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INTRODUCTION

It has been six years since the first volume of the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* (JCAS) was published. Significantly, within this period of time there has been a tremendous growth of interest and commentary from academic and popular circles focused on the broad subject of human-animal studies. Positioned at the cutting edge of these ever-expanding literary landscapes are a range of critical voices; voices which, at the very least, have begun to take important steps forward to politicize the multiple oppressions and struggle that exist within and between the 'human-animal interface¹.' Collectively these arguments have been - and will continue to be - crucial in guiding and advancing our understanding of the common roots of violence and gross exploitation which unite rather than divorce human experiences from the experiences of other animals. Crucially, in doing so, they have begun to clear the grounds for *new* normative visions and *new* collective strategies for change to take root.

Within this critical literature there exists a powerful and central argument, one which considers the pursuit of *either* 'human' *or* 'animal' liberation to be based on highly uncritical, unreflective and superficial understanding of the forces of oppression and domination. Thus, not only are those actions which emerge from such limited understanding destined to fail, but they are also highly counter-productive. A more nuanced and critical understanding would correctly argue that there are *no* absolute and unconditional spaces that exist to divide *all* humans and *all* animals: fundamentally we are one and the same. As Alice Walker² (1986: 6) said:

¹ Importantly, one of the outcomes of this unapologetically inclusive and critical framework has been to radically undermine the binary human-animal opposition so often legitimized within traditional mainstream studies.

² Alice Walker (1986) Am I Blue?

"People...have forgotten, and daily forget, all that animals try to tell us. *"Everything you do to us will happen to you; we are your teachers as you are ours. We are one lesson"* is essentially it, I think."

Importantly, this deeper truth uncovers a rich vein of resources with which to tap into in order to bring about meaningful and lasting (moral) progress in society. It is vital that future discussions within and between those academic and activist communities who are truly interested in liberatory ends, must *at the very least* demonstrate a commitment to engaging with, and acting within, the more inclusive and united concept of 'Total Liberation'.

In this context JCAS (and the *Institute for Critical Animal Studies* more generally) seeks ways in which to best engage and promote these authentic, critical thinkers (and agents for change) and, while doing so, continues to build bridges between broader academic and activist communities where they are most needed. In maintaining an explicit commitment to *critical* animal studies, contributors to the Journal will seek to offer greater clarity and context toward the speciesist nature of the contemporary world, and articulate practical visions and strategies to successfully confront and transcend dominant speciesist ideology, and other forms of oppression and exploitation.

Over the last six years, JCAS has continued to maintain a unique and vital space among other publications focused on animal studies. For those who are interested in exactly what this "unique and vital space" is, particularly in the context of Critical Animal Studies versus Mainstream Animal Studies, I would ask you to read the excellent essay, *"The Rise of Critical Animal Theory: Putting Theory into Action and Animal Liberation into Higher Education"* written by Dr. Steven Best that follows this Editorial. Steve delivers a powerful, passionate and extended commentary that critiques the contributions of mainstream animal studies, the notion of pure theory and the fetishism of theory. Moreover, the essay address the

need to "re-wild" animal studies, and draws explicit attention to the commonalities of oppression, and the need for Alliance Politics to come to the fore in academic and activities communities. The need for a radical departure from old singular human *or* animal *or* earth politics is more urgent than it has ever been, and it is this challenge - that we are living in an era like no other - which drives the essay to its conclusion.

Focusing on the five other essays included in this Issue, *"Bend or Break": Unraveling the Construction of Children and Animals as Competitors in Nineteenth-Century English Anti-Cruelty Movements*" is written by Monica Flegel, and focuses on the complex relationships which are common to two of the most vulnerable and defenceless groups in society: children and animals. This relationship can be both positive and enabling (e.g. in shared empathy and understanding) or negative and disabling (e.g. physical and mental abuse). Monica harnesses a wide variety of illustrations to support her arguments, and makes a clear-headed call to recognise that, while oppression can manifest itself in different ways in different contexts, it is only by understanding these differences (and their common-ness) that activists can move purposefully beyond the false 'human' *or* 'animal' binary which currently retard progress on both fronts in modern society.

Mike Jaynes is the author of the third essay: *"From War Elephants to Circus Elephants: Humanity's Abuse of Elephants."* Mike makes a powerful and critical contribution to the literature, detailing the often horrific and shameful ways in which elephants have been used instrumentally as means to human ends. Significantly, Mike completes this essay with a renewed call for action. In particular he argues that there is the need to recognise the critical responsibilities that key individuals (especially parents and teachers) have in ensuring that the systematic abuse of these wonderful and inspiring giants can be challenged and overcome.

"Mythologies and Commodifications of Dominion in The Dog Whisperer with Cesar Millan"

is written Lisa Jackson-Schebetta. Here Lisa draws our attention to the highly constructed and dominant representations and images which surround and inform the (binary, hierarchical, anthropocentric, imperialistic) relationships that we have toward other dogs (and animals more generally). To acknowledge and understand the dominant mythology and commodification, Lisa argues, is liberating – it is a necessary step towards being able to re-imagine and re-invent a more liberatory future, set firmly against these current narratives of dominion.

The fifth essay is written by Roger Yates. In *"Rituals of Dominionism in Human-Nonhuman Relations: Bullfighting to Hunting, Circuses to Petting"* Roger skilfully develops a persuasive critique which seeks to contextualise the powerful role of social rituals in shaping humans' speciesist relationships with other animals. Consistently referring to Jim Mason's (2005) multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of human-nonhuman relations, Roger draws on a wide range of international examples to illustrate the point in hand: ranging from UK 'royal' pheasant shoots; Spanish bull running; acts-of-blood sacrifices to the North American rodeo riders; and Anglo-American hunters/ shooters. The essay places great emphasis on the cultural changes which are needed if the moral zeitgeist informing our attitudes towards nonhuman animals is to be unshackled from its speciesist chains and evolve.

This Issue ends with the latest contribution to JCAS by Norm Phelps: *"The Quest for a Boundless Ethic: A Reassessment of Albert Schweitzer"*. This is a beautifully written and passionate contribution which focuses on the mixed legacies of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the renowned humanitarian, theologian, missionary, and medical doctor. Within the essay Norm

develops several interesting and critical themes, which certainly includes the ethic of a 'reverence for life' with which Schweitzer is most often associated. There is much to be drawn upon for guidance in many aspects of human-animal advocacy, but perhaps the lesson that 'Grand designs are rarely achieved... Small works endure' may be one of the most important of all.

As a final note to end my first JCAS Editorial, it is an indisputable fact that the 21st Century is increasingly caught up in a violent web of global crises (environmental, economic, political, and social) all of which carry very real and catastrophic implications for both humans and non-human animals. It is my belief though that these crises are still negotiable, and the prospect of creating fundamental change and progress toward a better future is still present. If JCAS can help develop and inspire further discussions and more importantly *actions* related to critical animal studies then it will continue make an invaluable and unique contribution.

Dr. Richard J White

Editor-In-Chief

The Rise of Critical Animal Studies: Putting Theory into Action and Animal Liberation into Higher Education¹

Steven Best²

“The capacity to contain and manipulate subversive imagination is an integral part of the given society.” Herbert Marcuse

In the last three decades, animal studies has experienced an exponential growth rate in the academy. The “animal turn” in academic research has moved throughout humanities, the fine arts, and social sciences; it has crossed into fields such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, political science, sociology; and it has made its mark in literature, history, cultural and critical studies and the arts, geography, philosophy, feminism, and queer theory. Currently, there are at least 40 courses being offered in departments that span these disciplines in universities and colleges in North America, the UK and New Zealand. The turn is manifest in an explosion of articles, books, conferences, and academic programs opening up from Canada to New Zealand.

Without question, these trends will continue and animal studies will evolve in new and stimulating directions. As its popularity increases, this new perspective will gain ever-broader acceptance within academia and, one would hope, within the public realm at large. Within a decade, perhaps, “Animal Studies” programs will be institutionalized globally throughout

¹ I am much indebted to Anthony J. Nocella II, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti, Richard White and Jason Miller for their helpful edits and comments on this essay, which is a foray into the novel and much uncharted territory of critical animal studies.

² Steve Best is an Associate Professor at the University of Texas, El Paso Texas. He is co-editor (with Anthony J. Nocella II and Peter McLaren) of *Academic Repression: Reflections on the Academic-Industrial Complex* (AK Press 2009) and author of *Moral Progress and Animal Liberation: The Struggle for Human Evolution* (Rowman and Littlefield forthcoming 2010). His website is: www.drstevebest.com, and he can be reached at: best@utep.edu.

academia and take their rightful place alongside Women's Studies, African-American Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Disability Studies, and Queer Studies.³

This growing popularity of animal studies, moving it from the theoretical margins toward the academic mainstream, is both laudable and lamentable. For as animal studies becomes a potential force of enlightenment and change in public attitudes and behaviors toward animals, its academic proponents can only advance it by currying for respect, credibility, and acceptance, which can only come by domesticating the threatening nature of the critique of human supremacism, Western dualism, and the human exploitation of nonhuman animals. Throughout the world philosophers, sociologists, historians, literary critics, and others who embrace this fascinating and fecund field of study seek their rightful and equal place within academia, without realizing that animal studies is in grave danger of becoming co-opted and contained, if it has not already been muzzled and neutralized by a corporate-bureaucratic machine and its codes and logics. For once it takes shape within the sterile, normalizing, hierarchical, and repressive environment of academia, animal studies, like any other knowledge or discourse, is tied to abstract, arcane, technical, and apolitical codes and discourses, and is reified as a marketable academic product and commodity as well. The Faustian pact that any discipline or professor-employee signs with academia demands that they obey the logics of abstraction, profit, utility, and careerism; that they will never seek to mediate theory with practice (unless they wish to risk their reputations as “scholars”); and, above all, that they will never question the legitimacy of social power and organize against it, or they shall quite possibly be exiled from ivy-walled kingdom.

³ To forestall possible confusion, “Animal Studies” with capital letters designates an institutionalized program or department, whereas “animal studies” refers to relevant research orientations, writings, discourses, and knowledges independent of any institutionalized status.

The recipe for the “success” of animal studies – immersion in abstraction, indulgent use of existing and new modes of jargon, pursuit of theory-for-theory’s sake, avoidance of social controversy (however intellectually controversial it may often be), eschewing political involvement, and keeping a very safe distance from “extremists” and “radicals” agitating for animal rights - is also the formula for its failure, upon being co-opted, tamed, and neutralized by academia. Consequently, the profound ethical, social, political, and environmental issues of animal exploitation are buried in dense theoretical webs; the lucidity and power of clear communication is oiled over with jargon and inscrutable language accessible only to experts; politically-charged issues are depoliticized; and theory is divorced from practice, resistance, and struggle. And all this unfolds amidst a new extinction crisis, the last one being 65 million years ago which wiped out the dinosaurs and over half of existing species,⁴ and as a massive planetary social and ecological crisis begins to unfold through the reverberations of global climate change.

But the fissures and cracks in the emerging paradigm of animal studies create openings for radical interventions. In this essay I emphasize the important virtues and contributions of animal studies, but the most crucial insights and implications of the challenges to humanist histories and the debilitating dualism between human animal and nonhuman animal are obfuscated and blocked by esoteric language, detached standpoints and apolitical compartment in a world in crisis, and humanity at the most critical crossroads in its entire history. What I am calling “mainstream animal studies” (MAS) should be superseded by

⁴ On the current extinction crisis, see Peter Ward, *The End of Evolution: A Journey in Search of Clues to the Third Mass Extinction Facing Planet Earth* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995); and Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, *The Sixth Extinction: Patterns of Life and the Future of Humankind* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996).

“critical animal studies” (CAS), a viable form of which my ICAS colleagues and I have been trying to develop in theory and in practice for nearly a decade.⁵

This alternative to the arid and shockingly detached and complacent nature of MAS is itself growing, as the bankruptcy and irrelevance of ivory tower thinking becomes increasingly clear at a time of urgent social and ecological crisis. Whereas MAS remains entombed in the catacombs of academia, CAS seeks to breakdown and mediate oppositions between theory and practice, college and community, and scholarship and citizenship, in order to make philosophy (in a broad sense) again a force of change and to repatriate intellectuals to the public realm. Against MAS, CAS seeks to illuminate problems and pose solutions through vivid, concrete, and accessible language. It openly avows its explicit ethical and practical commitment to the freedom of well-being of all animals and to a flourishing planet. It opposes all forms of discrimination, hierarchy, and oppression as a complex of problems to be extirpated from the root, not sliced off at the branch. It supports civil disobedience, direct action, and economic sabotage. And it promotes bridge-building and alliance politics as the

⁵ Core members of ICAS have used the discourse and formulated the positions and politics of CAS against MAS since founding our original group, the Center on Animal Liberation Affairs (CALA) in 2001. For ICAS’s definitional platform on “critical animal studies,” see our ten-point statement below and at: <http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/about.htm>. For recent attempts to define this field, see my introductory essays to the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, Volume V, Issue I, 2007 (http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/JCAS/Journal_Articles_download/Issue_6/introduction.pdf); and (with Carol Gigliotti) Volume V, Issue II, 2007 (http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/JCAS/Journal_Articles_download/Issue_7/introduction.pdf). For clear examples of CAS, see my essays: “Rethinking Revolution: Animal Liberation, Human Liberation, and the Future of the Left,” *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, vol.2, no.3, June 2006 (http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol2/vol2_no3_Best_rethinking_revolution.htm); “The Killing Fields of South Africa: Eco Wars, Species Apartheid, and Total Liberation,” *Fast Capitalism*, Issue 2, Volume 2, 2007 (http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/2_2/home.html); and “Minding the Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism,” *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*,” Volume 5, Number 2 (Spring 2009) http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5_no2_best_minding_animals.htm. I develop a detailed interdisciplinary and politically-oriented CAS position in my forthcoming book, *Animal Liberation and Moral Progress: The Struggle for Human Evolution* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield 2010). David Nibert’s book, *Animal Rights, Human Rights: Entanglements of Oppression and Liberation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002) approximates the kind of approach I advocate here, as does Bob Torres’ book, *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights* (Berkeley CA: 2007), but the latter book is severely marred in its uncritical embrace of the fundamentalist pacifist views of Gary Francione and the social ecology of Murray Bookchin, and its careless attempt to merge these incompatible viewpoints.

means to promote the large-scale social transformations that alone can free the continuum of animal life and the dynamic natural world from the elite's colonization and conquest and the building fires of global climate change.

Contributions of Mainstream Animal Studies

In many ways, the international, transdisciplinary, and pluralist field of animal studies defies easy categorization and generalization. It is still, moreover, a young and emerging framework (even as it congeals into theoreticism and apoliticism), and retains a kind of "Wild West" anything goes approach, which helps partly to account for its broad appeal. *Animal studies is everything to everyone* -- including welfarists, carnivores, speciesists, pro-vivisectionists, and sundry human supremacists and animal exploiters.

While a rich variety of animal studies approaches abound, we can identify some broad orientations, some of which rely on a clear empiricist style of writing and argumentation, while others take a far more esoteric, hermeneutic, and postmodern approach. These include: empirical and socio-psychological viewpoints; feminist/ecofeminist methods; the Continental/postmodern theory school; and posthumanist outlooks. Whether embedded in assumptions or brought to the fore, the political biases and orientations of MAS also are diverse, and may tend toward welfarism, rights, or abolitionism/liberationism. Among official animal advocacy organizations and academic-affiliated groups, however, CAS is unique in its defense of direct action tactics, its willingness to engage and debate controversial issues such as anti-capitalism, academic repression, and the use of sabotage as a resistance tactic; its emphasis on the need for total liberation stressing the commonalities binding various oppressed groups; and the importance of learning from and with activists.

The term “animal studies,” in fact, is a misnomer that impedes understanding from the start, for the field is not about nonhuman animals in isolation from human animals, but rather about human-nonhuman animal *relations*. Animal studies examines how our lives, identities, and histories are inseparably tied to other sentient, intelligent, communicative, and cultured beings in ways that human animals (in Western cultures above all) have systematically denied. Various writers and thinkers have thereby erased the fundamental, constitutive role nonhuman animals have played in the biological and social development of *Homo sapiens*, as human beings have of course for the last ten millennia domesticated and controlled every fact of every useful animal, an exploitative power now extended into systematic manipulation of animals’ genomes.

Following the lead of historicists, poststructuralists, postmodernists, feminists, and others who challenged and dismantled (via the method of “deconstruction”) binary oppositions pivotal to Western ideology and hierarchical rule, animal studies theorists have rearranged the conceptual furniture in the house of humanism. They have called into question the essentialist and dualist assumptions underpinning false views of humans and other animals alike. In doing so they have exposed the vain attempts to separate mind and body, the rational and the emotional, culture and nature, men (the masculine) and women (the feminine), and so on. These critical theorists reject Platonic metaphysics and notions that natural, human, and conceptual realities are grounded in or reflect some unchanging substance or essence.

Whereas postmodernists have deconstructed the numerous binary oppositions humans have created throughout Western history, many took apart everything but the Berlin Wall dividing

human from nonhuman animals.⁶ Animal theorists take it to the next level to dismantle the bifurcation between the “human” and “animal.” Consequently, animal theorists show that humans constructed their own “natures” and that of other animals as well principally through fallacious dualisms and the distorting lens of speciesism; this effectively prevented philosophers and scientists from grasping biological and social evolution in terms of a unity in difference and a difference in unity. It produced a theoretical mystification that both overestimated the fetishized “rationality” of humans and underestimated the amazing forms of intelligence found throughout virtually every animal species (such as specifically explored by the revolutionary field of “cognitive ethology” or “ethology,” which could be said to emerge with Darwin in the later part of the nineteenth century, was revived with the work of Donald Griffin in the 1980s, and was subsequently advanced and popularized by scientists and writers such as Roger Fouts, Frans de Wall, and Marc Bekoff).⁷ CAS argues that the “animal” includes all sentient beings, including humans, and thus “animal liberation” cannot be properly formulated and enacted apart from “human liberation,” and vice versa; it argues in addition that species survival is dependent upon a flourishing environment and global ecology, and thus animal, human, and Earth liberation are inseparably intertwined in the politics of “total liberation.” CAS is a critical human studies, and analyses how the discourse of the “human” has been constituted in dualistic, speciesist, racist, patriarchal, and imperialist terms.

