

Val Plumwood's contribution to intersectional veganism

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Val Plumwood's work was so rich and diverse that there are many areas upon which one could focus. I begin and end this lecture by noting the jarring disjunction between liberatory writing of which Val's work is a significant example and the horrifying political realities we now face.

It is not lost on me that I am the first white male to be asked to give this lecture. We might assume that my subject position is the last to be able to talk with any authority on the topic of intersectionality. And I am not wholly unsympathetic to this view. In this lecture I am not making any claims to authority, I am giving an undoubtedly imperfect viewpoint from my own observations and analysis. I don't have much, or any, experience of being positioned at the nexus of multiple oppressions but I *have* tried to listen to those that do. My main experience actually consists, it sometimes feels, in causing confusion to others, who might not understand why I would have intersecting interests in animal ethics, veganism, feminism, masculinities, ecofeminism, anti-fascism, anti-capitalism and so on. My view is that for anyone with a genuine interest in working toward non-hierarchical and non-violent societies, these would all be obvious places to be.

There are larger contextual questions in play with reference to what I am going to discuss today which I won't have time to focus on. One would be the left's inattention to the more-than-human and animal ethics in particular. Another would be academic feminism's arguably disingenuous marginalization of ecofeminism on the grounds of essentialism, which I read historically now, unfortunately, as protective of anthropocentrism.



Meeting Val

As an undergraduate in the early 1990s I had the luxury of time to explore the library at the University of Stirling in Scotland. There were several discoveries that I can now look back on as significant and I felt their transformational affect and effect at the time. The most significant was Val's *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993). Others of note at the time included Carol J. Adams's *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990) and Caroline Ramazanoglu's *Feminism and the Contradictions of Oppression* (1989). I was attracted to work that was theorizing the interconnections between different oppressions, because I wanted to better understand these connections and so, ways of undermining their underlying assumptions.

Those familiar with Val's work and the history of debates within ecofeminism might see the title of my lecture as a little provocative or playful. Well, first I would say that this lecture is more a reflection on intersectionality than it is on veganism. It is well-known that Val was not an advocate of veganism, and that this was a source of antagonism between her and several US-based ecofeminists including Carol J. Adams. Nevertheless, I do wish to make the case that Val's work has ended up being influential for the sort of intersectional veganism common to contemporary ecofeminism and critical animal perspectives. Val might not be totally happy about this, to be fair! – although sadly we can't know whether her views on veganism would have shifted over time.

As a graduate student in the mid-1990s I contacted Val to learn more about her work. She was incredibly kind with her time, swapping e-mails and even sending this postcard to me, dated September 1996.

Figure 1:
Postcard from Val



Her work came to greatly influence my PhD research written between 1997–2001 (Twine 2002) which examined and juxtaposed the ecofeminist critique of dualism with that which had been surfacing in Sociology around that time, especially within feminist sociology, environmental sociology, the sociology of the body and the sociology of the emotions.

Fortuitously Val had already been invited to be a Visiting Professor at Lancaster University in the second half of 2002 when I had just started my first academic post there. We managed a day's hiking together in the Lake District between Grasmere and Patterdale in September of that year as part of her coast-to-coast walk, and she gave several talks at Lancaster University that semester.

I will try and articulate what it was about Val's work that I found so interesting and why I think it remains so important to keep reading it to help understand the present malaise and crises that have only worsened since she passed away in 2008. In particular I will say something about why her critical work on dualism was so relevant to the development of intersectional thought.

In doing so it will be necessary to take care to think about the meanings of 'intersectionality'. As a word intersectionality is usually associated with the body of work of black feminists which emerged in the early 1990s. So, I will make the main focus today these two strands of thought that have theorized interconnections between different categories of oppression. Essentially, I want to build a little on my 'Intersectional Disgust' paper (Twine 2010) and continue my call for synthesis of these two traditions.

