

Laurie Shannon. *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales*.

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Wandering cold and desolate through a storm, Shakespeare's King Lear joins the mad Poor Tom in nakedness, naming himself like the disguised Edgar "unaccommodated man," a "poor, bare, forked animal," lacking any of the advantages enjoyed by the rest of nonhuman creation. Laurie Shannon's *The Accommodated Animal* uses this example of human negative exceptionalism to crystallize early modern ideas about the communal fellowship of humans and animals not merely because of its depiction of dethroned humanity, defined by lack and privation, but for its posited logical corollary, the accommodated animal, whose superior bodily faculties and endowments put human entitlement, and the human imperial self, in question at every turn.

Shannon's brilliant account of shared human and animal cosmopolity restores detail and nuance to the prehistory of posthumanism, tracing the effects in the biblical, cultural, philosophical, legal, and literary traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of a "zootopian constitution" that ensured the shared, if not always equal, status of humans and animals. With inexorable logic and playful wit, Shannon makes the case for animals' role in defining concepts of justice, tyranny, and sovereignty in early modern Europe. Along the way she takes on more recent developments in theory and criticism that fail to recognize the consequences of this historical role: thus, for instance, Shannon suggests that biopolitics from Foucault to Agamben merely repeats an originary exclusion when it fails to admit animals as political stakeholders, while Heidegger's assumption that animals are "poor in world" is directly refuted in the widely accepted thereophilic strain of argument among early modern theologians and philosophers. Criticism's stubborn privileging of Descartes over Montaigne among early modern skeptical philosophers is corrected when Shannon allows Montaigne to speak loudly and clearly against Cartesian solipsism, and in favor of negotiation and collaboration (indeed, she gives Montaigne the book's last word).

Shannon begins by insisting that instead of thinking "with" animals, through metaphor, critics should attend to "what it has been possible to think *about*" them (5). When, for instance, she turns in the first chapter, "Law's First Subjects," to the influence of the hexaameron tradition, she notes that it provides no absolute ontological divide between animals and humans — indeed, since animals were created first, they have a certain priority in the whole project of creation. Moreover, since animals did not sin as did Adam and Eve, their punishment as a consequence of the Fall raises issues of justice and fairness for many writers. Once fallen, humans can no longer claim absolute sovereignty, and so the willing submission of animals to human rule or human abuse must be figured as a form of voluntary vassalage.

The second through fourth chapters take seriously representations of animal bodily superiority and human debility: early modern natural histories suggest that

human uprightness only made humans static, fixed, immobile; animals' ability to run away mocks the whole idea of human sovereignty (they "vote with their feet"), while human claims to panoptic dominance are enfeebled by animals' sheer ubiquity. In chapter 3, humans are "put on trial" in works by Plutarch and Giovanni Battista Gelli, as well as in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where they are found wanting. Chapter 4, "Night-rule," finds human "jurisdiction," and so authority and dominion, only episodic, contingent on supplements to faulty human faculties during the hours of night. In addition to linking William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* with *Midsummer Night's Dream* in this chapter, Shannon also provides perhaps the most thorough demolition to date of Descartes's benighted method by rigorously attacking its flawed premises.

The fifth chapter turns to the topic of animals on trial, connecting the decline in actual animals' presence in legal proceedings to the rise of a different kind of trial where they could be more absolutely subjected — namely, scientific experiment. This analysis of the shift of animals from subjects to objects, their "disanimation" in the interests of establishing the human, continues in the coda, which charts animals in versions of Noah's ark, reduced through enumeration and empirical investigation so that humans might be correspondingly elevated.

Shannon's work should be required reading for anyone interested in early modern animals, animal studies, or posthumanist theory; but it will also greatly influence analyses of Shakespeare, and will introduce readers to a number of regrettably overlooked texts like Baldwin's or Gelli's. It benefits from thorough research in recent scholarship on early modern animals, but it advances the field significantly.

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