

CREATURELY COSMOLOGIES

WHY METAPHYSICS MATTERS FOR ANIMAL
AND PLANETARY LIBERATION



BRIANNE DONALDSON

Creaturely Cosmologies

Rowman & Littlefield
Review Copy

Contemporary Whitehead Studies

Series Editors:

Roland Faber (Claremont School of Theology Claremont Graduate University)

Brian G. Henning (Gonzaga University)

Contemporary Whitehead Studies, co-sponsored by the Whitehead Research Project, is an interdisciplinary book series that publishes manuscripts from scholars with contemporary and innovative approaches to Whitehead studies by giving special focus to projects that:

- explore the connections between Whitehead and contemporary Continental philosophy, especially sources, like Heidegger, or contemporary streams like poststructuralism,
- reconnect Whitehead to pragmatism, analytical philosophy and philosophy of language,
- explore creative East/West dialogues facilitated by Whitehead's work,
- explore the interconnections of the mathematician with the philosopher and the contemporary importance of these parts of Whitehead's work for the dialogue between sciences and humanities,
- reconnect Whitehead to the wider field of philosophy, the humanities, the sciences and academic research with Whitehead's pluralistic impulses in the context of a pluralistic world,
- address Whitehead's philosophy in the midst of contemporary problems facing humanity, such as climate change, war and peace, race, and the future development of civilization.

Titles in the Series

Butler on Whitehead: On the Occasion, edited by Roland Faber, Michael Halewood, and Deena Lin

Foundations of Relational Realism: A Topological Approach to Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Nature, by Michael Epperson and Elias Zafiris

The Divine Manifold, by Roland Faber

Creaturely Cosmologies: Why Metaphysics Matters for Animal and Planetary Liberation, by Brianne Donaldson

Creaturely Cosmologies

Why Metaphysics Matters for Animal and Planetary Liberation

Brianne Donaldson

LEXINGTON BOOKS

Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

Copyright © 2015 by Lexington Books

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Donaldson, Brianne.

Creaturely cosmologies : why metaphysics matters for animals and planetary liberation / Brianne Donaldson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.


ISBN 978-1-4985-0179-8 (cloth) -- ISBN 978-1-4985-0180-4 (electronic)

1. Metaphysics. 2. Animals. I. Title.

BD111.D65 2015

110--dc23

2015003302

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

For Herriot—
inestimable scout.

bgd

Rowman & Littlefield
Review Copy

Chapter Five

Intra-Actions II

Practices of “Reworlding” in Process Thought

A new creation has to arise from the actual world as much as from pure potentiality. . . .

—Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*

Having worked through the dialectic of the *jīva*, I will now turn to the actual occasion. It is striking that both Process-relational thought and Jainism posit a fluid, dual-directional activity to explain the development of relational life. Mentality/feeling, immanence/transcendence, personal/impersonal, individual/relational, human/nonhuman come together within becoming itself. Oppositional dualisms are transmuted to an active dialectic that is not *hierarchical*—one side over the other—but *integrated* within the very becoming of every entity. Life *is* the intra-action between the poles. Life is the *doing* rather than the *being*; the *how* rather than the *who*. Whereas Jainism locates the *jīva* between conventional and transcendent experiences/perspectives, Whitehead describes the actual occasion as the synthesis between what he calls the World of Activity and the World of Value. In this chapter, I will recap the architecture of the actual occasion, explore these two “worlds” that Whitehead locates creaturely development between, make a brief tour through Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of becoming, and look to Donna Haraway’s provocative book *When Species Meet* for clues on how to better align ourselves with creaturely life as active partners in “reworlding” toward alternative futures.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ACTUAL OCCASION

Before we get there, let us revisit the architecture of the actual occasion. As described in chapter 2, becoming is the novel moment of self-construction in which the actual occasion coordinates, or prehends, a given past with the mental grasping toward a potential future. The actual occasion describes an *event* rather than a thing—or rather *all things are events*. And like the best parties or most memorable encounters, the boundaries of an event are not marked out beforehand. One only knows afterward the contours of that remarkable day, that perfect storm of happenings, the night where time seemed to stand still. The boundaries of an experience that exceeds the sum of its parts only become apparent through the happening. But how? What makes those parts, not only come together in a new way, but also achieve an intensity of feeling that sets the event apart as unique? This is exactly what Whitehead was trying to answer for every aspect of experiential becoming. Every actual occasion is an event with some degree of intensity.

In an attempt to understand the strange and unfamiliar process of the actual occasion and its capacity for what Whitehead calls “non-sensuous perception,” Process scholar Steven Meyer describes the architecture of an occasion in terms of the “specious present,” a term used by William James in a chapter on the perception of time within his *Principles of Psychology* (1890, 609).¹ Not long after, Gertrude Stein, likely influenced by Whitehead’s insistence to “take time seriously” (Whitehead 1927/1961, 240) investigated the notion of “duration”—or the time-sense she had when she was writing (Franken 2000, 154)—calling it the “the prolonged present,” or “the continuous present” (Meyer 2011, 33),² referring to those moments that include an impossible abundance of happenings, yet seems to stand still. James elucidates this term, also referring to it as “the practically cognized present,” explaining how we experience a typical moment:

the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a *duration*, with a bow and a stern, as it were—a rearward- and a forward-looking end. (1890, 609)

The architecture of the actual occasion-as-specious present is such that two directions are not felt as a succession, first feeling the past followed by the future. Rather, “The experience is from the outset a synthetic datum . . . and to sensible perception its elements are inseparable, although attention looking back may easily decompose the experience, and distinguish its beginning from its end” (610). The breadth of the occasion takes place between the two directions of beginning and end, or past and future, the given parts and how

they might become. The stature of the occasion depends on how much can be held in that duration of “concrete togetherness” that defines the specious present and the “production of novelty” that Whitehead ascribes to the actual occasion (PR 21). When you think of those timeless moments in your own life, how much did they hold?

