

## [Five dimensions of our ethical relationships with animals: A review on the book titled "Just Fodder, \*The Ethics of Feeding Animals\*" written by Dr. Josh Milburn](#)

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### Abstract

This article presents a book review of "Just Fodder: The Ethics of Feeding Animals" by Dr Josh Milburn. The review outlines the structure and purpose of the book and provides a neutral summary of the main arguments presented in each chapter. It also discusses the perspective of the book reviewer and other scholars to contextualize the concepts discussed. The article emphasizes the relevance of the book for animal lovers, activists, and advocates, urging readers to reflect on the ethical questions raised by the author. The book covers various topics, including the animal-human relationship, animal carnivory, companion animals, animal neighbors, animal thieves, animal refugees, and wild animals. The review highlights the importance of considering ethical relationships with animals and explores the potential implications for future research. It also discusses the relevance of the book's arguments for non-human animal veganism and its impact on different lifestyle practices. Overall, the review acknowledges the book's significant contribution to the understanding of the animal-human relationship and calls for further exploration of the ethical considerations surrounding the feeding of animals.

Keywords: Ethical consumption, animal-human relationship, veganism, book review

### Resumen:

Este artículo presenta una reseña del libro "Just Fodder: The Ethics of Feeding Animals" del Dr. Josh Milburn. La reseña describe la estructura y el propósito del libro, y proporciona un resumen neutral de los principales argumentos presentados en cada capítulo. También se discute la perspectiva del revisor del libro y de otros académicos para contextualizar los conceptos discutidos. El artículo enfatiza la relevancia del libro para amantes de los animales, activistas y defensores, instando a los lectores a

reflexionar sobre las preguntas éticas planteadas por el autor. El libro abarca diversos temas, incluyendo la relación entre animales y humanos, el carnivorismo animal, los animales de compañía, los animales vecinos, los ladrones de animales, los animales refugiados y los animales salvajes. La reseña destaca la importancia de considerar las relaciones éticas con los animales y explora las posibles implicaciones para futuras investigaciones. También se analiza la relevancia de los argumentos del libro para el veganismo de los animales no humanos y su impacto en diferentes prácticas de estilo de vida. En general, la reseña reconoce la importante contribución del libro a la comprensión de la relación entre animales y humanos, y aboga por una mayor exploración de las consideraciones éticas en torno a la alimentación de los animales.

Palabras Clave: Consumo ético, relación animal-humano, veganismo, reseña de libro.

## 1. Introduction

Researcher network, Gelareh Salehi, reviews the essentials of the animal-human relationship topic- titled "Just Fodder, *The Ethics of Feeding Animals*" written by Dr. Josh Milburn<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Josh Milburn is a moral philosopher and lecturer in Political philosophy. His research interests are animal ethics, food philosophy, political theory, and applied ethics. He is currently a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Loughborough University<sup>2</sup>.

In this book review, the structure, assumptions, and purpose of the book, "Just Fodder, *The Ethics of Feeding Animals*". First, a step-by-step neutral summary of the arguments presented in each chapter of the book is presented. Second, the personal perspective of the book reviewer, and other scholars' positions to contextualize the main concept of the book are explicated. Finally, in the conclusion of this book review, a briefing of its benefits to non-academic interested parties toward the animal-human relationship and how it opens new avenues for future research inquiries.

For those animal lovers, animal activists, and animal advocates who have (or don't have) relationships with animals, it seems a good idea to read this book and think deeper about the ethical questions raised by the author. The book includes eight chapters. Starting with an introduction to the triangle of animals, food, and philosophy, the animal-human relationship<sup>3,4</sup> practices are questioned in the first chapter. The

second chapter addresses the problem of animal carnivory <sup>5</sup>. Chapter 3 discovers our relationship with our "animal family": pets or companion animals<sup>6</sup>. Chapter 4 reflects our "animal neighbors" <sup>7</sup>: urban and suburban animals who live among us but not in our households. Chapter 5 explores a particular kind of animal neighbor: "animal thieves" who want to eat the crops in our farmland that we grow for ourselves<sup>8</sup>. Chapter 6 turns to the "animal refugees," the wild animals in need of aid<sup>9</sup>. Chapter 7 looks to "animal strangers" <sup>10</sup>. As is shown in Figure 1, chapters 3 to 7, five dimensions of our relationships with animals are explored. Finally, chapter 8 concludes with a list of take-away conclusions from this book's analysis.

