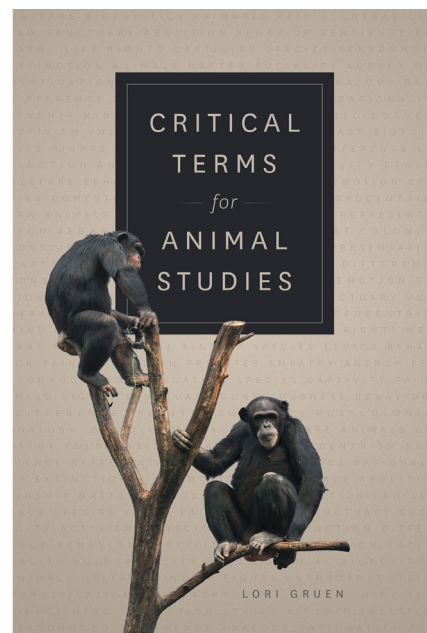
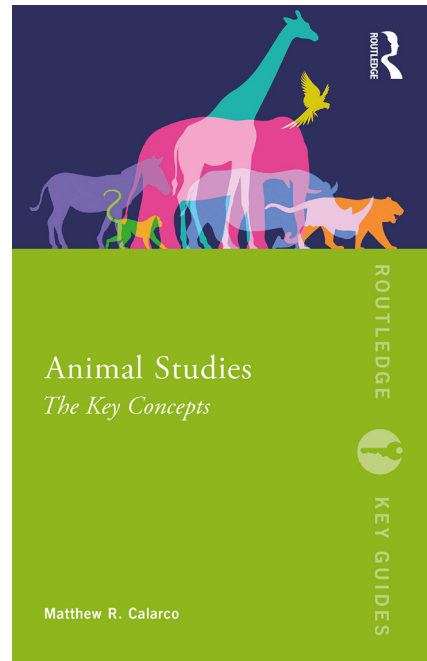


Matthew R. Calarco: *Animal Studies: The Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2020.

Lori Gruen (ed.): *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*. University of Chicago Press, 2018.

I read *Animal Studies: The Key Concepts*, authored by Matthew R. Calarco, and *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*, edited by Lori Gruen, to evaluate their suitability as instructional guides for undergraduate students. More specifically, I sought to gauge how effective the two volumes might be for courses on animals and/in literature that are part of the curriculum for a cross-disciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree in Animal Studies. Both books, with their A–Z layout, their extensive bibliographies, and their inclusion of entries ranging from “Anthropocentrism” and “Empathy” to “Sentience” and “Zoo-opolis,” are designed to be state-of-the-art reference works for the field, providing navigational resources for readers working to get their bearings in a dynamic, rapidly evolving and expanding domain of inquiry. The two volumes differ, however, in their scale, their scope, and, arguably, their target audiences. Ultimately, I concluded that whereas Gruen’s volume



is best suited for advanced seminars or workshops for MA and PhD students, a better strategy for undergraduate courses would be to make Calarco's book the main text while supplementing it with select chapters from Gruen.

Single-authored reference works are, in my experience, rarer than those made up of contributions by many hands. But Calarco, the author or editor of foundational texts in animal studies, and as conversant in the domains of critical theory, cultural studies, and the history of activism as he is in his home discipline of philosophy, is exceptionally well-qualified to undertake this comprehensive guide. *Key Concepts* thus provides a balanced, cohesive, and lucidly presented take on sixty-three terms that are centrally important for the study of animals and human-animal relationships. Entries on these terms range from one or two paragraphs ("Animal-Industrial Complex," "Ontology/Ontological") to several pages ("Biopolitics," "Human-Animal Distinction"); they feature bolded cross-references to other entries in the volume, "see also" lists containing still other relevant terms that are not directly mentioned in the definition/explication of a given concept, and abbreviated references to additional sources full citations for which can be found in the nearly thirty-page master bibliography. Together with a substantial index, a brief but effective introduction, which provides a thumbnail sketch of the

interrelations among rubrics more or less coextensive with *animal studies* (e.g., *human-animal studies*, *critical animal studies*, *anthrozoology*, and *cognitive ethology*), rounds out the apparatus of this brilliant, carefully designed book, which is likely to be as engaging and horizon-expanding for instructors as it is for the students to whom they assign the text.

Indeed, virtually every entry in Calarco's book is packed with insights, and each seems to reflect long-standing pedagogical practices of the author: the volume comes across as having been written by an outstanding teacher who has developed, through techniques honed over the course of many interactions with students, special expertise in defining, explaining, and demonstrating the concrete implications of key concepts for animal studies—in ways that make the concepts legible and usable but without in any sense "dumbing them down." The entry on "becoming-animal" (25–28) is a case in point. This entry provides the best definition and contextualization of Deleuze and Guattari's concept that I have yet encountered, situating the term in the authors' broader philosophical project, relating it to their distinctions among Oedipal, State, and demonic animals, exemplifying the term's relevance via artwork by Francis Bacon, noting criticisms that have been leveled against the concept, and comparing *becoming-animal* in its Deleuzian-Guattarian usage

with the term's scope and meaning in David Abrams's 2010 study of *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. And all this in just three pages! Many other entries offer a similar combination of concision, precision, and readability; standout examples include "Animot" (13–15), "Posthumanism" (84–87), and "Race" (113–16), among others. At the risk of nitpicking, I can report that one entry did strike me as being underdeveloped: namely, the one on "Ontology/Ontological" (101–102). Although this entry does provide a scaffold for further discussion, it does not fully register how ideas emerging from the "ontological turn" in anthropology bear on animal studies. Going back to A. I. Hallowell's work on conceptions of animacy among the Ojibwe and later extended by analysts such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Philippe Descola, Tim Ingold, and Eduardo Kohn, this turn has led to research on how cultures' cosmologies embed understandings of human-animal relationships — and how these understandings at once shape and are shaped by various expressive regimes, including those associated with literature and art. Indicatively, this entry is one of the few lacking a "see also" list or a list of further references.