I imagine it like an experiment of trying to see how many people will fit in a Volkswagen Beetle. I imagine the party where the door remains open for another guest and another and another, each more diverse than the last, until the crowd is massive in size and impossible in scope. I imagine it like the permeable boundaries of our nation in which we receive another stranger, another culture, and another language into this massive event that is the United States. I imagine it like a dream that holds the most contradictory elements that yet makes perfect sense in that disjunctive state. I imagine it like a local shelter that always has room for one more weary traveler no matter the hour. Bernard Loomer, a Process theologian, explained the precarious balance of this fullness as the “stature” or “size” of an occasion, referring to the “ability to absorb more and more dimensions of the world in the unity of your own being and add to the stature of your soul” (1987, 252). He goes on:

How much of the other can you incorporate into your being? How many of the contrasts and contradictions of life can you take in without being disorganized, thrown, or broke? Size is increased by the number and intensity of the contrasts that you attempt to unify within yourself. The greater the range and depth of contrasts that you attempt to synthesize into your unity, the larger the Size of your spirit. (252)

The words “incorporate” and “absorb” are unfortunate as they have tones of assimilation or takeover. But if we think Loomer’s statement alongside the *jīva*, we can think this “stature” in terms of the growing perception toward omniscience, or Whitehead’s prehension of the multiplicity. How much can we, or the actual occasion, “become with” or welcome into our developmental feeling? The duration of the actual occasion, or of any event, is not a directive to sacrifice oneself to overwhelming contrasts. It is, however, a helpful way to reflect on what contrasts are excluded or evaluated out in order to maintain a persistent identity. It also reminds us how we assimilate other life in the basic functions of eating, drinking, breathing, and moving that keep the “me” or “I” chugging along. As Jainism recognizes in its karmic calculations, and as Whitehead makes clear, “Whether or no it be for the general good, life is robbery. It is at this point that with life morals become acute. The robber requires justification” (PR 105). In a world in which life requires life, creaturely cosmologies demonstrate how all occasions and events might minimize that theft through “becoming-with,”

through a wider co-feeling, a more spacious, perceptive duration. But to what end?

BECOMING BETWEEN ACTIVITY AND VALUE

In two of the last essays of Whitehead's life—"Mathematics and the Good" and "Immortality"³—he describes how every actual occasion/becoming unifies two worlds—one temporal that he calls the World of Activity,⁴ and one conceptual that he calls the World of Value (1968, 61–62; hereafter ESP). The World of Activity "emphasizes the multiplicity of mortal things . . . It is the World of Origination: It is the Creative World. It creates the Present by transforming the Past, and by anticipating the Future" (ESP 61). The World of Value "emphasizes Persistence . . . Its essence is not rooted in any passing circumstance" (62). Already we can hear echoes of the multiple perspectives by which the Jain jīva must be viewed from both its permanent qualities as well as its changing qualities and modes.

Whitehead does not separate these "Two Worlds" (ESP 61), but endeavors to understand them distinctly *and* in relation to one another. Thus "Value cannot be considered apart from Activity" (62), he asserts. Rather, each finds its fulfillment with reference to the other. For Whitehead, "The immediacy of some mortal circumstance is only valuable because it shares in the immortality of some value" (62). Whitehead gives the example of a heroic deed or an unworthy act, saying that neither "depends for its heroism, or disgust, upon the exact second of time at which it occurs. . . . [V]alue-judgment points beyond the immediacy of historic fact" (62). Every judgment or evaluation involves reference to a given circumstance (World of Activity) and to something beyond the present moment (World of Value). "Judgment is a process of unification" (62) between particularity of existence and "the totality of existence" (62). Whitehead iterates the mutual relation between the Worlds this way: "[I]nfinity is mere vacancy apart from its embodiment of finite values, and . . . finite entities are meaningless apart from their relationship beyond themselves" (81). The finite, mortal, limited World of Activity and infinite, immortal, and unlimited World of Value each find expression through the other.

For Whitehead, this two-world unification held for actual occasions as well as for all judgments, and even for the purity of mathematical concepts. Mathematics is considered beautiful specifically because it strives for perfect theory. "The vagueness of practice," or imperfect mathematical application, asserts Whitehead, "is energized by the clarity of ideal experience," even though no mathematician "has ever observed in practice any perfect mathematical notion" (ESP 80). To put it another way, our ideas are more seamless than our actualization. This does not diminish either the theory or the practi-

cal attempts, but reminds us that ideas *are ideal* specifically because we can develop them in a conceptual sphere that is relatively free of the obstacles and limits of material life.

Nevertheless, the concrete and conceptual worlds work together to create and intensify meaning and knowledge. A line or point, even a number or pattern, only make sense against a “background which is the unbounded universe” (ESP 78). “Finite entities,” Whitehead states, “require the unbounded universe . . . [and] the universe acquires meaning and value by reason of its embodiment of the activity of finitude” (81). To put it more succinctly, “finitude vivifies the infinite” (86), and the infinite “adds the perception of worth and beauty to the mere transition of sense-experience” (81).

Every becoming is thus a judgment between the two worlds, an integrative evaluation between the World of Activity and the World of Value—between the actual happenings and the “ideals of perfection” (ESP 80). The parallels between Whitehead’s World of Activity (finitude/mortality) and World of Value (infinitude/immortality) and Kundakunda’s conventional/partial and transcendent/complete views are striking.⁵ Whitehead describes finitude and infinitude very similarly “‘Now we know—in part’ . . . [and] ‘Now we know—completely’” (78; original emphasis). All becomings integrate these two dynamic aspects. And if we recall the structure of the actual occasion, we know that every becoming is both actual (working with *what is*) and conceptual (striving toward *what might be*). The actual deals with the World of Activity and the conceptual deals with the World of Value. Every becoming “vivifies the ideals which [in turn] invigorate the real happenings” (81).

Every individual is but a living “idea” (ESP 65) or “ideal co-ordination” (69) that integrates the changing circumstances of its mortal finitude with the persistent unity of immortal infinitude. Every “idea,” he writes, “has two sides; namely, it is a shape of value and a shape of fact” (64). Every becoming is an “essential junction of the two worlds” (64). Again the parallels between the conventional limits of the *jīva* and the unbound perception of the liberated *siddha* are remarkable.

