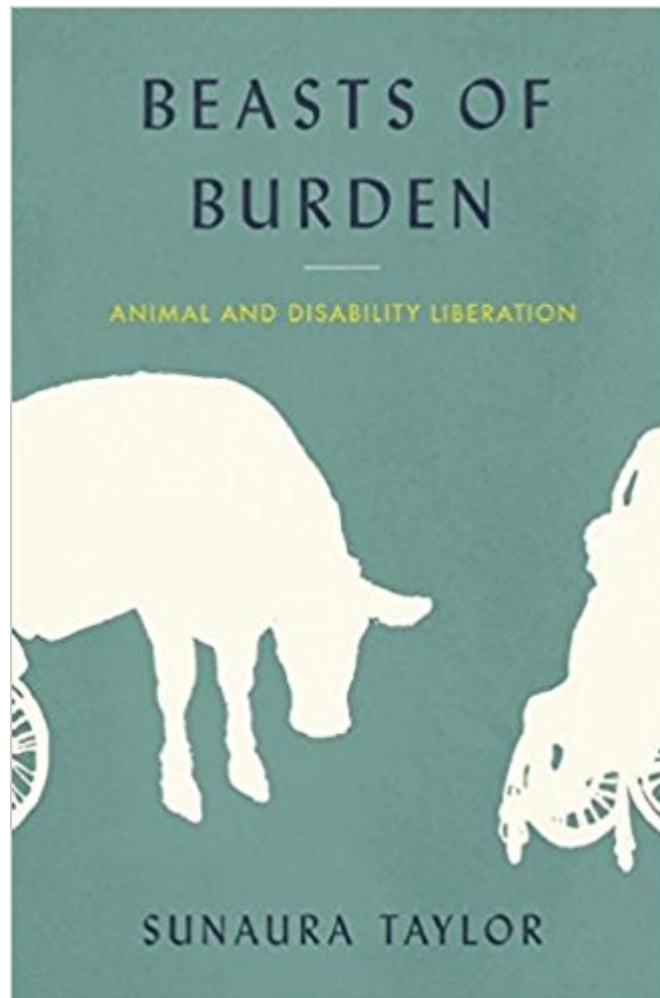




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# Beasts Of Burden: Animal And Disability Liberation



## Synopsis

A beautifully written, deeply provocative inquiry into the intersection of animal and disability liberation; and the debut of an important new social critic. How much of what we understand of ourselves as "human" depends on our physical and mental abilities; how we move (or cannot move) in and interact with the world? And how much of our definition of "human" depends on its difference from "animal"? Drawing on her own experiences as a disabled person, a disability activist, and an animal advocate, author Sunaura Taylor persuades us to think deeply, and sometimes uncomfortably, about what divides the human from the animal, the disabled from the nondisabled; and what it might mean to break down those divisions, to claim the animal and the vulnerable in ourselves, in a process she calls "cripping animal ethics." *Beasts of Burden* suggests that issues of disability and animal justice, which have heretofore primarily been presented in opposition, are in fact deeply entangled. Fusing philosophy, memoir, science, and the radical truths these disciplines can bring, whether about factory farming, disability oppression, or our assumptions of human superiority over animals; Taylor draws attention to new worlds of experience and empathy that can open up important avenues of solidarity across species and ability. *Beasts of Burden* is a wonderfully engaging and elegantly written work, both philosophical and personal, by a brilliant new voice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Beasts of Burden*: "From one of the foremost chroniclers of the twentieth century's other great dilemma, we now have this powerful set of reflections on climate change—they set in

useful and vivid context this great crisis, and will be of use to all as we try to think our way through it."#151;Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*"I am not the same animal I was before I read this book."#151;Alison Kafer, author of *Feminist, Queer, Crip*"Finally, finally someone has come along to undo all the damage Peter Singer has done. *Beasts of Burden* is a brave and brilliant book."#151;Michael B  rub  , author of *Life as We Know It* and *The Secret Life of Stories*"*Beasts of Burden* is a game-changer."#151;Marc Bekoff, author of *Rewilding Our Hearts* and *The Animals   Agenda*Feminist, Queer, Crip"This is a profound and wondrous book. Sunaura Taylor challenges us to rethink what is normal, what is natural, how to measure the value of a life#151;and how to imagine a world in which both human and nonhuman animals, resplendent in their differences and multiplicity, might flourish."#151;Claire Jean Kim, author of *Dangerous Crossings*"A powerful blend of sometimes poignant, sometimes funny, personal stories and sharp, passionate writing."#151;Lori Gruen, author of *Entangled Empathy* and *Ethics and Animals*#147;Sunaura Taylor will shake up your categories, turn your world inside-out, and tell you a lot of fascinating and important things you didn  t know yet, about your own body and the bodies of others, human and nonhuman, under an inhumane regime. A startling, readable, sometimes hilarious inquiry into the human condition from a whole new direction, this book might be very, very important, a book to stand alongside *The Body in Pain* and *The Human Condition*.  #151;Rebecca Solnit#147;Sunaura Taylor has written an amazing book that acts both as an intervention into widely held beliefs about disability and animals and an invitation to reimagine ourselves. Her thoroughly original, brilliant narrative transformed my imagination.  #151;Carol J. Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