“The question of the animal,” writes philosopher Matt Calarco, is now being used by many scholars to highlight “the notion that humanist and anthropocentric conceptions of

⁶ This is not to say that major postmodern thinkers operated with an uncritical humanism, as certainly thinkers like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and Michel Foucault dismantled Cartesian concepts of human agency, but with exceptions such as Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “becoming animal,” which invites a playful dissolution of species boundaries, they rarely explored humans as distinct kinds of animals in relation to other animals. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988).

⁷ See Steven Best, “Minding the Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism.”

subjectivity must be called into question.”⁸ Such a discursive approach would analyze, for instance, how the Western world fractures the evolutionary continuity of human/nonhuman existence by reducing animals to (irrational, unthinking) “Others” who stand apart from (rational, thinking) human Subjects. Animal studies can show, moreover, that the same discourses used to devalue other sentient beings as “animals” – mindless, “savage,” disorderly “beasts” to whom humans have no moral obligations and treat as they sit fit – are used to exploit and massacre human groups (e.g., Jews, women, and people of color) once they are dehumanized and reduced to “animals” themselves. Thus, the connections between human oppression of other animals and of themselves are deep and profound.

The Animal Standpoint

Postmodern critiques have been hugely influential in many theoretical strains of animal studies, but theorists could not employ the insights of postmodernism without overcoming their limitations. This is crucial for two reasons. First, deconstructionists and social constructionists are typically speciesists and dogmatic humanists (even those who deconstruct “humanism”!) who rarely challenge the human/animal dichotomy and analyze how it is used to advance false views of all animal, human and nonhuman. Second, they fail to see that the human/animal opposition underpins oppositions between reason/emotions, thought/body, men/women, white/black, and Western/non-Western. Yet as noted by theorists (e.g., Keith Thomas, Jim Mason, and Charles Patterson)⁹ with broader optics and more inclusive theories

⁸ Matthew Calarco, “Animals in Continental Philosophy,”
http://www.hnet.org/~animal/ruminations_calarco.html

⁹ See Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981); Jim Mason, *An Unnatural Order: Uncovering the Roots of Our Domination of Nature and Each Other* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); and Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002). All three books develop penetrating critiques of dualism and speciesism, and grasp commonalities of oppression, but they also lack a political viewpoint and tactic in response to the immense problems they raise, and thus in a crucial way fall short of CAS as I attempt to define it.

than humanism, speciesism and animal domestication provided the conceptual template and social practice whereby humans begin to clearly distinguish between “human rationality” and “animal irrationality.”¹⁰ Animals – defined as “brute beasts” lacking “rationality” – thereby provided the moral basement into which one could eject women, people of color, and other humans deemed to be subhuman or deficient in (Western male) “humanity.”

Whereas nearly all histories, even so-called “radical” narratives, have been written from the human standpoint, a growing number of theorists have broken free of the speciesist straightjacket to examine history and society from the standpoint of (nonhuman) animals. This approach, as I define it, considers the interaction between human and nonhuman animals – past, present, and future -- and the need for profound changes in the way humans define themselves and relate to other sentient species and to the natural world as a whole.

What I call the “animal standpoint” examines the origins and development of societies through the dynamic, symbiotic interrelationship between human and nonhuman animals. It therefore interprets history not from an evolutionary position that reifies human agency as the autonomous actions of a Promethean species, but rather from a co-evolutionary perspective that sees nonhuman animals as inseparably embedded in human history and as dynamic agents in their own right.¹¹

The animal standpoint seeks to illuminate the origins and development of dominator cultures, to preserve the wisdom and heritage of egalitarian values and social relations, and to discern

¹⁰ Eco-feminists argue that speciesism and patriarchy emerged together in history, as part of the same hierarchical cloth of agricultural society, and so constitute the basis of, or significantly influence, other forms of hierarchy and oppression. See, for instance, Karen Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

¹¹ I develop this concept of the animal standpoint in great detail in my forthcoming book, *Animal Liberation and Moral Progress: The Struggle for Human Evolution*.

what moral and social progress means in a far deeper sense than what is discernible through humanist historiography, anthropology, social theory, and philosophy. However “critical,” “subversive,” “groundbreaking,” or “radical” their probing of historical and social dynamics, very few theorists have managed to see beyond the humanist bias in order to adopt a proper analytical and moral relation to other animals; they have failed, in other words, to grasp the importance of nonhuman animals in human life, the profound ways in which the domination of humans over other animals creates conflict and disequilibrium in human relations to one another and to the Earth as a whole.

Thus, the animal standpoint seeks generally to illuminate human biological and social evolution in important new ways, such as reveal the origins, dynamics, and development of dominator cultures, social hierarchies, economic and political inequalities, and asymmetrical systems of power that are violent and destructive to everything they touch. Providing perspectives and insights unattainable through other historical approaches, the animal standpoint analyzes how the domination of humans over nonhuman animals is intimately linked to the domination of humans over one another, as it also brings to light the environmental impact of large-scale animal slaughter and exploitation.

A key thesis of animal standpoint theory is that nonhuman animals have been key driving and shaping forces of human thought, psychology, moral and social life, and history overall, and that in fundamental ways, the oppression of human over human is rooted in the oppression of human over nonhuman animal. Animal standpoint theory thus leads us ineluctably to understanding the commonalities of oppression, and hence to alliance politics and the systemic revolutionary viewpoint of total liberation.¹² It demonstrates – would that dogmatic

¹² See Steven Best, “The Killing Fields of South Africa: Eco Wars, Species Apartheid, and Total Liberation.”

Left, eco-humanists, and so-called “environmentalists” take note! -- the profound importance of veganism and the animal rights/liberation movement for human liberation, peace and justice, and ecological healing and balance.

A Critique of Pure Theory

“The contemporary effort to reduce the scope and the truth of philosophy is tremendous, and the philosophers themselves proclaim the modesty and inefficacy of philosophy. It leaves the established reality untouched; it abhors transgression.” Herbert Marcuse

CAS shares with MAS an interdisciplinary approach and engagement with notions of our relationships with and representations of nonhuman animals. But CAS differs from MAS in its explicit normative and political focus; in its critique of capitalism, imperialism, and hierarchical oppression in all forms; and its commitment to theory for the sake of total liberation, not for theory’s sake alone. Animal standpoint theory is not “neutral” or “objective” in any pretentious scientific, historical, or philosophical way; rather it defends and advocates a total revolution that works to dismantle every oppressive and dysfunctional system of hierarchy that thwarts freedom, creative activity, self-organization, and diversification.

In the current “Wild West” state of affairs in MAS, however, anything goes; including the detached pursuit of abstract and esoteric topics amidst a rapidly worsening animal holocaust and planetary eco-crisis. Here the underlying liberalism and pluralist relativism one finds in many quarters of MAS merges with complacency about urgent ethical, practical, political, and ecological issues, as part and parcel of a “repressive tolerance” (Marcuse) for speciesism, abstraction, and moral incoherence.

The abysmal state of MAS was evident recently as international animal studies scholars penned a blitzkrieg of missives to the H-animal list that could easily have been mistaken for the discourse of a pro-vivisection, meat-eating, pet-breeding, or general purpose animal exploitation site. Specifically, the Orwellian Wordfest began in December 2007, when Anita Guerrini, a University of California Santa Barbara Environmental Studies professor, earnestly wrote:

Does Animal Studies necessarily imply animal advocacy? Much, although not all, that I have read in this field takes some degree an animal rights/liberation/advocacy perspective. That is, the point of Animal Studies seems to be to advocate a certain political point of view, and this influences the kinds of work that have appeared thus far. Is there room in Animal Studies for people who, say, think eating meat is not wrong? Or that experimentation on animals in some circumstances is somehow justified? As someone who has written about animal experimentation quite a lot, but who has not unreservedly condemned it, I am not sure that I have a place in Animal Studies as it is currently defined. I don't think all uses of animals are good, and I don't think mistreating animals is ever justified. But I do think some human uses of animals are justified.¹³

This professor, commending the field of animal studies for its “growing sophistication,” came out as a defender of vivisection, a carnivore, and a clichéd welfarist who believes humans are inherently privileged and superior beings who can legitimately harm, exploit, and kill animals so long as they do so “humanely.” The responses from the list were mostly supportive (e.g., “Thank you for your interesting questions!”) and uncritical of the contradiction of a speciesist seeking a rightful place in the field of animal studies. Her insinuating questions, as at least a few respondents pointed out, were no less repulsive and incongruous than misogynists trying to ingratiate themselves in Women’s Studies or racists whose theoretical and historical interest in, and support of, slavery, lynching, and the Tuskegee experiments pursuing careers in African-American Studies.

¹³ These and other exchanges are archived at: <http://www.h-net.org/~animal>.

Blatant forms of discrimination prevail in animal studies that would never be tolerated in other programs such as women's studies or African-American studies. Here, rather than being politely received, the patriarchal and racist equivalent of Anita Guerrini would have been vilified, reported, pilloried, fired, and run out of academia forever. But speciesist double standards prevail in animal studies, where sexist and racist discourse is not tolerated by progressive women and men in other areas. Indeed, after Guerrini broke the ice, erudite scholars weighed in on whether or not one could do animal studies if one supported vivisection, took their children to see circuses, hunted animals for food, or bought "meat" from the store for the family dinner. This was followed, astonishingly enough, by debates over whether it is acceptable to liquefy a goldfish in a blender for "performance art" (a work apparently intended to get us to "think" about animals, which of course perfectly justifies the act).

For academics whose commitment to animals is strictly abstract and theoretical, nothing more than an interesting topic of research and form of academic capital, there is no contradiction here. But for anyone who understands the real, concrete suffering of animals and the logical consequences – i.e., veganism and animal liberation - of valuing them as living beings rather than as signs, referents, texts, and publications, the contradiction of speciesists working in the field of animal studies is startling. In this deplorable context, the old saying that "A rat is a thing into which you inject chemicals to produce a scientific paper" needs to be revised thus: "An animal is an object, sign, referent, or historical abstraction that you reify and allegorize in order to produce a book, article, or conference paper."

On shameful display on the H-animal list here were the inherent limitations, contradictions, hypocrisies, and absurdities of MAS, such that the term “animal studies” was drained of meaning until it became a conceptual Transformer one could shape, mould, and morph to one’s liking. It became apparent that someone interested in researching and publishing in the animal studies area need not have any specific moral commitment to animals whatsoever; rather, all one needed was a scholarly “curiosity” about human/animal interaction, a fetishized inquisitiveness such as one might have about the invention of Roman plumbing or the role of eunuchs in Chinese dynasties. It is in fact the same attitude of “curiosity,” the same immoral amoralism, and the same absence of affect about one’s “objects of study” that drives vivisectors and has inspired some of the most unimaginable and obscene “experiments” (e.g., sensory deprivation, mother separation, enforced crack cocaine addition, and LD50 lethal dose injections designed to kill half of the “test population” with deadly substances to indicate the “acute toxicity” levels, etc., ad nauseam). But theoretical engagement of human exploitation of animals is no ordinary musing without momentous social and ecological relevance and import.

Lacking a coherent moral context, and populated by careerists and opportunists climbing onto the trendy bandwagon, MAS is a field where theorists can examine human/animal relations as an intellectual exercise undertaken without social, ethical, and political contexts or consequences. After all, it’s fun, interesting, the new wave, “progressive,” and the scholar who begins work in this field might get some new publications, make new contacts, kick-start an incipient career or revivify a flagging vocation. Thus, one finds carnivores, pro-vivisectionists, and garden-variety speciesists operating in an academic terrain where a considerable number of theorists view animals as historical referents and abstract objects of research, rather than giving urgent attention to those beings who live and suffer now, to the

thousands of species teetering on the brink of extinction, and to the profound obligations we have as scholars to dramatically highlight these problems and to take aggressive action to protect and liberate present and future generations of nonhuman animals.

I must emphasize that I do not use the word “critical” in some vague generic sense already in use by some “critical animal studies” writers and programs; rather I espouse a position that is critical in two key senses. First, it is critical of (mainstream) *animal studies itself*, for its moral incoherence and aloofness (studying exploited beings without explicit commitment to ending their oppression, and indeed, further exploiting animals for their theoretical worth and career capital) and its overly abstract, esoteric, and jargon-laden language that is inscrutable to the general public and inherently elitist. The version of animal studies promoted by ICAS is critical, second, of the entire social system and complex of oppression and domination, such as has developed throughout the human-established “civilization” of the last ten thousand years, and it seeks a radical political analysis and tactic in response to systemic social and environmental problems.

Thus, in conditions where animal studies is already entrenched as an abstract, esoteric, jargon-laden, insular, non-normative, and apolitical discipline, one where scholars can achieve recognition while nevertheless remaining wedded to speciesist values, carnivorous lifestyles, and at least tacit – sometimes overt -- support of numerous forms of animal exploitation such as vivisection, critical animal studies emerges as a necessary and vital alternative. CAS repudiates the insularity, detachment, hypocrisy, and profound limitations of mainstream animal studies that vaporize animals’ flesh and blood realities to reduce them to reified signs, symbols, images, words on a page, or protagonists in a historical drama. MAS utterly fails to engage animals not only as “referents,” “signs,” and “texts,” but rather, first

and foremost, as sentient beings who live and die in the most sadistic, barbaric, and wretched cages of technohell that humanity has been able to devise.

In contrast to the dominant orientations of animal studies, as well as to tendencies prominent throughout the animal welfare and animal rights movements, ICAS advances a critical, radical, and transformative alternative that:

- 1. Pursues interdisciplinary collaborative writing and research in a rich and comprehensive manner that includes perspectives typically ignored by animal studies, such as political economy and the critique of capitalism.*
- 2. Rejects pseudo-objective academic analysis by explicitly clarifying its normative values and political commitments, such that there are no positivist illusions whatsoever that theory is disinterested or writing and research is non-political.*
- 3. Eschews narrow academic viewpoints and the debilitating theory-for-theory's sake position in order to link theory to practice, analysis to politics, and the academy to the community.*
- 4. Advances a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ablism, statism, classism, militarism and other hierarchical ideologies and institutions are viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination.*
- 5. Rejects apolitical, conservative, and liberal positions in order to advance an anti-capitalist, and, more generally, a radical anti-hierarchical politics. This orientation seeks to dismantle*

all structures of exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, killing, and power in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society at all levels and on a global basis.

6. Rejects reformist, single-issue, nation-based, legislative, strictly animal interest politics in favor of alliance politics and solidarity with other struggles against oppression and hierarchy.

7. Champions a politics of total liberation which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, nonhuman animal, and Earth liberation in one comprehensive, though diverse, struggle; to paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr.: a threat to liberation anywhere is a threat to liberation everywhere.

8. Deconstructs and reconstructs the socially constructed binary oppositions between human and nonhuman animals, a move basic to mainstream animal studies, but also looks to illuminate related dichotomies between culture and nature, civilization and wilderness and other dominator hierarchies to emphasize the historical limits placed upon humanity, nonhuman animals, cultural/political norms, and the liberation of nature as part of a transformative project that seeks to transcend these limits towards greater freedom and ecological harmony.

9. Openly engages controversial radical politics and militant strategies used in all kinds of social movements, such as those that involve economic sabotage and high-pressure direct action tactics.

10. Seeks to create openings for critical dialogue on issues relevant to Critical Animal Studies across a wide-range of academic groups; citizens and grassroots activists; the staffs of policy and social service organizations; and people in private, public, and non-profit sectors. Through – and only through -- new paradigms of ecopedagogy, bridge-building with other social movements, and a solidarity-based alliance politics, is it possible to build the new forms of consciousness, knowledge, social institutions that are necessary to dissolve the hierarchical society that has enslaved the life forms on this planet and all for the last ten thousand years.¹⁴

CAS is engaged, politically radical, and as concrete as possible in its language and orientation toward oppression of all forms and toward the rapidly worsening ecological crisis that demands our full attention. Animal studies is morally bankrupt and incoherent – just another bourgeois diversion, distraction, and narcissistic pursuit -- without commitment to animal liberation in theory, practice, and one's own life, such as necessitates animal activism and a vegan lifestyle. I am not advancing an essentialist definition or Platonic construct, and thereby saying that other people cannot articulate concepts of “critical animal studies” that differ from mine. But I am arguing against notions that are conceptually vacuous, ethically bereft, and politically problematic; that fail to mediate theory and practice; that ignore the urgent crises of the day; and that do not grasp the full significance (psychological, cultural, political, and environmental) of the animal standpoint. Scholars pursuing animal studies typically seem concerned far more about academic opportunism and exploiting new forms of cultural capital than about abolishing the barbaric institutions and mindsets of human supremacy, species apartheid, and animal exploitation. The animals have already been exploited enough, and they do not need MAS theorists to add insult to their injury and exploit

¹⁴ I developed this ten point platform of CAS in dialogue with ICAS colleagues Anthony J. Nocella II, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti, and Lisa Kemmerer; see www.criticalanimalstudies.org.

their suffering for their work without working to end their suffering. Those who disagree with my concept of CAS have the burden of proof to state why and to develop a better formulation.

