Eco-pacifism and the Anabaptist Vision

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Introduction

While the early Anabaptist movement was diverse and major differences arose among its adherents, the majority would eventually agree that true faith could never be coerced through the use of the sword. The concept behind eschewing the sword would continue to be refined and would evolve into the pacifist ethic widely held by Anabaptists today. While technical differences may arise in defining what constitutes violence, it is generally held that at least the killing of other human beings goes against the moral code of our tradition. However, especially in light of modern injustices such as racism, sexism, and exploitative economic practices, Anabaptists have also begun to expand the concept of pacifism to promote just relationships in general, not limiting nonviolence to the taking of life.

The expansions thus far have been mostly limited to relationships between humans under the assumption that humans are the highest moral priority on the planet.[1] A number of factors, however, can lead us to reconsider whether this ought to be the case and to what extent we should begin thinking nonviolently about the Earth and its inhabitants. Insights from cosmic and biological evolution have shown that humans arise out of the same creative matrix that brought about the rest of the cosmos.[2] Cognitive ethology teaches that many other-than-human animals [hereafter, animals] share with us a rich emotional life, can suffer and experience joy just as humans do, and perhaps even have moral systems of their own.[3] Ecology and climatology have made us aware of our impact on the environment and the future of life on the planet.[4] Essentially, our new understanding suggests that humans are in some sense kin to the rest of matter and are not the only beings in the cosmos that can experience joy and pain.[5] Likewise, it shows that our contemporary practices are often unwittingly violent toward the earth-other-neighbors with whom we share the planet.[6] These insights, along with the general view that God loves creation and calls it good, suggest that we rethink how we treat the other-than-human, using and expanding the

Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition of nonviolence as a guide to an earth-care ethic.

As important as these insights are, in order to create a distinct Anabaptist eco-pacifist ethic, we must ensure that broader resources in the biblical tradition support the idea that our earth-other-neighbors are worthy of not only dignity but nonviolent treatment. I establish this below, though my ethic clearly moves beyond the biblical witness. Yet, as neither the biblical nor the Anabaptist tradition has a solid model for rejecting our current system of valuation that prioritizes the human over the rest of creation, I begin with a philosophical model that establishes a biospherically egalitarian framework for our use. The eco-feminist philosophy of Karen Warren provides such a framework. After describing Warren's model for the ethical consideration of all matter, I show how one particular strand of the biblical tradition – eschatological redemption in Pauline theology – supports Warren's larger claim that all matter is morally considerable and should be treated with nonviolence and dignity. I then bring these insights to bear on contemporary Anabaptism through a discussion of John Howard Yoder's use of nonviolence to promote an earth-care ethic. I use Yoder to further define what nonviolence toward the Earth might mean for an Anabaptist eco-pacifist theology. The implications of such a theology are complex and difficult to implement, but I argue that the eco-pacifist ethic is nevertheless practical and necessary. I conclude with one particular way to apply eco-pacifism – a contextual-eschatological form of vegetarianism.

Ecofeminism and the Logic of Domination

The term "ecofeminism" was introduced in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne, in her work *Le féminisme ou la mort*.[7] Since then, ecofeminism as a philosophical discipline has grown tremendously.[8] Although there are different forms of ecofeminist thought, the movement claims that there are at least conceptual, if not causal, links between domination of women and domination of the natural world. Val Plumwood describes three basic types of ecofeminists: (1) those pointing to classical philosophy and its support for value-hierarchical dualisms; (2) those pointing to the Enlightenment development of mechanical models for nature and science, replacing more holistic, organic models stressing the continuity between humans and

nature; and (3) those pointing to the difference in engendered experience as male and female, which leads to a male rejection of what is feminine and natural.[9] With Plumwood, I agree that the latter two types of ecofeminism are problematic.

Rosemary Radford Reuther described the first type of ecofeminism in her 1975 book, *New Woman, New Earth:*

> Women must see that there can be no solution for them and for the evolutionary crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and underlying values of this society. The concept of domination of nature has been based from the first on social domination between master and servant groups, starting with the basic relationship between men and women. An ecological revolution must overthrow all the social structures of domination. This means transforming that world-view which underlies domination and replacing it with an alternative value system.[10]

Reuther suggests that patriarchal domination of women led to the domination of nature by men, since traditionally women have been more strongly identified with nature.[11] While this may be true, the specific sequential causes of the rise of dualistic thinking and the domination of women and nature are probably lost in history.[12] Nevertheless, Reuther's idea is helpful. Regardless of the exact nature of the link between women and nature, and the domination of both in patriarchal societies, the conceptual framework remains the same (essentially dualistic), and ending the domination requires a fundamental rethinking of it. To describe this framework in further detail, I now turn to Karen Warren.

Warren's philosophy focuses on common conceptual frameworks used to justify the domination of women, nature, and other groups of marginalized humans (e.g., the poor, ethnic minorities): "A *conceptual framework* is a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions which shape and reflect how one views oneself and one's world…. [It] functions as a socially constructed lens through which one perceives reality."[13] Conceptual frameworks may

or may not be oppressive.[14] They are oppressive when used to "explain, and 'justify' relationships of unjustified domination and subordination."[15] For Warren, five features make such frameworks oppressive: (1) value-hierarchical, "up-down" thinking;[16] (2) value dualisms asserting one group has more worth than another; (3/4) support and coercive power to keep certain groups in positions of privilege and others in positions of relative weakness; and (5) an underlying "logic of domination" that explains and justifies why certain groups are allowed to dominate other subordinates.[17] Examples of dualisms used within these frameworks are mind vs. matter, human vs. other-than-human, masculine vs. feminine, culture vs. nature, public vs. private. In each pair, greater value is placed on the front side of the dualism, relegating the back side to inferiority and lesser moral worth.