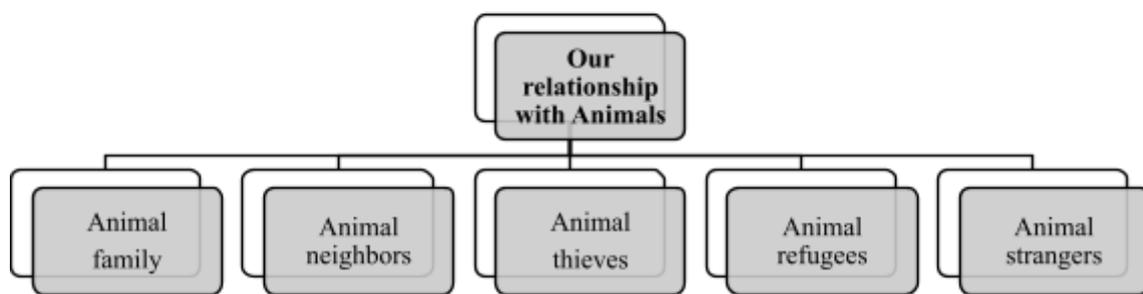


Figure 1. Five dimensions of our relationship with animals, according to Milburn

## 2. Book Summary

### 2.1 Introduction: *Animals, Food, Philosophy*

This book is about different questions and ethical dilemmas raised when we -as individuals, cs, and food in philosophical discourse. Specifically, as individuals, collectives, and legislatures in this book, Dr. Josh Milburn bridges this philosophical gap by critical analysis of normative dimensions of animal-based dietary practices. We can find out about diverse ethical Animal-Human Relationships (AHR) and how these relationships influence our "normative obligations" concerning animals. While the issue is usually rejected by animal ethicists<sup>11</sup>, in this book, the author aims to highlight animal foods to raise a clearer idea of just fodder but the justice of feeding animals. This idea is presented by bridging the continuum between (1) "moral, social, and political philosophy"; and (2) "the *right* of justice and the *good* of morality."

## *2.2 Feeding Animals to Animals: The Problem of Carnivory*

Animal lovers usually confront a paradox<sup>12</sup>, or an ethical dilemma -named "vegetarian's dilemma"<sup>13</sup> -toward feeding carnivores (or omnivore) companions such as cats or dogs. In brief, feeding carnivore animals might raise the dilemma while believing that all animals, including farm animals, are worth living<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, their meat-eating has a biological explanation, not (as in the occasion of humans) an ideological concern. A moral dilemma<sup>14</sup> accordingly ascends. How will the carnivores control the need for meat? A variety of hypothetically harm-free sources of meat are recognized for carnivore animals. This chapter concludes that many companion animals we feed (at least, dogs and cats), regardless of their biology or our relationship with them, can be nourished with plant-based options, which in turn decreases the suffering of animals raised for food. This suggestion, -companion veganism- is also supported by recent academic evidence on plant-based diets for pets.<sup>16,17</sup> However, the best solution seems to recommend further research inquiries on this overlooked question.

## *2.3 Animal Family*

The normative grounds of our obligation to feed animal families, who are our pets (companions) is re-questioned in this chapter, through the context of ethic-human relationship (AHR). These obligations rely on how we perceive animal families: (1) our family members, (2) members of other families, or (3) co-citizens. Any of these three perceptions are affected by other factors. Several factors that may motivate our decisions about how to feed our companions are explored in this chapter. In this sense, phenomena such as food justice, dignity, nature, and freedom are reviewed through the lens of feeding animals. The author afterward expands the animal-human relationship beyond the guardian/companion bond, arguing that companions' right to be fed expresses their needs to be considered in political decision-making settings.

## *2.4 Animal Neighbors*

Animal neighbors are those animals who are not fully wild, not controlled by us, but live among us without being in our household. They are in the "contact zone"<sup>18</sup> between animals and humans. Our feeding decision is different toward them: (1) sometimes, we choose to nourish them (e.g., garden birds); or (2) sometimes we *avoid* feeding them (e.g., like the rats with under-maintained compost loads). Dr. Milburn proposed that the

"*hospitableness*" concept identifies our relationships with these animals. Briefly, according to the author, we can choose to spread hospitality to our animal neighbors, but we don't have any obligation to do so. When we do outspread hospitality, we may undertake assured responsibilities regarding our guests' wellbeing.

