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The role of professionalization regarding female exploitation in the Nonhuman Animal rights movement

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Abstract

Adams (2004, *The pornography of meat*. London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd), Deckha (2008, Disturbing images: PETA and the feminist ethics of animal advocacy. *Ethics and the environment*, 13(2), 35–76), Gaarder (2011, *Women and the animal rights movement*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press), Glasser (2011, Tied oppressions: an analysis of how sexist imagery reinforces speciesist sentiment. *The Brock review*, 12(1), 51–68), and others have criticized People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) for sexually exploiting young women in outreach and fundraising efforts. This article extends these critiques in addressing the problematic relationship between objectified volunteer female activists and Nonhuman Animal rights organizations (Animal Liberation Victoria, Fish Love, LUSH, and PETA). These organizations have largely professionalized and have consequently refocused their priorities on fundraising for organizational maintenance. An exploration into the social movement literature on the phenomenon of professionalization casts the use of young women's bodies for financial gains

in a more troubling light. The Nonhuman Animal rights industry that exploits the sexuality of female activists ultimately exploits archetypes of women as nurturers and temptresses. These groups also utilize women's vulnerability by targeting female consumers and their sensitivity to body image. This article places female objectification within the logic of social movement professionalization. These organizations merge advocacy with capitalist interests to the ultimate disadvantage of women and Nonhuman Animals alike. The exploitation of female stereotypes and ultimately the female body, it is argued, is ineffective in challenging ideologies of oppression as both a practical and a theoretical matter.

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Keywords

- animal rights,
- gender,
- objectification,
- professionalization,
- social movements,
- sexualization

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