For its part, Gruen's *Critical Terms* encompasses fewer key terms than Calarco's book: it contains chapters named after twenty-nine concepts, slightly less than half the number covered

in Calarco's text. Yet this edited volume is more than twice the length of *Key Concepts*. Written by experts in the various subdomains under discussion, each chapter provides, in ways that will be especially resonant for more advanced students, a richly textured, in-depth presentation of the debates that have grown up around the terms in question. Further, although there is some overlap between the two volumes — both texts include analyses of, for example, "Activism," "Extinction," and "Mind" — Gruen's collection foregrounds important topics not listed in Calarco's table of contents, ranging from "Behavior" and "Emotion" to "Personhood" and "Vulnerability," among others. (Conversely, as entailed by its more capacious table of contents, Calarco's book contains entries with no corresponding chapter in Gruen's text, such as "Disability," "Intersectionality," and "Rewilding.") In addition to a nuanced introductory essay that parallels Calarco's in mapping out some of the disciplinary and nomenclatural histories of *animal studies*, Gruen's volume includes an extremely detailed twenty-page index, which offsets the spare use of internal cross-referencing within chapters. The volume contains no master bibliography; but each chapter has its own extensive, topically focused list of references, along with suggestions for further reading. (A small quibble: in several chapters, the suggestions for further reading reduplicate items that,

because they are cited in the chapters themselves, are already included in the reference lists. Ideally, the suggested additional sources would go beyond those referred to in the chapters proper.)

Because some of the chapters in *Critical Terms* are coauthored, the volume incorporates the work of a total of thirty-five different contributors, diversifying the perspectives offered on core topics in the field and, in the process, exemplifying the richness and complexity of established as well as emerging debates concerning animal worlds, the cultural role of animals, and the multifariousness of human-animal relationships. The advantages of having access to work by multiple authors with diverse backgrounds and research interests are highlighted when chapters devoted to different focal topics converge on the same or related issues, affording a variety of vantage points on concepts, practices, institutions, and histories whose multifacetedness thereby comes more clearly into view. For example, Maneesha Deckha's chapter on "Postcolonial" (280–93) articulates questions about veganism that are also addressed, from another perspective, in Annie Potts's and Philip Armstrong's chapter on "Vegan" (395–409). Deckha writes: "scholars within Animal Studies and those external to it have raised concerns about the hegemony of Western values in relation to the call for a vegan praxis, arguing that an ethic that requires all humans

to refrain from animal consumption espouses . . . values that originate from an elitist and cultural imperialist worldview" (283). Potts and Armstrong likewise address questions of this sort but do so by foregrounding issues of intersectionality rather than postcoloniality; they note that "the ways in which racialized, gendered, socioeconomic, and ableist contexts influence representations of meat and meat consumption" create "different incentives and opportunities" for vegan praxis (401).

Similarly, important thematic threads bind together a cluster of chapters focusing on nonhuman ways of experiencing and engaging with the world — even as the cluster reveals different orientations and emphases in the broader field. Thus, Alexandra Horowitz's discussion of the behaviorist origins of classical ethology in "Behavior" (64–78) can be productively juxtaposed with the case studies that Barbara J. King explores in "Emotion" (125–40) as well as with Kristin Andrews's overview, in "Mind" (234–50), of recent research on questions about the structures, functions, and contents of animal minds (245–48). Meanwhile, the philosophical arguments centering on animal sentience that Gary Varner reviews in "Sentience" (356–69) can be set against the empirical work discussed by Victoria A. Braithwaite in her chapter on "Pain" (251–66). A comparison of Lori Gruen's chapter on "Empathy"

(141–53) and Cynthia Willet’s and Malini Suchak’s chapter on “Sociality” (370–82) is equally illuminating, given that both of these chapters focus, in different ways, on what Willet and Suchak describe as “affect attunement.” When they are read together, the two chapters underscore how attunement of this sort shapes interspecies as well as intraspecies interactions.

Other standout contributions to Gruen’s volume include Fiona Probyn-Rapsey’s chapter on “Anthropocentrism” (47–63), Thom van Dooren’s chapter on “Extinction” (169–81), Robert R. McKay’s chapter on “Representation” (307–319), and Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson’s chapter on “Rights” (320–36). Any of these chapters could be assigned alongside Calarco’s *Key Concepts* in an undergraduate class on, say, the role of animals in literature and culture; alternatively, in

a more advanced seminar, Calarco’s text could be used as a support for these and other contributions to Gruen’s volume. As this last comment suggests, although the two volumes under discussion are indeed complementary, and although assigning both texts could provide a kind of stereoscopic introduction to core ideas in animal studies, it is Calarco’s book that, in my view, will be most useful across classes taught at all levels. By contrast, Gruen’s text might best be reserved for students pursuing higher degrees, unless instructors of undergraduates want to do a “deep dive” on specific issues by pairing entries from *Key Concepts* with parallel or related chapters from *Critical Terms*.

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