For Whitehead, the two worlds even explain the very concept of personal identity. For example, if the finite, mortal World of Activity is characterized by continuous change, how does any identity persist at all? How do we recognize ourselves as the same person today as yesterday? Whitehead uses the example of a speaker uttering a word in which a second passes between the start of the word and its completion. “And yet the speaker enjoyed his self-identity during the pronunciation of the word,” he explains, “and the listeners never doubted the self-identity of the speaker” (ESP 65). Even though I know that I am changing constantly, as is every object in my vicinity—the chair I am sitting on, the snoring beagle on the sofa—I simulta-

neously have a genuine sense that some aspect of “I” will wake up tomorrow, that the chair will be here, that the beagle and I will have our evening hike. For Whitehead, sustained identity is an example of the mutual entanglement of the two worlds: the World of Activity draws upon the stability of the World of Value, imitating its character amid its own transitoriness (65). This is especially significant when one considers that every actual occasion, as well as all plant and animals, also actualize the World of Value. Every life form actively integrates the finite and infinite—a claim that profoundly rejects any classical bifurcation of nature.

Jain philosophy also describes the *jīva* as an integrative unit of permanence and change insofar as it is a combination of dynamically persistent substance with changing qualities and modes. In fact, Jain philosophers strategically emphasized *both* the persistent *and* changing qualities of every entity in response to what they saw as one-sided (*ekānta*), or extreme, perspectives of other Indic worldviews that emphasized Being (*sat*) as primarily eternal/unchanging (such as Advaita Vedānta or Sāṃkhya) or as primarily non-eternal/changing (such as some Buddhist traditions) (Jaini 2001, 91–94). By committing to examine life from the perspectives of its modes, qualities, *and* substance, Jains avoid the one-sidedness of other positions.

Although Whitehead only mentions Indian thought in passing,⁶ his Process worldview addresses many of the same themes that were central to Indian thinkers and some of the parallels with Jainism are especially meaningful. Whitehead primarily develops his two-world paradigm with the help of Plato. In revisiting Plato’s work, Whitehead finds many expressions of the “mutual immanence of actualities” (AI 134). In the *Timaeus*, Plato refers to this mutual immanence as the *khora*, or “Receptacle,” and elsewhere “Space,” “natural matrix of all things,” or “fostermother of all becoming” (134). As a World of Value, the *khora* is a virtual space of totality that contains all happenings in the world, including even those entities and decisions that could have been and were not. This virtual World of Value and actual World of Activity fuse together *within* every becoming in what Roland Faber calls “manifolds in mutual immanence,” where “. . . universality and relativity, singularity and relationality, creativity and extension are differently related . . . expressions of their mutual and universal incompleteness” (2010, 103), a creative feature of all creaturely life. The Worlds of Activity and Value require one another, refuting any privilege of one *over* the other. Faber continues, “[mutual immanence] is a *critical* notion that, in refuting any transcendence of categories and principles, denies anything that status of origin, ground, aim or goal beyond the nexus of happening itself. It is anti-hierarchical!” (104). Much like kevala-jñāna in Jainism, Whitehead asserts that true understanding requires that we understand every creaturely becoming, or “idea,” from *both* perspectives (if not more!) of these mutually immanent worlds:

When we enjoy “realized value,” we are experiencing the essential junction of the two worlds. But when we emphasize mere fact, or mere possibility we are making an abstraction in thought. When we enjoy fact as the realization of specific value, or possibility as an impulse towards realization, we are then stressing the ultimate character of the Universe. This ultimate character has two sides—one side in the mortal world of transitory fact acquiring the immortality of realized value; and the other side is the timeless world of mere possibility acquiring temporal realization. The bridge between the two is the “idea” with its two sides. (ESP 64–65)

The actual occasion creates itself out of the two worlds of Activity and Value, enacting a coordination of both, lending realized value to passing fact, and giving tangible shape to pure possibility. Whitehead invites us to rethink our own development and identity through the lens of the actual occasion. This is precisely what Donna Haraway does in her book *When Species Meet*. In the next section, I argue that *When Species Meet* is Haraway’s experimental attempt to rework identities and action through Whitehead’s framework of the actual occasion, or event. In becoming like the actual occasion, Haraway unexpectedly demonstrates fresh ways to approach animals, not as passive bodies to be exploited or rescued, but as active partners in “reworlding,” that is, partners in shaping alternate futures that increase understanding and decrease violence.

BECOMING THE ACTUAL OCCASION IN HARAWAY’S *WHEN SPECIES MEET*

In the opening pages of *When Species Meet*, Haraway makes clear contact with Whitehead, a contact that will shape the entire book (2008, 5; hereafter WSM). Readers find a single glossy photo of “Jim’s Dog,” a moss-encrusted, leaf-covered, burned-out redwood stump uncannily resembling an alert, seated Labrador. Haraway’s friend Jim had found this canine conglomeration in the Santa Cruz greenbelt near his home. “So many species, so many kinds, meeting in Jim’s dog,” Haraway reflects. She asks, “Whom and what do we touch when we touch this dog? How does this touch make us more worldly, in alliance with all the beings who work and play for an alternative globalization that can endure more than one season?” (WSM 5). It is clear in these early pages that the text aims to provoke these alliances toward a globalization that includes life far beyond the merely human.

In perceiving Jim’s dog, we are indeed in the company of a global multitude. The plastic and metal parts of the camera, the hands or machinery of its manufacturing, the eye that spied and the finger that captured the frame, the redwoods, the ferns, the damp cool air, and the entire forest multiplicity existing to create a recognizable form for those passersby who might spot the

likeness. In the forest snapshot, we peer into a single instant that houses a seemingly endless fractal of multiplicities becoming. “I think this is what Alfred North Whitehead might have meant by a concrescence of prehension,” Haraway writes, “It is definitely at the heart of what I learn when I ask whom I touch when I touch a dog. I learn something about how to inherit in the flesh” (WSM 7). *When Species Meet* is an attempt to extend that inheritance to the margins of creaturely life, so that creaturely life can become something more than what it is presently understood to be.