It is crucial to interject a radical perspective and to help ensure the political relevance and potential of animal studies before it freezes into a homogenous outlook and dominant ideology, and becomes easily co-opted and contained by academia and its inherent bias toward abstraction, jargon, and value-neutrality or pseudo-radical politics. This has happened with other “studies” programs. Barbara Epstein, for example, attributes the defeat of the “vital mass women’s movement” in important part to its “institutionalization and marginalization” in academic Women’s Studies programs,¹⁵ and Russell Jacoby exposes how academics cloistered in Cultural Studies programs “merely end up celebrating the status quo” and brandish an arcane postmodern discourse that alienates them from the very people about whom they profess concern.¹⁶ Following a similar trajectory of co-optation and studied irrelevance, animal studies is becoming tamed, leashed, canonized, commodified, reified, neutralized, and rendered safe for academic production, consumption, and distribution. Another bad omen for the autonomy and political relevance of animal studies includes the practice of veterinarian boards, “pet food” industries, and sundry animal exploiters sponsoring conferences around this topic.¹⁷

Thus, it is vital that CAS be developed as a radical critique of and alternative to academic institutions and to MAS itself, as well as to capitalism and all other oppressive ideologies and

¹⁵ Barbara Epstein, “The Decline of the Women’s Movement,” in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper (eds.), *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* (Malden MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 328-334).

¹⁶ Russell Jacoby, *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in and Age of Apathy* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

¹⁷ See, for example, the “Impacting Multiple Species” conferences, scheduled for October 20-25, 2009 in Kansas City, Missouri (http://rechai.missouri.edu/isaz_hai09), whose sponsors include the University Of Missouri College Of Veterinary Medicine, the International Society for Anthrozoology, and the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction, along with Nestle Purina and Hills.

institutions. But one must be clear about the dynamics of opportunism and co-optation that neutralize everything of value and subversive import. Thus, a day may soon come when enough reformists and opportunists in the professorial class corrupt and dilute the radical ethical and political substance of CAS to the extent that it will have to be called something else such as “radical animal studies” to thwart dilettantes in search of something trendy and safe. But for now I will utilize the phrase “critical animal studies,” and continue, with my colleagues at ICAS, to forge this important, new, and radical path.

The Fetishism of Theory

To be perfectly clear, my position is not anti-theory, for theory provides the compass, maps, and studied reflection necessary for effective politics. My target, rather, is theory-for-theory’s sake, an academic disorder, which involves the severing of theory from ordinary meaning (or, often, meaning in any sense) and from action, practice, and politics, and the separation of scholarship from citizenship. I am vitally concerned with theory for two reasons. First, theory is indispensable to practice, and I stress the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, such that the two inform and deepen one another (in what is sometimes called “praxis”). Second, theory – as well as reading, learning, study, and critical thinking skills in general – is essential for a viable political movement. The anti-intellectualism that Russell Jacoby and others expose runs deep through American culture also pervades activist culture which often lacks the historical, philosophical, and political literacy necessary for their tasks. One cannot change a world one does not deeply understand.

But let there be no mistake, there is a huge gulf between animal studies and animal advocacy. The debates over whether a theorist of animal studies is obliged to be a vegan, animal rights abolitionist, or activist of some kind replicates the old nineteenth and early twentieth century

debates in art. There are direct parallels between critiques of art-for-art's sake and theory-for-theory's sake. Just as many artists resisted the call of the radical avant-garde to politicize their work, and insisted that politics would debase their art and transmogrify the beauty of form and ideal meanings into propaganda and ephemeral meaning, so theorists resist the call to connect their work to normative, practical, and political issues.

I appreciate the concern to do theory apart from an explicit political agenda (and of course all scholarly work has a bias, interest, or agenda whether recognized or not) and the demands of activism. I also believe that scholars in animal studies can indeed produce good and valuable work even if they eat meat, support vivisection, buy their dog from a breeder, and take their kids to rodeos, circuses, and zoos. There is no law that links the worth of people's ideas to the integrity of their life and consistency of their ethics. Just as there are no doubt liars, exploiters, racists, sexists, and violent abusers who write splendid ethical treatises, so welfarists, speciesists, and carnivores can do productive research in animal studies (on the surface, that is, on a deeper level connecting theory with practice the contradiction abides and vitiates the work in some significant way). I say this as a matter of logic and fact, and not in moral judgment of those who, unlike myself, are not vegans and dedicated animal advocates. But, again, there are jarring inconsistencies here, such as would not be tolerated in related academic fields, and these persist due to widespread speciesism, opportunism, and moral incoherence within the animal studies community.

Academics are endlessly creative in the act of inventing excuses for hermetically isolating themselves from a social and natural world in crisis and maintaining their aloof, analytic detachment. We have here again to examine the academic world itself and the dominant ideology that disparages work that deigns to engage real social conditions and practical life,

dismissing engaged theory as amateurish in comparison to the “rigor” of detached and “disinterested” theory, the more abstract, formalized, and jargon-laden seemingly the better. There are, moreover, institutional norms and pressures to produce abstract theoretical analysis, theory-for-its-own-sake. Those who engage society and link theory to practice are disparaged, while those who actually involve themselves as activists, especially in controversial causes such as Palestinian autonomy, animal liberation, anarchism, anti-globalization, and graduate student unions are in many cases fired.¹⁸

One prevailing excuse is to emphasize the value of theory-for-its-own-sake, such that scholars who devote themselves solely to theory, research, and writing produce valuable works that activists and others can use for their own purposes. The labor of getting “dirty hands” in the practical affairs of politics or activism, the argument goes, takes away valuable time and focus from the all-important work of theory.

While it is true that, for example, Einstein’s immersion in abstract produced incredibly important insights, and that his time, one might claim, was better spent doing high-level mathematics than feeding the poor, this argument is vitiated by two fallacies. First, it ignores the dialectical relation between theory and practice, such that, for instance, social theorists could both bring and take knowledge from activism. Karl Marx and John Dewey, to name just two giants, stressed the dialectical interdependence of theory and practice. Second, and relatedly, there is an obvious false choice imposed here, such that one commits to theory *or* activism, but cannot do both well. The mathematical preoccupations and achievements of Einstein did not prevent him from involvement in social life and becoming a peace activist who warned about the destructive potential of war and atomic weapons.

¹⁸ See Steven Best, Anthony J. Nocella II, and Peter McLaren (eds.), *Academic Repression: Reflections on the Academic-Industrial Complex* (Berkeley, CA: AK Press, 2009).

News of the incompatibility between theory and practice apparently did not reach the likes of Marx, Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, or Noam Chomsky, as they dismantled this false opposition in favor of an organic union of thought and action. In sharp contrast to effete and privileged academics who glide from seminar rooms and airports to hotel cocktail lounges and book conventions, we should note that Socrates was widely respected for his valor on the battlefield, and Sartre, Camus, and other noted French intellectuals and artists joined the French Resistance, risking their lives to thwart German Nazism and making their writing a key part of their resistance.

One can only imagine what today's professors or intellectuals would do were their country invaded by something as menacing as Nazi forces. I shudder to think how privilege rots the soul and weakens the will. And while US academics are not working amidst conditions of fascist occupation, they are certainly living amidst *the gravest ecological crisis and challenge humans have ever faced*. Global climate change, and the whole constellation of related problems (including rainforest destruction, human overpopulation, resource scarcity, and species extinction) poses, in fact, a *far greater danger* to "civilization" than Nazism, for it threatens not only one or many nations, but millions of species and the planetary ecosystem itself.

And yet consider the essay, "One or Several Literary Animal Studies?," in which Susan McHugh uses the most obtuse and pretentious jargon possible to justify academic entrapment within the funhouse of theory and to construct an insidious argument against the very possibility of politics:

To be sure, this potential for literary animal studies has not always been clear. Deconstructive approaches trace how animal stories have been enmeshed in the metaphysical presuppositions of humanism, but their primary concern with language can defer exploration of the ways in which poststructuralist approaches to animal literatures confront metaphysics with questions of multiplicity...

[A]nimal representations also foster uncertainties about the future of literary studies as disciplinary ways of knowing, and more basically the relationship of reading to maintaining institutional structures. Literary animal studies likely will continue to foster unpredictable (and often conflicted) positions on animal rights and welfare, establishing no clear foundations of political let alone epistemological solidarity among researchers.¹⁹

One might conclude from this Coltranesque sheet-of-jargon and cacophony that she is only arguing the reasonable point that complex issues allow multiple interpretations that do not cohere in a theoretical or political consensus. But the overall tone of the essay – which reads like a parody, rather than serious exercise, of postmodern theory – is to leave the reader (should he or she even understand the language) utterly disoriented among the emphases on multiperspectivalism, incommensurability, and indeterminism. Of course society, our lives, our consciousness, and our theories lack clarity in the Cartesian sense, but McHugh - in moving from epistemological truism to political nihilism, from undecideability of knowledge to impossibility of change - implies that it is better after all that the theorist-sans-citizen continue to spin webs in ivory towers.

The reactionary effect of animal studies theorists such as McHugh is apparent: as one struggles through their writing, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Levinas, Kristeva, Deleuze and Guattari, and Derrida are rumbling in our ears, but the concrete realities of animal suffering, violence and exploitation, economic crisis and social power, and the rapidly worsening planetary ecological catastrophe are entirely muted and virtually barred from the hermetically-sealed chambers of theory-babble.

¹⁹ McHugh, cited at: http://www.h-net.org/~animal/ruminations_mchugh.html.

In the hands of the academic - the self-described “radical” or otherwise - theory is just another tool of pacification employed by the “society of the spectacle” (Guy Debord) via the academic-industrial complex. Little different from the television or video game, theory is just another form of distraction in which individuals can immerse themselves, as they detach themselves from the real and pressing issues of society, animals, and the environment. With the potential for enlightenment and edification, books, research, writers, and professors instead perpetuate ignorance, egoism, and apathy. Erudite professors train their students in their methods of abstraction, obfuscation, and alienated detachment, as the disease of intellectualism spreads from generation to generation.

Crisis? What Crisis?

The crucial problem with MAS is not just the separation of theory from practice, but also the decontextualization of scholarship from current the rapidly worsening crisis of species extinction and global warming. The “absent referent” (to borrow a phrase from Carol Adams) in animal studies is nothing less than the catastrophe staring us all in the face and nothing short of biological meltdown and ecological collapse. We are not living in just any ordinary period of history, but the most remarkable, important, catastrophic, and challenging era of all, for global climate change is the biggest problem our species has ever faced. This “ecological crisis” is the overdetermined result of human overpopulation and overconsumption, the sixth extinction crisis (the last one occurring 65 million years ago with the demise of the dinosaurs), global climate change, rainforest destruction, and resource scarcity. Moreover, let us not forget, the enormity of animal suffering continues to build to the most severe and dire levels, especially with the globalization of carnivorousism and fast-food outlets, as currently up to 50

billion land animals and billions more in the sea die every year on this planet for food consumption alone.

As theorists research in cavernous library rooms; as they stare with bleary eyes into computer screens; and as they present papers and chat in polite, temperate, and civil tones around the hotel bar, something is happening outside of the academic matrix, something we all know is unfolding, but which the majority of academics (like the public in general) nevertheless ignore. In the most egregious possible case of *bad faith*, professors from all disciplines carry on their research and esoteric concerns as if the ecological crisis – *the* most serious crisis humankind has ever faced - were not barreling down on us with a speed and fury shocking even to pessimistic scientists.

While academics play their theoretical fiddles, planetary ecosystems are collapsing. While they live in the historical past, it is the present that demands our utmost attention and the future that merits our most profound concern. We live in this most incredible, singular, unprecedented, do-or-die era that places the most extreme obligations and demands on us that we cannot ignore. In this era, in our age, in this moment right now, as we confront the decisive historical crossroads that stand before us, what we do, or fail to do, will determine the fate of biodiversity on the planet and whether or not the world for future generations will be not only challenging and oppressive, but utterly nightmarish and dystopian.

Thus, the question must surge forth: do we have the luxury to be “merely” theorists or academics when the practical and political demands on us are so great? Of course theories are crucial for understanding the world, and a politics without reflexivity, study, history, philosophy, and social theory is no politics I want to advance. But it is not as if we need to

work a detailed social ontology before we can proceed. It is by now somewhat apparent what the forces of destruction are, and what we have to do to resist and transform anthropocentrism, speciesism, global capitalism, and hierarchical domination in all forms. While the social and ecological realities are not transparent, they are clear enough to begin to take informed and decisive action. Our knowledge will deepen in practice, only in and through political struggle, and cannot mature in the study and seminar room. It is not about unilateral application of a pre-formatted theory to social relations and struggle; rather it is about learning and improving on theory from conditions of experience and practical application of knowledge.

One may argue we are not obliged to give up theory, research, and writing in order to spend all of our time in political meetings, demonstrations, actions, and litigations. But can scholars continue to be as isolated from politics and advocacy as they typically are? Can they be complacent about the severe crisis in the world playing out before their very eyes? Can they watch once more on the evening news as the Arctic ice shelves crash into the sea, and retreat to their books and computers as if they saw another heartburn or scalpel itch commercial?

Theodor Adorno quipped that “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” Could we not pass the same judgment about academic immersion in animal studies or any other topic not directly related, in the most practical and political ways, to this grim time of planetary entropy, biological meltdown, global capitalist omnicide, totalitarian and fascist state power systems (e.g., the UK and US), and nihilistic philosophies which find their functional counterpoint in the extreme pacifism and glacial models of change urged by many of the so-called “new” abolitionists?²⁰

²⁰ With Jason Miller, I have recently written a trilogy of critiques of fundamentalist pacifism and single-issues that are embedded in the visions of new abolitionist approaches as advocated by a number of individuals, including Gary Francione and Lee Hall. These essays demonstrate some of the core moves and concerns of CAS in bold contrast with MAS. See Steve Best and Jason Miller, “Pacifism or Animals: Which Do You Love More?”

Rewilding Animal Studies

MAS is already beginning to solidify into something tame and domesticated by academia. The conditions that brought about its success as an innovative research topic are the very factors that are hastening its demise as a critical theory of political consequence. This is a tragedy as animal studies is potentially a subversive, critical, and radical perspective that can help illuminate and eliminate core structures of hierarchical domination and key dynamics of destruction and violence.

But so far, for the most part, animal studies has squandered and forfeited its radical potential to become another form of fragmented knowledge, another institutionalized “field of study” that exists in complacent harmony with, rather than fierce opposition to, the prevailing systems of power in academia and society overall.

Animal studies must not become a safe and sanitized discourse; it must use its unique and powerful perspective to advance a radical, critical, and oppositional discourse that engages and politicizes the many profound theoretical, environmental, and political issues embedded in animal studies.

It is thus crucial that a radical and opposition form of animal studies - critical animal studies - has emerged in opposition to mainstream animal studies and academic conservatism in all forms, in order to politicize and radicalize animal studies, and making it as concrete and

A Critique of Lee Hall, Friends of Animals, and the Franciombe Effect in the New Abolitionist Movement” (<http://thomaspainescorner.wordpress.com/2009/02/07/pacifism-or-animals-which-do-you-love-more>); Steve Best and Jason Miller, “Averting the China Syndrome: Response to Our Critics and the Devotees of Fundamentalist Pacifism” (<http://thomaspainescorner.wordpress.com/2009/02/24/averting-the-china-syndrome-response-to-our-critics-and-the-devotees-of-fundamentalist-pacifism/>); and Steve Best and Jason Miller, with Joan Court, Janet Tomlinson, and Lynn Sawyer, “Presence of Malice: UK Activists v. Lee Hall: Or, What Really Happened in the Churchyard” (<http://thomaspainescorner.wordpress.com/2009/03/23/presence-of-malice-uk-activists-v-lee-hall/>).

transformative as possible, relative and relevant to the contemporary context of crisis and catastrophe.

My critique of MAS is ultimately a critique of academia (or “higher education”), a unique world I have learned something about in three decades of life as a student, professor, and activist. For, to borrow Foucault’s terminology, there are strong disciplinary and normalizing biases in academia toward abstract, esoteric, jargon-laden, and apolitical research. No matter what discipline, person, or topic, the academic pathology is the same. It involves reified language, scholastic dullness, and detachments of theory from practice and scholarship from citizenship. While the content may differ - whether physics or philosophy, anthropology or animal studies - the same fissures, fractures, delusions, and narcissism prevails.

As mentioned, CAS eschews positivism, scholasticism, pretentiousness and elitist jargon (accessible only to other professional theoreticians and questionable in its ultimate worth and meaning), and the theory-for-theory’s sake approach – all of which vitiate mainstream animal studies. Rejecting the masks of objectivity and neutrality that in fact hide covert commitments and by default support systems of oppression, critical animal studies is informed by a normative commitment to total liberation and transformation (as animal liberation is impossible without human and Earth liberation, just as human and Earth Liberation is impossible without animal liberation).

Clearly, CAS is doing more than merely criticizing the dominant paradigm in animal studies; it advances a positive and sharply different vision of what animal studies could and should be. This alternative model emerges from a broad political context that shatters the insularity of academia, and underscores the urgency of the current era defined by mass slaughter, species

extinction, and a deepening and increasingly irreversible ecological crisis unfolding throughout the globe. CAS is rooted in a deep and explicit commitment to animal liberation, and it promotes a diverse range of radical politics and tactics necessary to struggle effectively and without illusions against capitalism and hierarchical oppression in all forms.

Parallels with the Frankfurt School

In fact, there are interesting historical and theoretical parallels between the emergence of the Frankfurt School and their “critical theory” approach against positivist academia and conformist cultures in Europe and the US, from the late 1920s through the 1960s (for the first and second generation critical theorists), and our current moment in the twenty-first century, specifically in the post-9/11 era, as we ourselves confront the largely abstract and apolitical institutions of academia and society in general, in order to mount a critique of MAS from a critical theory perspective influenced by the Frankfurt School in many ways.

Beginning in 1923, theorists including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal, Erich Fromm, and Walter Benjamin formed the “Institute for Social Research” in Frankfurt, Germany. The Frankfurt School abandoned the ahistorical, positivist, and disciplinary outlook of mainstream philosophy and social science in favor of a historical, critical, and interdisciplinary approach that analyzed the interrelationships among culture, technology, and the capitalist economy. Frankfurt School theorists synthesized political economy, sociology, history, and philosophy, with the first modern “cultural studies” that analyzed the social and ideological effects of mass culture and communications. Against staid, pseudo-objective forms of “traditional theory,” the Frankfurt School developed a “critical theory” distinguished by its practical and radical objective, namely, to emancipate human beings from conditions of domination. Recognizing the limitations of “orthodox” or

“classical” Marxism, Frankfurt theorists developed a “neo-Marxist” orientation that retained basic Marxist theoretical and political premises, but supplemented the critique of capitalism with other perspectives, thereby spawning hybrid theories such as Freudo-Marxism, Marxist-feminism, and Marxist-existentialism.