Warren and other ecofeminists seek to repudiate value-hierarchical and value-dualistic ways of thinking, the logic of domination that links the subordination of women, other humans, and nature. Ecofeminist philosophy rejects this logic because neither superiority nor difference among groups is adequate ground for control, subordination, or oppression.[18] Rejecting the logic of domination calls into question the privileged status of any group over another. It challenges gender, race, and class-based hierarchies, as well as the anthropocentric attitude used to justify any and every use of our earth-other neighbors. The conceptual system undergirding them is rejected.[19]

The rejection of the logic of domination resembles and extends what deep ecologists call "biospherical egalitarianism," which Arne Naess describes as a non-anthropocentric value axiom that acknowledges "the equal right [of all] to live and blossom."[20] Biospherical egalitarianism rejects a master-slave relationship between humans and nature, and all are ascribed commensurate dignity and value, leaving no room for domination or value distinctions. However, Naess qualifies the idea by asserting that such egalitarianism exists only *in principle* "because any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploiting, and suppression."[21] For him, when we use nature for legitimate, inescapable needs, it should be done with "deep seated respect, or even veneration, for ways and forms of life."[22] Thus, complete biospherical egalitarianism is an impossible ideal to live out fully at this time. Nevertheless, as a principle, it can serve as an ethical guide for our interaction with earth-other neighbors. What Naess describes is an

alternative way of looking at creation that refuses to objectify the other-than-human world. Earth-others must be used out of biological necessity, but they are perceived as subjects and not reduced to mere resources.

The ecofeminist vision then leads to an ethic that takes all matter – biotic and abiotic – seriously and ascribes equal dignity to the entirety of the created order.[23] This shared vision represents an alternative ontology of creation that recognizes the interconnectedness of all matter but refuses to ontologize others as pure objects for use. Oppression and domination are rejected as legitimate ways of being in relation to all earth-other neighbors even if use is necessary in some respect.[24] Value hierarchy is rejected and the entire creation is placed on an equal moral ground; all are morally considerable and none is intrinsically superior.

This brief discussion of the ecofeminist position leading to biospherical egalitarianism does not, however, justify its use as a model to construct a specifically Christian earth-ethic. To do this, we must see if ecofeminism and biospherical egalitarianism have any precedent or conceptual parallel within the Christian tradition itself.

The Biblical Witness and Biospherical Egalitarianism

In formulating a specifically Christian ethic, the models we use to speak of our relationship with creation must be supported by – or at least be compatible with – the foundational resource of the Christian tradition, namely biblical texts.[25] While many have suggested that the Christian tradition is largely responsible for allowing humans to exploit creation, this conclusion is simplistic.[26] Multiple biblical models support a strong earth ethic, though they may need reinterpretation or extension beyond the intent of the original authors in order to speak to our context today. Thus, while the Christian tradition has played a role in dominating creation, it also contains powerful resources to reverse negative effects and to lead the contemporary Christian community to take earth-care seriously.

While we could approach a biblical earth ethic from numerous angles and appeal to a multitude of scriptural texts, themes, and models, I restrict the focus here to one text/model: Paul's discussion of the eschatological salvation of all creation. [27]

Eschatological Salvation in Romans 8:18-23

Romans 8:18-23 falls within the larger Pauline discussion of *human* salvation (Rom. 8:18-30). Although Paul claims a universal, cosmic salvation, human beings are clearly at the center of the salvific drama being played out in history and God is the primary actor. We cannot pretend that Paul's soteriology is developed to the extent it is used in this essay, and we must recognize that Paul's view of the universe is radically different from the view of modern cosmology.[28] However, despite the apostle's pre-scientific, anthropocentric/theocentric theology and the need to expand his thought through dialog with other sources, Paul can provide a clear, powerful resource for a Christian theology of earth-care.[29] I will present the text under discussion with a brief commentary.[30]

> I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (NRSV)

Here Paul lays out the most inclusive soteriological statement in the New Testament. His discussion of the present time of imperfection and suffering on earth is characterized throughout with an eschatological hope for a future where the corporeal universe is renewed and glorified. He expresses hope for humanity's renewal and redemption as part of the divine plan. However, he is concerned not only with humanity but with all creation, anticipating a cosmic, eschatological redemption.

There are various interpretations of Paul's use of the term "creation" (*ktisis*) in this passage (e.g., the whole creation, humans, non-Christians only, Christians only, celestial beings, non-human creation only). However, the sense of the text seems to support the view that Paul means at least all biotic and abiotic nature, if not all of the cosmos including humanity.[31] (In a

recent study, Cherryl Hunt, David Horrell, and Christopher Southgate assert that "with few exceptions, the consensus amongst recent writers is that *ktisis* refers to non-human creation with or without remainder."[32]) For Paul, creation finds itself in the drama of historical suffering and redemption as a direct result of human sin. The divine subjection of creation to frustration (v. 20) is a vague reference to the Yahwist creation myth and the alienation brought about between humans, God, and nature because of sin (Gen. 3:17-19, esp. v. 17, "Cursed is the ground because of you."). As a result of sin, the entire cosmic order is disrupted and unable to find the freedom it desires.[33]

However, "the creation was *not* subjected to frustration without any hope: the divine judgment included the promise of a better future, when at last the judgment would be lifted."[34] This hope is that the cosmos will be "set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." This freedom is paralleled with the same freedom that Paul and other Christians long for – the redemption of matter through freedom from death and decay. However, if this passage refers to the entirety of the cosmos, it makes little sense to restrict the redemption to mere freedom from biological death. According to Hunt, Horrell, and Southgate, the cosmic term *ktisis* and the narrative background of this passage (the entire narrative of Gen. 1-11, not just Gen. 1-3) "suggest that the *phthora* [decay] to which Paul alludes is a broader phenomenon than simply a reference to mortality."[35] More specifically, the bondage to decay, if we consider Jewish Apocalyptic literature as a broad guide to Paul's meaning, can refer to "corruption, disease, death, decay, suffering, and sorrow."[36] This bondage also leads to "vanity of life in this age" and "major disruptions in the orderly operation of nature."[37] Humans are *not* the only ones who suffer the consequences of the Fall and thereby receive divine redemption from this general trajectory toward decay, purposelessness, and disorder.