Haraway is a theorist of becoming. *When Species Meet* is one more attempt in a series of projects where the author examines the micro- and macro-processes of becoming that place life between the “three crucial boundary breakdowns” she diagnosed years earlier in her posthumanist “Cyborg Manifesto”: between human/animal, between this human-animal and machine, and between the physical and nonphysical (2003, 10–11).⁷ *When Species Meet* also investigates this triad by (1) examining real situations for animal bodies in the current extremes of domestication such as animal agriculture, vivisection, and pet-owning culture; (2) exploring the role and effect of technology in these relations; and (3) investigating habits of thought that undergird these ownership models and experimenting with thought processes and practices that might pry these patterns loose.

Haraway does not denounce the “contact zones” of domestication as “as an ancient historical disaster” though she is extremely critical of the meat industrial complex as well as the trend to keep pets as fashion accessories or “living engines for churning out unconditional love” (WSM 206). Haraway focuses on lesser-known aspects of domestication describing examples of animal agency and the productive contribution of creaturely “partnerships-in-the-making,” such as those she shares with her agility dogs Cayenne and Roland, but also those she shares with “significantly unfree partners” in labs or on her plate (72).

Many critical animal scholars bristle at Haraway’s work, as do I, when she affirms vivisection or meat-eating, when she speaks on behalf of a chicken “willing” to die for our daily bread, or when she affirms the feral pig on the barbecue spit at a faculty dinner. Stephanie Jenkins has criticized Haraway’s advocacy of learning to “kill responsibly” instead of adopting feminist vegan ethics (2010, 506). James Stanescu has argued that Haraway looks at species while overlooking individuals in a “god-trick of transcendence” (2009, online).

I empathize and, in many cases, share the sentiments of these theorists. Yet, I also contend that these dismissals miss the broader impact that Haraway’s work can have on a theory of animal liberation that is aimed at total planetary liberation, alternative globalizations, and ecological societies. These wider relational goals require that we develop economic and social practices of freedom that proliferate creaturely liberties amid entanglements,

and transform the very ways we consider animals at all. Haraway recognizes that any creaturely globalization requires a thorough accounting of our impact on creaturely life, which must extend to animals, as well as beyond them. Creaturely globalizations will also require a greater capacity for partnership, both across politicized lines of different justice-oriented movements that do not always see eye to eye, as well as partnerships with life forms and systems that have been rendered passive fodder or victims, or merely de-realized as productive contributors to the creative advance.

Recognizing Our Partners in Reworlding

Haraway's project is an attempt to illuminate the ways in which all creatures contribute to local and global "reworlding" (WSM 93). This is an important aspect of Haraway's theory as one that is, like her methodology, *in process*. Reality changes when species meet, and humans cannot take "themselves to be the only actors" (206). Life is "coshaping all the way down, in all sorts of temporalities and corporealities" (164). Following Barad's theory of agential realism (see chapter 2), Haraway points out that her notion of "species" is far from the fixity of the biological discipline she comes from. "Species, like the body, are internally oxymoronic, full of their own others, full of messmates, or companions," she asserts (164). Here, she echoes Whitehead's description of creative occasions whose intra-actions constitute a nexus or society. Jim's forest "dog"—or one of Haraway's canine companions for that matter—is a living assemblage of agencies, and its ordered togetherness is a physical and conceptual provocation that changes the landscape for all involved, including Jim and Haraway who were so compelled by it. "[E]very species is a multi-species crowd," asserts Haraway, enlarging from the outset the awareness of the buzzing planetary partners we coshape with (165).

In her chapter titled "Chicken," Haraway takes on a first-person Chicken Little perspective to provide rapid-fire glances into the history of bird domestication. She describes the massive numbers of egg-laying hens confined in order to feed the pyramid-building Egyptian slaves, as well as the smuggled Chinese chicks that contributed to a major outbreak of bird flu in Nigeria's fledgling agribusiness industry.

What is the point of Haraway taking on this Chicken Little perspective? I think it is two-fold: first, to show how chickens, in spite of their captivity and colonization, have actively contributed to reworlding. Haraway is trying to give credit where credit is due, which is as much a tribute to exploited animals as it is to other marginalized populations whose forced or exploited labor has shaped the worlds we inhabit. Deleuze and Guattari are instructive here when they describes the act of "becoming animal," "becoming woman," "becoming molecular," or "becoming child" (1987, 277). Each of these articulations describe ways of aligning our own development with marginalized

identities. Deleuze and Guattari describe it as “becoming minoritarian” (291), that is, entering into a conceptual and/or tangible relationship with those bodies and ideas rendered “minor” by dominant discourses, practices, and institutions. This is what Deleuze means when he describes thinking “before”—or as Isabelle Stengers translates it “in front of” (2002, 238)—the “damned,” by which Deleuze means the “oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor” (WP 109). To think “‘before’ . . . is a question of becoming,” Deleuze warns (109). “We become animal so that the animal can become something else” he asserts, or one “becomes Indian, and never stops becoming so—perhaps ‘so that’ the Indian who is himself Indian becomes something else and tears himself away from his own agony” (109).

Haraway here is trying to think “in front of” chickens for the purpose of a collective transformation. These birds—captive or not—have contributed massively to our ecological and cultural landscapes and ought not have that contribution totally subsumed in critiques of exploitation (WP 109). Men, the West, and humans are not the only actors in systems of oppression. Nor should their world-shaping contributions be overlooked when narratives of liberation are later crafted. The aim of liberation is not only to free bodies from coercive systems and situations, but to free our concepts so that we more readily acknowledge and expect the invaluable creative contributions that all bodies make to our real worlds.