CAS emerges in conditions in which positivism is still a prevalent ideology in academia, and sophisticated sociological critiques of positivism replicate its separation of theory from values and practice. Apolitical values reign, as even “radicals” vie for respectability within the rules and logic of academia, and as the professionalization of discourse has transformed language from a potential medium of clarity into an opaque tool of obfuscation that ultimately reinforces systems of power. CAS eschews positivism and the fetishization of theory to respond as clearly as possible to conditions of oppression, domination, exploitation, and crisis. Just as in the 1930s and beyond Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, and others confronted a situation of growing totalitarianism, the domination of nature, the defeat of revolutionary movements, rampant consumerism and conformism, the co-optation of dissent, and the occlusion of emancipatory alternatives and possibilities, the same situations prevail today, only in more advanced form, and they all form the context, background, and motivation for CAS.

Like the Frankfurt School, CAS seeks a multidisciplinary theory. MAS is also interdisciplinary, but it typically leaves out political economy, whereas CAS incorporates it as a crucial part of its outlook. Like the Frankfurt School, CAS synthesizes social theory, politics, *and* the critique of capitalist domination in a revolutionary project to transform society and psychology alike.

CAS must stay relentlessly negative and uncompromising in its critique of the current social order, as it remains affirmative in sense of validating possibilities of resistance and envisioning an alternative future. The ultimate purpose of theory and critique is not to deconstruct textual contradictions, to explore the polyphony of meaning, or to experiment with alternative realities in literary imagination, but rather to align itself with animals and fight for their liberation. Importantly this must not occur in a way that conceptualizes animal issues as if they existed apart from social issues, but rather that illuminates the central role of speciesism in the major problems of cultures and societies, and shows how animal exploitation is now only part of a massive global system of exploitation that must be changed at all points and not just one.

CAS takes shape in awareness of historically-constructed ideologies and systems of power and domination in which humans have oppressed and exploited animals. CAS has a broad and holistic understanding of hierarchical power systems (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, and speciesism) and their intricate interrelationships, explores the systemic destructive effects of capitalism on all life and the Earth, and views animal liberation and human liberation as inseparably interrelated projects. In the spirit and tradition of the Frankfurt School, it seeks to realize its potential of developing one of the most comprehensive and radical outlooks yet developed.

Finally, at its best, the Frankfurt School tradition of critical theory mediated theory and practice through relatively clear language, explicit normative and political commitment, and attention to concrete forces of power, repression, and resistance. This virtue, unfortunately has been lost in the last few decades with the enclosure of theory within minutiae, esoteria, and lifeless abstraction. The turn toward abstraction, the mass production of jargon, and the

fetishization of Continental and postmodern discourse is but the flip-side of avoiding forces of power, structures of oppression, struggles of resistance, and the catastrophic global ecological crisis. As so blatantly evident in McHugh's approach, theory is completely detached from practice and indeed from comprehensible language itself, such that, the turn from critical theory to the likes of Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Derrida has had regressive effects.

Through the institutional biases of academia, and following the overall logic of modernity, theorists have become increasingly technical, specialized, and professionalized. They have thereby obliterated the role of the public intellectual and, ironically, of intellectual life in general, which the public regards contemptuously and dismissively as irrelevant to social, and thereby exacerbating the anti-intellectualism rampant throughout US culture. The tragedy is that theory – clear, concrete, and engaged as possible – is indispensable to practice, just as practice is to it, such that, to paraphrase Kant, theory without practice is empty, and practice without theory is “blind.”²¹ Instead of working as a weapon that illuminates conditions of oppression, galvanizes people, and clarifies ethical and political practice, the language of the intelligentsia functions as a wall, fence, and boundary that isolate specialists from laypeople as it separates universities from communities and the public realm. Overall, academics become tools of elitism and pawns of the ruling powers. In MAS, they often operate as theoretical vivisectioners who dissect the “animal Other” as a social construction and discursive

²¹ For a powerful critique of the turn toward abstraction in Western intellectual culture, see Bryan D. Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Temple University Press, 1990). Theodor Adorno clearly anticipated this critique in his 1964 work, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1983), which principally attacks the obfuscations of Heideggerian discourse as used in existentialist and phenomenological philosophy. For analysis of the theoretical and political advantages and disadvantages of postmodern theories, see the trilogy of works I have co-authored with Douglas Kellner: *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991); *The Postmodern Turn* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997); and *The Postmodern Adventure: Science and Technology Studies at the Third Millennium* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001). Russell Jacoby, among others, has chronicled the steady debasement and decline of the “public intellectual” in American culture since Dewey; see, for instance, *The Last Intellectual: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

object, by way of a detached standpoint that substitutes for political commitment and revolutionary rage.

Commonalities of Oppression and Alliance Politics

CAS rejects liberal reformist visions rooted in the deep delusion that an inherently irrational, violent, and unsustainable system can be rendered rational, peaceful, and sustainable. Its revolutionary outlook sees “separate” problems as related to the larger system of global capitalism, and rejects the reformist concept of “green capitalism” as a naïve oxymoron. It repudiates the logics of marketization, economic growth, and industrialization as inherently violent, exploitative, and destructive, and seeks ecological, democratic, and egalitarian alternatives.

Capitalism sucks everything inorganic and organic into the vortex of mass production and consumption. The profit imperative overwhelms the moral imperative; value is reduced to exchange value; everything, including human labor, becomes a commodity; market competition gives way to economic monopolies and political oligarchies; and Darwin’s “survival of the fittest” concept is the regulating principle of social life. In pursuit of the development and accumulation imperatives that drive its dynamic grow-or-die economy, capitalism devours nature, species, human lives, and indigenous cultures. The global capitalist world system is inherently destructive to people, animals, and nature. It cannot be humanized, civilized, or green-friendly, but rather must be transcended through revolution at all levels - economic, political, legal, cultural, technological, moral, and conceptual.

Of course, capitalism did not pioneer the reduction of living beings to things and exploitable resources. The domination of humans, animals, and the Earth has ancient institutional and

ideological sources in Western culture and, ultimately, agricultural society (spawned some ten thousand years ago) that transcend class and economic dynamics. But while the domination of nature and nonhuman animals hardly began with capitalism, the capitalist system raises human alienation from, and contempt for, the natural world to its highest expression in a global system of individualistic property rights and an advanced technological empire governed by transnational corporations. And when ancient pathologies are conjoined to modern technologies; to an industrial paradigm that subjects work, production, and living processes to mechanized procedures (such as the transformation of agriculture into agribusiness and farming into factory farming); to a bureaucratic state driven by efficiency imperatives; and to an economic system organized solely around accumulation and profit, the result is an unprecedented crisis stemming from a culture of carcinogenic growth and murderous extermination imperatives.

CAS is abolitionist, but in a far richer and more radical way than the prevailing abolitionist approach, as mentioned earlier. Despite recognition of the commonalities of oppression and the need for alliance politics, advocates of this approach appear ultimately to advance a one-dimensional, apolitical, elitist program of vegan education. Symptomatic of this outlook is the depressing absence of an ethically and racially diverse membership attracted to the modern vegan abolitionist movement. This lack of diversity within the abolitionist camp exposes the broader movement to loud criticism, very much in keeping with other “progressive” and “radical” academic and activist movements. In its crudest terms, animal rights advocates are wantonly dismissed as yet another, “Western, white, middle class movement.” Until this insularity is recognised and effectively addressed it will continue to seriously compromise any achievements of the “vegan revolution.”

Moreover, there is a serious contradiction between the ‘one plate at a time’ glacial approach to social change, and the dramatic spikes in global meat consumption (particularly in the most populated nations of the world, China and India) not to mention the dramatic worsening of the planetary ecological crisis. Yes, veganism is a crucial and necessary step for total liberation and turning back the furies of global ecological breakdown, but on its own it is hardly a sufficient condition. Unless tied to alliance politics and a revolutionary social movement, veganism becomes just another bourgeois individualist consumerist and egoistic based outlook. Any advocate of a “vegan revolution” that fails to engage its larger social and economic causes, and that seeks to sever all ties with radical abolitionists (and other social movements and groupings) is destined to relegate veganism to an elitist bourgeois lifestyle practice rather than a broad and diverse social movement. Truly bold and innovative approaches must focus on: overcoming the narrow, elitist, and Euro/US-centric nature of contemporary vegan and animal rights; branching out to working classes, people of color, and southern nations; and recapturing the pugilist spirit of the nineteenth century abolitionist movement, all of which are frequently jettisoned in favor of a toothless pacifism.

Animal exploitation is part and parcel not only of capitalism, growth, profit, and property-ownership relations, but also of a mass technics and instrumental rationality that objectifies and quantifies nature, culture, and the human personality. And it is this vision - the abolition of both speciesism and every other oppressive hierarchy - that guides this radical critique of MAS and development of constructive alternatives. CAS seeks to abolish not only animal exploitation, but also the exploitation of humans and the natural world. It challenges not only the property status of animals, but the institution of (corporate controlled) “private property” itself. Therefore, it is crucial that we continue to develop alternative, broader, alliance-based, bridge-building, anti-capitalist, anti-hierarchical social movements.

Since the fates of all species on this planet are intricately interrelated, the exploitation of animals cannot but have a major impact on the human world itself. When human beings exterminate animals, they devastate habitats and ecosystems necessary for their own lives. When they butcher farmed animals by the billions, they ravage rainforests, turn grasslands into deserts, exacerbate global warming, and spew toxic wastes into the environment. When they construct a global system of factory farming that requires prodigious amounts of land, water, energy, and crops, they squander vital resources and aggravate the problem of world hunger. When humans are violent toward animals, they often are violent toward one another, a tragic truism validated time and time again by serial killers who grow up abusing animals and violent men who beat the women, children, and animals of their home. The connections go far deeper, as the domestication of animals at the dawn of agricultural society is central to the emergence of patriarchy, state power, slavery, and hierarchy and domination of all kinds.

In countless ways, the exploitation of animals rebounds to create crises within the human world itself. The vicious circle of violence and destruction can end only if and when the human species learns to form harmonious relations that are non-hierarchical and non-exploitative - with other animal species and the natural world. To repeat: on its own the animal liberation movement cannot possibly bring about the end of animal exploitation. It can only do this in alliance with progressive social causes, anti-capitalist struggles, and radical environmental movements. CAS asserts the need for more expansive visions and politics on all sides of the human/animal/Earth liberation equation, and we call for new forms of dialogue, learning, and strategic alliances. Animal, human, and Earth liberation are interrelated projects that must be fought for as one, as we recognize that veganism is central

to peace, ecology, sustainability, nonviolence, and the healing of the major crises afflicting this planet.

In addition to gaining new insights into the dynamics of hierarchy, domination, and environmental destruction from animal rights perspectives, Leftists should grasp the gross inconsistency of advocating values such as peace, non-violence, compassion, justice, and equality while exploiting animals in their everyday lives, promoting speciesist ideologies, and ignoring the ongoing holocaust against other species that gravely threatens the entire planet. Conversely, the animal advocacy movement as a whole is politically naive, single-issue oriented, and devoid of a systemic anti-capitalist theory and politics necessary for the true illumination and elimination of animal exploitation; areas where it can profit greatly from discussions with the Left and progressive social movements. Furthermore, environmentalists can never achieve their goals without addressing the main cause of global warming – factory farming – and grasping how water pollution, rainforest destruction, desertification, resource depletion and other key problems are shaped principally or significantly from global meat production and animal exploitation.

The human/animal liberation movements have much to learn from one another. Just as those in the Left and social justice movements have much to teach many in the animal liberation movement about capital logic, social oppression, and the plight of peoples, so they have much to learn about animal suffering, animal rights, and veganism. Whereas Left radicals can help temper single-issue and antihumanist elements in the animal rights movement, so animal rights can help the Left overcome speciesist prejudices and move toward a more compassionate, cruelty-free, and environmentally sound mode of living.

“New social movements” and Greens have failed to realize their radical potential. They have abandoned their original demands for radical social change and become integrated into capitalist structures that have eliminated “existing socialist countries” and social democracies as well in a global triumph of neoliberalism. A new revolutionary force must therefore emerge, one that will build on the achievements of classical democratic, libertarian socialist, and anarchist traditions; incorporate radical green, critical race, feminist, and indigenous struggles; and synthesize Earth, animal, and human liberation standpoints and politics. It must reach out to radical academics, political prisoners, exploited workers, indigenous peoples, subsistence farmers, tribes pushed to the brink of extinction, guerrilla armies, armed insurgents, disenfranchised youth, and to everyone who struggles against the advancing juggernaut of global capitalism, neo-fascism, imperialism, militarism, and phony wars on terrorism that front for attacks on dissent and democracy.

Animal liberation, vegan, and environmental movements must address radical anti-capitalist politics, just as social progressives and radicals must engage these issues in sensitive, serious, holistic, and inclusive ways. Diverse interests can come together in recognition of the common goal of building a social-ecological revolution capable of replacing global capitalism and hierarchical systems with radically democratic, decentralized, and ecological societies. While standpoints such as deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, animal liberation, and Black liberation are all important, none can accomplish systemic social transformation by itself. Working together, however, through a diversity of critiques and tactics that mobilize different communities, a flank of radical groups and positions can drive a battering ram into the multifaceted structures of power and domination and hopefully open the door to a new future.

The three volumes that I co-edited with Anthony J. Nocella, II -- *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals* (Lantern Books, 2004); *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth* (AK Press, 2006); and *Academic Repression: Reflections from the Academic Industrial Complex* (AK Press, 2009) – represent not merely a *theory* of alliance politics and total revolution but also concrete *practices* of radical politics. Each book brings together diverse people and positions that ordinarily never meet. These works break down boundaries that typically exist between academics and activists, scholars and political prisoners (former and current), whites and people of color, men and women, and human and animal rights advocates. Diverse voices together challenge capitalism and hierarchical domination of any and all kinds in pursuit of a more free, just, and sustainable world.

In addition to the various books, essays, and reviews produced by our members, ICAS has taken numerous other steps to *implement* change, such as through organizing annual conferences, initiating protests and boycotts, launching campus campaigns, hosting fundraisers, and always working in these ways as well to build bridges (such as with former members of the Black Panther Party, leaders from the American Indian Movement, and disability rights activists), promote alliance politics, and engage controversial political and tactical issues mainstream groups of all orientations fear and shun. In this manner, ICAS – in little time and with a paucity of resources – has taken a quantum leap beyond pacifist abolitionist who sometimes talk about alliance politics, but never actually do it, and who respond to radical direct action tactics with the same mindset and level of sophistication as Christian fundamentalists in response to Darwinist evolution.²²

²² One deplorable practical exception to the hollow alliance politics rhetoric I am aware of is the alliance that Hall and Friends of Animals developed with Southern Poverty Law Center, a speciesist-humanist group that shares their extreme pacifism and visceral contempt for and demonization of militant direct action tactics, such

Thus, CAS aims to replace partial concepts of revolutionary change in favor of a far broader, deeper, more complex, and more inclusive concept of total revolution. We must exchange the critique of any one system of domination (be it speciesism, sexism, racism, or classism) with a critique of hierarchy as a multifaceted and systemic phenomenon. And as we seek to understand and transform various forms of hierarchy, we must recognize that capitalism is a metastasizing cancer eating away at the planet and that a viable program for total liberation and transformation necessarily seeks to replace global capitalism with decentralized democracy and a dismantling of hierarchy in all forms.

An Era Like No Other

As the global temperatures climb, icecaps and glaciers melt, sea-levels rise, and forests fall, the short-lived human empire has begun to devour itself and implode like a collapsing white dwarf star. The Earth itself – the bulk of which has been domesticated, colonized, commodified, bred and cross-bred, genetically engineered, cloned, and transformed into forces of mass destruction -- is refuting the myths and fallacies of Progress, Development, Science, Technology, the Free Market, and Neoliberalism, while demonstrating the inherent contradiction between capitalism and ecology.

It is time we drop all facile optimism, lift our heads from the sands, and recognize a powerful, singular, and ominous fact: Industrial civilization is unravelling at the seams, and it will be an ugly, brutal, horrifying process as environmental collapse - especially as brought on by global warming - exacts a deadly toll. We need completely new paradigms beyond what has

as the Animal Liberation Front's use of economic sabotage against animal exploiters (see Best and Miller, "Pacifism or Animals: Which Do You Love More?")

informed our thinking in the last five hundred years, the last two thousand years, in the last ten thousand years. These moral and conceptual revolutions must be as bold and shattering of hierarchical and capitalist paradigms as say, Einstein's theory of relativity or quantum mechanics was for classical metaphysics.

The animal advocacy and vegan movements have made important gains, but in comparison to the rate of planetary breakdown these are far too little and much too late. Similarly, as an esoteric discourse unable to escape from the fragmentation imposed on it by capitalism and academia, devoid of a coherent moral or political viewpoint, MAS is hardly poised to become a catalyst of radical change.

Despite recent decades of growing animal advocacy and environmental struggles, we are nevertheless *losing ground* in the battle to preserve species, ecosystems, and wilderness. Increasingly, calls for moderation, compromise, and the slow march through institutions can be seen as treacherous and grotesquely inadequate. In the midst of predatory global capitalism and biological meltdown, "reasonableness" and "moderation" seem to be entirely unreasonable and immoderate, as "extreme" and "radical" actions appear simply as necessary and appropriate.

