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Prog Hum Geogr 2002; 26; 721
DOI: 10.1191/0309132502ph400oa

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Progress in Human Geography 26,6 (2002) pp. 721–742

*The Progress in Human Geography lecture**

Anima urbis

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Abstract: Geographers have long neglected the role of nature in shaping the urban experience. Yet the *anima urbis* – the breath, life, soul and spirit of the city – is embodied in its animal as well as human life forms. Recent work focused on human-animal relations has begun to re-animate analyses of the city. Such studies range widely, exploring, for example: historical and literary perspectives on the place of animals in the city; links between urban institutions such as zoos and colonialism, nationalism and racial identity formation; negotiations around human-wildlife interactions at the urban fringe; and gender and cultural diversity in attitudes toward animals in world cities. In addition, geographers have begun to consider animals and the urban moral landscape, and assess competing rubrics of planning practice as they relate to animals in the city. Together, these efforts suggest a research agenda for urban geographers interested in human-animal relations, that may help bridge gaps between human and physical geography, and propel the study of nature-society relations to the fore in urban geography.

Key words: animals, biogeography, cities, cultural animal geography, transspecies urban theory, zoögeography.

I Introduction

In the spring of 2002 the Huntington Library in Los Angeles held a conference the theme of which was 'Los Angeles: nightmare or paradise?'. The day of the conference dawned so blue, balmy and glorious that there could hardly have been much uncertainty about the answer to this question, especially among the affluent urban scholars in attendance. By the middle of the meeting, however, the conversation had become less complacent and had turned to the question of 'whose urban nature?'. Discussion focused on how access to urban parks varied by race and class. Despite this outbreak of intersubjective sensitivity, only Lewis MacAdams – not an urban scholar, but rather a poet fighting to restore the Los Angeles River – had mustered up the courage to mention that maybe the four-leggeds, no-leggeds and wingeds needed space in the city too. The notion of the city as solely human habitat had, once again, trumped a more inclusive vision for the metropolis.

*This paper was originally delivered as the *Progress in Human Geography lecture* at the AAG Annual Conference, Los Angeles, 2001.

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As McAdams suggested, cities are replete with animate, sentient beings with legs, wings, antennae and tails – namely, animals. Yet, despite the fact that explaining relations between nature and human society is ostensibly a primary goal for geographical research, animals rarely figure in urban geographical studies. We see them as parts of urban ecosystems, raw materials powering the growth of great industrial cities, or symbols of urban popular culture. Mirroring larger trends in human geography, particularly over the last 25 years, urban geography has largely ignored animals as a topic for serious scholarly attention.

Recently, however, some geographers have begun to consider animals, and in ways that emphasize their subjectivity and agency as well as their utilitarian or symbolic value. The reasons for this new direction are varied, but they stem in part from the increasing public awareness of the plight of animals, especially so-called 'food' animals raised in intensive settings, animals endangered by habitat loss and environmental pollution, and recent developments in biotechnology that raise the specter of widespread use of animals as spare body parts. In addition, new approaches to ethics and social theory have blurred the human-animal divide, revealed how human-animal bonds and conflicts shape health and everyday cultural practices, and contextualized the larger role of animals under modernity – as mimetic of capitalist culture-nature relations, and as industrial capital itself (Emel and Wolch, 1998; Watts, 2000).

In this article, I want to focus attention on the issue of animals in the city. My purpose is to encourage geographers to include animals in their studies of urbanization, and suggest why it might be important, not only for intellectual reasons but also for ecological and moral reasons, to re-imagine the *anima urbis* – the breath, life, soul and spirit of the city – as being embodied in its animal life. First, I briefly chart the intellectual history of geographic investigations, emphasizing the rise of a culturally orientated animal geography, out of which a consideration of animals in the city arises. Then I explore the ways in which human geographers are investigating urban human-animal relations. Finally, I outline the research that needs to be done in order to better understand how people interact, and perhaps could in future interact, with non-human others.

II Trends in twentieth-century animal geography

Animal geography as a subfield has gone in and out of fashion within the discipline over the course of the twentieth century, and only at the very end of the millennium did interest in, and scholarship about, animals re-emerge. For the first half of the twentieth century, geographers focused on animals, either from a scientifically orientated zoögeographic perspective focused on space, spatial patterns and spatial relations, or from the vantage of cultural animal geography, emphasizing places, regions and landscapes, motivated in part by environmental concerns. Both had fallen out of fashion and receded from view by mid-century, as zoögeographic research was taken over by branches of biology, and traditional cultural ecology came under attack, to be supplanted by more social theoretically orientated approaches. By the 1970s, the term 'animal geography' was no longer to be found in the geographical literature. Stimulated by social movements around animals and the environment, however, as well as by new intellectual currents that turned many scholars toward a consideration of marginalized

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groups – including animals – by the century's end animals had once again become a focus of geographical inquiry.

A field of geography known as 'animal geography' was clearly recognized in the early twentieth century, as laid out in Marion Newbigin's 1913 book *Animal geography*. Newbigin pointed to the need for distributional studies of animal populations, examining floral and faunal regions and their relations (see also Newbigin, 1936; Maddrell, 1997). Animal geography also appeared in Hartshorne's (1939) book *The nature of geography*. Hartshorne's well-known version of regional geography was accomplished through integrating results from the various systematic subfields to create portraits of specific geographical areas; for Hartshorne, animal geography was one such systematic subfield, linked to zoology.

Thus, through the first half of the twentieth century, animal geography was an active if small portion of the discipline. Two approaches were clearly articulated, reflecting the widening divide between physical and human geography: *zoögeography*, focused mainly on animal distributions, and rooted in physical geography, zoology and ecology; and a *culturally orientated geography of animals*, focused on animal domestications, rooted in human geography and the social sciences.

1 Zoögeography

Zoögeographers focused on geographic distributions of animals, and determinants of distributional patterns at various scales, incorporating notions of space, spatial patterns and spatial relations into their work. Where did different animals live and play out their life histories, and what aspects of climate, topography, hydrology, soils and vegetation, other fauna and species-specific habitat preferences determined their geographies?

