Annotated Bibliography

Queering Organism and Environment

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Queering Organism and Environment:

An Interdisciplinary Approach

Ecological Impact

Gandy, Matthew. "Queer ecology: Nature, sexuality, and heterotopic alliances." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30.4 (2012): 727-747.

> Queer ecology is an interdisciplinary endeavor; it synthesizes theories across disciplines, "expand[ing] the conceptual and material scope" of multiple fields (727). In urban theory, interdisciplinary approaches allow for metaphorical richness and "new conceptions of complexity" (728). Of particular interest are *'heterotopic alliances',* which "involve or at least imply a coalescence of interests—even if not explicitly acknowledged—between disparate groups or individuals concerned with the defense of marginal or interstitial spaces". (740). These heterotopic alliances are significant in "protecting both urban biodiversity and public cultures of sexual difference" (741).
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> In this paper, Matthew Gandy uses the framework of 'queer ecology' to examine the case of Abney Park, an urban cemetery in North London. Abney Park is characterized by its juxtaposition of natural and artificial elements. An artifact of 'old urban nature', according to Ingo Kowarilk, Abney Park is representative of the ever-shifting boundaries between 'The Wilderness' and urban landscape (728). Home to rare and ecologically valuable flora and fauna, Abney Park is now recognized as a critical center of London biodiversity, a place of 'wild urban nature' (731).
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> Gandy's paper explores a 'queering of space' in relation to 'urban heterotopias' along with a 'queering' of analytical frameworks in relation to urban ecology (730). Gandy also searches for '*heterotopic alliances'*: "cultural and scientific responses to urban nature" that challenge the social paradigms of public space (730). Abney Park is recognized as a 'queer' space: a source of political radicalism and "a 'safe haven' for outsiders", standing in contrast to 'heteronormative parks' that reflect "hierarchies of property and propriety" (729, 731). Activities such as public sex and 'cruising' have been well known to take place in the park. Both 'cruisers' and ecologists have linked public sex in nature with the enjoyment of nature itself (740). The diverse characteristics of Abney Park have allowed it to become a '*microcosme'* of biological, social, and cultural complexity relative to 'the city', though at the cost of its own marginalization (733).
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> The 'heterotopia' of the '*mitoyenne'* (*joint*) experience leads to what Gandy calls a 'heterotopic alliance' (732-733). It is fruitful to examine these heterotopic alliances through the lens of queer ecology. Queer ecology stands in resistance to the destruction of 'wild urban spaces' and presents a "possibility of liberation" across political, social, sexual, biological, and ecological domains (730). A 'queer' framework implies a lack of fixed dimensions and definitions; it challenges the boundaries of

human/architecture/animal/nature; it is a "fluid set of possibilities and contestations" (735). Posthumanist ontologies have further deconstructed these borders. Gandy concludes that heterotopic alliances are significant in protecting "both urban biodiversity and public cultures of sexual difference" (740). The 'unruly space' of Abney Park is a site-specific example of such urban heterotopias.

Social Justice Dimensions

Hamilton, Carrie. "Sex, work, meat: The feminist politics of veganism." *Feminist Review* 114.1 (2016): 112-129.

Carol J. Adams' defense of a feminist veganism has been well established as one of the foremost frameworks of feminist veganism since her 1990 publication *"The Sexual Politics of Meat"* (114). Her ongoing contributions to ecofeminism, animal studies, and post-humanism have further entrenched her position in contemporary feminist studies. Hamilton argues that this is partially due to the fact that feminist theorists and activists have uncritically incorporated Adams' models in the development of their own ethical frameworks, and thus have failed to recognize the problematic—and potentially unsound—theoretical, political, cultural, historical, and empirical underpinnings inherent in her radical feminist approach (114-115). Hamilton further argues that these stances are self-defeating and ultimately contribute to the very social injustices that they intend to overcome (116).

Hamilton disagrees with Adams' model of feminist veganism in several respects: she questions the "structural link between violence against animals/women and the sex industry" that forms Adams' central thesis; she challenges Adams' anti-pornography, anti-prostitution stance in relation to to the 'sex wars' of the 1980s; she rejects the 'meat metaphor' that positions men as meat-eating aggressors who oppress and objectify women through misogynistic dynamics of sexual power; she refuses the 'man-masculinity-violent/woman-femininity-victim' dyad in terms of sexual power relations, and she criticizes the assumption of a universal gender binary that would be necessary to define such relationships of oppression (114-116).