Second, Haraway is showing that our avian friends cannot be reduced only to anxious harbingers warning us of the falling sky. Indeed, their pure-bred presence at county fairs and their genetically modified breasts on fast food menus point to ruptures and idiosyncrasies of relational life in desperate needs of redress. These birds also offer a new way forward. Per Haraway, “The contact zone of the chick embryo can renew the meaning of awe in a world in which laying hens know more about the alliances it will take to survive and flourish in multispecies, multicultural, multiordered associations than do all the secondary Bushes in Florida and Washington” (WSM 274). In this case, Haraway follows Deleuze’s example of “becoming-animal”—in this case becoming-chicken-and-egg—not just as a “god-trick,” but in order that the chicken and egg can become something else. Haraway endeavors to become minoritarian by entering into what Deleuze calls a “zone of exchange . . . in which something of one passes into the other” (WP 109). She is not merely reflecting on the ruptures between human/animal/technoscience, but she is deterritorializing herself as the privileged subject through a thought experiment capable of changing the future state of relations—and showing readers how they might also.

Becoming Animal; Becoming Nonphilosophical

Haraway is doing philosophy with what Deleuze and Guattari call the “non-philosophical” (WP 41). Here, the “nonphilosophical” or the “prephilosophical” “does not mean something preexistent but rather something *that does not exist outside philosophy*, although philosophy presupposes it. These are its internal conditions” (41, original emphasis). The nonphilosophical is paradoxically excluded from and de-realized by philosophy even as philosophy depends on it for its existence. Animals, for example, are typically excluded from philosophical contexts, and certainly as philosophical actants, though much of philosophy is a veiled exploration of what it means to be a so-called “human animal.” Thus, doing philosophy with the nonphilosophical—or becoming animal, becoming woman, becoming minoritarian—these are all ways of upending dominant discourses, fixed identities, and unexamined presumptions.

Haraway becomes chicken in order to recast those bodies as players in our philosophies as well as our world-shaping globalizations. This will not happen merely by freeing animals from their cage, although this is a decisive first step and a logical outcome. To transform creatures from passive victim to active partners in reworlding, we must develop new conceptual relationships with those bodies. “The creation of concepts,” claims Deleuze and Guattari, “calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist” (WP 108). Haraway is experimenting here with a new way of becoming-chicken so that the chicken might become something else in a future still to come. “This is the constitutive relationship between philosophy and non-philosophy,” Deleuze and Guattari assert, “The philosopher must become nonphilosopher so that nonphilosophy becomes the earth and people of philosophy” (109).

In her avian experiment, Haraway attempts to become nonphilosopher by employing what she calls “regard” for the provocative agency of creaturely life. Her regard includes a “looking and looking back,” that “aims to release and be released in oxymoronic, necessary, autonomy-in-relation . . . as transacting” (WSM 164). This is not the gaze of cultural studies, she assures us, but a transformative attention that changes what is possible next (164). “We don’t get very far with the categories generally used by animal rights discourses,” she writes, “in which animals end up permanent dependents (‘less-er humans’), utterly natural (‘nonhuman’), or exactly the same (‘humans in fur suits’)” (67). Haraway is asking what it would mean to regard creatures—by which she means all creaturely life—as workers but not slaves, as kin but not children, as commodities but not property to be owned. To be clear, she is not diagnosing, nor am I advocating, a new and “better” state for creatures as workers, kin, or commodities. On the contrary, she is advocating shifts in our perspective toward Barad’s agential realism rather than paternalism. She is

reorienting philosophy beyond itself, toward new creaturely participants whose inclusion will fundamentally transform what philosophy is about. These perspectival shifts are the becomings needed if bodies have any chance of breaking free of the conceptual cages and agony in which they are captive.

Her experiment is not the only way to become-animal, nor do we need to agree with the way she attempts it. However, it is incumbent upon us as critical theorists to engage Haraway's experiment, however vexing it may seem, because she is attempting something very rare. Haraway endeavors toward the double move of becoming—to forgo the subjectivity she is granted in humanist politics and personal preference in order to become something else and for that becoming to change the real future—*her* future as much as the creature's—as it always does when species meet.

It is easier to see how Haraway becomes-animal when she talks about giving herself over to the countless hours of joint work and play with her dog-companion Cayenne. In their agility training, Haraway sees alternative modes of domestication, meetings that respect and “transform the bodies of the players in the doing itself” (WSM 175). Those of us who have interacted with domestic companions may resonate with this transformation. Even if we are critical of domestication, we may yet have been touched and shaped by those bodies who are its products in moments of “symbiogenesis,” or “potent transfections,” the private phenomenon of our “forbidden conversations,” or “oral intercourse,” which make up “a nasty developmental infection called love . . . a historical aberration and a natural cultural legacy” (15–16). But it is more difficult to see how Haraway becomes-animal when she affirms the same hybrid becoming in vivisection and animal agriculture.

These narratives, like many within the book, remind us of the responsibility we bear as “becoming with” other bodies in the ongoing (re)configuring of the world. Our partners exists in every pocket of life—from concrete bodies to the agential cuts of actual occasions and *jīvas*—in the flesh and at the most impersonal and strange stages of life. Ecological societies aimed at total liberation must take this increasing scope of life into consideration. Stanescu is right that we cannot sacrifice individual lives for relational wholes, as pointed out so well in Marti Kheel's *Nature Ethics* (2008), in which she gives a sound intellectual spanking to all the conservationist greats such as Aldo Leopold, Warwick Fox, Teddy Roosevelt, and Holmes Rolston, who emphasize the mountains at the expense of the moles. Even Gandhi receives an unapologetic reprimand. Kheel's ecofeminist holist perspective affirms Stanescu's claim that theorization and action must hold systems and individuals together.

The crux is that, for Haraway, “individuals” has now expanded to the entire universe of becomings. The relational “whole” is nothing but self-constructing “agential cuts” involved in world-shaping. Systems of relevant relations and individualism are not opposing phenomena but mutually requir-

ing. Haraway is not willing, for example, as is Francione, to write off the majority of existence as unworthy of consideration because it does not meet a narrow criteria of human subjectivity or sentience. She wants to include these “nonphilosophical” communities in order to transform philosophy so that it might be relevant for our global multitude and not just a few armchair academics. On the other hand, the expanded notion of individuality does not move her to abstain from meat-eating or animal testing in her own life and work, a troublesome position for one so compelled by creaturely agency as well as by a love for her companion dogs that unfortunately remains rather nepotistic.