The work of Christ provides cosmic redemption for all creation, and Paul seems to hope that one day all members of the cosmos could find their own *telos* without restriction. While death may not be the sole reference here, it is certainly an important part of the divine redemptive scheme. In Paul's thought, biological death is an aberration from the divine will.[38] Death is not a mistake inherent in the design of creation but the result of human sin warping the created order.[39]

> Paul recognizes death to be a biological reality (Rom 6:6; 7:2-3; cf. 8:10, 38; 14:7, 8); yet nowhere in Romans 5–8 do we receive the impression that he thinks of it simply as part of the created, *natural order*.… Quite to the contrary, the apostle indicates that death is an *intrusive warp in the Creator's design* … it is an aberration not just of the life of an individual but of all humanity (5:18-19) and even of the entire cosmos (8:20-22).[40]

Thus, in Pauline soteriology eschatological salvation is thoroughly liberating for the cosmos. Paul calls all domination, suffering, and death into question, asserting that God is working to allow all matter to reach its intended *telos*.[41]

Paul's eschatological vision allows us to imagine new frontiers in which to expand his thought. Since Paul ultimately sees redemption and freedom from decay to be the fate of all matter, thus allowing all to flourish and find their own *telos*, his vision is basically compatible with biospherical egalitarianism, which says that all matter is morally considerable and entitled (as far as possible) to achieve its own end through its natural design. God is not interested in the redemption of any one species alone but cares for the entirety of creation. All creation is incorporated into its creator's vision and all are being drawn toward the same end.

If God is concerned for all creation, and no one thing is redeemed apart from the whole, it is difficult to maintain a value hierarchy in which any one part of creation is more valuable to God than another or to deny the moral considerability of any form of matter.[42] Given both the contemporary environmental crisis threatening all life on the planet and the kinship of all matter established by the evolutionary sciences, Christians would do well to extend Paul's thought to a position of biospherical egalitarianism seeking to treat all matter with dignity and love according to its nature. Yet, we may use even stronger language than egalitarianism. In light of the nature of Christocentric love and since Pauline soteriology envisions freedom from death and decay, I suggest that the language of *nonviolence* and *pacifism* be added to our description, as violence denies an object the power to meet its own *telos*. To develop this idea, I turn now to the work of John Howard Yoder.

John Howard Yoder, Anabaptism, and Eco-pacifism

I use Yoder to finish constructing the eco-pacifism advocated throughout this essay through more precisely defining what it might mean to act nonviolently toward creation.[43] Yoder is known primarily for his advocacy of nonviolence between humans; he did not publish widely on creation ethics. Yet he is not silent on such matters. He comments on issues pertaining to creation ethics in several lesser-known publications and private papers.[44] And in his 1992 essay, "Cult and Culture after Eden: On Generating Alternative Paradigms," he provides a clear response to contemporary issues regarding ethics and our earth-other neighbors.[45] I employ Yoder not as the embodiment of historical Anabaptism on such matters, but as one particularly constructive voice.

In his essay Yoder does not rehash what an Anabaptist theology of nature has always said, but rather employs the spirit of the Anabaptist vision to speak to a new situation, the environmental crisis.[46] He uses the resources of the tradition (e.g., pacifism), along with his biblical insights to imagine a theological model that could help Christians deal with the impact of humans on the earth's sustainability. Yoder calls the Anabaptist tradition to progress in a direction more open to treating other-than-humans with dignity. He does not so much critique Anabaptism as combine its resources with other knowledge to create a novel, earth-friendly Anabaptist theology of nature. His is not the default Anabaptist position, as is sometimes erroneously assumed, but a constructive attempt to move the tradition in a positive direction.

In "Cult and Culture after Eden," Yoder establishes a conceptual framework by which local communities can approach creation ethics.[47] His discussion is aimed at questions that "have to do with how to go on living when all the big questions [concerning the environment] are insoluble."[48] Thus, given an inability to adequately address larger systemic issues, he asks how local communities might think about creation ethics.[49]

First, Yoder rejects a Kantian approach based on "generalizability." A Kantian ethic "says that I should make my decisions while asking whether the maxim that guides me should guide everyone. I should consider myself the prototypical actor in the human drama."[50] Instead, Yoder insists that Christian ethics must represent its own distinct convictions as a value-bearing community. Second, he moves to create values based on Genesis 2-3. The

curse placed upon the cosmos in Gen. 3:17-19 is not accepted as the norm but as the way things have gone wrong. Instead of accepting things as they are, Yoder appeals to the creation myth in Genesis 2 of a primordial period in which the relationship between human and non-humans was characterized by dignity and mutuality, not by domination and exploitation. This utopian setting, however, does not last. He argues that the fall narrative of Genesis 3 represents a human attempt to reject its limited role in nature for one that is sovereign over creation. For Yoder, human rejection of finitude within the Yahwist's creation myth is not merely a piece of ancient wisdom for its own time but a cogent example of a destructive framework still ensnaring much of humanity.

> Seizing the fruit is the claim to sovereignty; "you shall be Godlike" the serpent had said. This may be the point in the ancient cosmology where the metaphor will be most translatable to our times. In that we are not godlike, because we are not godlike, we must discover and yield to the laws and limits and balance that govern life; we are not free to remove vegetation or to add freon as we wish. We cannot graze goats across North Africa, or plow the prairies, or dam the Nile, or log the rainforests, without untoward surprises. To think that we control the system (arbitrarily) will mean seeing its (relative) control slip from our grasp. What was a fertile garden with whose natural potential we could co-operate becomes a desert peopled by weeds and thistles, demanding burdensome labor before yielding any fruit. Death is the final verdict condemning the effort to break free of the divinely intended harmony. Dust returns to dust; our final link with the soil is that having refused to harmonize with it when alive, we are reabsorbed by it when dead.[51]

