

Tom Tyler and Manuela Rossini (eds.), *Animal Encounters* (Boston: Brill, 2009), xiv + 266 pp., \$117.00 (pbk), ISBN: 978-90-04-16867-1. Review doi: 10.1558/jsrnc.v4i1.114.

Animal Encounters is a wide-ranging and high-priced collection of original and reprinted/revised essays. Twelve chapters are organized into six sections, each detailing a different sort of encounter. The types of encounters considered include: *potential* (possible encounters that can exist between humans and other-than-human creatures); *mediate* (encounters that are not immediate or first-hand); *experimental* (encounters in laboratories in which 'human and nonhuman animals, as well as machines, are woven together in an instrumental economy in which "we" live in and through the use of one another's bodies' [p. 97]); *corporeal* ('Investigating discursive, material and operational entanglements between human and nonhuman animals in early modernity and modernity...an "organic"—rather than technology-driven—genealogy of how we became posthuman' [p. 135]); *domestic* (encounters with domesticated animals); and *libidinal* (two essays concerned with 'the fleshly entanglement or organisms' and 'orgasms and other pleasures and joys experienced by human and nonhuman animals as they unleash their libidos and join in sexual acts real and imagined' [p. 219]).

All of the essays in this volume are written by scholars residing primarily in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Most of the chapters have catchy titles—'If Horses Had Hands' (Tom Tyler); 'Post-Meateating' (Carol Adams); 'Affect, Friendship and the "As Yet Unknown"' (Robyn Smith); 'Becoming-with-Companions: Sharing and Response in Experimental Laboratories' (Donna Haraway); 'Invisible Parts: Animal and the Renaissance—Anatomies of Human Exceptionalism' (Laurie Shannon); and 'The Predicament of Zoopleasures: Human–Nonhuman Libidinal Relations' (Monika Bakke). However, I did not find the titles telling me much about what I was going to encounter in the essay at hand.

One problem for those who are outsiders to the fields covered in this volume (including some readers of this journal), is 'wordiness'. I already wrote above about the introduction to Part Four, 'Corporeal Encounters'. And, on p. 137, the chapter 'Invisible Parts' begins: "'Human exceptionalism"—the idea of a bordered humanity cordoned off by some exclusive and defining feature from the entire balance of other creaturely kinds, while they, in turn, are herded into the contracted fold of "the animal"—is an excessively familiar habit of thought'. Concerning the notion of friendship in science in an essay dealing with rat-feeding experiments in early vitamin research we read, 'In this final section I maintain the argument that new knowledge emerges in a refrain of human material agency, but I pursue this interaction through the actualization of the vitamins' (p. 110). Authors and editors interested in interdisciplinary discussion should strive hard to provide accessible writing.

Despite having to read countless sentences over and over again, I did learn a lot about various human academic views of animals but not much about the animals themselves. For example, I have studied various animals for many years but constantly found myself asking as I read some of the essays, 'Where's the animal?' In some essays the animal was relatively close but in others I could not find her or him. For most of the authors, encounters with other animals have been of the *mediate* kind, save for Donna Haraway, who is an expert on many aspects of dog behavior because of her interests in agility training with her buddy Cayenne.

While I am sure that this book will appeal to people in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, I do not see my scientific colleagues being much attracted to it. Now, that is not a 'bad' thing, but I do not think the book was put together to attract outsiders in the first place. Bridging disciplines requires that common language be used. If outsiders took the time at least to scan some of the essays they would find material of interest. Most likely because postmodernism and deconstruction are not my fields of expertise, I found none of the essays to be an easy read but when I finally sorted out what (I think) was being said I often remarked, 'Aha, now that's an interesting idea'.

All in all, this book was an interesting but very difficult read for this outsider. If it is revised and updated, I personally would like to see an essay by someone who studies animals up close and personal in which there is an attempt to bring together the insiders (in this case, for the most part, the articles are by those who write about animals but do not actually study them in any detail), and the outsiders, those who conduct research on animals. We can all benefit from cross-disciplinary accessible discourse, but in this age of information overload in which we can hardly keep up with what is happening in our own areas of interest, few are going to put in much time sorting out disciplinary jargon. I benefited from my 'Aha's and likely others would as well if they patiently make the effort to forage outside their academic territory and trespass into others.

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