

Relations

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The Affective Turn in Animal Ethics

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that rationalism no longer rules the field of animal ethics – an “affective turn” has occurred in a significant space of the field. The article first looks at exemplary rationalists for contrast, and then moves on to survey several leading affective theories: Donovan’s feminist care ethic, Acampora’s corporal compassion, Gruen’s entangled empathy, and Aaltola’s varieties of empathy. Aaltola’s criticisms of Acampora are reviewed and rebutted. Finally, the conclusion indicates what is positive about the contributions of affective theory to animal ethics.

Keywords: affective turn; care ethic; compassion; empathy; entanglement; feminism; intersubjectivity; rationalism; somatic; sympathy.

1. INTRODUCTION: RATIONALIST FOILS

Inter-species moral philosophy started out on a decisively rationalistic footing. In *Animal Liberation* Peter Singer (1975, 2015) was definitely seeking to shed sentimentalistic advocacy for other animals. He made a point of declaring he held no special attraction to other animals, and thus would not qualify as an “animal lover”. His conclusions as to the treatment of other animals followed purely from logical argument, or so Singer claimed. That argument was a utilitarian one: we should maximize happiness and minimize suffering, typical animal industries produce gross suffering in sentient species, therefore we ought to radically reform those industries in ways that would amount to the liberation of other animals. Singer saw animal liberation as following in the footsteps of black liberation and women’s liberation, and these he thought relied on rational respect not emotional sympathy. This rationalistic animus is maintained from the original edition in 1975 through the fortieth anniversary edition in 2015.

Rationalism is likewise rife in the work of the other leading pioneer in animal ethics, Tom Regan. For him, “the case for animal rights” (Regan 1983, 2004) is a matter of the mind leading the heart. The logical argument is basically a deontological one: some animals (mostly mammals and birds) are subjects-of-a-life (creatures who are sentient, sapient, and have a psycho-physical identity over time and a biographical life that matters to them); these animals have inherent worth (a type of value that is intrinsic to the valuable object and which is independent of anthropogenic origins) and consequently are bearers of rights (of the relevant sorts). The practical consequences of this argument are largely abolitionist – we should refrain from using (i.e. exploiting) other animals in agriculture, research, entertainment, etc. Regan also sees his case for animal rights as following in the train of expansions in human and civil rights; appreciating this is for him more of a cognitive than sentimental business. Again, his rationalistic approach is maintained from the original edition of his book (1983) through the twentieth anniversary edition (2004).

2. JOSEPHINE DONOVAN: FEMINST CARE ETHICS

One of the earliest affective theorists to rebel against Singer’s and Regan’s rationalism was Josephine Donovan. In “Attention to Suffering” (1996) she sought to reveal sympathy, compassion, and caring as legitimate bases for the ethical treatment of animals (147). Donovan claimed that in moral philosophy there was a male bias toward rationality that covered over the personal, contextual, and emotional (147). Influential here was Kant’s eschewal of sentiment or feeling – emotions were seen as volatile and uneven, therefore not universalizable and inconsistent with justice claims (148). The Kantian view was that emotion obliterates reason (149).

However, there is a whole sympathy tradition (including Philip Mercer, H.B. Acton, and Husserl) which argues, against Kant, that sympathy is intellectual as well as emotional (e.g., it allows for cognitive construction of the other’s point of view) (149). Participating in this tradition, phenomenologist Max Scheler lifts sympathy (*Mitgefühl* or fellow-feeling) into an episteme alternative to Descartes’ science; behavioral and expressive signs refer to animals’ affective and mental states (150). Scheler thinks that we need to cultivate our capacity to identify with life throughout the cosmos – sympathy allows us to decode nature’s own lan-

guage and see organic life as it is in reality and not as objects for our use (151). Likewise, Kenneth Shapiro offers “kinesthetic empathy” and Edith Stein proffers “sensual empathy” as an interpretive science of animality (151-152). John Fisher has it that sympathy posits an understanding of the being of the other, and Paul Taylor asserts that careful attention and observation yields cognition of a creature’s telos (152). For Donovan, these perspectives show that the sympathy tradition insists on moral imagination, evaluation, and judgment – cognitive aspects all (152).