After the fall, humanity is alienated from nature, unable to achieve fully the conditions of its utopian past yet able to recognize that its situation is not the ideal that God envisions. Yoder describes this through the Cain and Abel narrative, where Cain begins to exploit nature while Abel carries with him relics from a more "natural" past within creation. Yoder describes Cain's move to agricultural subsistence as an aberration from the free provisions of the utopian orchard and Abel's pastoral mode of life, both of which are

more "natural" than Cain's tilling of the earth.[52] Agriculture is not sinful but is a result of sin's entrance into the world in Yoder's interpretation of the myth. Thus, Cain's manipulation of the earth is less natural (hence more violent, since it does not allow nature to proceed of its own accord) than Abel's submission to the needs of the flock and the uncultivated provision for the flock by nature.[53] Cain's sin, and the sin of humanity according to Yoder's interpretation, is not that Cain tilled the soil but that he refused to recognize Abel's way of life and sacrifice were fundamentally closer to the divine ideal.[54] Thus, for Yoder, the fall narrative, including the Cain/Abel legend, represents a movement away from the natural order toward a culture characterized not by peace and interconnectedness but by violence and domination.

Yoder discusses how the whole narrative of creation and fall is read today. There are "technological optimists" who believe that human progress continually leads us closer to an original, utopian past; "religious fatalists" who see the effects of the fall as unchanging until the destruction of the earth in the parousia; and "prophetic critics" who admit that the lives we live now are not the ideal that God desires for creation.[55] The latter do not believe (with the optimists) that we can recreate an edenic utopia in its fullness, but neither do they abandon creation (with the fatalists). Instead, they recognize the idealistic nature of the creation-fall myth, and rather than discount the vision of the past they seek at least to hearken to the divine ideal and let it shape their practice, even if there is no full realization of it.

Yoder seeks to fulfill the role of the "prophetic critic" and challenge both the optimists and fatalists. He rejects the idea that history as it has already unfolded is indicative of the progress of God's will in time. He rejects this idea in light of our knowledge of the earth's finitude and a more nuanced interpretation of the Bible. Alternatively, he suggests we can look to Jesus to critique the direction our collective history has taken. In Yoder's vision, the restrained, reconciling, and compassionate ethic of Jesus is the answer to the disastrous history of industrialization and exploitation that has brought ecological crisis. Accordingly, the Anabaptist vision of Christocentric nonviolence is the model informing Yoder's notion of a sustainable earth ethic. While he does not describe the richness and history of this vision, his commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite pacifism is his starting point. "To

renounce violence is the first functional meaning of affirming creation or nature. To renounce violence in itself solves few problems, but it holds them open for solution."[56]

Yoder expands on nonviolence toward creation in his discussion of apocalyptic language. Apocalyptic dreams provide hope for a creation crushed by systems of violence and domination. But apocalypse is not simply about the future; it is "a call to creative response, denying the last word to a closed system determinism."[57] The response envisioned promotes the sustainable, natural functioning of the cosmos without hindrance from humans. Apocalyptic language "promises that the wholesome potential of creation will one day be fulfilled."[58] This eschatological vision further defines the cosmic nonviolence previously mentioned. Fulfillment seems connected to allowing creation to function on its own terms, apart from human interference. This interpretation is strengthened when we recall how Yoder reads the Cain and Abel narrative. Cain's violence is connected to agriculture, which coerces the ground to produce certain things rather than allowing it to produce and grow of its own accord. Abel, despite sacrificing sheep, is seen as less violent, since his way of life more closely aligns with the natural unfolding of events as determined by the design of nature itself.[59] In Yoder's vision, a nonviolent life toward nature suggests that we interfere as little as possible with the *telos* of our earth-other-neighbors, allowing them to be fulfilled on their own terms by designs that have emerged and will continue to emerge naturally.

For Yoder, the goodness of our communities and our future survival depend on finding creative responses to this vision: "The viability of our culture, as we hit the ceiling of the planet's capacity, will be correlative with our finding ways for our time, as heirs of the apocalyptic hopes of all time, to envision the world that needs to be, on other grounds than that it is the necessary product of our past."[60] That world has minimal human interference with creation. Yoder's vision embraces nonviolence toward creation by allowing it to meet its own *telos* and function according to its own design whenever it is in our power to do so.

Yoder's discussion of earth-care is compatible with, and strengthens, the conclusions outlined earlier in this discussion. Yoder uses nonviolence as an ideal for envisioning an earth-care ethic, applying peace in a way

not traditionally contemplated by Anabaptists. His view fits nicely with the eco-pacifist vision already described and adds a crucial dimension to it, specifying what it would mean to act nonviolently toward our earth-other neighbors. Viewing creation through these lenses leads to a strong, though abstract Anabaptist-Mennonite eco-pacifist ethic easily extended to any Christian tradition. This is an ethic where, in light of the redemption in store for the cosmos, all matter is seen as morally considerable and, as far as possible, allowed to flourish and achieve its own *telos*. Humans must obviously still consume resources, yet consumption would be justified only in a limited, sustainable way. Overcoming the complexities and abstractness of this position will require specific conversations about what constitutes violence toward particular earth-other neighbors.

Pragmatism and Eco-pacifism

Here I should say a word about the practicality of such a vision. An eco-pacifist theology is difficult to imagine, as the means of reaching one's own *telos* are often plainly at odds with the means of another. Death and decay also make sense to us because they are largely responsible for driving creation to its current form. Without supernovas and predatory relationships, the cosmos as we know it would not exist. With these considerations in mind, it is easy to dismiss the eco-pacifist ethic. Total eco-pacifism can be achieved only in an eschatological future where we experience radical ontological change allowing all to find their *telos* without interfering with others. Regardless of how this could happen, it remains a hope within many strands of the Christian tradition.[61]

Just how this future could come to fruition is not my concern here. Instead, I focus on what an eco-pacifist approach might mean for contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonites and others in the Christian community. Some will claim the sheer impossibility of fully practicing eco-pacifism demonstrates its bankruptcy as a usable conceptual framework. While I concede it is impossible to *fully* practice it or to see it realized in the current created order, I do not think it without merit. Despite limitations, its eschatological character does not rule out its function as a moral guide, since Christians are encouraged to begin living according to eschatological values even though the Kingdom of God is an emergent reality only to be fully realized in the future.