Contextualising Val Plumwood's anti-veganism

Firstly though, there are two connected areas I am not particularly going to focus on today, but I will say a few things about them briefly as they are relevant. The first relates to debates in ecofeminism over whether ecofeminism implies veganism. The second is the debate around veganism and indigenous communities. On the ecofeminism/veganism -question there were quite large and acrimonious debates at conferences and in publication during the 1990s. In April 1998 the 'Ecofeminism: A Practical Environmental Philosophy for the 21st Century' Conference took place at The University of Montana, and this was something of a flashpoint for ecofeminist debates over veganism, and Val was at the heart of it. Val had been a Visiting Professor at the University and was one of the keynote speakers at the conference. I was not present at this conference, I was just at the start of my PhD, but I recall publicizing the conference on the ecofeminism website that I ran at the time. However, I also know from email correspondence from

Val and accounts from others since that this conference certainly was a tense affair for the ecofeminist movement, such as it was. In some ways these tensions were representative of broader arguments between environmental ethics and animal ethics around the question of the human killing and consumption of other animals. Whilst we can't pretend these debates have gone away, the relative normalization of veganism as a practice within ecofeminism (enhanced by critical work that has underlined that the animal-industrial complex has a special interest in the commodification and killing of *female* animals and the control of reproduction), and then more recently within critical animal studies is something of an achievement. We are after all talking about the first academic communities anywhere which have normalized the practice of veganism. Let us not underestimate the struggle that that has been.

Now given that part of Val's opposition to the idea that ecofeminism implies veganism was an objection to a fear of 'vegan imperialism' being imposed on indigenous communities the two areas I am highlighting here are linked. Whilst this objection was well-intentioned, I think it was a weak argument against vegan practice per se. Intersectional veganism implies a degree of contextuality in understanding how food practices intersect with gender, 'race' and class. In the long-term Val's position probably contributed to a more robust position within ecofeminism and subsequently (critical) animal studies with regards to issues of racism and colonialism. I highlight, for example, Greta Gaard's (2001) work on the Makah Whale hunt and Claire Jean Kim's body of work (e.g., 1995) addressing these issues somewhat later. A broad range of work by black feminist vegans (for example, Harper 2010, Ko and Ko 2017, Boisseron 2018) has also firmly criticized non-intersectional veganism for example, for the way in which it can be used as a means for performances of racialized 'civility' or for reinforcing racism. Furthermore, the recent volume, featuring several notable AASA members, *Colonialism and Animality – Anti-Colonial Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies* (Montford and Taylor eds. 2020) was a significant contribution in this area. So that is actually an initial way in which Val has contributed to intersectional veganism, but not even the main way I wish to underline today.

I touched on these issues in my chapter for Lori Gruen and Carol J. Adams' *Ecofeminism* volume (Twine 2022). In the paper I covered various aspects of that debate, and I pointed out that none of the people Val was in argument with were actually advocating a naïve vegan universalism. I was also critical of some of Val's construction of veganism. For example, I agreed with her wanting understandings of the 'human' to be resituated in ecological terms but disagreed with her framing of veganism as precluding that possibility. Just because vegans do not eat animal products does not mean that

everything else they do eat does not somehow embed the (vegan) human in the rest of nature. Herbivores after all are not disembedded from the rest of nature. Nor do vegans, as she claims, insist that neither humans nor animals should never be conceived as edible. Admittedly a small number of vegans and animal ethicists want to somehow transcend all animal predation, but I have misgivings about this utilitarian, transhumanist train of thought. I personally think that human edibility should be promoted – not in a cannibalistic sense you will be relieved to hear, but in our burial practices. Human composting may literally be the best way to go! It is worth noting that in what was probably her final publication, ‘Tasteless: Towards a Food-based Approach to Death’ (Plumwood 2008) Val did discuss the relationship between modernity, mortuary practices, striving for practices in line with her animist beliefs.

Val’s critique of veganism was a little of its time. She presented veganism as a somewhat purist ethical practice. However, this just doesn’t equate well to the lived realities of being vegan, which remain full of ethical negotiations. What has happened since Val’s writings in this period of 2000–2003 is that we have witnessed in many parts of the world, and not just the Global North, the proto-normalisation of veganism.

I did not fully transition to veganism until 2005. Indeed, I would say that vegetarians of the 1990s, myself included, were beholden to the exact same denials of the egg and dairy production that we decried in meat eaters. Quite remarkable really to look back on oneself in this way, but it at least makes it easier to understand contemporary conformity by the majority. So, a big thank you to all those people who only went vegan in the last 5 years for making me feel like a visionary. But that label should be reserved for the 20th century early adopters.