Such basic questions were addressed through application of scientific, empirical methods, in order to formulate general zoögeographical laws. Zoögeographers rarely considered animal-society relations, but they did worry about human impacts on animals, and in some instances what animals meant to people. Cansdale (1949; 1952) explored the relations between animals and humans in terms of 'competition, conflict, domestication and biological control'. Even earlier, at the turn of the nineteenth century, Eagle Clarke (1896) had noted human influences on bird migration, including the frequent deaths of migrating birds crashing into the lanterns of light stations in foggy weather, while Moebius (1894) despaired about human violence against whales.[1] Moreover, the pioneering early work of Fitter on *London's natural history* (1946; see Matless, 1998), noted that human-animal interactions often intensified around the city, and that many animals were adapting to life in this settlement type.

Nonetheless, attention to society-animal interactions was minimal and not theorized within larger frameworks for understanding cities or nature-society relations. Animals, like plants, were regarded as natural entities whose distributions could be mapped and modeled.

2 Cultural animal geography

This second approach to animals arose in the mid-twentieth century, out of earlier work in cultural geography and its dominant subfield, cultural ecology, where topics of

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interest included the prehistory of animal domestication, and the role of animals in evolution of place, region and landscape. At the University of California, Berkeley, Carl Sauer was cultural ecology's key figure in North America, studying domestication and diffusion of animal husbandry, cultural and economic roles of animals in agrarian societies, and environmental changes attendant upon agriculture- and livestock-based lifeways (Price and Lewis, 1993). This work revealed the centrality of certain animals to cultural practices and environmental conditions.

Although not his primary concern, animals, according to Sauer, were implicated in the conversion of 'natural landscapes' into 'cultural landscapes' (Sauer, 1969). Notably, he resisted economism in understanding society-animal relations. Other geographers in the Sauer tradition, both in the USA and the UK, similarly argued that economic benefits of domestication were secondary to religious motivations for taking animals into the human fold, and even that pet-keeping practices depended at least in part on the character of the prospective pets themselves (Donkin, 1985; 1991).

Such work prompted Charles Bennett to propose a *cultural* animal geography that could reinsert animals into geographical research and discourse (Bennett, 1960; 1961). He called for research on human-animal interactions, involving studies of how humans shape animal distributions, echoing zoögeography's emphasis on space and spatial distributions. However, Bennett also considered animal behavior, and suggested that geographers study how animals reacted to domestication efforts, subsistence hunting and fishing, and more indirect anthropogenic changes to their habitats. He also called for studies of how animals influenced human life chances, and their potential dangers to human life and livelihoods in rural settings.

Yet, rather than emphasizing animal subjectivity or agency, traditional cultural geography treated domestic animals primarily simply as cultural artifacts, an evolutionary technological development or a medium of environmental transformation. McKnight (1976), for example, suggested that Australia's feral livestock 'represents an immense amount of wandering protein on the hoof' constituting a 'biomass approaching 800,000,000 pounds' but with deleterious ecological and economic impacts on their host regions. While appropriately emphasizing human agency and ecological dynamics, possible roles of non-human animals were seen as limited. They were either there to be dominated and used, or symbols of human culture and meaning.

3 Mid-century animal geography, threatened and endangered

By the mid-twentieth century, zoögeographers had practically become an endangered species (Davies, 1961), although they were still accorded a chapter in James's and Jones's catalogue of the discipline (Stuart, 1954). Zoologists, ecologists and population biologists had turned their attention to animal distributions and species-habitat interactions, stimulated by advances in island biogeography theory, technologies for monitoring animal movements, and mathematical modeling approaches to population biology. Increasingly, as their work became facilitated by the advent of remote sensing, availability of satellite imagery and the use of geographic information systems, biogeographers turned away from animals, and focused on plant distributions instead.

For very different reasons, traditional cultural geography, represented by Sauer and the Berkeley School, had also receded from view by around mid-century. Heavily

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criticized for its simplistic approach to culture-economy relations, lack of attention to political power, and super-organic approach to culture, as well as on the basis of conflicting archeological evidence, Sauerian cultural geography was overtaken by both the 'new' cultural geography and political ecology (Duncan, 1980; Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987; Jackson, 1989; Rodrigue, 1992). While the new cultural geography emphasized the social construction of urban landscapes, political ecology focused on the connections between political-economic structures, poverty and marginalization, and environmental degradation in rural third-world settings.

Ironically, just as the environmental movement emerged during the 1970s, and concern about endangered species was rising, culminating in the passage of the US Endangered Species Act in 1973, 'animal geography' had vanished from the geographical lexicon.

4 Recovering animal geography

In the 1990s, however, interest revived. Inspired by new developments in GIS and remote sensing, as well as geomorphology, new work in zoögeography began to emerge (Butler, 1995; Bryant, 1997; Baer and Butler, 2000; Gillespie, 2001). Moreover, and of primary interest here, new studies in cultural animal geography arose out of encounters between human geography and social theory, cultural studies, selected natural sciences and environmental ethics. Tuan's (1984) book *Dominance and affection*, which highlighted the power relations entailed in pet-keeping and its similarities with other forms of domination, also inspired some attention to animals within geography. By the end of the twentieth century, theme journal issues and edited collections had appeared (Wolch and Emel, 1995; 1998; Philo and Wolch, 1998; Philo and Wilbert, 2000). Such efforts instigated a wave of research that once again has become known as animal geography.

What stimulated this resurrection of this culturally orientated animal geography? One factor was the *larger social context*: the rise of powerful environmental movements during the 1970s and 1980s, generated scores of new organizations working on behalf of animals, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the Animal Liberation Front, the Fund for Animals, and Greenpeace. The most radical of these groups rejected human domination of the planet and animals, and drew explicit linkages between racism, sexism and 'speciesism'; slavery, postcolonial oppression and animal captivity; and the Holocaust, factory farms and research labs.