Politics as usual just won't cut it anymore. We will always lose if we play by their rules rather than invent new forms of struggle, new social movements, and new sensibilities. Causes require decisive and direct action: logging roads need to be blocked, driftnets need to be cut, and cages need to be emptied. But these are defensive actions; new movements must also be built, ones that incorporate social justice, animal liberation, and ecological politics in multiracial and global alliances. Such approaches have been taken by Judi Bari and Earth

First!,²³ the environmental justice movement,²⁴ the international Green movement,²⁵ the Zapatistas,²⁶ alter-globalization struggles against transnational capitalism,²⁷ and radical holistic visions are also commonly found in the animal liberation movement.

Narrow windows of opportunity are rapidly closing. The actions that human beings now collectively take or fail to take will determine whether the future is hopeful or bleak, whether, in David Korten's phrasing, we have Empire or Earth community, a Great Unravelling or a Great Turning.²⁸ While the result is horrible to contemplate, our species may not meet this challenge and could instead drive itself into the same oblivion as it pushed countless other species. There is no economic or technological fix for the crises we confront, the only solution lies in radical conceptual and institutional change at all levels.

The revolution that this planet so desperately needs after ten thousand years of "civilization" must involve, among other things, a transcendence of anthropocentrism, speciesism, patriarchy, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and prejudices and hierarchies of all kinds. At the same time, it must reconstitute social institutions in a form that promotes autonomy and self-determination of communities and individuals, decentralization and democratization

²³ See Judi Bari, "Revolutionary Ecology: Biocentrism and Deep Ecology," <http://www.judibari.org/revolutionary-ecology.html>.

²⁴ See Robert D. Bullard (ed.), *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice & Communities of Color*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994. Also see the Introduction to *Igniting a Revolution* for detail on social justice, anti-racist, and environmental movements.

²⁵ On the global scope of ecological and political battles, see Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search For a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Richard Peet and Michael Watts (eds.), *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1996); Bron Taylor (ed.), *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and Chapter 8 in Rik Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago: The Noble Press, Inc., 1990).

²⁶ Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, *Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising*. Berkeley, CA: AK Press, 2004.

²⁷ On the resistance movements against global capitalism, see Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith, *Globalization From Below: The Power of Solidarity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2000); and Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner, "Resisting Globalization," in G. Ritzer (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization* (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2006).

²⁸ David Korten, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007.

of political life, non-market economic relations, guaranteed rights (or whatever post-capitalist equivalent discourse) for human and nonhuman animals alike, an environmental ethics and ethics of care and respect for all life, and the harmonization of the warring elements of this planet in crisis.

We need the boldest and most systemic, holistic, and inclusive vision possible, one that transcends the destructive alienation and pathology of humanism itself. We need the most uncompromising and radical form of politics we can muster, such that we can revolutionize what cannot be reformed, or, we shall all just be washed away by rising tides or buried by the chaos and violence of a dying world. It is this looming, already unfolding, social crisis and ecological catastrophe that CAS addresses unflinchingly and head-one, and which provides the context and catalyst for its radical theory and transformative politics in action.

“Bend or Break”: Unraveling the Construction of Children and Animals as Competitors in Nineteenth-Century English Anti-Cruelty Movements

Monica Flegel¹

Children and animals are often constructed, particularly in anti-animal rights discourse, as somehow in competition with each other for rights and protections,² a construction very much in existence at the emergence of anti-cruelty to children societies in both America and England. One supposed source of this competition was the assumption that animal lovers did not value children. For example, as one late-nineteenth-century commentator explained, “Those who are kind to their fellow creatures will almost always be found to be also kind and considerate to animals; while, on the contrary, those who are merely fond of animals are known to be often averse to children” (Warren 20).

Though early child protection advocates did not necessarily hold these views, they often suggested that animals, as a result of this sentimental investment, received greater protections than did children. For example, in July 1888, *The Child’s Guardian*, the official journal of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), published a commentary from the *Morning Advertiser* on the Bill before parliament to bring about legislation criminalizing cruelty to children. The *Advertiser* supported the Bill, exclaiming: “It does seem anomalous that it should be easier to punish a man or woman for ill-treatment

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² A problem reflected in the title to Gary Francione’s animal rights text: *Introduction to Animal Rights: Your Child or the Dog?* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000). Though Francione argues that this is an “unfair hypothetical” (Francione xxii), it is nevertheless a comparison that is often presented in ethical debates, particularly in anti-abortion rhetoric. See, for example, John Smeaton’s “In Britain, Unborn Children are Treated Worse than Unwanted Dogs” (<http://spuc-director.blogspot.com/2008/09/in-britain-unborn-children-are-treated.html>).

of a dog or cat than for cruelty to their own children; but such is the state of the law at present” (*The Morning Advertiser* 58). This complaint echoed that of early child-protection advocates in the United States, particularly in the wake of the infamous Mary Ellen case.

Etta Angell Wheeler, a volunteer “making her usual rounds through the tenements of the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhoods tending the souls of the poor and the sick” (Pearson 1) discovered the young Mary Ellen in an abused and neglected condition. After consulting, to no avail, with numerous authorities in an attempt to intervene, Wheeler finally approached Henry Bergh, the president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), and, “according to Jacob Riis, who was then a reporter for the *New York Herald*, Bergh ... declare[ed] that ‘the child is an animal. If there is no justice for it as a human being, it shall at least have the rights of a cur in the street’” (Pearson 2-3).

The Mary Ellen case led to the formation of the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1874, and given the circumstances behind this formation, it is hardly surprising that the development of similar societies in England utilized similar rhetoric about the supposed greater rights enjoyed by animals. Though the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (which would later become the National Society) did share many things in common with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in England, Benjamin Waugh, the first director of the NSPCC, nevertheless often castigated the people of England for caring more for animals than for suffering children.³ Nor do the facts surrounding the passage of laws and the formation of anti-cruelty societies seem to contradict the narrative that “curs” had more protection: as James Kincaid points out in *Child-Loving*, the Victorian Era was “comparatively neglectful of the young in its reforms” (77) pointing

³ See, for example, Waugh’s complaint in the NSPCC’s journal, *The Child’s Guardian*, that “if wretched children were only dogs, what sunlight would fall into their doomed and dismal lives!” (Waugh, “Notes,” 84).

out that the London SPCC was not formed until 1884,⁴ even though the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals had been in existence since 1824.⁵ Similarly, the first laws protecting animals from cruelty had been passed in 1835,⁶ while the Children's Charter was not passed until 1889. Evidence such as this would seem to support the long-standing representation of the English as a people whose sentimental attachment to animals represents either a displacement of, or worse a perversion of, a proper investment in human beings.

Examining the origins of the anti-cruelty to children movement in fact displays something quite different than the "irony that an organization existed to protect animals but not children" (Gerry 4). Prior to the child-protection movement, children were protected under the same laws that safeguarded other humans from assault and murder, and parents had been prosecuted, long before the advent of the Children's Charter, for the abuse of their children.⁷ What animal-protection discourse provided was not the ability to see children as deserving of better treatment, but the ability to see children as deserving of better treatment *in much the same way* as animals. That is, it had to be possible to see children as something like animals in order for similar (and in some cases, shared) anti-cruelty societies to come into being. In many cases, this did in fact mean that children should be protected from cruelty and neglect, but in others, it meant delineating proper control over and discipline of the child, to the extent of safeguarding particular forms of violence *against* children.

⁴ The first SPCC in England was in fact the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1883.

⁵ The prefix "Royal" was added in 1840.

⁶ The Martin Act was passed in 1822, and prevented cruelty to cattle. It was extended to include other domestic animals in 1835.

⁷ In *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500-1900*, Linda Pollock argues "that the law and society condemned child abuse long before the specific Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act appeared in 1889. Parents who abused their offspring were generally considered 'unnatural' and the cruelty as 'horrific' or 'barbaric'" (94). As well, no new laws were required to save Mary Ellen from her home, nor was she represented under laws that protected animals.

In other words, a close examination of the relationship between anti-cruelty to children and anti-cruelty to animals reveals not an English preference for safeguarding animal life over child life, but instead a problem at the heart of protectionist discourse: that safeguarding both animals and children is not solely about preventing cruelty, but also about preserving both animal and child as useful, pleasurable objects. In an examination of “Bend or Break,” a story of child abuse published in the RSPCA’s *Animal World* in 1870, I argue that this story’s representation of suffering childhood works very much within the more common characterization of children within that journal as sadistic abusers of animals. Far from constructing two contradictory narratives of childhood – one, violent and out of control, the other, victimized and endangered – the representations of children in *Animal World* instead work together to present models of “appropriate” discipline, narratives that instruct *Animal World* readers on how they might bend a child’s will without breaking that child, and which coincide with the journal’s articles on how to control and care for animals themselves. Rather than providing a discourse of rights, anti-cruelty societies like the RSPCA—and later, the NSPCC—instead generated narratives of kindness that nevertheless produce justification for power over the animal and the child, and stress the necessity of control over both. What is important about the construction of these similar agencies, therefore, is not that animals received greater protection than children, but that *both* animals and children, in protectionist discourse, are presented as disempowered subjects.

“Bend or Break: A Story for Parents”

“Bend or Break,” a story specifically concerned with the emotional and physical abuse of a young boy by his parents, was published serially in 1870 and 1871, and thus predates the emergence of anti-cruelty to children societies in England. The publication of a story with such a subject in the RSPCA’s *Animal World* might seem somewhat odd, given that journal’s

commitment to animal protection issues, but it is important to note that calls for the inclusion of children in animal protection had already taken place in its pages: in the February 1870 issue of *Animal World*, for example, a letter from “A. B.” asks,

May I venture, through your valuable medium, to call the attention of humane people to a class of animals whose sufferings have hitherto been little regarded? They are as helpless as any class of creatures...yet those who have tried only know how difficult it is to rouse an interest in them—I mean *Children*. (“The Protection of *All Defenceless Animals*” 94)

In order to justify the inclusion of children in the anti-cruelty-to-animals movement, the writer attempts to construct the two as similar: both are “helpless,” and “completely in their power, and at the mercy of those they happen to belong to” (95). That is, like animals, children cannot speak on their own behalf, and must rely on the care and protection of those who, it would seem, own them, as the “belong to” in that sentence suggests. A second letter, written by an “Old Bachelor,” and published in *Animal World* in April of 1870, reaffirms this position, stating, “The power, absolute to an almost terrible extent, which parents and guardians possess over their children or wards, morally and intellectually, the ability to make or mar their little lives is often abused sadly enough, and for this there is no remedy” (“The Protection of Children from Cruelty” 125). What unites children and animals in these letters, and therefore makes them both candidates for the same protections (as the first letter specifically asks that the RSPCA expand its mandate to simply include children), is their defenseless position.

Such calls for child protection fit well within the object of the RSPCA’s journal, which was, as expressed in the appropriately-named editorial, “Our Object,” “to protect animals from torture, and ameliorate their condition, and to awaken in the minds of men a proper sense of the claims of creatures placed under their dominion” (8). It goes on to state that “The animal

kingdom consists of ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’ beings, of which man forms a part; and we shall be bound, therefore, in *THE ANIMAL WORLD*—a title made comprehensive enough to include ‘both man and bird and beast’—to advocate man’s interests as well as the happiness of his subordinates” (8). Children, of course, fell within the category of “man’s interests,” particularly in terms of the adults they would one day become and the adulthood for which they were being shaped, and the RSPCA’s dedication to humane education was often in evidence within the pages of the journal. Children also, however, easily fit within the category of “subordinates.” As Mary Wollstonecraft wrote in *Original Stories from Real Life* (1791), “It is only to animals that children *can* do good, men are their superiors” (16). In a hierarchy in which children are significantly below adults, it is not a far leap to see the concerns of abused children as also falling within the purview of “the claims of creatures placed under [man’s] dominion,” as evidenced by both the letters published in *Animal World* on behalf of abused children, and the publication of “Bend or Break” later that same year.

However, we must also remember that there were “substantial and widespread cultural associations between animals and children” (Pearson 92) that also served to strengthen the argument for including children in animal protection. In addition to their shared position as subordinates and disempowered subjects, children and animals were often linked together in terms of their supposed nature. The “Romantic Child,” a construction of idealized childhood that writers such as Judith Plotz identify in particular with male Romantic writers, imagines the child as “embodying what is best in the physical endowment of humanity and also a link to mute insensate things” (Plotz 6). In Romantic discourse, “children are regularly depicted as the indigenes of nature: at once *originary* models of ideal nature, unselfconscious and self-sufficient models of natural beauty, and irrepressible engines of vital power” (6). Though not inseparable from or interchangeable with the animal, the child and the animal nevertheless

shared space in the Romantic imagination: both perceived to be outside of human culture, and the industrialization and destruction of the natural world associated with it, animals and children were seen as uniquely threatened by modernity. The influence of the Romantic child remained within more sentimental representations of children in nineteenth-century England. Both *Animal World* and *Band of Mercy*, the RSPCA's journal for children,⁸ were filled with stories and illustrations that celebrated the supposedly natural bond between children and animals: an illustration in *Band of Mercy* for example entitled "Grandpapa's four pets,"⁹ includes a pony, two dogs, and his granddaughter, while another picturing a young smiling boy embracing a lamb is merely entitled, "They understand each other."¹⁰ Images such as these, Susan Pearson argues, show the animal and the child's "mutual status as objects of the sentimentalizing gaze" (69). Such sentimentalism plays a large part in what Pearson identifies as the growing appreciation for the "pet" in the nineteenth century, an appreciation in part resulting from "industrialization and the separation of home and work, a process during which children, and many domestic animals, were removed from the labor force and valued precisely for their helplessness, dependence, and innocence of worldly ways" (58).

But if the animal and the child were celebrated for their innocence, playfulness and beauty, they were also simultaneously feared and disciplined for their supposed "savagery"—the violence that was equally seen to be a part of being closer to the "natural world." At times, the savage/unspoiled binary was managed through categorization of animals and children: dogs were valued for their loyalty, for example, and for the fact that their relationship with humans "epitomized the appropriate relationship between master and subordinates" (Ritvo

⁸ This journal was initially published as *The Band of Mercy Advocate* by Mrs. Smithies and her son, T. B. Smithies ("The Band of Mercy Movement" 6); however, the journal was passed on to the RSPCA's Ladies Committee in 1883, and renamed simply *Band of Mercy* ("Notice" 2).

⁹ Cover illustration for *Band of Mercy*, 6.71 (November 1884).

¹⁰ *Band of Mercy* 9.104 (August 1887): 60.

20),¹¹ while cats were reviled for being “deceitful and difficult to train” (22). So too the middle-class child might be a treasured pet while a lower-class child could be seen as wild, dangerous and uncivilized.¹² Often, however, in RSPCA discourse, stories of the child as pet appear side-by-side with stories of the child as vicious instigator of violence, and for every sentimental narrative about a child and animal pair in the RSPCA’s journal, there is a competing narrative of some child’s sadism towards helpless and defenseless animals. Stories of cruel boys in particular filled the pages of the journal, with the aim both of instructing parents on how they might curb that cruelty, and of modeling proper behavior for the child reader. One story, “Only for Fun!” tells of young Harry who when caught “pulling the legs and wings off a poor fly” has his hair pulled out by his dutiful mother so that he might learn “the pain you have inflicted on the poor fly” (19). Another common story found in both journals was that of the fantastic reversal: dreams or enchantments in which young boys find themselves made small, and at the mercy of animals they have previously tortured.

While such stories construct the animal as victim of (young) human savagery, it is important to note that discipline, and not necessarily the suffering of the animal, is the primary concern. In *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind*, James Turner somewhat problematically observes that “Presumably little boys have for centuries satisfied their curiosity and their sadistic impulses by tormenting unlucky cats and dogs” (12), but notes that it was not until “the eighteenth century—due partly to new attitudes towards animals, partly to the influence of Evangelicalism at the end of the century, and perhaps partly to increased interest in child rearing as such—[that] this juvenile barbarity [began] to

¹¹ Even dogs, however, could be divided into “classes”: as Harriet Ritvo points out, discourse surrounding rabies in the nineteenth century “divided society into respectable and dangerous classes—potentially offensive dogs were invariably identified by their social status, which reflected that of their owners, rather than their biological category or breed—and it located the most urgent threat to health and safety among the disorderly poor” (176).

¹² As Lydia Murdoch notes, “animalistic and subhuman terms classified poor children as physically and morally different from the English. The philanthropist Ellen Barlee described children in a ragged schoolroom as the ‘most curious motley of zoological specimens possible’” (26).

disturb many adults” (12).¹³ Though it is true that concern for the suffering animal inspired protests against child cruelty to animals, it is also important to remember that it was the fear that torturing an animal “was the first brutalizing step on the road to callousness, sadism, and—who could say?—murder” (Turner 12-13) that inspired much anxiety. Immanuel Kant, in his “Duties towards Animals and Spirits,” used Hogarth’s “The Four Stages of Cruelty” to illustrate this point:

Hogarth depicts this in his engravings. He shows how cruelty grows and develops. He shows the child’s cruelty to animals, pinching the tail of a dog or cat; he then depicts the grown man in his cart running over a child; and lastly, the culmination of cruelty in murder. He thus brings home to us in a terrible fashion the rewards of cruelty, and this should be an impressive lesson to children. (174)

The belief that children required this lesson—along with those often associated with children, people of the lower classes and of “savage” cultures—demonstrates the extent to which “humane” behavior was linked to a particular subjectivity that combined the Evangelical “pursuit of personal self-discipline” (Harrison 116) with a focus on civilization, “a word with great currency in the nineteenth century, reflecting a particular set of attitudes towards behaviour that became associated most strongly with middle-class cultural tastes” (27). As a result, both child and animal alike represented problematic subjects, very much in need of taming.