Bearing all that in mind it might have been the case that Val would have shifted her position. It’s certainly harder to pre-figure a practice when it seems quite marginal to how we have been encouraged to think and act.

Interrogating dualism, pre-figuring intersectionality

I now want to turn to Val’s work on dualism – which I will argue is the biggest source of influence on intersectional type thinking for both ecofeminism and critical animal studies.

At this point I am asking myself what my favourite piece of writing by Val was. For example, when I have taught gender studies in the past, I used her article in *the Ecologist*, titled ‘Feminism and Ecofeminism: Beyond the Dualistic Assumptions of Women, Men and Nature’ (Plumwood 1992) as a class reading – a really nice outline of the relation-

ship between feminism and ecofeminism. It is also clear that despite her misgivings about veganism, Val did make important contributions to animal ethics. It's there in her essay 'Being Prey' (1996b), her famous account of surviving a crocodile attack; in her lesser-known articles on the film *Babe* from the now discontinued journal *Animal Issues* (Plumwood 1997a; 1997b); and in the article in which she discusses veganism which I think is nevertheless important, 'Integrating Ethical Frameworks for Animals, Humans, and Nature: A Critical Feminist Eco-Socialist Analysis' (Plumwood 2000)¹.

Indeed, for all the richness of these works and her final book published in her lifetime, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (Plumwood 2002), I want to return to that book I found in the University library back in 1994, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (Plumwood 1993).

It would take a more detailed analysis of her work to produce a comprehensive account of the extent to which her work contributed to intersectional thought, but here I focus on what I see as a key chapter of *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, chapter 2, 'Dualism: The logic of colonisation'. For me, thirty years later there is still something revelatory about this chapter. It feels like a cultural and political decoding. To read Plumwood's explication of dualism is to be taken into some of the ideological core of the dominant Western imagination of recent millennia. Perhaps an exaggeration? I'm not sure though. It seems to me that no account interested in understanding what might link together forms of oppression and exploitation can afford to ignore this work – a point I return to later.

Allow me to pick out some of the chapter's key points.

It presents dualism as a particularly entrenched conceptual schema throughout Western history. Whilst many of the associations and separations were consolidated and developed during the Enlightenment, the key gendered distinctions between reason/nature, mind/body and reason/emotion, Plumwood argues, stem from the Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It is important to note that dualism in her analysis refers to more than just dichotomy. She offers several original definitions of dualism.

For the first set of these I jump back to her article in *the Ecologist*. She says the

1 Other important articles to my mind included 'Ecofeminism: an overview and discussion of positions and arguments' (Plumwood 1986). Also, her 'Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism' (Plumwood 1991), 'Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics' (Plumwood 1996a), and her essay 'Decolonizing Relationships with Nature' (Plumwood 2003). Also, her paper on Karl Marx (Routley 1981), her contribution to thinking about the sex/gender distinction (Plumwood 1989), her early work on logic (Routley and Routley 1975), and forest protection (Routley and Routley 1973).

following of dualism, it is “the process by which contrasting concepts are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive”, a way “of construing difference in terms of the logic of hierarchy” and “a process by which power forms identity, one which distorts both sides of what it splits apart” (Plumwood 1992, 12). In this analysis dualism supersedes dichotomy because it involves a hierarchical relation between two spheres and is given a role in the constitution of identities. Figure 2 below presents the main intersecting Western dualisms.

culture/nature
reason/nature
male/female
mind/body (nature)
master/slave
reason/matter (physicality)
rationality/animality (nature)
reason/emotion (nature)
mind, spirit/nature
freedom/necessity (nature)
universal/particular
human/nature (non-human)
civilized/primitive (nature)
production/reproduction (nature)
public/private
subject/object
self/other

Figure 2: Intersecting dualisms. Source: Plumwood 1993.

These ought to be read both as horizontal hierarchies and as vertical mappings, and overall as an “interlocking structure” (Plumwood 1993, 43). Back in *Feminism & the Mastery of Nature* (1993) she writes,

A dualism [...] results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other. This relationship of denied dependency determines a certain kind of logical structure, in which the denial and the relation of domination/subordination shape the identity of both the relata. (Plumwood 1993, 41.)