Sunaura Taylor is an artist and writer based in New York City. She has written for *AlterNet*, "American Quarterly," "BOMB," the "Monthly Review," "Qui Parle," and "Yes! Magazine." She has contributed to the books "Ecofeminism," "Defiant Daughters," "Occupy!," "Stay Solid," and "Infinite City." Taylor and Judith Butler's conversation is featured in the film "Examined Life" and the book of the same title, published by The New Press.

I learned a lot from this book. It explores and overturns assumptions commonly made about disability in a sensitive manner. It is well written and very accessible. Though I ended up being not 100% sold on correlating animal and disability liberation (presented as the thesis of the book, per the subtitle), there is a lot to be gleaned from it, and I highly recommend it.

Powerful arguments, how speciesism and ableism intersect. Animals are viewed as "subhuman" and the disabled "sub-normal".

Extremely well written and well argued. It has made me rethink my carnivorous ways! An important contribution to disability studies.

This book is about love and makes it crystal clear how damaging prisons are...All life is precious!\*

This book is spectacular. Carol Adams told me about this book about a year before it came out when I was talking to her at a conference. I mentioned that I don't know a lot of people who write about the intersection of disability and animal liberation and she told me that "Beasts of Burden" was in the works. I also read Sunaura Taylor's contribution to the Ecofeminism anthology which completely rocked my world. From that point forward, I eagerly awaited the release date of Sunaura Taylor's book. So, I went into this with very high expectations that were difficult to meet. This book surpassed them. Sunaura tackles topics of disability and animal liberation without separating them from each other or many of the other oppressions that are intertwined with them like race, class, gender, and so on. At the same time, she gives the topics and members of these groups the individualized attention they deserve. One of the best parts about this book is that Taylor does not shy away from the difficult conversations such as forced nonhuman animal research for human health issues, abolitionist rhetoric of rewilding animals and the extinction of domestication (and in turn- the maligning of (inter)dependence), some animal rights activists seeing themselves as "voices for the voiceless," the barriers to accessing vegan food for some people with severe health struggles, and so on. She tackles these topics head on, having discussions about issues where nonhuman animal liberation and disabled human liberation seem to collide- and often shows that they are connected rather than at odds with each other. Taylor also does not shy away from directly and honestly addressing the works of people like Peter Singer and Temple Grandin who represent famous and damaging representations of animal liberation in relation to disability and disability in relation to animal liberation. She is able to parse out the things that have merit while effectively calling attention to the things that do not. I really hope this book becomes one of the staples of animal liberation discourse and disability discourse. Sunaura Taylor argues quite well that the two are intertwined and that ableism is at the center of nonhuman animal oppression and that speciesism is part of the ammo used to demean people with disabilities. It is an invaluable contribution that will hopefully help us create more connections between our movements.

This is perhaps the best animal rights book I have ever read because it isn't single-issue. Taylor clearly articulates how ideologies of inequality (like speciesism and ableism) create systems of oppression that touch all marginalized groups differently, yet produce meaningful parallels. Though focused on disability and animal liberation, she draws heavily upon the ways in which race, class, sexuality, and gender identity shape ableism. Taylor's work is unique in that she seamlessly blends memoir, history, and critical theory (made richer due to her contribution), digesting a staggering amount of research (15 pages of notes' worth!) into an engaging 200 pages that are as heartbreaking as they are hopeful.

well written. lots of interesting anecdotes about the objectification of animals, and the moral corruption associated with slaughtering animals for food. kinda wierd to juxtapose animal rights with human disability rights. lots of wheel reinventing but good synthesis overall.

A

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