Nevertheless, Haraway, like the Jains within the bird hospitals, is attempting to recognize a wider swath of creative becoming at play. She shows that by suspending, though not necessarily overriding, our humanist assumptions and sense impressions, we can experiment with different ways of becoming “in front of” the animal, engaging in practices of freedom through which the animal might become something else.

Becoming Actual Occasion

What Haraway asks of her readers is to attempt the consequences of our philosophies. We cannot just say that all life matters without recognizing that we do take life and benefit from its use, something she grapples with in her consideration of animal testing and meat-eating. Either we get around it by relegating much of the universe to deterministic automatons that do not have interests or creative impulse, or we accept the empirical and speculative perspectives that continue to show us how all life intra-acts in the process of reworlding. If we accept the latter, then Haraway’s book makes much more sense, as does her exhortation to not make life “killable” (WSM, 80). We do not have to align ourselves with her particular approach in order to employ her methodology, which is to become, not just animal, but also the actual occasion. As described by Loomer, Haraway is trying to increase her perceptive stature. She is trying to grow her awareness in order to receive as much of the truly strange as she can abide, in order to transform herself, as well as the attitudes and practices currently in play, toward a future of greater regard. *When Species Meet* is not a statement of Haraway’s position for all time, but a momentary event that adds itself toward a transforming future that even Haraway herself cannot predict.

Haraway becomes-actual occasion in order to demonstrate the cost of not making something killable. Like the epistemic practice of *syādvāda*, she refrains from dismissing alternative points of view when they do not conform to her own personal desires, experiences of care, or meaning. She takes on an architecture of the actual occasion when she tries to grieve the death of her cat *as well as* considering the raccoon who killed it, *as well as* considering

the sheep and rice that went into the scientifically formulated kibble her cats eat, “systems that should not exist,” she reflects (WSM 280). None of it, Haraway asserts, is “emotionally, operationally, intellectually, or ethically simple” (281). Considering the complexities of multispecies relationships means trading in rights and wrongs for better options. “Becoming with” or “in front of” is the way of sitting amid the entanglements—as impersonal and strange as they may be—and trying to act again and again without the guarantee or guardrails of ethically normative frameworks, or self-certainty.

Becoming-with means tolerating differences, not for the sake of relativism, but as is the case of *syādvāda*, to collide, persuade, and change. In one vignette, seated around a table of colleagues and students, Haraway describes the transformative aspect of this kind of colliding “indigestion,” as various individuals debate the ethics and aesthetics of eating a sautéed placenta, a peculiar ritual two of her students had just experienced after a midwife delivery. “I had found my nourishing community,” she writes, “even as its members began to look a little green around the gills while they contemplated their comestibles” (WSM 294). She continues:

This community was composed of people who used their considerable intellectual skill and privilege to play, to tell serious jokes, to refuse to assimilate to each other even as they drew nourishment from one another, to riff on attachment sites, and to explore the obligations of emergent worlds where untidy species meet. (294)

Haraway enlarges her community. And her methodology is sound even, and perhaps especially, if the aim of total liberation is to include the minoritarian, the nonphilosophical, the damned and de-realized in the conversation—beyond, and even subversive of, the privilege of the university.

The most troubling chapter of Haraway’s text is the final one, in which she details a faculty party where her colleague Gary Lease had hunted a feral pig and mounted the body on a spit. This decision was politically and personally offensive to some of the faculty members present, and Haraway explains that several of her colleagues refused to eat the flesh (WSM 297–99). But whereas some differences were tolerated over the meal of a cooked-up placenta, they could not be withstood at the pig roast. “We all avoided conflict” recounts Haraway, “and no real collective engagement on the ways of life and death at stake took place . . . ‘good manners’ foreclosed cosmopolitics” (299).

Stanescu is unconvinced of Haraway’s final analysis, stating that a “cosmopolitical moment does not occur when we set aside partisanship (as she so often seems to imply), but can only occur *through* partisanship,” of which eating is a paramount example (2009, online; emphasis added). Jenkins, too, sees Haraway as hostile toward veganism, accusing her of homogenizing all

types of killing and presenting a “straw-person” version of animal rights. “This disavowal of ethics in animal studies is especially dangerous,” Jenkins asserts, “because it disengages the relationship between theory and practice” (2010, 507). Jenkins helpfully crafts a “vegan ethics” that is not about purity, a position that has been gaining ground and causing productive strife in activist circles.⁸ But when it comes to philosophies of animal liberation that aim at total liberation, alternative globalizations, and ecological societies, we will need to grapple with Haraway’s claim that “killing well is an obligation akin to eating well. This applies as much to a vegan as to a human carnivore” (WSM 296). Trying to practice what it would mean to truly liberate life from its various modes of de-realization and exclusion from our philosophical discourses—and what that would look like in our own alternative habits should we step away from dominant corporate frameworks of production—we will certainly find ourselves facing extremely difficult choices, none of which will be “innocent, bloodless, or unfit for serious critical investigation” according to Haraway (66).

CO-SHAPING FUTURES WITH CREATURES

I agree with Jenkins that a vegan life typically places fewer demands on bodies, requires less energy, and water, and has a much lower overall impact on the planet. This assessment mirrors the logic of Jain karma theory that encourages eating low on the karmic scale. But Jains know full well that even a lower impact still counts and cannot be de-realized. Haraway, for her part, also acknowledges (without any disclosure of her own meat-eating) that “most people do not have to eat meat” (WSM 298). But as Best points out, single-issue vegan living expressed in personal dietary choices is just *one* part of the revolutionary transformation needed to combat systematic violence toward animals, marginalized populations, and systems. Experiments in living, killing, and eating well are needed and will require us to let go of so many of the guardrails that we currently cling to, including many that we are not yet able to admit.