Plumwood also ties the historical development of dualism to a particular type of logic, known as classical prepositional logic:

The key exclusions and denials of dependency for dominant conceptions of reason in western culture include not only the feminine and nature, but all those human orders treated as nature and subject to denied dependency. Thus, it is the identity of the master (rather than a masculine identity pure and simple) defined by these multiple exclusions which lies at the heart of western culture. This identity is expressed most strongly in the dominant conception of reason and gives rise to a dualised structure of otherness and negation which I argue corresponds to that of classical prepositional logic. If the prevailing power relations of western culture have determined the selection of logical theories, as they have scientific theories and technologies... then to reject this classical structure of reason does not imply the rejection of all attempts to structure or systematise reason, but rather the rejection of those which promote dualistic accounts of otherness. (Ibid. 42.)

This combination of 'horizontal hierarchies and vertical mappings' as I put it in my PhD (Twine 2002, 7), is crucial to the potential for Plumwood's analysis of dualism to contribute to intersectional thought, and indeed contemporary intersectional veganism. Meaning percolates vertically through the structure of dualisms, with each pair obtaining reinforcement in alliance with others.

Crucially this constructs a cultural repertoire for representing otherness and difference. It is generative of essentialist and homogenized accounts of identity, along lines of social class, gender, race and ethnicity, and species. So now we are getting to the heart of why a critical analysis of dualism is helpful for intersectional ways of approaching oppression and similarities between oppressions. In what has become quite familiar to ecofeminism and critical animal studies, we have begun to appreciate how difference has been inferiorised via overlapping discourses which

- Associate with nature
- Associate with animals and animality
- Associate with femininity
- Associate with the body
- Associate with emotionality.

These associations only 'work' if one accepts how dualism has separated and constructed what these words mean. They have served to position a white male subject as superior and helped to structure the representation of inferiorised difference. One of the

labours of animal studies and critical animal studies researchers has been to discern animalisation within sexism, racism, and poverty, and also to question indeed, the animalisation, of nonhuman animals. Furthermore, if one contests the assumedly inferior status of nonhuman animals and 'nature' broadly conceived, then there might be a destabilising effect that could undermine the power of dualistic association. This dualistic structure is conceptually violent, epistemologically violent (Wadiwel 2015) and has been inseparable from the physical violence of oppression. It's there in the witch hunts, it's there in British colonialism, it's there in the history of the Atlantic slave trade, the Nazi holocaust, persisting in the ongoing exploitation of refugees, and in everyday and systemic sexist, racist, classist and speciesist exploitation. To quote Plumwood again, "Culture thus accumulates a store of such conceptual weapons, which can be mined, refined, and redeployed for new uses. So old oppressions stored as dualisms facilitate and break the path for new ones." (Plumwood 1993,43.)

She then goes into more detail about five key features of dualism (refer back to figure 2), which again add to our understanding of commonalities between oppressions. These are as follows:

1. **Backgrounding** (denial) – the left-hand side terms are taken to form a singular, centred reality or perspective, whilst the right-hand side terms contribution to this formation is denied.
2. **Radical Exclusion** (hyperseparation) – certain characteristics ('language' as in human/animal) are mobilised as signifying a polarised difference between two realms.
3. **Incorporation** (relational definition) – the devalued side is defined hierarchically in relation to the valued side, as in masculine/feminine.
4. **Instrumentalism** (objectification) – the devalued are rendered passive and conceived as having no ends in their own right.
5. **Homogenisation** (stereotyping) – differences within the devalued are denied, as in 'they're all the same'.

Plumwood's work on dualism was also intended to signpost emancipatory pathways out of the structure of dualism. She was thus critical of attempts at what she referred to as 'uncritical equality' which strove for humanization, because for the most part, what it means to be human had been naturalized in rather masculinist and nature-dominating ways. Moreover, she was critical of approaches of 'uncritical reversal' that might seek to embrace, for example, both the cultural feminization of nature and the positioning of women as closer to nature, as more emotional and so on, because it leaves various

dualistic assumptions intact (see Plumwood 1992).