The nature and character of that taming, however, was not always the same. Children, though considered to be like animals in many ways, were also adults-in-training and as such the

¹³ The presumption made here seems to rely on social constructions of gender and the naturally “sadistic” child, neither of which, I believe, can be simply “presumed.”

position they occupied was in many ways very different from that of the animal. Both child and animal could be ruined by improper handling, but the child could be ruined both as child and as future man—two very different roles that required different instruction. The odd position of children in the social hierarchy is perfectly captured in “Bend or Break” in the description of the young protagonist struggling with his gloves: “‘I never can put on lavender gloves without papa, or else I make them so dirty,’ said Bertie, looking piteously at his little brown paw, on which the glove stood at attention, half on and half off. ‘I have such a nice pair in my pocket, do let me wear them!’ ‘What are they?’ ‘Dog-skin....’” (77). Little Bertie struggles with the dress restrictions his parents place on him, restrictions the narrator ably captures in the battle between lavender gloves and “little brown paw.” Bertie’s dirtiness and paws speak to his boyishness and connection to nature, both of which, as we shall see, are valorized in the story, but his dog-skin gloves also speak to his position of power *over* nature—to a nascent manliness that rejects lavender gloves in favor of the more rugged option, and that clearly revels in man’s dominion over animal at the same time. The struggle to define just what space Bertie occupies—playful, improperly managed child with “little brown paws,” or little man who must learn proper authority—provides a glimpse of the issues at stake in the collision of anti-cruelty to animals and anti-cruelty to children discourse.

“Bend or Break” fits very much within the RSPCA’s goal of humane education and the production of civilized (middle-class, adult) subjects. The subtitle is “a story for parents” and, throughout the text, advice on child-rearing and proper child management are liberally mixed in with the narrative.¹⁴ In his rantings against the mistakes of parents, and in his appreciation of childhood exuberance and elderly sagacity, the narrator seeks to demonstrate how parents should shape their boys, and instructs them in the ways of boyhood and boy nature so as best

¹⁴ The story is published anonymously, though later chapters include the sub-heading, “By an old bachelor,” indicating that it may have been written by the same person who wrote to the RSPCA on behalf of suffering children.

to understand and nurture them. Beginning with little Bertie's sad complaint, "If only I wasn't so ugly and stupid" (44) and ending with the tragic death of Bertie and his brother Alfie, after Alfie's abused pony propels them both over a cliff and into a quarry, the story makes clear that the parents, the wealthy Fanes, are very much in need of good instruction. The father is supercilious in his dealings with others, but always concerned about the family's reputation, while the mother is vain and selfish.

There are three boys in the family: Bertie, the eldest, who is abused and reviled by his parents for his exuberant boyishness and plain looks; Alfie, who is adored (particularly by his mother) for his beauty, feminine qualities, and malleability; and Hugh, whose only purpose seems to be to leave his parents with one last child to prove they have learned some lessons after the deaths of the first two. The abuse that Bertie suffers at the hands of his parents is both physical and psychological: he is "beaten and kept in the oak room for three days on bread and water" (44); he is told that he is a "wicked, ungrateful, unnatural child" (45); and he is continually rejected by his father after Bertie's numerous attempts to show respect, affection, and love towards him.

The complex similarities and distinctions between child as animal and child as future adult are very apparent in the parental instruction the reader receives from the story on the proper way to "bend" not "break" a child. As Susan J. Pearson notes in "The Rights of the Defenseless," "Thanks to changes in ideas about violence, discipline, and the natural disposition of humans and animals, reformers inhabited a world in which ideals for the proper management of animals and children were remarkably similar" (74). Certainly, the story does suggest that, in some ways, the treatment of the two should be much the same: Bertie's careful instruction of his dog, "Bounce," for example, in which he lovingly puts Bounce

through his drills and rewards him accordingly giving only the admonishment “Naughty” as needed (76), provides a sharp contrast to the thoughtless and rigid disciplines his parents mete out against their children. When Bounce gets caught poaching, Mr. Fane promises to punish “dog and poacher [Bertie]” alike, with the punishment against the dog, locked away without food, identical to the punishment Bertie receives at the beginning of the story. While this kind of discipline is frowned upon by the narrator, it is important to note that it is not the similarity of the boy’s and the dog’s punishment that is criticized; instead, it is suggested that such a punishment suits *neither*. When it comes to boys and other pets, Mr. Fane does not exercise the light hand and understanding heart such creatures most require, demonstrating a failure to recognize the affective value child and dog should hold within the domestic realm. After the death of his two children, Mr. Fane can only ask himself if he “had tried to manage them, even taking the word in its accepted sense in the stables? No, he could not honestly say that he had. He had punished them when they did wrong, or displeased him; but had he ever rewarded them by a kind look, a changed tone, a word of encouragement...when they did well?” (103).

Yet if the story recognizes similarities between boys and pets, the word “even” suggests that while such equal treatment would be preferable to the cruelty exercised upon Bertie, “even” the management that happens in the stables is not quite right as treatment for boys. Mr. Fane seems to consider his duty as father and as “famous stock farmer” (44) as one and the same: “he saw that his children had a comfortable nursery, and a competent governess...and a careful groom to take charge of them when he rode out” (44), while in terms of his animals, “he regularly visited the stable, the farm, and sometimes the kennels” (44). His dutiful if perfunctory treatment of both speaks more to his style as caretaker than it does to his knowledge of what management best suits the animals and children in his care, for though he

gives the animals “the food most adapted to them and the sort of breaking-in or rearing most likely to make them serviceable” (44), his treatment of the boys can lead only, the narrator assures the reader, to their ruination. The narrator’s dry observation that “it would have done no harm if he would have spent as much time and personal attention in supervising the rearing and education of his children” (44-45) raises the specter of competition between animal and child, with the father privileging the animals who “brought Mr. Fane both money and credit, while his children only cost him the former” (45). Mr. Fane’s misplaced priorities, though clearly linked to his personal vanity and new-money status (59), are implicitly connected by the narrator to larger societal preferences: “The slaughter of a blue-rock pigeon furnishes abundant ground for a harrowing display of fine writing, but a dingy-complexioned, ill-dressed, and half-washed child, with its back all over bruises, is hardly a picturesque object!” (91).

But if the story wishes to castigate readers and parents for appreciating attractive and/or financially-compensatory animals over messy and physically-unattractive children, it does so by valorizing and celebrating boyhood, and by producing a competing aesthetic that glories in the rough-and-tumble style of the true English boy. Harold Annesley, an artist hired to produce a portrait of Mrs. Fane, represents the ideal father, one who, the narrative suggests, allows his boys to be boys: “He was himself the father of a merry, noisy, romping family of six boys, who ran wild about his studio” (59). These boys are messy, spilling “his turpentine over their pinafores and jackets” and making themselves “ill with tasting his paints” (59). Bertie is himself a messy boy, destroying a mechanical sheep used by Mr. Annesley in his portraits, breaking a billiard cue, and burying his youngest brother in a rabbit hole. Though his parents despise him for this, the reader is meant to recognize, through the voice of Mr. Annesley and others, the truly “manful way” (61) Bertie comports himself. Managing such a

nature as his requires the proper handling: as Mr. Annesley proclaims to Mrs. Fane, “The thing seems to me to be merely to be thoroughly just to them, and at the same time perfectly firm, and of course, thoroughly to understand them” (62).

Breaking in a boy, the narrative continually reiterates, requires understanding a boy’s nature, while also taking into account the man he will one day become. The father and mother’s inability to properly consider the difference that future adulthood means in terms of the temporary similarity of children and animals is continually demonstrated in their rearing of their boys. Alfie is usually cared for and loved in the story, but to such an extent that he becomes weak, cowardly, and selfish: Bertie notes that “he’s delicate, and gets petted, and that makes him more like a girl” (44). Bertie, on the other hand, is treated harshly: as Bertie himself asks, “Must they pen him up like a sheep in a slaughter-house when they had given him punishment already?” (45). In both cases, the reader is meant to understand that children suffer as a result of their parents’ inability to distinguish their children’s needs from their animals’ needs: made into a ridiculous pet or treated like a sheep to be slaughtered, neither boy is given the upbringing required to shape them into a proper man. Instead, what the boys learn is the violence enacted upon them: Alfie, after being castigated by the groom and by Bertie for beating his horse replies, “papa says, animals were only made for our pleasure,” and continues, “papa beats us” (77). The fact that Alfie models his treatment of animals on his father’s treatment of the boys speaks to the role that pet-keeping played in the shaping of the young adult, and in the teaching of the proper exercise of power: as Pearson notes, pet-keeping was a “didactic enterprise: to teach children to become adults who can exercise self-control in their dealings with equals, and more importantly, subordinates” (60). However, Alfie clearly recognizes that in his relationship to his father, he is in a very similar relationship as his pony is to him.

In Alfie's understanding lies a paradox: though the story clearly seeks to demarcate the distinct differences between boys and animals so as to suggest the proper handling of both, yet its construction of childhood and boyishness repeatedly indicates the similarities between them. The reader is asked to consider the effects punishment has upon the child's "mirth" and "spirits," "spirits and mirth which come to them naturally, as bloom to flowers or songs to birds" (103). Mr. Annesley's perfect boys are "wild" (59) and Bertie's, we are told, singularly wonderful nature springs from "sheer happiness and abundant spirits...just as the flowers bloom because the sun shines hot, and waters ripple because the winds blow soft" (103). The story reminds us the "Youth is to be revered for its pure unknowingness" (91), an innocence that, when placed within the context of the descriptions linking the child to the natural world, places the child firmly outside adult human rationality, experience, and responsibility.

Such a fetishization of the child does not of course allow for a discourse of child rights, for if a child like Bertie is meant to be appreciated in all his natural glory, he must also, like the animal, be properly managed and controlled—that is, kept in line and preserved in helplessness so as to safeguard the pleasure adults find in him. In an essay on "Kindness to Animals," printed in *Animal World* in 1882, George Lowe argues that "animals, like human beings, need correction, but two things are necessary to make it of use. One is not to punish them too severely, which only hardens them in rebellion; the other is, never to beat them at all, except for real fault.... Otherwise the poor beast, not knowing when or why it may be beaten, gets confused and foolish, as any boy might do from being in a great fright" (Lowe 90). The essay continues, "An animal, or a boy either, living in constant fear of ill-usage whether he deserves it or no, will get so stupid or careless as seldom to do what is required"

(90). Though the essay seeks to demonstrate the wrongness of cruelty, it does so through elucidating its ineffectiveness—the extent to which cruelty prevents the subject from doing “what is required.”

The suggestion that improper treatment “hardens” subordinate animals “in rebellion” is a threat that “Bend or Break” continually applies to young boys as well. Though everyone in the household recognizes the parents’ flaws, Bertie is continually reminded to respect them, and to recognize that they have his best intentions in mind (even when it is clear that they do not). Bertie’s observation that his father was “very unkind” (44) towards him, though accurate, yet demonstrates the beginnings of a rebellion against parental authority. The fault for this rebellion may lie with the father, but such a lack of respect is nevertheless represented as ultimately damaging to the child. The story clearly states that “it is right [that children] should obey the rules of their elders” (45), and by setting unclear rules or by punishing inappropriately, Mr. Fane fails to properly “break in” his sons. Such a failure may result in a frightened effeminate boy like Alfie, but it also holds out the possibility of creating a “hardened child,” a child that can only be produced, the narrator states, when they “have been long and systematically mismanaged; misgoverned because miscomprehended” (45). The deaths of the children, caused by the mismanagement of a cruelly-treated pony, are a not-so-subtle reminder that improper training – in the case of poorly-trained Alfie, too cowardly to control his animal, and poorly-trained pony, too abused to be controlled - can have disastrous results. As the narrator observes, “Long punishments harden by rendering obstinate high-spirited children; make them desperate by cowing the timid ones, break their spirit, make them deceitful....” (45). Children, like animals, can be spoiled by mismanagement, growing up to be “at the bottom of the social kennel, moral ‘slag’” (103).

Though the narrator laments that “we ‘bit’ our children” (59), therefore, the story is clearly concerned with demonstrating how to kindly and properly do just that. Furthermore, though it laments the supposed preference for pretty birds over ugly children, yet in its championing of Bertie, it does not challenge the assumption that protection should be given most to pleasing, deserving objects. Alfie, though pretty, is cowardly and unlikable, and the reader is meant to appreciate Bertie’s threat of “I shall break your switch and punch your head” (77) in response to Alfie’s spoiled behavior. The story warns that children who are mismanaged will become hardened and “vicious” with “blighted lives” (45), yet little Bertie, who receives the harshest treatment of any creature in the story, remains unstained. He might be physically unappealing with his “by no means pretty face” (45), but he is to the end a “true, chivalrous, self-sacrificing,” “merry, manly, unimpressible,” and most importantly, “blameless” (103) little boy. His response to a beating, “not that I minded” (44), is crucial as it suggests that it is his “unimpressible” nature that sustains him, but also because it is central to his role as victim in the text; it is his blamelessness, rather than simply his right to freedom from abuse, that should protect him from harsh punishment.

Both *Animal World* and *The Band of Mercy Advocate* spoke approvingly of punishments for children who misused animals, and, as noted, Bertie himself sought to teach Alfie a thing or two when Alfie beat his pony. One gets the distinct impression that if Alfie had either been petted less or beaten more, he and his brother would have survived the story. Where it is necessary to keep a child managed from that greatest of sins, disobedience, violence towards a child is not in and of itself unethical. When violence ruins an animal or a child, preventing either from providing pleasure to adult humans, then violence is presented as a problem. For example, Bertie comments to his father that Alfie should not use spurs on his pony because the pony “doesn’t never want it. I can make him go like anything when I ride him. He only

wants you to shake the reins, and pat his neck, and say ‘Come up’...and he’s off like the wind” (102). The lesson Bertie is giving his father here is not, of course, about what the pony actually wants, but about what one must do in order to make the pony do his pony job. Treating it gently results in a pleasurable ride; treating it roughly results in death over a cliff. The distinction between a discourse that stresses the importance of proper management to the value of a child or animal—that is, to keeping them unspoiled and obedient—and a discourse that asserts their right to freedom from pain and cruelty is that the former preserves the right of adult, human control over and investment in an inferior object. However, such a discourse also makes the savage animal and the difficult or vicious child problematic objects of concern, and it should be noted that the death of Alfie and Bertie, though presented as tragedy, also “saves” them from a life of ruined adulthood. A dead child, it would seem, is infinitely preferable to a ruined one.

Conclusion

Arguments that focus on the “irony” of animal protection preceding child protection do so in a context that presumes child and animal alike as disempowered subjects, as distinctly other than and separate from adult humans. I have argued here that such a construction of the child and the animal is essential to protectionist discourse, rather than something against which it defines itself. And while I am far from arguing that protections should be rescinded, I would suggest that battles over which victim society prefers, the animal or the child, should not be confused with actual considerations of the rights either group should be granted. Instead we should be asking: what inequities are we protecting within these protectionist models? The fact that corporal punishment of children is still allowed in England, Canada, and the United States demonstrates that protection models do not necessarily challenge the parental “right” of violence towards the child, and the RSPCA’s current stance on animal experimentation

demonstrates that animals' use value still trumps their rights to life and freedom from pain.¹⁵ I am not suggesting that these are similar or equal oppressions; instead, I argue that my very need to clarify the comparative magnitude of a child being spanked and an animal being experimented upon speaks to the problem at hand: how does one sort through cultural representations that present "the child" and "the animal" as similar constructs without producing analogies that succeed in demeaning both?

The best answer I can give to this question is that it is necessary to recognize that various forms of oppression can be mutually reinforcing, without necessarily being experienced in exactly the same ways. Animals, children, and for that matter, women, racial others, and members of lower classes, all "live in an adult-centered, age-segregated world that better serves the political and economic interests of powerful adults" (Kurth-Schai 194), and have all been subject, at various times in English history, to "social restrictions...often justified in terms of protection, affection, and assistance" (194).¹⁶ Too often, groups representing disempowered others do so through a "single-mindedness so common in Western institutions" (Gruen 60), a single-mindedness that, I argue, sometimes leads to narratives of competition that place one victim in opposition to the other. While ecofeminists have done excellent work arguing that "an adequate ecofeminist theory must not only address the opposition of women and nature, but must specifically address the oppression of the nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet" (61), I believe there is still significant work to be done to unravel the web of similarities and contrasts linking (and separating) animal and child victims. Until the connection between the child and the animal receives the critical attention it deserves, the oft-repeated argument that animal lovers care more for

¹⁵ For an outline of the RSPCA's stance on research animals, see the following:
<http://www.rspca.org.uk/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RSPCA/RSPCARedirect&pg=researchanimals>.

animals than they do for children will continue to undermine activism on behalf of both animals and children in contemporary society.

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From War Elephants to Circus Elephants: Humanity's Abuse of Elephants

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Abstract

This paper examines the historical human use and abuse of elephants in an attempt to connect the contemporary use of performing elephants with the ancient use of war elephants and also examines two opposing opinions regarding elephant conservation. Beginning in ancient times, the now unheard of but once ubiquitous war elephants used by Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Hannibal and other Asian cultures is revisited and the abuse of war elephants is traced into modern warfare. Contemporary "elephant crushing" in Thailand and the use of elephants to execute human beings will be examined. The argument is posited that western acceptance of the use of performing elephants is equally as reprehensible as the ancient use of the war elephant. The ivory trade is also examined along with elephant cognition and social behaviors including death rituals. The paper suggests the alternative of elephant sanctuaries. Statistics are provided regarding the highly endangered Asian and African elephants' declining total populations. The paper: connects contemporary western elephant abuse with the use of elephants in war; urges the reader to never attend or promote elephant circuses, buy ivory, or support the exploitation of the elephant in any way; and argues intrinsic valuing of elephants in lieu of other conservation approaches such as Sustainable Use.

Key Words: *elephants, war elephants, nonhuman animal abuse, performing elephants, elephant sanctuaries, ivory trade, poaching, historical animal use, animal circuses, elephant exploitation, elephant conservation*

Humanity's History of Inhumanity Toward Elephants

Since the dawn of human history, opposing forces have been engaged in warfare utilizing a variety of weaponry, gadgets and accoutrement. As the American cultural climate takes its contemporary turn toward matters long ignored by the masses, a new focus on animal rights (AR) and animal welfare has emerged. The elephant, now severely endangered, has

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of late been the focus of many animal rights and welfare groups' actions. Animal rights activists (ARAs) have been achieving progress in the areas of factory farming, the fur industry, companion animal breeding and other areas; however, the plight of the captive elephant receives little attention in comparison. With some current research turning its focus on zoos, circuses, magic shows, elephant rides and other aspects of performing elephants, it seems apropos to trace human use of elephants to its genesis and to briefly revisit its roots deep in the classical world and discuss how best to save elephants from extinction.