In her estimation sympathy is an intellectual and emotional practice, and thus we can educate for it, as in the work of Nel Noddings (153). Sympathy notices the need for help and thus precedes justice in moral psychology (153). As W. Stark claims, imaginative projection into the lives of others is prior to the rise of egocentricity (153). Sympathy for animals is a primordial experience – as per Brian Luke, our culture conditions us to obscure it in the interests of exploitive practices (vivisection, factory farming, hunting, etc.) (154). As several eighteenth-century theorists had it (Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, Smith), sympathy (feeling/sentiment) is at the base of morality (154). Schopenhauer insisted that empathetic identification results in emotional compassion, including with other animals (155).

In more recent times, the environmentalist Fisher says that sympathy selects who is subject to justice, including other animals (156). Mercer asserts that sympathy enables moral respect, where the agent is cognitive and affective and the patient is sentient (156). Scheler held that sympathy for one expands emotionally to sympathy for all (157). Virginia Held, against Regan, points out empathic personalism beyond abstract rationalism (158). In general, the sympathy theorists counter Kant by insisting that sympathy includes a cognitive dimension (158).

Donovan is keen to indicate the contributions of feminists to the affective turn in animal ethics. Marti Kheel brings out the importance of feeling and emotion to morality (158). Carol Gilligan’s care ethic is rooted in the sympathy theorists of yore; this caring sympathy is pronounced in female social and economic experience (159). Donovan indicates that caring is primarily ethical, but it needs political and economic contextualization (160). Rita Manning underscores the importance of attending to the needs of others, and Seyla Benhabib’s communicative ethic calls for assessment of animal needs (161-162).

According to Simone Weil’s doctrine of “attentive love”, we should ask of the other, “What are you going through?” (163). Iris Murdoch takes up Weil’s view and asserts that attentive love dissolves solipsistic

barriers and opens up worlds of others (163). Donovan implies that attentive love embraces Martin Buber's I-Thou relation, as against the reification of rationalism (164). In a similar vein Paul Taylor would have us move beyond objectivism in order to see an organism's standpoint as a unique individual (164). Donovan concludes that a caring animal ethic centers on sympathy and attentive love, is rooted in the experience of the oppressed, and balances concern for the personal and the political (165).

3. RALPH ACAMPORA: CORPORAL COMPASSION¹

My ethical approach is rooted in ontology. It takes up Thomas Nagel's rationalistic challenge to animal phenomenology that must search for a realism based neither in imagination nor in empathy. My argument for circumventing Nagel's alleged opacity of nonhuman being is that the task before us is not one of transubstantively becoming-other (indeed impossible) but of articulating our already familiar experiences of *being-with* others. This reinterpretation dissolves the original problem, and then I resolve it into a more comprehensible project by returning to Heidegger's (mis)treatment of transhuman *Mitsein* and demonstrating how to work through and think past shortcomings therein.

With a focus then on phenomenology of transspecific conviviality, I argue for a phenomenology of body because somaticity is what opens us out into our environment – and that environmental opening is what provides the shared space of convivial worldhood across speciated horizons. I refer to Watsuji Tetsuro, who argues the case for the existential importance of the climactic/spatial dimension of human worldhood. Climaticity as an existential structure includes our appreciation of weather and landscape. Human being-in-a-world is a bodiment-environment complex that has to be treated as comprising, chiasmically, not only *Geist* but *physis* too.

I facilitate such treatment by employing the Merleau-Pontyan notion of world-flesh, which describes a holistic *Leibswelt*. I place the phenomenology of this live body-world under a *residential* hermeneutic, and conducts a parkscape phenomenology that makes three points: climate and history (or nature and culture) interpenetrate; our environmental experience is transhuman, involving our lifeworld with other species; and these “chiasms” of climatic culture/natural history and cross-species

¹ The ensuing passage is revised from Acampora 2006, 119-123.

conviviality are made possible and actual by “the somatic act of being in place” (*à la* Joseph Grange). This common worldly residency is itself constituted through somaesthesia – that is to say, it is a bodily phenomenon felt by flesh-and-blood being-in-a-world. Thus existential ontology can speak intelligibly of “transpecific intersomaticity”.