Instead Plumwood argued that ecofeminism could constitute a third wave of feminism and find liberatory meaning in redefining, for example, gender, species, and dominant understandings of the human. Of course, ecofeminism did not come to form a third wave of feminism (at least not yet). My feeling remains that academic feminism for the most part stereotyped ecofeminism as an inherently essentialist perspective – even though much 1990s ecofeminist scholarship was exactly devoted to the issue of critiquing essentialism. It is worth revisiting what Plumwood said about ecofeminism in relation to it potentially constituting a third wave of feminism:

It is not a tsunami, a freak tidal wave which has appeared out of nowhere sweeping all before it. Rather, it is prefigured in and builds on work not only in ecofeminism but in radical feminism, cultural feminism and socialist feminism over the last decade and a half. At the same time, this critical ecological feminism conflicts with various other feminisms, by making an account of the connection to nature central in its understanding of feminism. It rejects especially those aspects or approaches to women's liberation which endorse or fail to challenge the dualistic definition of women and nature and/or the inferior status of nature. (Plumwood 1993, 39.)

This is significant, because it is important to keep in mind that ecofeminism was also a critique of feminism, for its uncritical assumption of anthropocentrism.

What I have done thus far is outline some of the key points of Plumwood's explication of dualism, and I have argued that they have a clear import for what we would now refer to as theories of intersectionality. I will return to the question of whether we should use that word, and whether ecofeminists have done so, in a moment. But at this point I am just making the argument that a critique of dualism which for example includes a critical questioning of human/animal relations is indispensable for drawing out connections between different forms of oppression. Furthermore, even though Val herself had issues with veganism, her work has come to be influential on the kind of intersectional vegan position now adopted by many ecofeminist and critical animal scholars – and indeed, her criticisms helped add nuance to intersectional veganism.

As noted earlier, the word 'intersectionality' was coined within the black feminist tradition, and specifically in the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw. Her famous paper in the Stanford Law Review, 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color' (Crenshaw 1991), has been cited over 31 000 times, though she actually first used the term in her prior article 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex' (Crenshaw 1989). Of this first article Crenshaw says the following:

My objective there was to illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately. I build on those observations here by exploring the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color. (Crenshaw 1991, 1244.)

First thing to say is that it's noteworthy that this work is being produced just after or at the same time as Val's first work on ecofeminism. But at least at this point, it is clear that the two approaches are doing slightly different things. Whilst Val's work is helping us better understand how different oppressions share a similar 'interlocking structure' to use Val's language and how they draw upon common discourses to hierarchically represent difference; Kimberlé Crenshaw wants to convey that experientially being positioned as a black women under conditions of capitalism, patriarchy and racism gives rise to a different experience of oppression, compared to, for example, being a white woman, or black man. Furthermore, a black man, or white woman may be able, in certain contexts, to leverage some privilege in ways that may be foreclosed to black women.

Crenshaw's intersectionality concept can be seen in the context of the evolution of feminist thought which at the time was shedding itself of the view of a falsely homogenized category of 'women' which had glossed over power differences within gender identities. Crenshaw's work was about contesting the dominance of white normativity in feminism, and of giving voice to, for example, black women, Asian women, and indigenous women. In addition to the intersections of gender, race and class, Crenshaw's article mentions age and sexuality, whilst other work at the time was theorizing intersections of gender and disability, such as Jenny Morris' *Pride Against Prejudice – Transforming Attitudes to Disability* (1991). In this way, it is important to remember that a) substantial other work around this time, and before, was linking together different liberatory movements, and b) the political impetus to do so, and the theorization of it, has a much longer history than either the advent of the notion of intersectionality, or indeed ecofeminist work around dualism.

Given that Crenshaw was interested to outline the specificity that one's positionality might entail for the lived experiences of exploitation (and also resistance in the form of oppositional strategies), it might be tempting to conclude that whereas the ecofeminist work on 'interlocking structures' seemed to be about outlining similarities

between different oppressions, Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality was more focused on the *differences* between them. This would be a simplification, however. Eco-feminists indeed have theorized shared conceptual underpinnings but have not sought to collapse oppressions into each other, whilst in developing her concept of intersectionality Crenshaw intended for it to disrupt the idea that categories such as gender and race are wholly separable. To quote Crenshaw from 'Mapping the Margins':

In mapping the intersections of race and gender, the concept does engage dominant assumptions that race and gender are essentially separate categories. By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable. While the primary intersections that I explore here are between race and gender, the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and color. (Crenshaw 1991, 1244–5, fn 9.)