The war elephant used so profusely by ancient peoples is not familiar to many people, and few in the West seem to spend time researching this once brutal use of the elephant. In fact, for over three thousand years, elephants were used in warfare. Elephants were used as battering rams, tanks and cargo carriers long before machines were created. In illustration of the dearth of war elephant research, this paper often refers to the only book dedicated solely to war elephants written in the English language: *War Elephants* by John M. Kistler. The author writes that until gunpowder severely limited the effectiveness of the animal in the seventeenth century, the largest land mammals on earth performed amazing feats during wars including building roads and swinging swords as well as completely terrifying enemies (Kistler, 2007). While people may be aware of war elephants and circus elephants, obvious ethical connections between the two are rarely, if ever, made.

For both war and circus purposes, people captured elephants from the wild, deprived them of needed socialization, imposed crushing isolation on them, deprived them of their basic needs, failed to realize their rights as individuals, failed to value them intrinsically and damaged their complex and self-aware psyches. This paper examines the war elephants of antiquity and contemporary uses of the elephant and connects this past grievance with the patronizing of circuses by Americans. It would be helpful for ARAs to pay more attention to the elephant and to gain a brief grounding in the history of the war elephant because these elephants were forced into fierce wars to serve and die, and forgetting them dishonors their sacrifices.

The Ancient Plight of the War Elephant

In 2008, both the African and the Asian elephant are dangerously near extinction. Between 1979 and 1989 the African elephant population was reduced from around 1.3 million to perhaps 600,000 due to ivory poaching; and only around 35-40,000 Asian elephants remain (Irwin, 2000). At the time of the ancient battles between Carthage and Rome, African forest elephants likely ranged as far as the Mediterranean, and the African elephant roamed the entire continent. Elephants were abundant, trainable, and commodified, used, but never domesticated. Being the only nonhuman animal ever used in large scale warfare, this non-domestication is notable. All war elephants were most likely captured in the wild in lieu of breeding. In contrast, the dog and the horse are the only other animals to be used in warfare, and they have been domesticated for four thousand years. However, the elephant is the only animal ever used as an active weapon; curiously they will stomp an enemy while the horse will always step over them (Kistler,

2007). When this fact was discovered regarding the elephant, it was soon pressed into service.

As late as the Vietnam War, elephants were used to transport items. Since they were big and visible, they were used as ground targets for U.S. air forces. In Asia, elephants were typically not used as active instruments of war but rather as beasts of incredible burden, pulling loads along the ground that could not be moved by many numbers of troops. In World War II, elephants were used to drag huge cannons to battle positions. And the service of elephants in modern warfare has caused them to be bombed from planes and suffer searing napalm and other injuries and death, far from their natural state of living (Kistler, 2007).

In the wild elephants are not always aggressive toward humans; they tend to be peaceful creatures living in large female herds while the adult males mostly wander alone. Elephants do occasionally attack cars and tourists in the wild, but their threat displays are usually empty. To many people, the human use of elephants seems to exemplify some of the worst human abuses toward all nonhuman animals. It is Matthew Scully, author of *Dominion: The Suffering of Animals, The Power of Man, and the Call to Mercy* who claims the fate of the elephant to be the greatest human onslaught ever visited upon any animal (Scully, 2002).

Most likely the most famous war elephants are those used by the Carthaginian general Hannibal during his crossing of the Alps during the second Punic War against Rome in

218-201 BC. However, other cultures in Asia had long used elephants in military campaigns. The probable first use of an elephant by a human was over five thousand years ago in Asia when an orphaned calf wandered into a village. It was friendly, trainable, and proved most useful. It is believed that the first organized use of elephants was in India where the Elephant Corps made up one of the branches of the Indian military. By 1000 BC, riding elephants was very common in Western China; they were so numerous it is believed that almost everybody had one. As such, human use of the elephant began to spread substantially.

Humans became adroit at capturing wild elephants. It was even discovered that certain captured elephants could be trained to help capture wild ones and this happened in China so often that the southern region of Ho-Nan became known as the “Country of Docile Elephants” (Kistler, 2007: 3). Soon after learning to subdue these beasts for relatively peaceful tasks such as transportation and transport, humans soon pressed elephants into warfare. The aforementioned Hannibal is the most iconic user of war elephants, but Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Hannibal are only some of the leaders who utilized elephants in warfare. The first war elephant was probably utilized around 1100 BC, and the first contact Europeans had with war elephants is thought to have been the October 1st, 331 BC Battle of Gaugamela with Persia fighting against Alexander the Great. Mecca, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, the Numidians, and Kushites, and Carthage all used war elephants. The Islamic founder Mohammad was born in the year 571 AD, and it is known as the Year of the Elephant.

As is well known, use of elephants is pervasive in many religious and artistic rituals and practices throughout the Eastern. The soldiers of Constantinople faced war elephants. Arab horses ceased their charges, terrified of Persia's war elephants until Arab troops learned how to defeat the elephants by gouging out their eyes and attacking their trunks. Additionally, the famous ancient Queen Semiramis supposedly faced attacking forces utilizing front lines of behemoth war elephants (Kistler, 2007).

While effective, war elephants were not invincible by any means. Romans discovered by slitting their horses' throats that the smell of blood would often cause elephants to rage and trample their own troops in confusion. Also, it was discovered that elephants were terrified of the squeal of pigs, so war pigs were also used. One would put tar on the backs of the pigs, set them aflame, and direct the terrified and squealing pigs at the elephants who would succumb to panic, thus rendering them ineffective. Pliny the Elder and Aelian in his *de Natura Animalium* both report the effectiveness of war pigs. And of course Hannibal and Carthage were ultimately unsuccessful. As any teacher who has taught Virgil's *Aeneid* knows, when Hannibal reached the Republic, only one of his thirty seven war elephants remained alive. Also, it is known the Chinese caused rival elephants to panic and crush their own troops by shooting crossbows into the elephants' sensitive skin that was incorrectly believed to be extremely tough and virtually impenetrable (Ebrey, Walthall, & Palais 90). Eventually—and thankfully—the use of elephants in warfare vanished.

Elephant Cognition and Social Behavior

Since these barely remembered facets of animal history have faded from public consciousness, it is tempting to believe society has progressed beyond similar abuses of elephants. It is useful to understand a few key biological facts regarding elephant cognition and social structure to further understand the ancient phenomenon of war elephants and the contemporary phenomenon of the circus.

Elephants are very social animals who require tactile guidance. They are raised by an entire herd of caregivers. Asian and African elephants enjoy stability and active social interactions led by a matriarch. Young elephants will remain with their mothers, aunts and other females for several years before the males leave the herd after adolescence. These males then only come into contact with females in order to breed. Males sometimes form social friendships with other bulls, but they are much more solitary than their female counterparts. A 2005 research study reports that African savannah elephants spend up to 80 per cent of their time together, behave in coordinated manners, and display group behavior when caring for their young, gathering resources, and providing defenses. Family units, kinship groups, and larger clans can often consist of up to one hundred elephants and these closely interacting members help each other during dry seasons or in other times of distress (Vidya, T. & Sukumar, R., 2005). Elephants are also extremely loving, tactile and communicative. Vidya and Sukumar state, "Communication is central to social, long-lived, intelligent animals that can transmit information across generations" (1201). This generational transmission of information accounts for many elephant families' mistrust and wariness of humans. Using war elephants (and circus

elephants) in situations requiring isolation is especially stressful to elephants considering this heavily communicative aspect of their lives. The same researchers point out differing types of communications upon which elephants seem to thrive: they exhibit visual, tactile, olfactory and acoustic behaviors. Having a highly evolved and sensitive chemosensory system, undoubtedly they experienced war much differently from their human masters who urged them ever onward. Vidya and Sukumar argue that given elephants' extremely advanced and developed behavioral and intellectual capacity, special needs exist for conservation techniques with need for more scientific understanding than that from the past. One wonders if the Carthaginians, Romans, and other warring nations of the past had understood the complexity of elephants, would they have used them as blunt instruments of warfare?

Elephant intelligence is vast and ranks only behind primates and certain cetaceans. The great memory capacity of the elephant is no falsehood, and much of the aforementioned coordinated social herd behavior requires great intelligence. In 2006, an elephant successfully passed a mirror self-recognition test, long considered the hallmark for advanced human and nonhuman intelligence and self-awareness. Mirror self-recognition (MSR) is extremely rare in the animal kingdom and has not been observed outside of humans, apes, and one report on dolphins at the time of the paper referenced (Plotnick, de Waal, Reiss, 2006).

In the MSR test, the animal is placed before a mirror and researchers set out to validate that the animal is seeing him/herself in the mirror. This is proven by placing a mark on

the animal's face or body and seeing if the animal will recognize that mark by touching it on his or her own body. This is a highly developed level of cognition and in 2006 one elephant displayed it. The authors report the elephant, named Happy, had a white X placed on her forehead while inside her stall. Caretakers did not observe her noticing the mark before entering the elephant yard. She went immediately to the mirror and looked at her reflection a few seconds. Then she walked away from the mirror and started touching the area of the mark with her trunk and then returned to the mirror. Next she looked at her reflection and explored the mark on her head. Happy touched her own head a total of forty-seven times thereby passing the MSR test and being the first nonhuman, non-ape, and non-dolphin to do so. The other two elephants in the control group did not seem to pass the MSR test; however, Happy's successful "passing" presented scientific evidence that she was self aware. The researchers stated:

The mark-touching by one elephant is compelling evidence that this species has the capacity to recognize itself in a mirror. Finding strong parallels among apes, dolphins, and elephants in both the progression of behavioral stages and actual responses to a mirror provides compelling evidence for convergent cognitive evolution (Plotnick, et al, 2006).

Nonhuman cognitive evolution should not be ignored or usurped for the purposes of pressing animals into various services for human use.

Most people, when asked, will report an affinity for elephants, thus one could easily assume most people would not support the widespread continued abuse of the elephant. However, logic fails in this case. In the same spirit Alex Hershaft reports that "93 percent of American consumers oppose farmed animal abuse and 97 percent continue eating

them” (Hershaft 16). People still attend circuses while claiming deep affinity and even affection for elephants. Elephants have long been commodified not for intrinsic value but for what they can provide humanity. Whether it is for their massive bulk and skills in warfare or their ivory or their performance for circusgoers, the elephant has a long history of abuse at the hands of humans. Contemporary abuse is no better.

Contemporary Abuse

For thousands of years, an oft used method of execution in South and South East Asia was Death by Elephant or اف کندن پیل پی زی ر, which translates into “casting beneath an elephant’s feet.” The execution training was multifaceted. Elephants could either quickly kill a condemned prisoner by stepping on his head or could slowly torture the person in a slow and agonizing death. This was widely used in Sri Lanka, India, and South East Asia and is still common in some parts of Africa and Asia where humans and elephants coexist. Usually, in areas of cohabitation, it is the human element that turns the human/elephant coexistence toward danger. Human elephant conflicts claim around 150 human lives a year in Sri Lanka (Smithsonian National Zoo, 2008). In the past, deserters and prisoners of war were sometimes crushed to death by elephants. Also, Perdiccas, who succeeded Alexander the Great, had mutineers crushed to death by elephants in the city of Babylon (Fox, 2007). Other examples abound, but for brevity’s sake the focus will now turn to the subject of elephants and their possible awareness of death.

Elephant Death Rituals

Death seems to have special relevance to elephants. Researchers and scientists have observed that elephants have elaborate death rituals. Among these, they often cover dead elephants with branches and other debris in an attempt to bury them. Furthermore, elephants have been seen returning annually to the death sites of companions and family members. While other animals, such as hippos, may tend to the dead and dying in certain ways, it is these yearly visitations to the death sites that set elephants apart. The fantastic memory capacity of the elephant is not a myth, and it seems elephants remember much about death. The aforementioned genetic memory that is present in elephants has been largely influenced by humans. Elephants are wary of humans in the wild and they have had ample cause to be so. The most successful herds in Africa and Asia are often led by the matriarchs who avoid humans the most zealously. In the wild, in times of drought, elephants will sometimes return to a water source they have not been to in over twenty years. They also do not forget traumas they have experienced.

As Scott Blais and Carol Buckley—cofounders of the Tennessee Elephant Sanctuary—reported on ABC's *20/20*, researchers have been conducting elephant psychological research. They feel elephants who are abused in zoos or circuses after witnessing their parents being killed can suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with symptoms similar to humans (Blais and Buckley, 2008). It is elephant researcher Gay Bradshaw and colleagues who first posited elephant PTSD in 2005. In the article published in *Nature*, Bradshaw and others claimed that orphaned elephant calves who had witnessed the culling of their herds and families internalized their traumatic experiences and displayed psychological problems akin to PTSD. PTSD could be the

underlying condition responsible for hyperaggression and abnormal musth cycles occurring too early. Being reared in extremely close social situations, the separation of the orphaned calf from the family unit and the subsequent life of near isolation can cause the elephant's psyche to become damaged. As seen in the media, elephants can eventually rampage, kill, and display hyperaggression, that is not seen in the wild. Dr. Bradshaw feels socio-ecologically induced psychobiological trauma in humans is most similar to such disruptions in elephants as well. Dr. Bradshaw and her colleagues state, "Wild elephants are displaying symptoms associated with human PTSD: abnormal startle response, depression, unpredictable asocial behavior and hyperaggression" (Bradshaw, et al. 807). Considering the recent revelation of Happy successfully passing the mirror self-recognition test, perhaps it is time for the public view of elephants to shift. It wasn't known in Hannibal's time, but elephants are self-aware highly intelligent and social creatures with differing and diverse psyches. It is this complexity that leads to the difficulties in using them in war or circuses or other arenas for which they have not evolved or voluntarily participated.

Elephants appear to contemplate death. Even though scientists are ignorant of the impetus behind such matters, elephants appear to have a conceptual understanding of death. This similarity to humans is relevant. Iain Douglas-Hamilton claims the extent to which elephants hold behavioral traits in common with human beings is relevant to the ethics of how humans should treat them. He has presented many examples of this death awareness of elephants over the years, yet the most iconic is from his 1975 book.

He witnessed several adult elephants trying to help sick, dying, and even dead elephants to their feet. Other elephants refused to abandon the decomposing corpses of their calves, and one even carried her dead calf around on her tusks for days. Douglas-Hamilton says what was harder to describe with reason was how elephants reacted to elephant corpses they encountered. When wild elephants came across the bones of a dead elephant, they became silent and slowly touched and fondled the bones for a while. They passed the bones around among their young and spent time touching and feeling them, often showing special attention to the tusks which they may carry away from the skeleton and then return later (Douglas-Hamilton, 1975). The boisterous head shaking and trumpeting ceased and the elephants appeared concentrated, pensive, and attentive. Afterwards, they quietly walked away from the elephant bones and resumed their normal behavior.

Elephants did not treat the bones of any other animal this way. Bolder researchers and observers have even posited that elephants may very well be the only nonhuman life form on the planet with an actual conscious understanding and conceptual perception of death (Kistler xii). Elephant families even seem to visit the “burial sites” of fallen comrades, often coming back to the bones for years to come. McComb, Baker, and Moss posit that African elephants do in fact show a great interest in the bones of dead elephants, particularly the skulls and ivory. However, they are doubtful elephants actually visit the “graves” of specific family members. They believe it is more a general interest in elephant remains. However, they feel this awareness of death remains significant. Humans were long thought to be unique among the animal world in that they grant

importance to the dead bodies of their own species. Most animals only display a limited interest; however, elephants—as discussed—are very different (McComb, Baker, Moss, 2006).

With this reverence and possible awareness of death, it becomes more poignant to examine the use of elephants as instruments of death and destruction. An elephant surely endures psychological damage when he or she is forced to torture another being. Elephants do not kill for food in the wild, being one of the very few truly vegetarian animals; it is human training that has allowed elephants to be instruments of warfare, torture, and death. This should at least inspire rigorous ethical theorizing regarding the use of such complex and self-aware individuals.

The Ivory Trade

Westerners should not behave haughtily regarding these abuses heaped upon elephants by people on the other side of the world or people in the past. Contemporary times are no better for the elephants. It is true war elephants are a thing of the past and awareness is spreading, but elephants are still valued not for their intrinsic value but for their economic potential. And a staggering majority of Americans are partially to blame for this. The ivory trade is destroying the elephant and the United States is one of the largest consumers of ivory products. Sites such as EBAY are rife with “cultural” items carefully listed under the euphemism of “African bone carving” which are actually ivory. These items remain in high demand regardless of the manner of death inflicted on elephants.

A certain percentage of elephants have always been born without tusks, but recently a vast increase in the amount of tuskless elephants has been noted. Tusks evolved to protect them from other elephants and possible predators. Currently, an evolution appears to be underway and tusks are not developing for protection. Scully says, "Now, as if evolution itself were trying to spare these creatures from human avarice, that [tuskless] gene is spreading because the tuskless ones are often the only ones left to breed" (Scully,pg.123). Douglas-Hamilton has some keen insight on ivory harvesting. A longtime advocate of elephants, he says it has often been suggested to him that the elephant is not being overexploited by the ivory and hunting trades and that his efforts may be excessive. He claims this kind of statement results from not knowing the facts. He says, "There is no doubt whatsoever...the elephant is being exploited faster than it can reproduce...and the ivory trade is the cause" (Douglas-Hamilton 30). As for people who fear attacking the cultures of those in Africa who are indigenous ivory hunters, he says Africa has become little more than a dumping ground for weapons which are actively traded for ivory and this is how "crooks" are financially exploiting elephants. Indeed he says, "the only hope for the elephants [is] a moratorium on the international trade in ivory. Only if people stopped buying, wearing, or selling the stuff would the herds have a chance to recover" (Douglas-Hamilton 30-31).