To bridge the gap between ontology and ethics, I undertake a structural axiological analysis. Objectivism is too metaphysical for its own good – the significance of values, I argue, lies precisely in their pragmatic meaning, and so belief in (or worry about) their putatively pure inherence in that which is appreciated has no relevant import. Subjectivism, on the other hand, falls prey to troublesome relativity (capable of producing normative chaos). Thus a relational axiology is found preferable: value arises neither by revelation nor as creation, but rather through a process of growth – organically emerging when valuer and valuee are related and subject to cultivation. Beyond giving this account of value’s source, I also supply a statement of its nature, namely that it is the pervasive or profound probability of appreciation. Hence, I arrive at a hallmark of valability: *x* is worthy if it is widely or thoroughly likely to be prized.

Then I proceed to furnish a more substantive treatment of appreciation itself when applied to bodiment and animality. This task is pursued on two levels: typology of somatic valuation and “topology” of animal appreciation’s cultural dynamics. Typologically, somatic valuation is discussed in six domains: first ethics, politics, and aesthetics; then survival/health, economics, and sexuality. The most significant insight herein is David Michael Levin’s notion that the experience of intersomaticity (rooted in corporal phenomena of reversibility and intertwining) brings with it a primordial feeling of mutuality.

With respect to mapping the cultural dialectics of animal appreciation, I present an extended Nietzschean treatment of the history of prizing tame versus wild animality. “Zoovalently”, Nietzsche himself privileged and thus transvaluated the feral. Nietzsche’s philosophy demonstrated the general fact of valuation being contextual – that, in other words, it is embedded in historical sediment and cultural conditioning. Organismic being – as subsumptive of fusion of the animal and the bodily – appears inscribed with(in) an acosmic array of discursive and practical complexes.

Confronting this situation, either we reduce somatology to post-structural semiology and/or postmodern politics of praxis, or else we reinvigorate the phenomenological/hermeneutic project of thematizing fleshhood’s presence and significance. My study tends to follow the latter

route, which enables us to articulate and appreciate family resemblances of bodily animacy across species lines as well as the real heft or terrestrial weight of organismic being for various earthlings' lifeworlds.

I then pursue the task of making sense of other animals' incorporation into transhuman morality, arguing at the outset that animal ethics has matured enough to redeem its existential basis in affective/somatic experience. Theoretically, I mobilize Mandelbaum's claim that experience of moral demand rests upon apprehension of a fittingness relation between a situation or context and an action or attitude. Phenomenologically, it is seen that that apprehension is in transspecific fields undergirded by a somaesthetic nexus by one or more members of a(n inter)relationship – and I refer to this experience as “symphysis” for short. Historically, I hold that investigation of symphysis is a necessary complement to the sentimentality of moral sense tradition.

After introducing the idea of symphysis, I attempt to illustrate its existential mediation of vulnerability and togetherness. To illustrate vulnerability, I use the example of squirrel protection. I give various descriptions of the cross-species intersomaticity possible with squirrels through the *Leibswelt* of parkland. These phenomena are symphysical in nature: they lead one generally to appreciate the related otherness of squirrels and specifically to attend concernfully to their vulnerabilities. One thus experiences a moral demand or claim expressible ethically as a protectionist judgment of obligation. I note that this way of conceiving transhuman moral phenomena affords an ethical equipoise between interests of ecological holism and biotic individuality.

In the second kind of situation (illustrative of togetherness), I appeal to Hearne's and Lopez' accounts of symphysical relationships and encounters with working and wild animals respectively. Hearne's canine and equestrian examples of interspecific togetherness demonstrate an intimate reciprocity, and Lopez' association with wolves displays a relational mutuality, both of which render fitting the adoption of respectful or caring attitudes toward other animals. I furnish supportive scientific findings, particularly as regards the role of biophilia in children's development and other primates' sociability. I conclude that it is sensible to incorporate other animals into transhuman morality – sensible in the double sense of being conceptually intelligible, from the twin perspectives of relational axiology and transspecific/intersomatic ontology, and existentially attractive, on the lived basis of (affective and sensory awareness of) cross-species symphysical phenomena.

4. LORI GRUEN: ENTANGLED EMPATHY

Rationalism is given another critique by the development of Lori Gruen's concept of entangled empathy. Her book entitled such defines it as "caring perception focused on attending to another's experience [positive or negative] of well-being". She stipulates that entangled empathy blends emotion and cognition and recognizes relationships – including relevant needs, interests, desires, vulnerabilities, hopes, and sensitivities (Gruen 2015, introd.).