Although I live toward veganism and vegan advocacy myself, I am continually aware of my own complicity in violent systems merely as a facet of our collective way of life. Even as one who seeks to minimize my planetary impact, I live in a region of the United States that should, in all wisdom, be depopulated immediately. Every glass of water I drink and every toilet I flush drains vital rivers from the north with its ecosystems and economies already beyond repair. In this suburban oasis, it is nearly impossible for me to live without some access to a car without giving up a number of activities that activate me in life-giving ways, reminding me of the real cost of my own desires. And the fact that I try to avoid dairy or cheese does not diminish the

impact of my fuel use, water consumption, and energy draw in order to thrive here in this semiarid valley. When I buy fruit at the market, I know damn well that those subaltern spectral bodies in the agricultural north, running back and forth along the orchard rows, are doing my dirty work so that I can get a pound of organic fruit for two bucks on sale. The energy it takes to have vegetarian dog food delivered to my house makes me cringe when I think of the congested roadways that continually obliterate and pollute life in this part of the country and around the globe. And because I come from a very rural area of the country where it is possible to live with a lower footprint—at the cost of a much different lifestyle—I am actively grappling with what it would really mean for me to consider these biopolitical stakes personally and aesthetically, much more at the level of even a small community or urban center.

Stanesco's point is a strong one, that every act of eating is partisan. It is a choice *for* something, but even that choice is a "process of selection" (PR 340) or "valuation up . . . or down" (241)—as Whitehead describes the actual occasion—an ordering among multiple factors, some that are weighted heavier than others in a given moment. It is one synthesis from the given data. The challenge of becoming nonpartisan is not necessarily to become relativistic, but to try to hold a wider swath of claims in coexistent tension. Becoming nonpartisan or nonphilosophical is not an escape clause, but rather the attempt to better include dynamic life that does not rise to the level of personal or political framing, in hopes that it, too, may become something different, insisting its way into our partisan and philosophical calculations. This, of course, includes becoming-animal, but is not limited to that.

In becoming-actual occasion, each of us is challenged to increase the breadth of data we tolerate in our concrete actions, welcoming strange and different claims and holding as much contrast as we can *without losing our ability to act*. I know I am not the only animal advocate who has met people who make their decisions differently than I and whom I yet respect immensely for the seriousness which they bring to their existence and the ongoing reflection and personal/communal change they attempt and inspire. And I am sure I am not the only one who has met animal advocates whose perspective is so narrow as to suck the air from a room. But among those whose bodies and vocations are engaged with the complexities of environmental, transnational, feminist, postcolonial, and economic systems and ruptures—not to mention those communities whose ancient life ways are so glaringly at odds with contemporary habits—I have learned much, even though there may be certain conditions by which they would consume the flesh or fluids of animals. I am well aware that my presence has impacted and even persuaded them, as theirs has mine, a testament to the multispecies collisions that moves us together toward un/re/worlding in the form of risky disagreements. In some conflicts, I have held my breath in hopes that the bond could hold

and grow from the dissent. Sometimes it could not, and sometimes the cost to my own commitments seemed too great and I could not manage nor assent to the breadth required. The precarious balance between cultivating my “I” in relation to the many, remains one of the perplexing challenges of the ages.

By admitting a collision of perspectives, I am in no way obligated to give equal credence to every point of view I meet. For me, the point of view of the feral pig looms large and, unforeseen circumstances notwithstanding, I would not eat its flesh if it were before me today. It may well be that the feral pig requires much less life to produce than the cultivation, production, packaging, and transport of my soy burgers or lentils (though this certainly does not hold for resource-intensive industrial meat). And even if it did, I would be hard pressed to deny an emotional connection with that pig that I do not have in quite the same way with a field of soybeans . . . yet.

This is one of the great beauties of the Jain way of life: first, that caring for certain creatures—as exemplified in their unwavering commitment to vegetarianism—does not rule out the increasing perceptive care of other life; and second, there is no mandated truism that my life always takes precedence over the lives and desires of others. But this is no surprise. For millennia people have voluntarily sacrificed their own pleasure, interests, and bodies for those they love, their children, their friends, their community, and even for a principle. Walter Kaufmann, the philosopher responsible for most of the great translations of Nietzsche, even challenges the logic of “the golden rule” based on the rich history of countless people choosing for themselves something that they would not choose for others (1973, 188). Such decisions are laden with complications, contradictions, and “irrationality” that yet speaks to what is most hopeful in our world—that the so-called “selfish gene” of ensuring our own survival turns out not to be a mechanistic switch after all. We find innumerable examples of creatures co-feeling with others and enduring discomfort in their place, alongside them, or so to lighten their burden.

Those who experiment with plant-based eating are often motivated by a deep co-feeling with other entities or communities. Some are concerned with health, animals, the environment, poverty, food access, malnutrition, and/or the destruction of rural farms or indigenous cultures. And while it can be downright indulgent to eat contemporary plant-based foods—in their simplicity and complexity—it is not uncommon for people who learn about the reality of food animals to realign their desires with the well-being of other creatures. As talk-show icon Ellen DeGeneres said in a conversation with cooking host Rachel Ray, “I would eat cardboard rather than go back to eating animals” (2012). In Jainism, the connections we make to the broader multiplicity can, at some point, exceed our own ego and aims, as evidenced by monks and nuns who tread lightly on the earth by minimizing their needs and desires in order to maximize their co-feeling with others. As I will discuss in the next chapter, Whitehead also envisioned the possibility of a

relational existence “where the ‘self’ has been lost, and interest has been transferred to coordinations wider than personality” (AI 285).

In all cases, the decisions we make are based on a narrow selection from amid a vast living multiplicity, and philosophizing otherwise does not solve the many socio-ecological crises we face as a burgeoning population shredding the seams of our responsive planetary systems and the creaturely kin that we share this planet with. Haraway did not want to silence dissent at that faculty party, but proliferate it. She did not want the strained quiet of agreeing to disagree. She wanted her colleagues—hunters and vegans and feminists alike—to seize the opportunity of productive conflict, to trust that the bond, however temporary and tenuous, would hold and move them all toward a reconfigured world.