This is interesting because it shows that intersectionality is intended to both underline the experiential specificity of oppression, but also to draw points of intersection between different oppressions. I would suggest that the ecofeminist tradition, especially in the work of Plumwood, provides a contribution to understanding some of those 'primary intersections'. Let's remember at this juncture Plumwood's definitions of dualism noted earlier. Dualism helps to shape identities, providing quite limited options for self-constitution due to its fostering of homogenization, stereotyping and radical exclusion. This is, or should be, very relevant to Crenshaw's interest to better understand intersectionality in structural, political, and experiential forms; because it is part of the essentializing discourse of oppression that attempts to constrain categories of identity. The obvious difference between the ecofeminist texts and the black feminist texts, at least of this time in the early 1990s, is that the former were interested in how such primary intersections also have consequence for nonhuman animals and broader ecologies². There is little consideration at this time (later black (eco)feminists would change this) of how capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism were inescapably bound up in the mastery and exploitation of the nonhuman. Similarly, perhaps because she was not engaging with a particular critique of dualism or of Western reason, Crenshaw's work, for example, did not engage with the way in which categories of animality and nature were involved in the co-positioning of, for example, black women.

2 The exception to this, as noted below by Adams and Gruen (2022), were a small number of black feminist writers in the early 90s who were also focused on ecology.

There is actually a tantalizing moment in Crenshaw's 'Mapping the Margins' (1991, 1267), which I don't think, to the best of my knowledge, has been noted, where she is critical of animalizing portrayals as part of racialization. The context for this in the article were incidents of rape in New York's Central Park in the late 1980s. Crenshaw is critical of the portrayal of black men at the time as bestial, savage and as constituting a 'wolfpack', as inflaming of the general cultural portrayal of black men. Furthermore, unlike the eco-feminist work, the black feminist work at this time was not largely exploring empathy or care for the more-than-human. This is not a criticism as such. It would be foolish, I think, to venture this as a criticism given the focus upon the issue of violence against black women for example. But it is to point out the co-existence in the early 1990s of two strands of feminist scholarship which had an interest in theorizing connections between different oppressions, which seemed at least initially somewhat aloof from each other.

Uses of intersectionality

This sense of detachment between the two strands has changed in *some* specific ways in the intervening years. And as we shall see momentarily, this aloofness did not last long at all from ecofeminists. Intersectionality has had a considerable influence on the social science research agenda. It is a word that has taken on a public presence, an activist presence as well, even if sometimes the public life of the term is in the guise of a predictable right-wing backlash and/or confusion over what the term might mean. My view is that mainstream uses of intersectionality are still rather anthropocentric. That in spite of a new generation of black women scholars writing on animal ethics in intersectional approaches, as already stated. This continued anthropocentrism is further surprising when we note the extensive literature on environmental racism that has been around for decades, and the fact that, as Lori Gruen and Carol J Adams (2022, 25) pointed out, Black feminist writing on ecology started to emerge very soon after Crenshaw's initial work – for example, they point to the early 1990s work of both Delores Williams and Shamara Shantu Riley.

The other shift that needs to be noted is that ecofeminist writers and later in their overlap with critical animal studies *did begin* to use the term intersectionality. This raises several interesting questions, such as: Was this a kind of conceptual laziness? And, has it been an unfair appropriation of a concept originally used by black feminists? Or, more positively, can it be seen as a justified strategic use of the term to continue both the contestation of anthropocentrism within feminism and an attempt at *synthesis* between the two strands of thought?

It is useful to include now a very brief exploration of when, if at all, some of the major ecofeminist writers started adopting the language of intersectionality. Val Plumwood did not appear to specifically use the language of 'intersectionality' at all, instead talking of integration between different social movements. However, when we look to North American ecofeminism of the 1990s we do begin to see the emergence of talk of the 'intersectionality of oppression'. For example, it is present in Greta Gaard's edited volume *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature* (1993) and in *Animals & Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Adams and Donovan eds. 1995).