### *2.5 Animal Thieves*

Animal thieves are those who usually live around or among arable farms or (un)cultivated spaces. For example, rats, rodents, birds, or reptiles could be categorized in this group. The human-animal controversy with animal thieves occurs because these groups are seeking the food humans are actually growing for themselves (or for other animals) through harvesting practices. As a concluding remark, the author claimed that the existence of animal thieves calls for the development of vertical, indoor agriculture. This is a form of arable farming that could, in theory, crop food without *any* effect on our animal neighbors.

### *2.6 Animal Refugees*

In this chapter, regarding the feeding situation of "animal refugees," the author argued that not only should animals in these wildlife institutions not be nourished meat, but that 'rehabilitated' destructive animals should not be unrestricted. The underlying reason for this argument is that the rescuers' involvement in these animals' lives endorses noteworthy accountability for the animals' following actions on the heads of humans. Released predatory animals will, in all probabilities, place significant responsibility on the rescuers.

### *2.7 Animal Strangers*

We might rethink the norms about what we do and do not owe to "wild animals." In this book, it is argued, though, that even if we have a responsibility of protecting wild animals from their predators, there are bounds to what we may allowably do in quest of that objective. Hence, for instance, if we consider the assumption that we ought to avoid reorganizing the ecosystems. Instead, it is contended that even if we do *not* have a duty to feed "wild animals" in the necessity, we can gain such a commitment when we become intertwined with these animals in an ethically salient manner. Our responsibility

for harm caused to animals due to climate change may stipulate a morally salient predicament.

## *2.8 Conclusion*

The author did not pretend that this book has seized all the possible relationships that we have with animals. It has not explored the outlines of the most significant relationship, our food-related relationship with animals. The fact that we farm animals for producing our food. Still, the feeding of farm animals raises ethical and political queries. No chapter is dedicated to this relationship for a sincere reason. As it is explored in chapter 2, this is a relationship that should not be endured. Whereas there are certainly imperative concerns for advocates and activists concerning the feeding of these animals, this book is not about activism. It is a book about how we may relate to animals.

### 3. Overview of the book

The question of the choice of pet food to feed companions, neighbors, or other animals in need, is raised and explained in the book. It seems reasonable to not expand the human veganism concerns to carni-omni-vore non-human animals. This idea relies on four prepositions. First, scientific evidence on human well-being through following vegan diet is available so far (Craig & Mangels, 2009). However, for veganism of carnivore animals more multidisciplinary research attempts including both social and veterinary science are needed to provide comprehensive and reliable arguments. Second, omni-carni-vore dietary practices of humans compromise animal farming. However, omni-carni-vore practices of animals (except for pet foods) do not involve factory farming. Third, in the debates for human veganism, WE as humans discuss ethical choices for OURSELVES. However, in non-human animal veganism, WE discuss dietary decisions about OTHER sentient which confronts another perspective. It also raises some thoughts on the selfishness of giving the rights to the humans to make decisions on other sentient natural dietary practices. Finally, in contrast to many non-human animals, relatively, humans have access to a variety of nutritious food most of the time which gives them the decisional ability for choosing food sources.

Well-developed philosophical reasonings of this book could be conceptualized not only in critical animal-human studies. For example, the idea that we do not have the right to make decisions about non-human animals could be expanded to other related decisions. For example, vegan parents' decisions to raise vegan children could be questioned with the same arguments.

It is also worthy to consider that the arguments on feeding animals, although supported by some examples, are developed in an abstract manner. While, conceptualizing each question in a specific context, or case study may bring better clarity and decreases the risk of misleading non-academics who are interested in the topic.

To close, whether convincing or debating, whether applicable for all people or situations, this book brings a significant and imperative contribution for animal advocates (and/or activists), social scientists, philosophers, and other academic sectors parties to think about and understand the animal-human relationship from a broader point-of-view.

Human veganism is considered ethical, supported by reasonable and evidence-based arguments. Thus, one of the human-animal relationship dimensions is that eating animals is excluded to be explained distinguishably. Future research, focusing on comparative arguments of human veganism, and non-human animals' veganism may bring deeper conceptualizations on the questions about feeding animals.

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