Gruen claims that traditional rationalist ethics are too abstract and unhelpful to actual agents. She follows Marti Kheel's warning about "truncated narratives" that take ethics out of context. From Gruen's perspective rationalist ethics stunts moral imagination and lifts us out of relationships. Furthermore, traditional arguments for extension of moral regard tend to focus on sameness, which can breed "arrogant anthropocentrism". By projecting human preoccupations the perspective of abstract reasoning allows us to overlook the other's point of view and obscures unique capacities. Gruen argues that we need to investigate larger political and social power structures (such as race, class, gender, ability, and sexual identity). She endorses Iris Murdoch's view that ethics needs to focus on context and develop attention/care. And she takes inspiration from Carol Gilligan, who developed a feminist ethic of care against the rationalist justice tradition. This ethic of care emphasizes context over abstraction, relations over individualism, connection over impartiality, and responsiveness over conflict. It focuses on differences among moral patients, including differential power (Gruen 2015, ch. 1).

Empathy, according to Gruen, is a species of attention, a kind of moral perception that cultivates sensitive responsiveness in order to see what is morally relevant in a given context. By contrast, sympathy proceeds without projection and is a response to something bad happening to someone else. (Here I think Gruen departs from etymology and mistakes sympathy for pity.) Empathy establishes connection with an understanding of the other's circumstances. A primordial form of empathy is emotional contagion or affective resonance, which is an immediate embodied reaction (characterized by self-interested motivation). Other forms of empathy include storied empathy (which uses fictional characters) and personal empathy (which puts *you* in the shoes of the other). Another form, total projection, results in fusion with the other. The species of empathy favored by Gruen is cognitive empathy, which exercises reflective imagination to become the *other* in their shoes (this per-

spective is characterized by altruistic motivation). It is a process whereby attention picks out relevant aspects, reflective imagination conjures the other's point of view, judgment sizes up the other's conditions of mind, and finally there is evaluation of morally relevant aspects. Gruen charges empathy skeptics with an undue focus on primitive forms (as opposed to cognitive empathy) whereby they misread the (ir)relevance of empathy for ethics. She admits that projection is liable (via ideology) to misplace direct desires and mediated desires, but she says there is a fix for this problem: gather information about differences, employ critical reflection, and consult with experienced experts – including scientists and advocates (Gruen 2015, ch. 2).

Despite the dangers of dualism, Gruen asserts the importance of maintaining a distinction between self and other. The relational self is distinct from others, but not autonomous or independent. It is “entangled” – embedded or constituted in a network of relationships. Entangled empathy is neither pure (anthropomorphic) projection nor total fusion, but rather an equilibrium between first- and third-person points of view. Gruen holds that empathy occurs between sentient beings only, our material matrix notwithstanding. Val Plumwood suggests attention to *telos*, in order to empathize with non-sentient “earth others”. However, Gruen says this invites anthropomorphism, fetishizes *teloi*, and lacks the requisite point of view for making corrections. Loving regard for and commitment to nature is its own form of ethical care, but it is not entangled empathy. Entangled empathy changes our perceptions of self and other – Gruen cites her interactions within a chimpanzee colony (Gruen 2015, ch. 3).

Minding the difficulties with entangled empathy, Gruen admits that empathy can get covered over by neglect and that it is subject to epistemic and ethical inaccuracies. Epistemic inaccuracies include overestimating and underestimating experiences of others. For the former, the remedy is greater self-knowledge; for the latter, it is deeper knowledge (of the other). Ethical problems include failure of moral attention, as well as willful or affected ignorance. The fix for this is to seek out further information. Another ethical problem is empathetic saturation, burnout or breakdown (here I think Gruen is referring to the notorious setback of compassion fatigue). The cure for this is to disengage or distance from the relevant others and attend to self-care (Gruen 2015, ch. 4).

5. ELISA AALTOLA: VARIETIES OF EMPATHY

Now we come to our most recent thinker, Finnish philosopher Elisa Aaltola. She contributes to the affective turn in animal ethics by offering a typology of different kinds of empathy. She also serves up a redefinition of moral agency, according to which the following factors are prominent: recognition of harms to others, capacity for judgment, other-directedness, openness to heterogeneity and difference. The central, organizing query for Aaltola is whether different varieties of empathy enable the third and fourth factors above (Aaltola 2018, introd.).