A predominantly plant-based diet is the primary contender for feeding the planet’s burgeoning population, a fact I take as given for several reasons. First, the eventual obliteration of government subsidies to farms (now mostly large-scale farms of 1,100 acres or more) will reveal the true cost of meat, dairy, and egg production and render it much less accessible for the average citizen’s wallet (Pollan 2012). Second, decades of plowing has killed much of our nation’s soil, now on life support with synthetic fertilizers made from fossil fuels (Gallagher 2010). Much as in Cuba, for whom the 1960s oil embargo fundamentally undermined their dependence on cars, farm equipment, processing, refrigeration, and long-haul transport, diminished fossil fuels will necessitate similar revolutions in food production around the world (Altieri and Funes-Monzote 2012). Decreasing access to water, another key ingredient in resource-intensive farming, will also impact current models (“Agricultural,” online), as will the air, water, and soil pollution that is currently plaguing so many communities (“Livestock,” 2006). Third, awareness about political and special interests in agriculture is growing, as is resistance to policies and practices that claim rights to land and biodiversity-rich systems that indigenous or local communities live within. The 1970s Chipko Women’s Movement in India demonstrated that communities can and will fight against the seizure and killing of land, forests, and biodiversity that is essential to their physical and spiritual existence.⁹ Global communication and networking will continue to spread knowledge about these efforts and increase the number and power of those who resist the “inevitable” advance of certain forms of progress. Fourth, although the factory farm model is making its way to plant-based societies around the globe in countries with fewer regulations (Nierenberg 2003), the realities of breeding, housing, and slaughtering resistant bodies in sufficient quantity and with enough speed to feed the growing global population is and will remain a grotesque proposition that has little to do with ending hunger or providing nutrition, and everything to do with profit and entitled appetites (Center for Food Safety, online). Concerned citizens will continue to expose and resist “humane”

fallacies, as well as the economic deception and environmental, social, and spiritual cost of this kind of systemized brutality.

The shift to a predominantly plant-based future will not happen overnight, nor is it clear that this shift can be total or possible in all places, as most activists admit. It is still less clear that there will be a consensus of thought driving this plant-based move. For my part, the means of thought and feeling that undergird the evolution toward alternative globalizations and ecological societies shape the character of the ends achieved. While it is imperative to identify and resist the exploitation of animal bodies and environmental systems, reducing creatures to the status of passive victims in need of rescue and paternalist protections will not fuel the kind of political and ethical reimagining needed to truly displace anthropocentrism with panexperiential agency, creativity, and partnerships in reworlding.

Additionally, though it is clear from the Jains, and many plant-based communities, that meat eating was not a necessary part of even ancient life ways, it does not follow that all those who eat flesh in the world see individual lives as valueless units, nor that the Western construct of “vegan” can be applied like a band-aid on any patch of geo-cultural skin. The fact is that I am a toddler when it comes to those few and rare indigenous communities who truly live with the land and its creatures with an intimate exposure to systems and seasons—a kind of entwined cellular perception with creaturely life—that I cannot claim, even as I attempt another season of nurturing a backyard plot of vegetables while learning more about urban and mountainous foraging. Nevertheless, indigenous life ways do not get a pass either as some romanticized Eden. Every community is shaped by worldviews that must be investigated for the presumptions and practices within them. We are in the quagmire together now and we must co-shape each other, proliferating the voices at the table and not reducing them, finding ways beyond fear, anger, guilt, and normative claims of justice. We take the past toward a future, but we can never return to that past.

Whitehead describes the actual occasion as an event that takes place between the data of concrete Activity and ideals of Value. Development and identity is a dialectical integration of the actual and conceptual. *Who* or *what* one becomes is due largely in part to the *how* of this integration. Life starts where it is, but imagines/reaches/aims toward its own intensive twists, depth of re/combinations, and novelty. The activities shift the value. Value lures the activities onward. By recognizing this intra-play in other creaturely life forms—including those who make up our very experience of “I”—we acknowledge essential creative partnerships in our processive universe. By striving to emulate this dialectical integration in our own development, we enlarge our scope of co-feeling with those partners.

“Animals are everywhere full partners in worlding, in becoming with,” writes Haraway (WSP 301). Disagreements are not necessarily a recipe for

nonpartisan relativism. On the contrary, oppositional claims invite new modes of ontological and political regard that gives way to persuasion and conceptual collisions that will transform the practices of freedom needed to live toward revolutionary change on behalf of animals, and other disregarded populations. We do not live amid a multiplicity of passive bodies. Far from it. We co-shape our identities and futures alongside creaturely partners in reworlding. We must seek worldviews that inspire us to imagine new coalitions and alternative futures alongside these alliances.

NOTES

1. This term was used by William James but coined by E. R. Clay.
2. Also see Steven Meyer, *Robust Empiricisms: Jamesian Modernism Between the Disciplines, 1878–Present*, vol. 1 (forthcoming).
3. These essays can be found in ESP 60–74 (“Immortality”) and 75–86 (“Mathematics”).
4. In the same essay, Whitehead also refers to the World of Activity as World of Fact, World of Action, World of Change, and World of Origination.
5. Equally intriguing is an exploration of the World of Activity/karma and World of Value/mokṣa.
6. See, for example: ESP 82 and PR 244, 342–43. A great deal of work has been done on comparing Process and Buddhism. It has also been noted that Whitehead may have drawn upon Indian thought without crediting the influence, for example see: Rajiv Malhotra, *Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism* (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2011), 144.
7. The full title of this text is “A Manifesto for Cyborgs,” but it is often referred to as “Cyborg Manifesto.”
8. Vegan Outreach, for example, the international non-profit organization for whom I worked from 2008–2010, held a similarly pragmatic view that framed veganism in terms of eliminating the most suffering. Their leaflet “Even If You Like Meat,” reminds readers that they could reduce suffering even if they could not fully give up meat or dairy but minimizing consumption of those products, especially of chicken and fish, whose bodies make up the majority of factory farmed casualties and industry support. That they do not mandate an abolitionist approach or a specific philosophical commitment has resulted in some consternation among animal activists. Learn more at www.veganoutreach.org.
9. See, for example, Haripriya Rangan, *Of Myth and Movements: Rewriting Chipko into Himalayan History* (New York: Verso, 2000).