As well as this social context of activism around animals and the environment, *social theorists* expressed interest in animals during the 1980s, spurred by new ideas from feminism, postmoderism and poststructuralism, postcolonial theory and critical race theory. One result was a reconsideration of culture and its importance (the 'cultural turn'). Suddenly, movies like *Babe* or *Chicken Run* were no longer merely Hollywood flotsam but potent representations – and cultural critiques – of human-animal relations. Another outcome was a broadening conception of personal subjectivity. As critical social theorists drew attention to a wider range of subjects and multiple, mixed and dynamic subjectivities, the notion of the classical universal subject was rejected, opening up space to consider the possibility of animal subjectivity (Baker, 1993: 26).

This possibility was furthered by *scientific research* in cognitive psychology, ethology,

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landscape ecology and conservation biology which revealed the complexity of animal thinking and behavior; suddenly humans were not the only animals with sophisticated cognitive abilities or even culture, and not just primates (Bekoff and Byers, 1998; Fossey, 1983; Galdikas, 1995; Griffin, 1992; Goodall, 1986; Moss, 1988; Morton and Page, 1992; de Waal, 1982). Simultaneously, genetic engineering, cloning and xenotransplantation called into question boundaries between machines, animals and humans, making the notion of a 'cyborg' world startlingly realistic (Haraway, 1991; Sheehan and Sosna, 1991; Taylor *et al*., 1997). Both sorts of work undermined long-standing stereotypes of 'dumb animals' that served to maintain human identity and position at the top of a perceived hierarchy of beings. Along with the 'new' *environmental history* as practised by Worster (1994) and Cronon (1983; 1991), who argued persuasively for an inclusion of nature in efforts to understand urbanization and economic change, these currents led to new ideas about nature as agent.

Along with many activists, social theorists, scientists and environmental historians, by the end of the twentieth century geographers from various intellectual traditions had began arguing for animal subjectivity and the need to get beyond the generalities of the nature-society relations paradigm, and look more closely at human-animal interactions in order to revivify geographical understandings of the world.

III Animals in the city

The idea that cities are the exclusive domain of humans is widespread, especially within the academy. While there is a strong tradition of urban economic, social and political geography, there is barely any urban cultural ecology, political ecology or biogeography from which to launch studies of human-animal relations in the city. The Chicago School, for example, ignored animals (and plants for that matter), despite their appropriation of an overtly ecological lexicon.

Yet the importance of recognizing nature and animals in the city is indisputable. As Botkin (1990: 167) argues: 'Without the recognition that the city is of and within the environment, the wilderness of the wolf and the moose, the nature that most of us think of as natural cannot survive, and our own survival on the planet will come into question.' This recognition has stimulated some recent work on animal geographies focused on the city *per se*. Efforts to re-animate urban scholarship over the last decade have considered issues of how animals shape *identity and subjectivity*, the role of *animals and urban place formation*, and the evolution and dilemmas that arise when animals are allowed to figure in our *urban moral reckoning*.

1 Urban identity and subjectivity

The 2000 movie *Best in Show* offered a witty parody of the famous Westminster Dog Show in New York's Madison Square Gardens. Anyone who has seen either the movie or the dog show itself can hardly deny that certain sorts of animals are intimately tied up with stereotypical urban identities (suburban white trash; urban gay couples; preppy, neurotic DINKS (double income no kids)) as well as rural good ol' boys steeped in the wisdom of coon dogs. Moreover, the dogs in question clearly took things

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into their own paws (so to speak), ingratiating themselves with their handlers as well as 'resisting' human domination by, in one case, biting the judge!

Drawing on new ideas about culture, nature and subjectivity, animal geographers have explored questions of animals' role in the social construction of culture, individual as well as collective identity, the human-animal divide and its shiftiness, and the nature of animal subjectivity and agency itself (Anderson, 1997; 2000; Ryan, 2000; Emel, 1995; Wilbert, 2000; Wood, 2000). Only a few have taken up questions of identity and subjectivity in an explicitly urban context, yet their work suggests the rich terrain that such questions elicit. Building on critical race and postcolonial theory that highlighted connections between race, gender and representations of 'animality', animal geographers have sought to understand the role of animals in the development of heterogeneous identities that urban residents adopt or have ascribed to them. Such identities may have ties to temporal periods, geographic places or imagined communities such as nations, as well as to racial/ethnic, cultural or gendered identities. While concepts of human and animal are universally understood, the boundary shifts over time and space. The result is a dynamic but place-specific assemblage of animals, valued and used according to particular, legitimized codes – codes that are increasingly contested under conditions of globalization and world city formation.

Within the urban realm, Kay Anderson (1995), for example, developed a cultural critique of Adelaide's urban zoo as an institution that inscribes various human strategies for domesticating, mythologizing and aestheticizing the animal universe, while at the same time helping to construct a national identity among Adelaide residents. Through its constructions of nature and animals, zoo practices consolidated and legitimated Australian colonial identity, naturalized colonial rule and oppression of indigenous peoples, and reinforced gendered and racialized bases of human-animal boundaries. Investigating the emergence of an explicitly urban identity in Victorian England, Chris Philo (1995) argued that animals played a notable role in setting apart rural from urban standards of civility, public decency and sexual license, and norms of compassion. Constructing the new urban order – and standing apart from rural stereotypes – necessitated the removal of live urban meat markets and in-town slaughterhouses, such as Smithfield in London, that forced civilized city-dwellers to witness sexual intercourse among animals on their way to market, exposing their delicate senses to the violence of auction and slaughterhouse, and risking their moral decay by forcing them to mingle with drovers perceived by bourgeois reformers as inclined to drink and sexual excess. As a result, meat markets and slaughterhouses were excised from the city, reinforcing urban identities defined in opposition to a countryside populated by beastly people and animals.