Aaltola relates some good features of empathy: it allows to comprehend others (the capacity to enter others' interiors is a central feature of morality); it can be profoundly pro-social (which also helps self-flourishing); it enables vision of good/bad valences; it acts to see/make norms (as) morally relevant; it's crucial to the constitution of self-identity (because it engenders introspection); it enables evaluation of moral character vis-à-vis treatment of and relation to other animals. Aaltola jettisons the inferential model of empathy in favor of affective engagement (here she is skeptical of being overly rational and abstract). She admits that empathy runs some risks – namely projection, which may lead to anthropomorphism and species narcissism; abuse, which empowers exploitation; and mental fatigue. For her, sympathy is feeling-for (and here I think, like Gruen, that she ignores the etymological meaning of sympathy as fellow-feeling or feeling with; the connotation of condescension that both attach to sympathy is better laid at the doorstep of pity). As Aaltola would have it, empathy is feeling with (whereas I and others think, again following etymology, that it is feeling into). She thinks compassion is equivalent to affective empathy (whereas I would etymologically take it as a synonym for sympathy). Finally, Aaltola lands upon a broad definition of empathy as identifying (with) the mental states of another (Aaltola 2018, ch. 1).

Adam Smith provides a sort of Ur-definition of empathy as projection into the position of the other and imagination of how the other feels. The first couple of varieties of empathy that Aaltola considers are closely linked, in that they clarify what Smith leaves unclear: projective empathy puts the *self* in the shoes of the other, whereas simulative empathy tries to envision the *other* in its shoes. It is projective empathy that risks anthropomorphism when used with animal others. With simulative empathy we imagine the other's physical and mental attributes along with their personal and political context. Narratives and "animal stories" aid simulation, as does sensitivity to body language. Aaltola warns us that

we should avoid colonizing the other or attempting total fusion (these being the respective risks of projective and simulative empathy). Sources of support for simulation include poetry, literature, theater/acting, and film/television. Empathy enables minds to mesh and bodies to interact, which are important roots of morality. We need to overcome the dualism of human minds vs. animal bodies, because such a theoretical maneuver is important to the development of transhuman morality.

Aaltola identifies another kind of empathy as a cognitive one. Cognitive empathy blends two elements: cognition, by noticing emotions through reading expressions/behaviors; affection, by resonating with these. (Recall here Gruen's entangled empathy, which also merges cognition and emotion.) There is a danger, with cognitive empathy, of excessive cognition and detachment from emotions; one risks falling into psychopathy and narcissism. In addition, Aaltola presents four other problems that cognitive empathy is liable to: excessive egoism, skepticism about other minds, domination of the other, disregard toward morality. These problematic features, when applied to the interspecies context, lead to "anthropathy" (species solipsism). The anthropath sees animality as representing ferine features and thus something to be dominated by civilized humans. Such a project of dominance is seen among farmed animals (cages), companion animals (sterilization), and wild ones (culling). Liberalism, industrialization, and human supremacy, taken together, yield anthropathy. Aaltola cites Amelie Rorty, who thinks that societal institutions and belief systems need retooling when they are out of sync with morality. Other commentators remind us that social and political beliefs can affect personal psychology, especially in marking capacities for cultivation. These functions, by contrast, highlight the overall diagnosis that anthropathy enables consumerism's commodification of other animals (and vice versa).

A fourth type of empathy is affective. Affective empathy is spontaneous resonance, neither inferential nor emotional contagion. It doesn't possess the *same* emotion of the other, rather some feeling *akin* to it. Affective empathy and cognition can manifest together in a fortuitous equilibrium, neither manipulative nor naïve. Applied to animal ethics, resonance results in a merging whereby emotions and experiences of other animals enter the self. Affective empathy protects us from narcissism and anthropathy in that it recognizes the subjectivity of animal others (as against reification and commodification). Of course, we must guard against colonizing the other, for affective empathy can breed a sense of ownership. Aaltola refers to Simone Weil, who notes that just

as knowledge claims can risk violence, so too does empathy. Fortunately, affective empathy shows the subjectivity and specificity of every animal, as the other is resonated with in their particularity. Against the instrumentalism and self-directedness of the past, affective empathy harbors the multi-species promise of a new political ethos (Aaltola 2018, ch. 4).