But more significantly perhaps, is Carol J. Adams' solo work. In her 1990 *The Sexual Politics of Meat* she talks of "the intersection of the oppression of women and the oppression of animals" (p. 60 in my 1995 copy) and in her slightly later book *Neither Man nor Beast – Feminism and the Defense of Animals* she actually cites Kimberle Crenshaw and discusses the concept of intersectionality, as well as drawing on the work of another intersectional Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins (1990). Some of this work by Carol J. Adams was interested in the historical associations and overlaps between feminism and animal advocacy that had their roots in the 19th century. She had also been working on *The Sexual Politics of Meat* since the 1970s, publishing a short article on the topic in *The Lesbian Reader* (Covina and Galana eds. 1975). It is to her credit I think that she was already engaging with Crenshaw by 1994 and seeing the synergies between ecofeminism and the concept of intersectionality. Looking back on the ecofeminism field of the 1990s, although it was dominated by white women, these writers such as Val Plumwood, Carol J Adams and others ensured that race and colonialism were at the heart of their theory building.

I also took this opportunity to have a look back over my own formative work. Starting with my PhD, which was entitled: *Ecofeminism and the 'new' Sociologies: A collaboration against dualism* and written between 1997 and 2001, I was interested to note quite a number of uses of the terms 'intersecting', 'intersectional' and even a small number of references to 'intersectionality'. Perhaps most interesting was a brief critique of Patricia Hill Collins, in the following extract from the introduction of my PhD:

[...] feminism is now concerned with the intersection of 'race', class, sexuality, age and disability for example. Moreover, ecofeminism can highlight the constructions of 'nature' at play within these and thus highlight better their intersection/s. Ideas of 'nature' are not only salient to gender, but also to class, sexuality, race, age, disability and so on. Oppressed groups have been caught in a firm trap of devaluation both by being associated with 'nature' and the 'body' but also through a process of policing by various discourses of nature and the natural. Ecofeminism echoes

the call of Collins to re-vision class, gender and 'race' as interlocking systems of oppression, and yet does so in critique of her call for a "humanist vision" (1990: 221). This points to an important post-humanist difference between ecofeminism and most feminisms. For ecofeminism does present a decisive ethical challenge to feminism in its reevaluation of nature and nonhuman animals. Ecofeminism offers a more thorough examination of the political and exclusionary uses of ideas of the 'human' colonised as it has been by constructions of masculinity and rationality. (Twine 2002, 6.)

Whilst I still tend to agree with this over 20 years later, I would add that it's rather easy is it not, for someone like me who has not been on the receiving end of racist and sexist dehumanization to question a humanist vision. Nevertheless, it is a contribution of Plumwood's work, noted earlier, to urge liberatory movements to not uncritically seek out discourses of the human as straightforwardly politically galvanizing, but to contest and reimagine what the human might mean.

My article 'Intersectional Disgust? Animals and (eco) feminism' (Twine 2010) touched upon the issues I have been discussing today. It was orientated toward exploring the possibility of a more-than-human account of intersectionality. There I tried to understand why much of academic feminism had not really engaged with the ecofeminist work on animal ethics and I turned to the idea of 'disgust' as a part explanation. This was prompted by a brief experience that I'd had whilst researching for my PhD over ten years previously. As I recounted in the paper:

It was the sort of moment that sticks in your mind [...] I was mid-PhD, walking through my faculty carrying a copy of *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Adams and Donovan eds. 1995). In an elevator a feminist colleague spotted the book and reacted with shock and indeed one could say disgust. I was in turn shocked by her response and before there was time to engage she was gone. Regrettably I did not really know this person and did not have the opportunity to talk more about the moment. Emotions are embodied and relational and here was a specific response to an object and also implicitly to me (I assumed that she had not noticed the second half of the book title). (Twine 2010, 398.)

I wondered whether there was a relationship between this affective response and the work that animalisation does when attempts are made to position some humans as inferior, and I talked about how both processes require a sense of human/animal hierarchy in order to work. This article was also a first attempt at advocating for a synthesis of ecofeminist work with the black feminist work on intersectionality that by then had become so influential for feminism.