There are two ways in which this ethic can impact our communities and lead to a more loving ethic toward our earth-other neighbors. First, the model of eco-pacifism can shape our attitudes toward resources that we must use out of necessity. Humans can at least respect and perhaps lament for that which we *must* use or kill for survival. This could be accomplished apart from a system of value hierarchy. Many living and non-living things would still be used but would not be ontologized as pure objects, as less important than us, or less deserving of dignity. We would thus use our resources wisely, sustainably, and with a mix of thanksgiving and lamentation, in hope of a coming world where all matter, without exception, can flourish.

Second, although eco-pacifism is impossible to fully live out at this time, we may begin to progressively adopt it by moving toward practices that interfere as little as possible with the being of our earth-other neighbors. Eco-pacifism can at least begin shaping our lives, regardless of whether it can be fully realized in the foreseeable future. This approach rejects value hierarchies and positively accepts the potential for changed relationships with our earth-other neighbors. Practical application of this ethic would need to be carefully decided by individual communities based on their understanding of individual earth-other neighbors. I make suggestions below, but the process will require extensive discussion, careful study, and creative imagination.

The eco-pacifist ethic functions as a sort of utopian vision, used by God to perpetually call human communities toward new and better ways of being human. This divine lure toward the fullness of eschatological life could be implemented in small steps as local communities deem it possible and appropriate.[62] "We are thus offered a vision of something beyond ourselves and our past that calls us forward in each moment into a yet unsettled future, luring us with new and richer possibilities for our being. . . . Its power is that of an ideal, a power which is not coercive, but not, for that reason, ineffectual."[63] The eco-pacifist vision is a hope to be fulfilled in the future, yet a constant challenge to live in ways that are increasingly better for us and our earth-other-neighbors. As Jay McDaniel puts it, it is the "divine dream" for what creation will one day become.

> God has a new dream for us, which means that much of the violence we see in creation does not reveal God's dream for us.

> God's dream is that we become a people of radical nonviolence. While it is unreasonable to want or hope that animals can avoid killing one another, we can reduce the suffering we inflict on them and the numbers we kill, and we can avoid our wholesale assault on the Earth. We cannot simply turn to violence in creation as an excuse for our own, either in relation to one another, animals, or the Earth. We are beckoned by God toward an amplification of the dream of communion the likes of which the history of life on Earth has not yet seen.[64]

We could continually see the vision's partial fulfillment as we promote the interests of other-than-humans and live more and more peacefully toward nature.

A Contextual-Eschatological Vegetarian Ethic

However helpful this ethic is, it remains largely abstract. Eco-pacifism thus far has referred broadly to an ethic seeing all matter as morally considerable and employing the ideal of nonviolence to treat all matter (insofar as possible) in accord with its intrinsic nature, allowing it to achieve its own *telos* and function according to its own design. While this is not bad (a conceptual framework must undergird concrete decisions), we must eventually make specific suggestions for implementing this ethic. While it has enormous implications for climate change and the functioning of ecosystems as a whole, I focus here on the lives of individual animals, a neglected topic in eco-theology.[65] I specifically address the use of animals as food, though their use in scientific research and entertainment is just as crucial to discuss.[66] My focus comes from a conviction that although we must consume some earth-other neighbors as resources, ending sentient life is more problematic than ending non-sentient life.[67] Non-sentient life is of course still morally considerable, but its basic nature leads us to prioritize using it.[68]

From the outset, I should stress that this vegetarian ethic is not envisioned as historically absolute and binding. It is contextual, not ontological. I do not believe it can be embraced by all peoples or fully realized this side of the eschaton. Total nonviolence toward all other animal species is simply impossible at this time in history – and not just in terms of what humans eat. Numerous examples suggest particular communities *must*

rely on animals for food and other resources for survival. In geographical settings where climate conditions seriously limit agriculture, humans have no recourse but to eat other animals. This may be lamentable, but it cannot be condemned.[69] Animals are thus justifiably eaten out of biological and geographical necessity.[70]

Nevertheless, nonviolence toward animals reflects the eschatological ethic of the Christian tradition. In view of the peaceful hope of the cosmos, Christians should at least take food ethics more seriously. Perhaps the place to start is to question the legitimacy of intensive factory farming as a means of obtaining animal-based food. Michael Northcott refers to the modern industrialization of meat production as "the most cruel and exploitative chapter in the history of humanity's relationship with other animals."[71] The treatment of animals in these contexts is a far cry from traditional husbandry practices where, until an untimely death, an animal's life was likely in line with its nature. In light of the eco-pacifist vision, industrial meat production is a highly suspect, if not abominable, practice. If humans continue to eat meat (along with eggs and dairy), they could at least yield to a more animal-friendly food ethic as a prophetic response to an industry that strips away the dignity of God's creation.[72]

However, we may choose to go a step further. The eco-pacifist vision encourages those who can exist without eating animal flesh to strongly consider doing so. Those embracing an ethic that rejects violence and envisions an eschatological future where all creation is liberated from the power of death and suffering should embrace peace to the greatest degree possible. We ought to avoid killing, causing suffering, and interfering negatively with animal lives whenever we can. In so doing, we embrace and expand the nonviolence of Christ by allowing the *telos* of animals to be fulfilled. If we can exist on a vegetarian diet, we should do so, refusing to participate in the untimely deaths and sufferings of animals. We ought to see them as earth-other neighbors who desire, like humans, to fulfill their *telos* by living out their days in species-specific abundance and peace.[73]

Perhaps the call to rethink food ethics is a response to an ineffable divine lure toward a better way of being human.[74] Surely, even if we reject all animal food products, our ethic would not be commensurate with the eschatological hope for which creation longs. However, it would be a step

toward realizing the divine dream of a cosmos free of violence and suffering in which all matter can flourish.[75]

Notes

[1] Some exceptions are Calvin Redekop, "Toward a Mennonite theology and ethic of creation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 60 (1986): 387-403; Walter Klaassen, "'Gelassenheit' and Creation," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 9.1 (Winter 1991): 23-35; and Calvin Redekop, ed., *Creation and the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2000).