Howell's (2000) study of dog-stealing in Victorian London shows both dogs and bourgeois women as victims of a patriarchal society, confined to domestic captivity but vulnerable to the actions of lower-class men, the venal public world of commerce, and dangers lurking in the city's poorest districts. Borrowing from Viriginia Woolf's satirical tale of the theft of Elizabeth Barrett's dog, written from the dog's point of view, he articulates a political geography of dog-stealing characterized by class antagonisms and exploitation of rich by poor, and deeply ingrained practices of 'domestication' itself – both of dogs and women confined by Victorian ideals of femininity, obedience to male authority and middle-class domesticity. Gender relations and animals are also at the forefront of Van Stipriaan's and Kearn's (2002) study of billboards as an influential

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aspect of Auckland's built environment that shapes ideas about gender and local urban culture. They consider the case of a notorious Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals spay-neuter campaign, showing a dog 'dressed' in a woman's wig, sexy glasses, a frilly skirt and high heels, wearing lipstick and smoking a cigarette, and urging Auckland residents to 'de-sex your bitch'. Van Stipriaan and Kearns argue that the campaign and the controversy it generated destabilized human-animal relations and highlighted the gendered nature of animal representations in popular culture – thus indicating that animals not only have a bodily presence in the city but also play important representational roles in local cultural formations.

Building on postcolonial and critical race theory, others have considered animals to help understand the dynamics of racialization in culturally diverse world cities under conditions of globalization (Elder *et al*., 1998). Today, as international migration brings together heterogeneous people, 'out-of-place' animal practices risk being interpreted as trangressions of species boundaries. Exploring attitudes toward animals among women of diverse racial/ethnic and cultural background living in a major US world city, Griffith *et al*. (2002) discovered a willingness to tolerate dog-eating among Filipinas that seemed to reflect their own experience as a marginalized group in American society, and their sensitivity to racialization based on color and culture. Filipina respondents hesitated to condemn other groups whose animal practices, while alien or distasteful, were rooted in their particular culture, instead adopting a position of cultural relativism.

Animal-based practices that vary by race/ethnicity may reflect or reproduce urban racial formations. Central-city African American women queried about their attitudes towards animals tended to segment the animal world into three categories: 'food', 'pet' and 'wildlife'. 'Food' animals were simply necessary for survival; people had to distance themselves from their unfortunate fate. Pets and wild animals, in contrast, demanded compassion – people should help wildlife in distress, just as people should help each other regardless of color, hinting at their solidarity with animals as brethren due to their outsider status (Wolch *et al*., 2000).

Animals can also become links to a past identity and so cushion the shock of the new urban environment, just as they also play a role in assimilation. For Latina immigrants, keeping animals like chickens in the backyard is one way to retain connection to the rural landscapes they left behind, but over time the culture of pet-keeping, and the assimilation that it implies, seems to take over (Wolch and Lassiter, 2002). When animals once relegated to the barnyard or backyard are welcomed into the house, traditional human-animal boundaries become destabilized.

What about the animals and their subjectivity? Whatmore and Thorne (1998), stimulated in part by actor-network theory, have argued for consideration of animal agency. Following Ingold (1992), they suggest that animals are 'strange persons' similar to outsider human groups. In like manner, Philo (1995) sought to view animals as akin to marginalized, socially excluded persons; he speculated on the terror of cattle at the hands of drovers and the possibility of their transgression of human-set limits, as they jump through shop windows and engage in 'beastly' sexual conduct.

Yet neither Whatmore and Thorne nor Philo, nor most other animal geographers, have considered animal thinking and behavior *per se* to better understand their subjectivity and ideas about people. One exception is the 'thought experiment' performed by Gullo *et al*. (1998), who excavated scientific literature on cougar ecology and behavior

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to explicitly assess lion attitudes toward people – do they, as one cougar expert claimed, see a child as a little fat pig to eat? How, if at all, have cougar ideas changed with the encroachment of urbanization into their habitats?

This strategy – of trying to figure out what animals are thinking or feeling – is fraught with difficulties (to which I return later in this article) that include lack of sufficient scientific knowledge, and the temptation to indulge in excessive anthropomorphism. But such work attempts to go beyond speculation and engage animals on their own terms to try to better understand their interactions with people, especially as they shift under pressures of urbanization.

2 Animals and the making of urban places

Animals are critical to the making of places and landscapes. This point was driven home during the Clinton Administration when virtually the entire metropolitan region of Seattle was declared critical habitat for salmon. This stirred much controversy, but it was also clear that salmon are central to the identity of the Northwest as a place, and to the city of Seattle in particular. Part of this is economic – the fish is a powerful image that attracts tourists far and wide to come and spend their dollars. Some of them even fish. But in many neighborhoods and individual homes in the city, residents devote themselves to bringing back streams, restoring spawning areas and trying to make the city – even if only their small share – safe for salmon. Thus, not surprisingly, in the wake of the Clinton Administration's ruling, Seattle's political leadership asserted that 'economic growth and saving the salmon were not incompatible' while residents turned out to rally in defense of the fish, holding placards that proclaimed: 'What's good for salmon is good for people' (Verhovek, 1999).

Such episodes, along with academic debates about the social construction of landscapes and places, led animal geographers to explore animals and the networks in which they are enmeshed, leaving imprints on particular places, regions and landscapes over time. Within the academic realm, the idea that animals might play a role in place-making was stimulated by a larger rethinking of how nature, culture and subjectivity are embodied in landscape, led by 'new' cultural geographers (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988; Jackson, 1989; Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Price and Lewis, 1993). This vanguard used poststructuralism, discourse theory and deconstruction to identify landscape not as the product of a realist 'nature' or an enigmatic 'culture group' but as a 'text' composed of signs and symbols whose hegemonic reading both represented and reproduced power relations, knowledge claims and discourses that initially inscribed them. Simultaneously, they promoted alternative readings of landscape by those marginalized and/or exploited by virtue of their gender, race, class and sexual orientation (categories themselves often 'naturalized' or 'animalized' by patriarchal or colonial powers; see Anderson, 2002; Davis, 1998).

Such approaches were in the contradictory position of making discursive space for animals while criticizing any notion of an extra-discursive or external nature of which animals might be a part or from which they might act. For many political ecologists, animal rights theorists, ecofeminists and activists, such views also seemed to deny the very liveliness of the world (Gaard, 1993). Moreover, denaturalizing nature and treating geographic places as cultural productions denied the agency of nature and especially

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animals. This 'writing out' of nature catalyzed an energetic debate with 'new' environmental historians such as Worster and Cronon, trying to demonstrate nature's agency (Demeritt, 1994). This debate, in turn, stimulated a reconsideration of the role of animals in the making of places, regions and landscapes (Ufkes, 1995; Yarwood and Evans, 1998; 2000; Proctor, 1998; Matless, 2000; Brownlow, 2000).