The fifth sort of empathy is embodied. We must recognize that oneself and the other are somatic beings; we comprehend mental states via somatic exchange. According to Aaltola, embodied empathy involves conceptualization of the other's somatic state (here I would say that the phenomenon before us is a variety of resonance, more like what we find in affective empathy). Knowing others in this way is viable, but not in a totalizing way – after all, we are very nearly illiterate in non-human communication; empathy must recognize a residual opacity, for there is always something that eludes it. Aaltola asserts that intersubjectivity comes about by means of co-constitution. Ultimately, the focus of empathy is seeing and feeling how one's behavior is experienced by the other, and thereby how our subjectivity is constituted for others. Embodied empathy has a moral dimension in bringing forth the subjectivity of the other. It makes difference available for recognition (here I would add that this phenomenon is also proto-moral). Aaltola states that embodied empathy allows us to take an ethical perspective on animal others. We should admit, however, that we often don't know how other animals experience us, neither do we know how our expressions prevent them from experiencing us, nor how we are prevented from comprehending them (Aaltola 2018, ch. 5).

There is a sixth kind of empathy, namely the reflective. Reflective empathy considers data from other forms of empathy on a meta-level, attending to fellow-feelings and our own mental experience. Thus it enables us to develop a greater ability to understand the other. Mindfulness, as a second-order reflection on first-order experience, can aid reflective empathy. Iris Murdoch holds that Zen philosophy's detachment from ego can help us to "unself", which in turn, according to Aaltola, helps reflective empathy. Murdoch also reveals how *agape* (selfless love) enables attention to and love of the other – which, according to Aaltola, aids reflective empathy. Simone Weil focuses on loving attention to the other as they are, and on the way solitude can strip away cultural dogma; these assist reflective empathy, according to Aaltola. Weil observes that suffering or affliction empties the ego, and thereby – according to Aaltola – supports reflective empathy. Both Weil and Murdoch claim that wilderness experiences can facilitate attentiveness to animal others. Hence, reflective empathy has several sources.

Having mapped out six varieties of empathy, Aaltola proceeds to present and rebut various criticisms of it (particularly as concerns animal ethics). First, it is held that empathy helps the domination of others; knowing the flaws of animals can further their degradation. The fix here is reflective empathy, which encourages investigation of our address to animals. Next, some argue that empathy may feed into a narcissistic frame of reference. However, Aaltola contends that feeling good and boosting ego come as bonuses and don't drive empathy. Then there is the problem of bias that shows up in the concatenation of anthropocentrism, incomplete projection, and an emphasis on similarities; this problem enables a preference for companion animals – to the detriment of farmed, wild, and feral animals. The remedy for this is critique of cultural presuppositions and the imaginary of other animals (especially “alien” ones). Moving on, it is sometimes the case that power, superiority, and privilege enter the picture; yet, helpfully, reflective empathy challenges species supremacy. Another problem is that of contextualism; against this Aaltola contends that we can incorporate contexts in the practice of reflective empathy (thereby becoming aware of and owning contexts, without canceling empathy). There is also a worry about the inaccessibility of nonhuman minds (Nagel 1974), which breeds species solipsism. To fix this, we need to mount bodily and sensory dialogues between the species; too, reflective empathy reminds us that we and other animals share capabilities, ecologies, and evolution. Now rationalism stands as a rival to empathy, but it is important to notice that empathy is meant to establish equilibrium with reason (this is true of affective ethics in general). Some have pointed to psychopaths and the autistic as examples of empathy deficiency. However, the autistic present a mixed bag of empathy (they have some varieties and lack others), and psychopaths may be viewed as having empathy and needing more rational skills. An alternate view of psychopaths is that they are rational but unempathic; this would show a flaw in rationalism. There is a problem of parochialism in that empathy appears to be limited to Western liberalism; but often empathy is found in other contexts upon closer inspection (e.g. norms based on empathic resonance). Aaltola concludes that affective empathy is at the center of moral agency. The rival rationalism returns, but she doubles down on her model of balance and insists that empathy orients moral agency. Some contend that anger is a more helpful affect than empathy; against this, however, it can be argued that empathy directs moral outrage and saves us from egoism and ethically negative emotions. Compassion fatigue is a problematic phenomenon, which can lead to the breakdown of empathy.