Alternatively, Hamilton recommends interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches that draw upon queer and feminist studies in addressing questions of "gender, sexuality, power, desire and representation" (115). The postcolonial, posthumanist theories of Maneesha Deckha are presented as one such example, though Hamilton argues that even this model is weakened by a tacit acceptance of many of Adams' assumptions. This is similarly true of the models proposed by Val Plumwood and Elspeth Probyn. Judith Butler's groundbreaking theory of gender and sexuality as an 'asymmetry between discourses' is presented as a further critical examination of *'class–race–gender–species'* dynamics (121-122).

According to Hamilton, the revolutionary art and activism of Mirha-Soleil Ross represents a polemical and pedagogical call for "sex-worker, animal and transsexual rights" and pushes the 'ontological boundaries' of 'human' and

'animal' (123, 125). Rather than an absolute rejection of pornography as inherently violent towards marginalized genders, Ross's situated/embodied work "uses alternative porn to explore the relationship between veganism and trans and queer sexualities" (114, 124). Capitalist and labor approaches to prostitution, such as those undertaken by historians Jason Hribal and Mary Murray, provide additional parallels and distinctions between the sex work of humans and animals (125).

Despite disagreements between particular feminist/vegan paradigms, Carrie Hamilton recognizes that feminist veganism is united by a shared concern for the rights of women and animals. Whereas ecofeminism and feminist materialism seek a redefinition of human/animal and the relationships between, vegan feminism demands a further commitment to social justice in the form of a non-violent ethics of food (126).

Philosophical/Religious Approaches

Spretnak, Charlene. "Radical nonduality in ecofeminist philosophy." *Ecofeminism: Women, culture, nature* (1997): 425-436.

Ecofeminism typically rejects a number of dualistic constructs, such as that of *"femininity/nature/body/emotion/connectedness/receptivity/the-private-sphere"* framed as a clearly divided, clearly distinguished contrast to "masculinity/culture/mind/reason/autonomy/aggressiveness/the-public-sphere" (425). Although ecofeminist philosophies are known for challenging traditional dualist assumptions such as these, Charlene Spretnak argues that ecofeminist theories generally do not go far enough to accept a *'radical nonduality'* that posits "unitive dimensions of being" (425). Spretnak pushes for greater consideration of radical nonduality among ecofeminists and presents *'ecological postmodernism'* as a philosophical framework to accomplish this (425-426).

A number of restrictions have prevented radical nonduality from being embraced by academic ecofeminism at large. Spretnak addresses three obstacles in particular: prejudices in modern Western science and philosophy; the ubiquity of a deconstructive, postmodern lens in academic thought; and feminist philosophies that reject nondualism based on erroneous patriarchal interpretations of nonduality. She argues that the Western Enlightenment establishment of 'individual as supreme' has served to perpetuate a false division between self and world. To counter this, Spretnak suggests an approach that embraces nonduality as a "dynamic system of relations" that "functions simultaneously as a distinct part and the unbroken whole" (427). Although Spretnak acknowledges the contributions of deconstructive postmodernism to philosophical discourse, she warns against the constructivist conclusion that concepts are "*nothing but* social construction" (427). She rejects the constructivist conception of continuity as "a fictive unity" (427).

Spretnak futher responds to feminist hesitations towards the acceptance of an expanded/ecological self such as that proposed by deep ecology. For feminists who take a postmodern deconstructivist approach to discourse, it is argued that

all relationships are political and "constructed of power relations" (428). 'Holistic' models that claim a unified self and nature are therefore perceived as problematic due to an underlying gender politics--if men and women experience 'the self' differently due to socialization, then there is concern that the 'expanded self' or 'ecological self' of deep ecology fails to be a gender neutral concept and in fact could be an expression of expanded male ego (428). It is of further concern to feminists that Western women have been socialized towards a malleable self-identity that exists in deference to the "needs and demands of others" (428). Spretnak claims, however, that 'radical nonduality' is not limited to "interdependence" or "interrelatedness" of a number of discrete parts--instead, it aligns with principles of system dynamics and self-organization (429, 432). Ultimately, Spretnak presents the concept of radical nonduality as an empirically supported philosophy that is respectful of and gains insight from many marginalized cultures, genders, and perspectives. She concludes that 'radical nonduality' "acknowledges *both* the enormous role of social construction in human experience *and* our constitutive embeddedness in subtle biological, ecological, cosmological, and quantum processes (433).