Within the urban context, work has primarily focused on the meanings associated with areas for the public viewing of animals (namely zoos); how the presence/absence of animals leads to distinctive perceptions of neighborhoods in the city; the creation of urban animal-centered spaces, through community activism or restoration efforts; and the dynamics of urban borderlands where people and animals share space. For example, stating that '[i]f the zoo is a "space", Adelaide Zoo is a "place" ', Anderson (1995) advanced general claims about urban zoos as pivotal sites in the cultural construction of nature, and how particular colonial and national identities were promoted through the constructed landscapes of the nineteenth-century Adelaide Zoo. Similarly, Philo (1995) and Howell (2000) explored nineteenth-century London, focusing on places characterized by the presence/absence of animals, and how human-animal interactions can create distinctive urban landscapes and landscape imagery.

More contemporary examples show the complexity of human-animal spatial orderings in the city and the ambiguity of resident attitudes toward nature and civilization as manifest in place. Gaynor (1999), for example, reviewed attempts by urban managers in Perth to exclude productive animals such as chickens, goats and pigs (once common in Australia's urban backyards) from residential areas. Using zoning and other planning tools, local officials worked to sanitize the city, attract the more affluent classes and change the city's sense of place. This process of spatial reordering served to privilege animals as part of middle-class lifestyles of consumption – in this case, promoting animals as household pets – rather than working-class relations with animals focused on production (for cash as well as direct sustenance). In so doing, local managers generated conflict and inflicted a loss of identity for many of the city's working-class residents by changing the character of their neighborhoods.

In another investigation of why some animals are deemed out of place in urban areas, Griffiths *et al*. (2000) cast the city of Hull's feral cats as a marginalized social grouping existing within the urban realm, and explored human responses to feral cats in relation to ideas about the proper order of urban places. Their analysis revealed how some human residents saw wild places associated with feral cats as sites of anxiety and aversion, while others viewed them as refuges for an otherwise lost wild nature. Responses to feral cat colonies among local residents were affected by their social constructions of the built environment. They rendered cat spaces either discrepant or acceptable urban features, and promoted ideas of feral cats as either legitimately wild or domestic 'convicts on the loose', ultimately engendering urban social conflict.

Grassroots activism can also lead to the creation of new, more formal urban spaces orientated toward animals and the human-animal bond. The urban dog park movement in the USA is an example. Initially controversial, these are now standard urban park system elements, but were initially created through intense activism. Wolch and Rowe (1992), for instance, documented how a degraded public park was 'taken back' from drug-users and prostitutes by an informal group of dog-owners who invested in improvements and security, and used the presence of large off-leash dogs – illegally – to discourage less desirable uses. Paradoxically, just as the park became more

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attractive, other local residents signaled their desire to use the park but objected to off-leash dogs, framing the issue as 'dogs versus kids'. Dog-owners prevailed in part by normalizing dogs as legitimate members of the American family and urban community. Like other urban dog parks, this park is now a distinctive place for both people and animals, and remains a locus for grassroots participation in the governance of urban park and recreation facilities.

Urban ecological restoration efforts to bring wild animals back into the city also reveal conflicting ideas about animals and wildness in the city, and what restoration implies for human dominance. Waley (2000), for instance, showed how riparian restoration plans in urban and suburban Japan, based on new ecological thinking, often prioritized animals linked to threatened ways of life, such as rice farming, and harnessed the rich symbolism of fireflies, dragonflies and fish. Yet such ecological landscaping was feared as privileging animals over people, and faced opposition from powerful construction interests unwilling to relinquish space in the city. The result is apt to be humanized urban streamscapes unable to support riparian wildlife.

Nowhere is the complexity of human-animal spatial orderings more evident than in the urban-wildlands border zones of metropolitan regions. Here, zoning ordinances and land use plans have often been used to allocate animals and people to designated areas, but such crisp divisions are rarely so straightforward on the ground. As Davis (1998: 204) indicates: 'On land use and planning maps . . . the division between "developed" and "undeveloped" areas is drawn as a straight-edged border. Spuriously precise boundaries likewise define parks, wildlife refuges national forests, and official wilderness areas. In reality, there is an infinitely more intricate interpenetration of the wild and the urban.' Even the idea that fringe urbanization is inversely related to biodiversity is often erroneous, since urban-edge environments often display remarkable ranges of both native and exotic animals and plants, and some species flourish under the patchwork habitats of the metropolitan borderlands, at least for a time, with some becoming so numerous as to fall into the 'pest' category.

Davis traces the history of human interaction with wildlife in southern California, characterizing it as a 'relentless chain of slaughter and extinction' (1998: 208) in which brutal nineteenth-century ranching practices, market hunting and fishing, and relentless predator 'control' led to the wholesale eradication of much of the budding urban region's natural bounty and heritage. Animals were particularly integral to the runaway growth economy of the California Gold Rush era, with the enormous numbers of cattle causing environmental disaster – extensive erosion, invasions of exotic plants and crowding-out of native grassland animals. Market hunting to serve urban markets was ultimately curtailed not only because target species dwindled but also as a result of elite demands to protect animals for recreational hunters, leading to the emergence of state-led game-management strategies, that also involved efforts to eliminate predators from a newly defined urban fringe now zoned for humans.

At present, however, wild animals have returned to many metropolitan regions in significant numbers – for example, deer, moose, elk, bears, coyotes, bobcats, beavers, javelina and cougars, to say nothing of a vast array of smaller creatures and invertebrates. In part such 'repopulations' are about sprawl-driven urban encroachment into animal habitat, but they also arise as a result of changing attitudes toward wildlife and associated wildlife-management practices. Gullo *et al*. (1998), for example, considered the changing relations between people and mountain lions in contemporary California.