The remedy for this is to place attention on small success stories (dietary changes, rescuing strays, rehabilitating the wild), as against getting overwhelmed at the institutional level of animal advocacy; also, reflective empathy notes limits and differences and directs us out of the narcissism characteristic of compassion fatigue; moreover, versus anthropathy, empathy fuels a revolution against the reifying institutions that feed compassion fatigue. Finally, it is observed that one can comprehend ethical norms only through affection toward them. In the end, what we need is less reasoning and more affective resonance (Aaltola 2018, ch. 7).

Aaltola concludes that reflective empathy has the most potential and affective empathy is central. In a capitalist, reifying culture, empathy holds the promise of resubjectifying and it offers a relational stance toward other animals. Empathy deconstructs homocentrism as it helps to traverse other *Umwelten* (Aaltola 2018, concluding ch.).

6. CROSS-THEORY OBJECTIONS AND REBUTTALS

Aaltola brings me to task for allegedly extending corporal compassion to plants (Aaltola 2018, 112 f.). She states that “he claims that life is characterized by ‘having a self-generated perspective’ on existence” (112 f.). Despite the fact that the phrase just cited does not appear in the place Aaltola cites (i.e. Acampora 2006, 18), nor can I recall using it elsewhere, I do own up to “join[ing] those who speak of plants as demonstrating a capacity to perceive and dwell in the world since they relate to their surroundings by, say, turning toward the sun” (Aaltola 2018, 113). Indeed, I do believe that “all life takes part in transspecific intersomaticity – that is, shared, embodied relating with one another” (113). With regard to botanical being, I have asserted that “[t]he sunflower can be said to dwell in its surroundings, since it has an environment (or *Umwelt*) in a living, orientational sense unavailable to inorganic things” (Acampora 2006, 19). Yet all this remains on the level of ontology. With respect to ethics, moral standing – in the strict sense – becomes salient when we are speaking of *sentient* life. I take the question of putative sentience in plants to be open, indeed most interestingly so (Calvo *et al.* 2017). Now Aaltola worries about my alleged use of *agency* to describe plant life (Aaltola 2018, 113) – but this is a red herring: nowhere do I build a case for botanical agency. However, I *would* say that her position on plants is unduly skeptical: “Plants respond, but they do not perceive in the sense of being *aware*, and it probably is not *like* anything to be a plant” (113).

Compare this with the lively discussion of botanical worldhood that has recently coalesced into the pioneering field of plant studies (e.g. Marder 2013). Finally, Aaltola concludes that my thought “aims for a biocentric account of compassion, extending it to all living beings” (Aaltola 2018, 113). Yet that is not the case: while I have furnished a biocentric account of *bodiment*, my goal then and there was a *zoocentric* theory of compassion extended to all *animals* (Acampora 2006, ch. 4). Still, it is worth keeping our eyes on the exciting evolution of plant studies – for cues or hints of relevance to embodied empathy (Aaltola) or somatic sympathy (Acampora).

7. CONCLUSION: WHY TURN “AFFECTIVE”

The theorists we have surveyed and commented upon all make their own contribution to the affective turn in animal ethics. Donovan underscores the relevance of feminist care ethics to transhuman morality, showing the importance of bringing emotion into the picture as against a purely rational approach. I highlight the somatic nature of inter-species sympathy, thereby embodying the emotion relevant to animal ethics. Gruen directs our attention to “entangled empathy”, presenting a model for transhuman morality that displays an equilibrium between emotion and reason. Aaltola exhibits the wide variety of empathies in moral psychology, and thus reveals the multiple ways in which affection can be relevant to animal ethics.

Taking the affective turn, Aaltola asserts, we see how feelings aid in creating ideas about ethical concerns (Aaltola 2022, 68). She argues that, when both reasoning and feelings are used, animal ethics becomes more plausible in practice (69). These insights, after the Enlightenment investment in rationality, had to be rediscovered by contemporary ethicists. Centuries ago, the sentimentalist tradition in ethics and moral psychology had already explored the relevance of affection to morality, but their insights were buried by Enlightenment rationality. Today – because of the affective turn in ethics – we can appreciate how Hume, Smith, Hutcheson, and Shaftesbury all demonstrated the involvement of emotion in moral experience. Schopenhauer and Scheler, too, did the same – and explicitly extended their approaches to transhuman morality. Taking inspiration from these predecessors, and taking into account relatively recent developments in moral psychology, contemporary animal ethicists can tap a rich resource of affective theory.

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