[2] Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1992).

[3] Two of the most important ethologists for the purpose of theological ethics are Marc Bekoff and Frans De Waal. See F.B.M. de Waal, *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996), and *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Harmony Books, 2009); Marc Bekoff, *Animals Matter: A Biologist Explains Why We Should Treat Animals with Compassion and Respect* (Boston: Shambhala, 2007); and *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy – And Why They Matter* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2007); Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009).

[4] See, e.g., Michael Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).

[5] These insights are saying something real about the cosmos. While it could be construed as a "Western" approach, the appeal I make here refers to ideas widespread among many cultures. This appeal to science represents the story of no one culture but can increasingly be said to be, with cultural modifications, the story of the universe itself, which obviously would include all humans.

[6] By "earth-other neighbor," I refer to all the multiform manifestations of matter on the Earth, biotic life as well as abiotic aggregates.

[7] Françoise d'Eaubonne, *Le féminisme ou la mort* (Paris: Pierre Horay, 1974).

[8] For a brief history of ecofeminism, see Charlene Spretnak, "Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering," in *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, ed. Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), 3-14.

[9] Val Plumwood, "Ecofeminism: An Overview and Discussion of Positions and Arguments," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64 suppl. (1986): 121.

[10] Rosemary Radford Reuther, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 204.

[11] Ibid., 186.

[12] The explanation of the link between value dualism, women, and nature is in Plumwood's words a "chicken and egg" problem. Is it, as Reuther claims, that the domination of women led to the domination of nature? Or was it the other way around? Did dualistic thinking cause women to be treated with less dignity? Or did women suffer from domination already, which in turn led to dualistic thought? See Val Plumwood, "Ecofeminism: An Overview and Discussion of Positions and Arguments," 123.

[13] Karen Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 46.

[14] Warren defines oppression in terms of practices preventing self-determined entities from using resources to accomplish their goals. Thus, not all who are dominated (subordinated to others) are oppressed, as Warren assumes that plants, rivers, mountains and other such non-personal entities do not have self-determined choices or options. While all oppression involves domination, not all domination involves oppression. Despite the technical difference in definitions here, Warren still rejects both domination and oppression. See ibid., 54-55, for a discussion. The difference is important but does not play a major role in this essay because of space constraints.

[15] Ibid., 46.

[16] Hierarchical thinking is not itself condemned here. Some hierarchical thinking may be morally neutral or only descriptive. Organizing information, for example, is a benign process that orders and classifies according to hierarchies. Also, certain things are relatively better than other things in particular ways (e.g., homo sapiens is better at radically re-shaping the environment than a rock). Problems arise when these thought patterns are used to make judgments on the moral status or inherent worth of the individuals in question and to justify domination. The condemnation of hierarchy and dualism applies only to the moral considerability of matter. This protects us from moving towards a flat relativism where anything goes.

[17] Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, 46-47.

[18] Ibid., 54.

[19] This does not mean that rejecting domination or subordination outlaws use in any way. Use of resources does not automatically constitute domination. I discuss this further below.

[20] Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement. A Summary," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Biospherical egalitarianism does not lead to the conclusion that all bodies (living and non-living) should be treated identically. Instead, it asserts that no earth-other neighbor is intrinsically worthy of more or less moral consideration than another. All matter is to be considered and treated morally. This can, however, lead to multiple ways of acting toward different earth-other neighbors. Moral consideration of these neighbors must take into account the particular nature, needs, and (if possible) desires of the other. Thus, treating a river morally looks different from treating its fish morally.

[24] For an ecofeminist example of this alternative ontology that uses resources without objectifying them, see Val Plumwood, "Integrating Frameworks for Animals, Humans, and Nature: A Critical Feminist Eco-Socialist Analysis." *Ethics and the Environment* 5.2

(Autumn 2000): 285-322. For a response attempting to refute this view, see David Eaton, "Incorporating the Other: Val Plumwood's Integration of Ethical Frameworks," *Ethics and the Environment* 7.2 (2002): 153-93.

[25] Considering the polyphonic nature of the biblical witness, we need not establish that the entirety of the Bible is compatible. Instead, there ought to be at least some traditions within the Christian scriptures that could support biospherical egalitarianism.

[26] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (10 March 1967): 1203-07. For a discussion of issues involved here, see Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 67-116.

[27] Other such models/texts helpful in forming a creation ethic are the creation, fall, and flood narratives; Sabbath and jubilee; proper procedures for sacrifice and handling animal blood; Isaiah's peaceable kingdom; the renewing of the earth in 1 Peter and Revelation; the kenosis theology of the New Testament, and the incarnation and sacramental nature of all matter following from it; and the triune nature of God as expressed in the Christian tradition.

[28] Paul's universe is not chaotic and evolving but intentionally fashioned and controlled by God. Creation is fashioned in a determined way, cursed by God, and suffers because of human sin. Its redemption is dependent on human redemption and is the action of God alone. God's direct intervention is at odds with much theological/scientific thinking in light of contemporary physics. For an example of a non-interventionist theology of divine action, see especially Denis Edwards, *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption, and Special Divine Action* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010) and Phillip Clayton, "Natural Law and Divine Action: The Search for an Expanded Theory of Causation," *Zygon* 39. 3 (2004): 615-36. For more technical scientific perspectives on divine actions, see the following in the *Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action* series produced by Vatican Observatory Publications in the Vatican State: Robert Russell et al., *Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action: Twenty Years of Challenge and Progress* (Volume 6, 2008); *Quantum Mechanics* (Volume 5, 2002); *Neuroscience and the Person* (Volume 4, 1999); *Evolutionary and Molecular Biology* (Volume 3, 1998); *Chaos and Complexity* (Volume 2, 1995); *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature* (Volume 1, 1993).

