[Review] Lynn Turner, Undine Sellbach and Ron Broglio, editors. *The Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies*. Edinburgh University Press, 2018, 2019. 559 pp.

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In the Introduction the intended relevance of this collection for Animal Studies is spelled out: firstly to 'bring[] into focus kinships, stories, affects and dependencies that may otherwise be elided' (2); secondly, to 'cultivate new kinds of peripheral attention, improvised imagination, interdisciplinary diplomacy and interspecies company' (2). The freshness of these essays (in the Acknowledgements, the contributors are thanked for 'their daring new work' (np)), and the willingness of contributors to ask original questions makes this collection a stimulating and delightful read. Artists and writers, not usually part of an animal studies canon, feature throughout. Most essays open portals into new arguments, or new ways of regarding nonhuman animals in unexpected contexts, while inserting themselves into current debates. Many essays critique the Humanities and suggest that an overhaul is overdue.

The *Companion* begins with the visual and the disturbing – Jane Alexander's iconic art installations which dispense with human/nonhuman animal binaries. The shock, at the time, of the Butcher Boys, first displayed in South Africa in 1985 during the State of Emergency the apartheid era, is difficult to convey. In this essay Ruth Lipschitz's critique of Kristeva's abjection in relation to Alexander's figures is situated in post-apartheid's xenophobic violence. If this is not an essay to be read dispassionately, nor is the collection itself. Many of the essays frame questions that can wake up an attentive reader. Timothy Morton asks: 'am I *myself* conscious?' (44) ushering in the question of who/what is conscious or non-conscious, sentient or non-sentient. Nicole Shukin considers how capitalism uses animals, noting the 'faith' in their 'saving

grace' (96), their supposed redemptiveness: cat cafes in Japan, military dogs. (One could add the marketing of 'wild animals' and the framing of their gaze as omniscient and spiritualised in southern Africa and elsewhere).

Ron Broglio calls for a 'Revolution' in our consigning of animality to the inferior, the untameable, asking if we humans have the 'hospitality' to re-imagine our 'habits' in order 'to accommodate the animal others' (482). Other essays hold up for scrutiny long-accepted central concepts underpinning Critical Animal Studies and animal studies. In 'Biopolitics' Rick Elmore puts together biopolitics and Derrida's work. Carla Freccero, in 'Queer Theory' queers Derrida's famous encounter with his cat and questions the 'normativity' of species categories. Narratives of specific animals dramatise making kin. In 'Friendship', Johnny Golding poetically and philosophically defines interspecies friendship as a 'kind of sticky belonging' (263). The essay is written with huge respect and love for a mustang named Manhattan who seems legendary in his perceptions and agency.

The urgency of the future of the planet, which we can no longer assume will survive, loops through the collection. Dawn McCance's essay on 'Death' foregrounds 'phono-logocentrism' as yet another strategy of cementing the apparent difference between human and animal. Matthew Chrulew and Rick de Vos's heartfelt and persuasive 'Extinction' exemplifies the losses and tragedies of species extinction through the particular lives of animals, as well as stressing the imperative for the Humanities to take on the 'horror' of species loss.

David Wood in 'Homo Sapiens' considers the imagining of a post-anthropocentric or post-apocalyptic planet as a '*threshold discourse*', one that responds to shifts in 'commonly held values and meaning-horizons of the human' (293). He raises an issue which has preoccupied me: 'Could the end of Homo Sapiens be a good thing [for the planet]?' (302). Matthew Calarco, in 'Genealogies', asks: what can animal liberation ever entail with the collapse of ecological systems which can no longer support them? In examining histories of animal studies and animal activism, Calarco suggests that liberatory 'ideals' might contain their own 'dogmas' and potential for violence. This useful, gritty essay, in its delineation of the genealogies of identity, difference, indistinction ends with the relevance of indigenous worldviews.

Indigenous philosophy features in a number of essays. John Ó Maoilearca shifts conventional thinking about philosophy in 'Non-human Philosophy' as he considers animal philosophy vs a philosophy of the animal and incorporates indigenous American thinking about personhood. In 'Posthumanism', Franklin Ginn critiques its differing forms as locating the human centrally. He connects indigenous ontologies to co-species vulnerability. In her lucid, beautifully written essay 'Religion', Danielle Sands asks whether it is possible to 'conceive' of a religion not based on the primacy of the human subject. Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism are similar in this regard, unlike the spirituality of indigenous peoples which is grounded in immanence and ecologies.

Theories, often respectfully conformed to in scientific research, are critiqued, even dismantled. In 'Evolution', Thom van Dooren and Vinciane Despret show, amusingly, how adherence to evolutionary theory, based on notions of selfishness and competitiveness, is undermined by the behaviour of ravens. The apparent puzzle of their co-operation comes to stand, metonymically, for an extended critique of evolutionary thinking. These corvids have agency and diverse knowledge of their worlds. Lynn Turner's 'Voice' locates her subject in philosophy and what it signifies about the imagined human/animal divide. The essay challenges the definitions and parameters of cetacean research, suggesting, like van Dooren and Despret, that our very concepts are no longer valid.

Other scientifically oriented essays usher non-scientific readers into debates. Wendy Wheeler's 'Meaning' weaves together biosemiotics, meaning and poetry. The essay is itself enchanting, to use one of Wheeler's concepts. She makes a claim that could be startling (unless one has read Richard Powers' *The Overstory* (2018) or Elif Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees* (2021)), that mind does not need a brain, and places poetry centrally as 'naming reality' (351.) Undine Sellbach, in another concept-expanding essay, 'Performance', puts together science and play in her analysis of *Green Porno* and its sequels which dramatise insect 'sexual' behaviours.

As a literary animal studies scholar I wished, in a partisan way, for more essays on literature. In 'Poetics' Aaron Moe defines animal poetics, suggesting that the bodies of many species be included on the page in what he terms 'material poeisis' (400). Sherryl Vint on

'Science Fiction' finds convincing parallels between animal studies and science fiction. The worth and relevance of science fiction, which she argues for, is indisputable, even as its proponents regard it more as a 'worldview' (499) than a literary genre.

In the 'Afterword', Cary Wolfe is adamant that animal studies is of 'real use in making sense of the multiple larger contexts in which both 'losers' and 'winners', are, after all, "animals"' (537), provided that the slipperiness of the term 'animal' is acknowledged. It certainly is in *The Edinburgh Companion* with its framing of animal studies debates in original and urgent ways – salutary for new researchers and students, as well as more established animal studies scholars.