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There, urbanization-driven increases in human-cougar interactions, along with scientific discord over cougar ecology, stimulated a polarized public discourse. This discourse was characterized by renewed advocacy of trophy hunting by gun/hunting lobbyists, and proposals from ecologists for wildlife reserves, movement corridors and urban buffer zoning to protect both people and cougars. Yet, although media coverage during this debate suggested that the public had moved from thinking of cougars as symbols of wilderness heritage to seeing them as cold-blooded suburban serial killers, the voting – and largely urban – public nevertheless refused to reinstate cougar hunting.

Community activists also shape such debates, however, as shown by Michel (1998) in her study of golden eagle rehabilitators and wildlife educators in San Diego's metro fringe. There, conventional planning around endangered species and habitat conservation relies on scientific discourse and legitimacy and excludes alternative arguments based on the connections people feel with wild animals that have been injured as the result of urbanization. Grounded in struggles to save injured eagles and starving eagle chicks, and to nurture responsibility and consideration for animals among children, eagle rehabilitation and wildlife education for children constitute an ecofeminist, personal politics of both animal and human social reproduction that asserts the agency of wildlife in defining pathways to human-animal coexistence and shared places. This practice allows children, and by extension their parents, into the world of the golden eagle and the birds' fight for survival, helping them voice their views to the larger public through letter-writing campaigns and special events – in this way helping recast the nature of grassroots environmental activism in southern California.

At a larger scale, geographers have also investigated how conflict over human-animal relations – particularly the 'taking' of endangered species – is linked to convulsive urban growth and ultimately shapes the landscapes of entire metropolitan regions through the creation of habitat conservation plans and similar zoning efforts. In southern California, where between 1982 and 1997 over 400,000 acres were lost to urban sprawl (Wolch *et al*., 2002), Feldman and Jonas (2001), for instance, harnessed urban growth regime theory to understand the evolution of land-use conflict and decision-making among property-owners, environmental organizations, local governments and growth coalitions in Riverside County, California. Driven by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the result has been a large-scale regional planning exercise designed to zone some areas of the county for urbanization, and others as habitat reserves. Similarly, Ryan *et al*. (forthcoming) detail the meaning of new urban growth boundary policies in southern California for endangered species and critical habitats, while Pincetl (2002) has detailed the ways in which distinctive subregional growth regimes are responding to Endangered Species Act provisions, generating major integrated land-use, transportation and habitat-conservation plans as well as prompting land-owners to surreptitiously kill endangered animals. These studies begin to sketch out how relations with some animals, codified into law, are imbricated into the dynamics of urbanization under capitalism, and shape the overall footprint of the metropolis, patterns of human-wildlife relations, and the life chances of its non-human residents.

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3 Animals and the city's moral compass

A sensational media story cropped up in California during 2002 about a San Francisco apartment dweller on trial for the 'murder' of her neighbor, committed by her dog – a Presa Canaria whose moniker was (of all things) 'Bane'. A classic wacky California story, it was replete with lurid links to criminal dog-fighting rings, the Aryan Brotherhood and interspecies sex. Of course animals used to be put on trial for various crimes during the Middle Ages (Evans, 1906), and indeed Bane has already been executed (although he was never made to stand trial); but this is the first time in recent memory that a human has been held so directly responsible for an animal's killing spree (Berry, 2002). Clearly, the moral compass of human-animal relations in the city is shifting and, like so many other aspects of city life, is subject to constant renegotiation.

Writings on environmental ethics, deep ecology and animal rights during the later part of the twentieth century generated deep polarization on the issue of animal subjectivity and moral status, and how humans should relate to the non-human world (Stone, 1974; Nash, 1989; Callicott, 1989; Devall and Sessions, 1985; Salleh, 1993; Singer, 1975; Regan, 1983). Ultimately, however, what seems to have emerged is a more postmodern environmental ethics that tends to take non-human subjectivity seriously, stresses the situatedness and partialness of knowledge, and emphasizes the interconnectedness of living creatures and environments, as well as between nature and culture. Such an approach offers more contextual pathways to ethical choice (Plumwood, 1993; Oelschleger, 1995).

Evolving in conjunction with these debates, some animal geographers have asked questions about how animals figure into the moral landscape, once claims of human dominion and lack of animal subjectivity or agency are open to question. In addressing such issues, geographers have explored animal rights to sustenance (Wescoat, 1995), ethical perspectives toward meat-eating (Robbins, 1998), the ethics of animal protection movements (Thorne, 1998), the role of animals in creating 'moral geographies' of particular places and regions (Proctor, 1998), conflicts between animal rights perspectives and an ethics arising from an understanding of the ways in which the very structure of the capitalist economy produces animal suffering (Watts, 2000) and more general ethical frameworks for thinking about geographically emplaced human-animal interactions (Lynn, 1998).

However, we have just begun to think about the moral choices we make in building and living in cities, and what they mean for animals. This is despite the moral issues that abound in urban places: pet euthanasia, extermination of non-endangered wildlife, sprawl-induced habitat destruction, pollution of urban waterways and ecosystem appropriation to feed consumption-orientated urban lifestyles. If animals are granted subjectivity, agency and maybe even culture, how do we determine their survival opportunities in the city? To what urban arenas should our moral compass direct us – homes, businesses, streets, parks and open spaces, restaurants and supermarkets? The implications of training our moral gaze on such urban places are enormous. For example, federal law mandates water-quality standards for all waterways, but these standards are designed for humans; what is tolerable for humans is not necessarily tolerable for, say, frogs. Does this mean that the US EPA needs amphibian water-quality standards for urban watersheds? The answer is probably yes – and this implies the need for an astonishing range of research and, ultimately, urban regulation.[2]

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If urban social and environmental justice is eventually broadened to include animal justice as well, questions also arise about how radical an urban democracy we can visualize, or handle in practice. In a recent survey, respondents living in a large, diverse metropolitan region were asked about their tolerance toward a number of controversial animal practices, such as cock-fighting, dog-eating, rodeo and so on (Wolch *et al*., 2001). It turns out that tolerance – one measure of respondents' ethical positions – was fairly low but differed widely across race/ethnic groups, hinting at the difficulties of coming to agreement about ethical norms for human-animal interactions even in a world city with considerable exchange of cultural norms and values.[3] There has been no consideration yet as to if or how animals themselves could be included in any such decisions.