[29] Unlike anthropocentrism, theocentrism may not seem like a problem in this text. However, if God is the sole actor in the drama of liberation, then the role of humans, imperative in regard to anthropogenic climate change, could be dismissed or downplayed. Humans must be seen as actors in this liberating drama. Thus, not all the principles outlined in Paul's letter are helpful. Rather, the general orientation of the passage is our focus.

[30] For a full account of this passage and its relation to eco-theology, including references to significant other sources in biblical studies, see Cherryl Hunt, David Horrell, and Christopher Southgate, "An Environmental Mantra? Ecological Interest in Romans 8:19-23 and a Modest Proposal for Its Narrative Interpretation," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 59.2 (2008): 546-79. For an excellent exegesis of the passage in light of Jewish apocalyptic works, see Harry Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8:19-22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, Library of New Testament Studies 336 (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 171-209.

[31] Paul's use here likely does not include humans, and definitely does not include non-physical creation such as angels, demons, or the heavenly realm. For a history of the interpretation and issues involved in the exegesis, see Hahne, 176-81. See also Hunt, Horrell, and Southgate, "An Environmental Mantra?," 546-55.
[32] Ibid., 558.
[33] Though there are distinct nuances of such a theology, this general idea is common throughout Jewish apocalyptic literature. See Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 35-168.
[34] C.E B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 1978), 414. Emphasis added.
[35] Hunt, Horrell, and Southgate, "An Environmental Mantra?," 561.
[36] Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 212.
[37] Ibid., 212-13.
[38] C. Clifton Black, "Pauline Perspectives on Death in Romans 5–8." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103.3 (1986): 413-33.
[39] Robert Jewett says it is probable that "Paul has in mind the abuse of the natural world by Adam and his descendants." Humans thus play an even more active role in the domination of nature in Jewett's reading. The suffering of nature is not just general cosmic disruption but a direct result of human domination. See Jewett's *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 513.
[40] Ibid., 429-30. See also Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 212.
[41] The "intended *telos*" of different forms of matter may be debated, especially between ancient and modern sources (e.g., in ancient sources the *telos* of the other-than-human is often to serve the human). While I will not parse out the differences here, the *telos* of nature is shown below to be very important for a theology of eco-pacifism.
[42] God may be concerned for various forms of matter in different ways, according to their nature, but it is not easily said that God is more concerned with one part of creation than another.
[43] Relegating the discussion to one theologian is not for a lack of writing within the Anabaptist community. Yoder's ethic is not well known, so it ought to be discussed. But see also Redekop, "Toward a Mennonite theology and ethic of creation"; Klaassen, "'Gelassenheit' and Creation"; and Redekop, *Creation and the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World* (all details in Note 1 above).
[44] John Howard Yoder, "The Impact of Evolutionary Thinking on Theology" (paper presented to Mennonite Graduate Fellowship, Chicago, 1959), and "Theological Perspectives on 'Growth with Equity,'" in *Growth with Equity: Strategies for Meeting Human Needs*, ed. Mary Evelyn Jegen and Charles K. Wilber (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 9-16; Thomas L. Shaffer and John Howard Yoder, *Moral Memoranda from John Howard Yoder: Conversations on Law, Ethics, and the Church between a Mennonite Theologian and a Hoosier Lawyer* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002).
[45] John Howard Yoder, "Cult and Culture after Eden: On Generating Alternative Paradigms," in *Human Values and the Environment: Conference Proceedings, Human Values and the Environment Conference* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters,

1992), 1-10.

[46] While historic Anabaptism does speak to a theology of nature, an environmental theology such as Yoder constructs was not even possible before the rise of the environmental movement and such publications as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962) and Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968). Until the rise of this movement, no conceptual framework existed for the specifics of the theology Yoder constructs. With few precedents for a modern theology of nature, he uses resources at his disposal to envision one. Going back to the roots of Anabaptism shows that while some thinkers took physical matter seriously (e.g., Hut and the Marpeck circle), they still operated in a Thomistic, hierarchical understanding where all matter served the interests of humans. Not until the advent of modern science was this idea thoroughly replaced by a more interconnected, egalitarian view.

[47] Though he addresses primarily local Christian communities, he indicates that nothing makes this framework inherently unintelligible for other communities. "The themes I propose to attend to are 'Christian' in the setting where I see them, although I can see nothing that would keep them from being shared by Jews or by original Americans … they take account of a value bearing community which is neither the same as, nor in control of, the world as a whole." Yoder, "Cult and Culture after Eden," 1.

[48] Ibid.

[49] This does not discount the need to address larger systemic issues. Yoder was speaking in a specific context, leaving systemic questions for others to handle. For systemic issues, see for example Northcott, *A Moral Climate*.

[50] Yoder, "Cult and Culture after Eden," 1.

[51] Ibid., 4.

[52] Yoder sees agriculture as close to nature but not natural. What was "natural" in the myth was the reception of fruit from the orchard of Eden and Abel's submission to the "natural" wandering of his flock that ate the food which the earth provided ("Cult and Culture after Eden," 5).

[53] Ibid.

[54] "The sin of Cain … began when he refused to recognize that his brother Abel was closer to the beginnings and closer to the God of the natural than he was. But he deepened that offense and estrangement, and made it irrevocable, when he chose not to share in Abel's sacrifice of a sheep from the flock; instead, in a macabre parody of the killing of an innocent sheep, he sacrificed his innocent brother." Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 5-6.

[56] Ibid., 8.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 9.

[59] Presumably this view could be extended to refusing unnecessary killing of our earth-other neighbors, and it undercuts living matter's ability to reach its own *telos*. That Yoder does not reject Abel's sacrifice of sheep does not preclude this. Yoder's vision does not look backward but forward. The past does not determine the character of our present and future ethic. However, it is difficult to determine what Yoder would have thought about killing animals.