I have presented some examples here of evidence that ecofeminist writers have engaged, for example, with Crenshaw’s idea of intersectionality and have demonstrated a desire to have ecofeminism and intersectionality speak to, and inform, each other. This has taken us a little away from Val Plumwood’s work, but I contend that it is her critical work on dualism that has been a crucial contribution to potentially integrating social movements and continues to be important for ongoing work that has come to label itself as intersectional veganism.

A persistent exclusion in feminist theory

Before I finish it seems to make sense to briefly consider the contemporary state of play in the theory of intersectionality. For this purpose, I have looked at several more recent books on intersectionality. I am interested to see if we can discern any presence of ecofeminism or critical animal studies, and the extent to which nonhuman animals and/or even environmental issues form any part of the focus. These books are the 2020 2nd edition of *Intersectionality* by Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge; *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (2015) by Vivien May; *Intersectionality – An Intellectual History* (2016) by Ange-Marie Hancock; and *Intersectionality – Origins, Contestations, Horizons* (2016) by Anna Carastathis.

<p><i>Intersectionality</i> (2020) by Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge</p>	<p>Mentions ecofeminism once. Mentions critical animal studies once. Cites David Pellow’s work twice. For example: “Environmental justice studies recognize that social inequality and oppression in all forms intersect, and that actors in the more-than-human world are subjects of oppression and frequently agents of social change. These insights are important for building an understanding of the ways that intrahuman inequality and oppressions function and how they intersect with human-nonhuman oppression (Pellow 2018). In this sense, social justice may provide an aspirational framework of shared interest that simultaneously expands and deepens intersectionality’s critical project”.</p>
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<i>Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries</i> (2015) by Vivien May	Cites Chloë Taylor (2012) in a footnote. Makes a few references to including environmentalism within intersectionality.
<i>Intersectionality – An Intellectual History</i> (2016) by Ange-Marie Hancock	No references.
<i>Intersectionality – Origins, Contestations, Horizons</i> (2016) by Anna Carastathis.	No references.

Figure 3. More recent texts on intersectionality and whether they engage with ecofeminism, nonhuman animals or the environment.

As figure 3 makes clear, at least when these texts were written, there remained little evidence for the influence of ecofeminism upon understandings of intersectionality. Overall, I would say the aloofness of the theorization of intersectionality in social science to ecofeminist and critical animal work continues – even if some of the content in Hill Collins and Birge’s book is encouraging for dialogue. Elsewhere there have been applications of intersectionality from scholars that have attempted to operationalize the concept broadly. For example, Kaijser and Kronsell’s (2014) well-cited paper ‘Climate change through the lens of intersectionality’ (2014) draws upon Crenshaw and generously engages with the ecofeminist literature, including that of Val Plumwood, if not her work on dualism.

I conclude today with a generalization which nevertheless seems accurate enough. Scholars in animal studies, critical animal studies and ecofeminism have produced valuable intersectional work, attentive to racism, over the last three decades. Whereas mainstream social science, which has been significantly influenced by the work started by Crenshaw and others in that time, remains slow to be inclusive of the more-than-human. In a blog post I wrote (Twine 2021) I drew upon Val Plumwood’s essay ‘Decolonizing relationships with nature’ to argue that the inclusive labour of critical/animal studies in this time can be seen as a dimension of *decolonization*, but that academia and wider cultures remain epistemologically anthropocentric.

In a personal sense the last three decades represent all of my adult life. 1992 was also the year of the Rio summit and the year that I stopped eating meat. During the past 30 years the global capitalist economy has emitted more than half of all the CO2 emissions that have been emitted since 1751. I don’t need to tell an audience in Australasia about the already real-world experience of the climate crisis. I can only con-

clude that academia remains far from being on any kind of emergency footing, both intellectually and in its policies. Val Plumwood's landmark *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* will be 30 years old next year.

Folks like Val and my undergrad philosophy tutor, the Environmental philosopher Mick Smith predicted what has transpired. For example, we were using the language of environmental crisis in class in 1995. The work of people like this surely has an important lesson, which relates to my lecture today. Attempts to provide a synthesis of parallel stands of liberatory theory speaks to the urgency of political cohesion and coalition in progressive politics. And the need for that should be all too obvious in our present time of multiple crises.

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