In thinking prospectively about morality, animals and urban places, my own work has sought to reconceptualize the ways in which the human-animal divide plays out in terms of ethical practices for city planning and living. A major consideration here is animal subjectivity; once we abandon a strict human-animal boundary with human subjects on one side and animal objects on the other, we seem to be obligated to figure them into our ethical consideration and everyday practice. As if the challenges of doing so, particularly at the level of the political economy, were not large enough, we also must face a set of tougher questions. What do animals want? Can we ever really know?

A classic argument against the possibility of answering such questions was made by the philosopher Thomas Nagel (1974), who asked: what is it like to be a bat? He answered by saying that it was impossible for humans to know. Is it, in fact, impossible to 'think like a bat', however? On the one hand, it is – we are unlikely to ever know a bat's innermost desires! But we also have a very hard time knowing the innermost desires of people, especially people who are unlike us in fundamental ways, such as gender. Thus humans may not be able to literally 'think like a bat', but, rather than nihilistic relativism or denial of human-animal differences, the human response could recognize that both people and animals are embedded in social relations and networks with others (both human and non-human) upon which their social welfare depends.

This realization allows for the recognition of kinship but also difference, since identities are defined by the ways in which we are similar to, as well as different from, related others. People should come to know, however partially, the animals with whom they coexist, thereby sustaining webs of connection and an ethic of respect and mutuality, caring and friendship. The obvious challenge is to figure out ways to transform such sentiments into practice, and actually design cities as if animals mattered; in short, to figure out how to transform the metropolis into a zoöpolis – a place of habitation for both people and animals.

IV Re-animating the city

Geography is now providing new leadership in explicating the history and cultural construction of human and non-human animal relations, the gendered and racialized character of these relations, and their economic embeddedness. In the case of human-animal relations in the city, however, much work remains if we are really to re-animate the city in both our thinking and practice.

How can we best go about this? One place to start is at the theoretical level, with an eye to rethinking urban theory and unsettling its anthropocentric traditions, to create a

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new political ecology of people and animals in the city. The goal of this sort of theory is to bring together disparate discourses, ranging from social theory to urban wildlife ecology, and stimulate empirical studies utilizing a broad toolkit. The content of this kit should include not only the sorts of methods already in use by urban geographers but also new approaches to understanding the patterns and behaviors of animals themselves derived from ethnography (Thomas, 1993) and urban history (Vuorisalo *et al.*, 2002), as well as recent zoögeographical research, noted above, stimulated by new technologies and efforts to integrate human and physical geography (for example, GIS and remote sensing, and time geography; see Bryant, 1997; Gillespie, 2001; Baer and Butler, 2000).

Such an agenda would seek to achieve four major goals (cf. Wolch, 1996).

- *To understand urbanization from the perspective of its meaning for animal life.* Urban geographers (among others) have developed a rich theoretical literature on urbanization, utilizing, for example, political economy (Davis, 1990), postmodern theory (Dear, 2002), urban regime analysis (Jonas and Wilson, 1999), studies of racial, gender, and housing segregation (Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Wyly and Hammel, 2000), fiscal disparities (Joassart-Marcelli *et al.*, 2002), and critical race theory (Pulido, 2000). But urban nature rarely figures in such accounts, and recent research in urban animal geography has yet to bridge the gap between macrostudies of sprawl, habitat conservation planning and endangered species, and microstudies of the role of particular species (livestock, predators, pets, etc.) in urban development (Wolch, 1996; Davis, 1998; Gullo *et al.*, 1998; Gaynor, 1999). Ideas from the new environmental history, animal commodity chain analysis, evaluations of local state-nature relations and cultural studies of popular movements to save urban space for animals could expand the research agenda on urbanization to encompass the role of animals. In turn, such approaches could help us understand what urbanization means for animals, their habitats and life chances, and their patterns of interaction with people.
- *To trace how and why attitudes and practices toward animals and patterns of urban human-animal interactions change over time and space*. We know very little about the evolution of such interactions, but the field of human-animal interactions is growing rapidly, and, as noted above, animal geographers have contributed with studies of how animals and animal representations shape urban and individual identity, underlie social conflict or contribute to racialization of particular urban populations such as immigrants (cf., Philo, 1995; Griffiths *et al.*, 2000; Griffith *et al.*, 2002; Van Stipriaan and Kearns, 2002). Additional work could be much broader, however, tackling larger time-space sweeps, and linking analyses of human-animal interaction to the evolution of nature-cultures in the city, urban actor networks around animal-based products, changing attitudes to the urban environment, and the impacts of globalization.
- *To explore how urban animal ecology is produced by science, social discourse and political economic forces*. The ability of animals to co-exist in the city is strongly shaped by powerful discourses around ecological science, animal welfare and rights, environmentalism and urban property rights. Animal geographers have contributed to our understanding of these dynamics (cf. Waley, 2000; Michel, 1998), but much more could be accomplished by scrutinizing underlying precepts of urban biogeography through the lenses of science studies and feminism, for example, investigating the

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politics of major urban biodiversity studies and plans, and more generally developing a more sophisticated urban political ecology that accounts for the role of discourse in shaping habitat conservation and restoration efforts, wildlife population management decisions and so on.

- *To grasp how human-animal relations as an urban practice are shaped by managerial plans, grassroots activism and the agency of animals*. Most studies of urban managerialism and planning practice (even those focused on the environment) rarely take animals into account except as exemplars of endangered species (cf. Feldman and Jonas, 2001). Thus, as Thorne (1998) points out, wild animals tend to obtain value through death and extinction. Similarly, urban design and landscape ecology are seldom attuned to the needs or desires of animals living in the city. Increasingly, however, grassroots activism and new social movements around urban animals and nature are shaping up, designed to make discursive as well as material space for animals in the city.[4] Almost no work has attempted to see the city from an animal's viewpoint (although see Beck, 1973; Thomas, 1993). This could be remedied through ethnographic and time-space studies of urban animals.