[60] Yoder, "Cult and Culture after Eden," 9.
[61] A helpful discussion of difficulties with Paul's theology is John Cobb and David J. Lull, *Romans* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 124-27. Cobb and Lull agree that eschatological hope for the future is crucial, though the form it will take is uncertain. They posit a continuing life after death in which Paul's vision is fulfilled, and they reject theologies that spurn the concept of life after death or restrict soteriology to the historical period.
[62] The language of divine "lure" is prominent in process theology. See John Cobb, *God and the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 42-66. Cobb also discusses utopian ethics and ideals as a guide to human imagination away from slavery to the past towards ever better future possibilities. These possibilities are never fully realized but serve to pull humans to a progressively better ethic in this world.
[63] Ibid., 55.
[64] Jay McDaniel, *With Roots and Wings: Christianity in an Age of Ecology and Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 109.
[65] Species as a whole are often discussed, but these discussions usually focus on exotic or endangered species. Species preservation remains a crucial issue, but not at the expense of the lives of individual creatures with whom we regularly interact. However, a growing number of theologians focus on individual creatures. See, for example, Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1995) and *Why Animal Suffering Matters: Philosophy, Theology, and Practical Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009). Also see the essays in Charles Robert Pinches and Jay McDaniel, eds. *Good News for Animals? Christian Approaches to Animal Well-Being* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993) and Celia Deane-Drummond and David Clough, eds., *Creaturely Theology: On God, Humans and Other Animals* (London: SCM Press, 2009). In "'Gelassenheit' and Creation," Walter Klaassen suggests Gelassenheit should be reinterpreted to reject the "long tradition of violence of humans toward the natural world, violence against the soil, against animals, birds, trees, water and air" (32).
[66] See Hunt, Horrell, and Southgate, "An Environmental Mantra?" See also the essays in David Grumett and Rachel Muers, eds., *Eating and Believing: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), especially those by Christopher Southgate, "Protological and Eschatological Vegetarianism," and Michael Northcott, "Eucharistic Eating, and Why Many Early Christians Preferred Fish." For a broader perspective on the ethics of eating animals, including the ecological impact of a diet centered on animal flesh, see Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 232-66.
[67] This does not imply that animal life is inherently worth more than non-animal life or abiotic matter. It simply acknowledges that the difference allows for different concrete practices. The presence of suffering in animals leads me to prioritize their well-being, since the *telos* of some things (e.g., plants) must be interfered with for life to continue.
[68] This is an exceedingly complex issue. No human (or any being) can exist without consuming resources. At some point a detailed discussion on resource use, and when it is justifiable to thwart the *telos* of an earth-other neighbor, is needed. The answer would undoubtedly be different according to the parts of creation in view. This may lead to dualistic ethics like mine (e.g., animals vs. plants vs. non-living matter), but it would not deny moral considerability.

I suggest two guiding principles here. First, we may kill when it is biologically necessary for survival. Humans and some animals must kill plants in order to survive. In these cases, death is lamentable yet inevitable. This also protects the eco-pacifist ethic from being employed to justify killing humans as a result of conflict (e.g., war is not a biological necessity to survival). Second, if we can avoid killing our earth-other neighbors who are sentient and capable of suffering, we absolutely should. Since we must use some resources and thus interfere with their *telos*, the difference between those that can suffer and those that cannot is crucial. Matter that has become aware of itself and consequently can suffer calls for more ethical consideration. The dividing line between what is or is not sentient and can suffer is a further complication (can a bivalve, such as a clam, suffer?), but at least "higher" mammals clearly fall into the sentient-and-capable-of-suffering category. Sustainable use can be our guide for nonviolence. Thus, unless it is necessary, eco-pacifists would resist killing that which can suffer and would support (as far as possible) only sustainable use of all other resources. This line of thinking flows out of what we have seen in Yoder.

[69] Even building houses is bound to disrupt some animal life. No way of life we can imagine will completely avoid harm to some animals and other forms of life.

[70] Biological and geographical necessity would still not justify the practices of modern industrialized factory farming. When humans must take animal life, it must be done with reverence and respect. The importance of the life blood of all animals in the Hebrew Bible indicates that the taking of life is to be done only in view of the inherent worth of God's creation. If the eating of animals is allowed, it must be construed and carried out as a form of sacred eating. Southgate also makes a strong case for traditional/cultural justifications for eating animals. See "Protological and Eschatological Vegetarianism," in *Eating and Believing*. I am not completely convinced by his argument, though it must be taken seriously. Biological and geographical necessity seems the better way to determine the justifiable eating of animals.

[71] Northcott, "Eucharistic Eating, and Why Many Early Christians Preferred Fish," in Grumett and Muers, eds., *Eating and Believing*,.

[72] Simply cutting down on animal-based food is a move toward a better earth-ethic. Because of the ubiquity of "meat" eating in industrial societies, I am pessimistic that large numbers of people will become vegetarians. However, cutting down on meat or choosing to buy from small, local farming operations is a step toward what I am proposing. In terms of eggs and dairy, I find it difficult to argue that consuming animal products is morally wrong if a result of ethically based relationships of mutualism. Mutualism is ubiquitous in biological life, and if done ethically it cannot be questioned in the same way as meat-eating. The support of ethical mutualism is perhaps one way to dialog with Southgate's concern that vegetarianism too strongly breaks the relationships between animals and humans (see his "Protological and Eschatological Vegetarianism" in *Eating and Believing*). Mutualism could facilitate the human/animal friendship and care that Southgate supports, without unnecessary animal deaths.

[73] This does nothing to prevent predation and other forms of natural deaths; predation is in fact necessary for the *telos* of some animals to be fulfilled. This ethic cannot be extended beyond our own species. The eco-pacifist ethic described here indicates a partial fulfillment

that is incomplete on this side of the eschaton. While death through predation and disease will surely continue, humans do not have to participate in furthering and multiplying animal deaths.

[74] I do not want to suggest that vegetarianism is simply and always ethical. Growing and transporting vegetables can be done in ways that are ultimately harmful to the Earth and human well-being.

[75] I thank Nekeisha Alexis-Baker, Sam White, Ted Koontz, and Luke Gascho for their insights on earlier drafts of this essay.

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