As one exemplar, perhaps an interrogation of the Los Angeles River and its role in shaping the city's economic, political, social and natural environments can illuminate how such a revivified, transspecies approach to understanding cities and urbanization might work in practice. Addressing the questions raised by the role of this one urban river demands that we pay attention to animals, in a variety of ways.

Early on, the *urbanization* of Los Angeles and its economic base relied upon the LA River, on its water and natural bounty. Fish and wildlife flocked there – at times, the numbers of migratory birds that it supported was so huge that they darkened the daytime sky (Gumprecht, 1999). What role did these animals play in building the economic wealth of the region, and for whom? How was the city's growth machine and the local state involved in successive decisions about the river – were their objectives simply to use it as both a source of accumulation and a convenient sewer?

The river's creatures eventually vanished due to market hunting, and as industrialization and population growth polluted the river transportation infrastructure destroyed its tree-lined banks, and the Army Corps of Engineers channelized, straightened and armored it, altering its features so much that it is the most denaturalized US river today (Graf, 2002). What *attitudes toward nature* and wild animals prevailed at the time that decisions to armor the river were made? Why did a 'control of nature' ideology become so prevalent in this place (McPhee, 1989)? What cultural and political shifts led the image of the LA River to re-emerge so powerfully at the end of twentieth century (Browne and Keil, 2000), so that it is now widely perceived as the city's spiritual heart?

Today, the restoration of the river has become a quest to bring nature back into a city best known for sprawl and pollution, and to bring people of diverse social class and racial background together in a place famous for class conflict and civil unrest. For example, innovative ways to do urban design – to prevent river pollution and allow the steelhead trout to return – have been developed as a result of *scientific discourse, social movements and political economic forces* on the urban environment. Created by the hydrologists and ecologists, as well as advocacy groups, some design practices are now mandated; but local governments are contesting them, afraid of their impacts on

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growth, pushed by developers and builders. What, if any, were the scientific disputes involved in coming to such design solutions, and how did political factors and activist efforts affect the design standards now in effect to regulate total minimum daily pollutant loads going into the river and coastal ocean? How are images of animals – especially charismatic marine wildlife – being mobilized to promote river restoration and coastal ocean water-quality improvements through urban design?

There are major *urban managerial plans* afoot to restore the river – to build retention basins, spreading grounds, bike paths and trails, and a green ribbon of parks and open spaces. Many plans are not state-led, but rather are being developed by national and regional non-profit organizations and land conservancies with various agendas and divergent views about how animals fit into the urban fabric. What is the emergent structure of conservancies and non-profit organizations, and what is their role in the city's land-use governance? Have they become a shadow state apparatus or third-party government? How are grassroots organizations and community groups involved in attempts to secure places for animals along the river?

As funding for the river materializes, the possibilities of restoration approach, as well as riverside economic revitalization for poor inner-city communities and recreation for a park-starved metropolis. A vibrant network of *grassroots action* groups has emerged, each with their own ideas about what to plan and representational politics. Will it be soccer fields for Latinos, nature trails for birdwatching Anglos, skateboard parks for kids, boardwalks for macho dudes to show off their Pit Bulls, riverside coffee houses for singles, dog parks for canine family members? What kinds of urban nature and river ecologies, and whose nature, will eventually emerge from such political ecological dynamics?

In an evolving green corridor of this scale, animals are bound to reappear (even big predators) and will exert their *agency*. What room will be made for animals? Many residents support coexistence in theory and the torrent of people (especially children) already visiting the river (from which no concrete has yet been removed) is impressive. But practice may be another matter. Will people be able or willing to coexist with the river's animals? Will fear of crime, demands for access and pastoral landscape ideals lead to a river of bright lights, traffic, noise and simplified vegetation – making it unbearable for timid, nocturnal or solitary creatures or those that need a rich plant biota to survive? If so, will anyone speak out for such animals? Or will those animals returning to the river need to develop new subjectivities, new ways of interacting with people and the built environment, in order to coexist in the heart of the city?

This article began with LA poet Lewis MacAdams, and to him it returns, to tell his lovely story about how the US Army Corps of Engineers recently tried to restore a stretch of the river. Because flood control is still required, the 'restored' river does not actually replace the older armored channel but runs right alongside it – it is, in short, fake nature, a purely aesthetic device rather than functional landscape feature. But the willows and rushes are back, as are the dragonflies and at least some of the birds. Will people care if the river is not actually 'real' again? Or will they be content to let the presence of diverse four-legged, winged and no-legged animals – the reassertion of an *anima urbis* – be the measure of our success in re-animating the city?

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Alec Murphy for his kind invitation to deliver the 2002 Progress in Human Geography lecture at the Association of American Geographers Meeting in Los Angeles, California, on which this paper is based. Thanks also to Liz Gooster and the others at Arnold Publishing, sponsors of this annual lecture. I also want to acknowledge the contributions to my ideas and work, made by so many colleagues, especially Jody Emel, Chris Philo, and Chris Wilbert, with whom I have written about some of the issues discussed in this article; in particular, sections of the paper devoted to the historical evolution and contemporary structure of animal geography are derived from more extensive work on these topics with Emel and Wilbert (Wolch *et al*., 2003). Lastly, I want to thank Michael Dear for his valuable comments on an earlier version of this article, and acknowledge Stephanie Pincetl, Laura Pulido, Roger Keil, and Mike Davis, whose ideas have shaped my own thoughts over the last few years.

Notes

1. Thanks to Chris Philo for bringing this early zoögeographical work to my attention; see Philo and Wolch (1998).
2. I am grateful to Travis Longcore for making this important point.
3. This is the sort of conflict that boiled over in 2002, as international protests of dog-eating were staged in advance of the World Cup in Seoul, generating much controversy among animal advocates and Korean-Americans in the USA (Feffer, 2002).
4. Several US cities have altered their legal codes to remove the terms 'pet owner' and 'pet' in favor of such terms as 'animal guardian' and 'companion animal', in order to destablize the legal tradition of considering animals as property.

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