Animal Circuses and the Connection to Ancient War Elephants

The ivory trade may be closer to home than war elephants for most Americans, but there are yet other problems more relatable to the average citizen. Truthfully, the existence of circus elephants is not much better than the lives of the Carthaginian war elephants of

long ago. The average American is quick to shun ivory poaching and elephants being used as war machines or executioners while continuing to attend the circus due to a longstanding outdated American iconic event. Ironically, it is the ivory trade that supplies many orphaned calves who are shipped to zoos and circuses around the world. A multitude of research regarding what circus, zoo, and other performing elephants undergo is available, and it is valid to link the life of a contemporary performing elephant in a traveling circus to that of the war elephant in the military campaigns of antiquity.

Though some people are attempting to train with positive reinforcement, it is widely understood that circus elephants are usually trained with the application of pain and fear (circuses.com, 2008). Many trainers feel this is the only reliable way to make a six-ton animal perform on cue while providing any degree of safety to circusgoers and elephant handlers. Elephants are routinely whipped with ankuses, bull hooks and cattle prods. They are poked and stabbed in sensitive areas. The tricks they are trained to perform are not natural extensions of their behaviors and often result in dire and sometimes fatal injuries. This has led some animal rights and animal welfare groups to adamantly protest circus that use elephants.

In the wild, elephants often walk up to sixty miles a day, and in traveling circuses they are often chained in spaces the size of an automobile for up to twenty hours a day. Elephants often display disturbing stereotypic behavior such as head swaying and shifting from foot to foot (Epstein, 1993). It is believed by many that the crushing boredom, fear, and lack of exercise damage their complex psyches and leads some of them to become

violent and rampage, often killing children, adults and trainers. Then, they suffer a further misfortune when they are labeled as violent or dangerous and isolated even further or gunned down or otherwise euthanized. Conversely, zoo and circus advocates offer contradictory evidence stating their animal are very well cared for and cite their compliance with the Animal Welfare Act's (AWA) minimum standards. Activists claim the AWA is so extremely limited in its protection that the fulfilment of its minimum requirements in order to keep licensure does very little to actually protect the mental and physical well being of the animals. As a result, many have called for the retiring of all performing and captive elephants to the two large elephant sanctuaries in Tennessee and California as solutions to circus and zoo elephant issues. It appears the circus elephant has direct links with the war elephant in complex psychological ways. Both were captured from the wild, deprived of needed socialization, had crushing isolation imposed on them, never had their needs met, failed to have their rights as individuals realized, failed to be intrinsically valued and had their Daedalian psyches damaged.

Contemporary Protests and Progress

Elephant and other performing animals are quickly becoming ubiquitous installations in circuses. With the increase in public awareness—largely due to campaigns and undercover investigations by groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the Born Free Foundation—more people are actively protesting the cruel use of elephants and other animals in circuses. In fact, Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth is currently on trial for violations of the Endangered Species Act

in Washington D.C. After years of dilatory tactics, a federal judge has finally ordered that the case proceed to trial. It began in February 2009.

The United States Department of Agriculture recently confiscated an adult male Asian elephant named Ned after video taken by protestors was brought to the officials' attention. The government agency had only confiscated one other elephant in its history. Ned's former owner, Lance Ramos, has been accused of failure to comply with the Animal Welfare Act and to properly care for Ned. After Ned was taken from Mr. Ramos, he was delivered to The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee where he will be cared for while his permanent home is prepared in California at the Performing Animal Welfare Society's Elephant Sanctuary habitat. Upon initial veterinary examination, Ned was found to have been a full ton underweight. Veterinary professionals believe Ned was essentially starving to death (http://www.elephants.com/Ned/ned_bio.htm).

Animal activists have been asking the USDA to be more active in the utilization of its right to remove elephants from owners who are in violation of the Animal Welfare Act's basic guidelines. Through close public observation and elephant activism, Ned is now being properly cared for in a facility that is equipped to provide for the complex needs of elephants.

Also, circus attendance has been on the decline in the past years due to animal activism. Recently, a circus performance was cancelled in Kentucky due to the fact that less than one hundred tickets were sold. Performance cancelations have become more frequent since 1999. Peacefully assembling activists engage circusgoers and educate them about the abuses elephants suffer at the hands of the circus. As more people research these

allegations and discover they are not merely the exaggerated claims of animal advocates—as circuses maintain—circus sales will continue to decline.

Negative publicity following animal deaths, former employees' animal abuse charges, ever waning attendance figures, and numerous USDA violations have worked in concert with local grassroots animal activism to cause Ringling to lose major corporate sponsors and millions of dollars worth of advertising. In 2004, MasterCard, after extensive pressure from a PETA campaign, officially ended its sponsorship of the Circus. Circuses.com's press release states:

“The decision (to end the sponsorship) was made after PETA sent MasterCard's president and board of directors undercover videotape of standard circus-industry-training practices showing screaming, terrified elephants being viciously attacked with sharp metal bullhooks and electric prods during behind-the-scenes circus training sessions. MasterCard joins Visa and Sears, Roebuck & Co. to become the third national sponsor to end Ringling promotions amid a flood of complaints (PETA, 2004)

With continuing pressure from concerned citizens and animal advocates, the popularity of animal circuses will continue its downward spiral. After the 600 or so captive and performing elephants are retired to elephant sanctuaries, the public and the small group of global elephant professionals can truly begin to formulate approaches to save the elephant.

How to Save the Elephant: Nonconsumptive Use Versus Lethal Sustainable Use

Now that the ancient use of the war elephant has been related to contemporary circus and other performing uses of the elephant, it is useful to examine two leading theories of how best to conserve the rapidly declining populations of elephants. Two opposing viewpoints,

“Sustainable Use” and “Non-Consumptive Utilization,” have intriguing points of contention.

Sustainable Use (SU) maintains that if an animal—especially an animal that is harmful and dangerous to indigenous human societies—can provide economic benefits and financial reward to the country in which it lives, the people of that country will have a greater interest in conserving the animal, thereby assuring the animal will be protected. SU theorists claim that the lethal use of elephants provides money for humans, cuts down on environmental impact (African elephants have long been criticized for destroying huge numbers of certain trees in Africa), provides more range for the surviving elephants who will live easier lives as a result of the culling/killing of the elephants. At the center of this argument is economic incentive, and as a result big game hunting of the African elephant is one of the most supported methods of SU, since a wealthy western hunter might spend up to \$100,000 on a hunt, killing around ten elephants (Mundy, 2006).

While it may seem these points have merit, Non-Consumptive Utilization (NCU) claims elephants—and other animals—should be valued intrinsically and not killed for profit. NCU proponents also claim ecotourism, such as photographic safaris and elephant watching treks, have the potential to bring in far more currency while not harming the elephants. A leading advocate of NCU, Paul G. Irwin, offers that over an elephant’s lifetime it can bring in over a million dollars in NCU revenue (Irwin 131). Undoubtedly both sides of the Sustainable Use debate have many members who are passionately committed to the conservation of the elephant. Nonetheless, this researcher believes methods of financial gain from the elephant which focus on its intrinsic value should be explored in lieu of practicing Sustainable Use.

To argue the case of Sustainable Use, P.J. Mundy's article "The African Elephant—Something to Use and Cherish" published in the *International Journal of Environmental Studies* in 2006 is useful to examine. Mundy, who developed his views during his time as an ecologist in the Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, is well versed on the plight and situation of the African elephant. Mundy states that the population of the African continent is increasing at the world's fastest rate, 2.2 per cent per year, while only six of the 42 African countries do not exist as low-level economies. In 2006, Zimbabwe's human life expectancy was only 33 years and Mundy expressed a strong and urgent interest in how Africans can turn their natural resources into profit in order to improve the admittedly negative quality of living for the continent's humans.

The elephant is presented as one of Africa's natural resources, and Mundy cites the many aspects which provide value. Mundy mentions the very valuable ivory of the elephant. He argues the elephant is indeed very photogenic, but NCU will not bring the financial incentives needed. Mundy reports that in Zimbabwe the government fee for trophy hunting of elephants is around \$12,000 (Mundy 589). Taxidermy and shipping fees also bring in revenue. Often spending \$100,000 on a three-week hunt, he argues, "one hunter is therefore worth a lot of money to the host country...even though he/she has perhaps collected only ten 'heads' in the process"(Mundy 590). Mundy continues: "...one trophy hunter is worth many tourists, and it is easier to see how value from a dead elephant goes into the local community, such as the meat. Clearly one trophy bull (dead) is worth many family groups (alive)" (595). The elephant's value, in this case, is clearly not intrinsic but derived from the profit and value it provides humans. The ecologist also says, "One has only to watch local people cutting up a shot elephant to appreciate the animal's

importance; its actual value to the consumer and co-use of the same environment” (Mundy 595). Hunting of the African elephant has long been the main focus of the very profitable safari and sport hunting business in Africa, but hunting and tusks are not the only valuable items that may be used to generate economic incentives.

At the time of Mundy’s article, the inflation rate in Zimbabwe was hovering around 1000%, no doubt a dire situation. The author mentions the usefulness of many parts of the elephant: “The leather makes wonderful boots (I personally have a pair) and briefcases, etc.” (Mundy 590). Bracelets can be made from the hairs at the tip of the elephant’s tail and small tables and lamp stands are frequently made from their feet, as well as the infamous wastebaskets which used to be a mark of the upwardly mobile in Britain. Umbrella stands are also made of their feet. Another valuable item each elephant has to offer is meat, which can feed many people. Also its own reproduction is a renewable resource that can be harvested as well. The live export of calves orphaned due to their parents being killed to zoos and circuses around the world can indeed produce tremendous revenue. The dung of the elephant is even offered as an economic commodity since it can be used as compost or turned into a type of paper.

Sustainable Use, for all the negative appearance on its surface, is said to have elephant conservation at its core. Mundy says, “...it is clear that the African elephant is a very valuable animal, whether alive or dead...however...to get value from a dead elephant, one has to have enough live elephants in the first place....” (590). And to manage these elephants, SU believes culling to often be a very effective method. Culling keeps the population to a manageable size and the heavily useable products of the elephants are auspicious by-products of the cull.

SU also maintains culling is good for the environment. For a long time, elephants have been destroying certain types of acacia trees in Africa, and this has been considered a problem. Culling and trophy hunting provide economic incentives as well as reduce the number of elephants destroying the trees and environments. It is true elephants are one of the few land mammals who customize their landscape, often tearing down many trees and stripping the bark with lethal consequences. Elephant density reduction has been suggested as a method of reducing the damage to these trees. Mundy says, “The elephant debate has been dominated by animal lovers and not at all by tree lovers. Why should trees be killed by elephants? Are elephants in that sense predators?” (591).

P.J. Mundy and other SU supporters clearly put human concerns before animal concerns. He says, “increased numbers of elephants must also cause increased destruction of crops, and worse still increased death of humans” (592). Mundy says as the African human population continues to increase drastically and encroach upon lands previous roamed freely by elephants, human-elephant conflicts will only increase and that, “human-elephant conflicts cannot be tolerated; the humans must be protected against marauding wildlife...a human death cannot be valued against an elephant death” (592).

However, for all his illogical sophistry, Mundy does at least condemn illegal poaching. His solution to quelling ivory poaching is not stricter law enforcement or game patrol, but providing enough incentives to discourage and stop the activity, e.g. assigning the elephant even higher economic value. SU proponents reject NCU as a viable possibility. Mundy says, “Endless photographic (non-consumptive) safaris in themselves will not produce a thriving elephant population. An income of foreign currency from a burgeoning ecotourism industry will not give results to elephants if it buys Mercedes-

Benz cars instead” (594). Mundy concludes by saying elephant poaching and Sustainable Use are undesirable to sensible and vociferous groups of westerners and that SU remains the only truly scientific method with which to save the African elephant. NCU, it is gleaned, is a foolhardy alternative based in emotionalism and anthropomorphism.

P.J. Mundy makes some seemingly logical claims regarding Sustainable Use that are highly centered on human benefits derived from the elephant. To some, his argument seems based on an unpleasant supposition that elephants must in some manner pay their way and contribute to failing human economies in order to justifiably be conserved. In this vein, SU could be considered an evolutionary offshoot of elephant exploitation for human benefit akin to the use of elephants for war or performing.

Paul G. Irwin, president and chief executive officer of the animal welfare group the Humane Society of the United States, could not disagree with P.J. Mundy and Sustainable Use more. In his 2000 book *Losing Paradise: the Growing Threat to Our Animals, Our Environment, and Ourselves* he examines the question of killing rare animals with the hope of saving them. Irwin says the problem with SU is that the methods of culling and hunting it supports will only work if “the animals are killed or captured at a *sustainable* rate that does not wipe out the species” (125). He argues that economic valuing of the elephant and its products is not encouraging use of them that is in any way sustainable. Calling Sustainable Use “the rallying cry of a new generation of big-game hunters and traffickers in wildlife” (Irwin127), he claims it is the same theory that was once called “consumptive wildlife management” and with it the destroyers of wildlife are attempting to present themselves as the saviors of the wildlife they pay significant amounts of money to kill.

Sustainable Use, by providing increased economic value to animals, actually promotes unchecked killing of wildlife at an unsustainable rate. Irwin cites that in the single decade between 1979 and 1989 the population of the African elephant was reduced from around 1.4 million to only 600,000 due to the ivory trade and big-game hunting. Problematically, the price of ivory increased along with the number of elephants being killed, thusly negating any practical feasibility of Sustainable Use. Only with the elimination of the ivory trade in 1989 did this “poaching orgy” finally settle down (Irwin 129). SU theoretically attempts to conserve wildlife through unfortunate but necessary lethal techniques of population control and financial gain. However, Irwin argues practically it only creates an inflated and thriving commercial market for endangered wildlife. He also states, “Case after case in which sustainable use has been tried, it has created a commercial market for wildlife that has stimulated uncontrolled, unsustainable killing of the animals involved” (128). This is most urgent as bans on culling and one-off ivory sales are becoming more common throughout Africa.

Irwin closes his chapter with some observations on big-game hunting and the extinction of certain species, something SU drastically opposes, mainly for financial reasons. In Africa, the big-game animals are being eliminated to the point of extinction primarily by ivory poachers and big-game hunters. Irwin says, “A ‘sportsman’ using searchlights at night shot the last three cheetahs ever seen in India. The last Barbary lion in the wild was shot in Morocco in 1921” (133). It appears the main focus of sustainability in SU is the sustainability of human life. Any concern for the animals appears either weak or thinly veneered. Given P.J. Mundy’s anthropocentric remarks regarding his perceived hierarchy topped by humanity, one wonders his thoughts and feelings on Irwin’s observations

regarding the last three cheetahs in India. No doubt the hunter paid the proper hunting fees and had filed the proper paperwork. Most likely, some indigenous community in India profited from this. Admittedly, this is conjecture, but the question of who earns more importance—animals or humans—has not been answered by science and should not be closed for discussion in anyone’s mind, on either side of the debate.

Irwin and NCU argue for intrinsic valuing of elephants who have rights to exist and to be left alone by the ever-encroaching onslaught of human population. Sustainable Use appears to be simply commercial commoditization and exploitation of animals and the outcome rarely varies, Irwin tells the reader. He also further illustrates the danger of this commercial exploitation by mentioning another huge creature, the hugest on Earth in fact: “Consider the blue whale, the largest creature ever to live on earth. Between 1900 and 1965, over 325,000 blue whales were reportedly taken. The season was finally closed when only a mere 20 blue whales could be found and killed in the Antarctic” (139). Did the whales get more adept at avoiding whalers, or is there little sustainability in Sustainable Use? Given there are now possibly as few as 3,000 blue whales left on Earth, it appears the latter. SU appears to have the nonhuman animals’ utilitarian survival at heart; however, closer examination seems to offer some stark contradictions. At the very least, the theory of Sustainable Use should be scrutinized and considered as only one possibility among many other, non-lethal, possibilities.

The Quickly Vanishing Elephant

Whether being crushed by the oncoming stones of the opposing sides' catapults, the bombs of the American planes in Vietnam, the isolation of the American zoo, the effects of PTSD, the bullets of the big-game hunter, the killings for 'sustainable use', or the endless beatings and chaining and neglect of the circus, it is not maudlin to say the captive elephant is unjustly enslaved. As stated above, both wars and circuses captured elephants from the wild, deprived them of needed socialization, imposed crushing isolation on them, inadequately met their needs, failed to realize their rights as individuals, failed to value them intrinsically, and damaged their intricate psyche. Does humanity finally show signs of understanding this, perhaps in the eleventh hour? Presently, the elephant is quickly heading toward extinction at an ever-increasing pace. Continued circus attendance is a primary reason the live export elephant trade still flourishes in Africa and Asia. Scully quotes the French naturalist Bernard-Germain de la Cèpe, and what he says of whales seems fitting to elephants as well: "In vain do they flee before him [Man]; his art will transport him to the ends of the earth; they will find no sanctuary except in nothingness" (Scully161). This writer fears the elephant, revered by so many who remain inactive and refuse to help it, will continue vanishing under the influence of humanity until its inevitable extinction.

Starting with the warlords of antiquity and continuing through the contemporary animal circus, elephants have forcibly bent to humanity's wishes. The debate continues on how best to save the elephant by elephant lovers and misguided persons on both sides. However, science suggests that if the hunting and exploitation of the elephant continues along with ever-increasing human encroachment on elephant habitat, the

elephant- admired by so many- may possibly only be around only a short time longer. What Douglas-Hamilton said over thirty years ago remains apropos:

This co-ordinated group defense [the gathered protection of the herd] has been one of the elephant's keys to survival, effective for hundreds of thousands of years against a multitude of predators, but it is now obsolete. Conditions have changed. Man with a gun is a predator that can easily wipe them out, and the keys to the elephant's survival are now in the hands of man (259).

Final Thought: Future Strategies for Change

It is clear that the elephant is quickly vanishing. Extended critical discussion on elephant conservation should contain clear and logical suggestions on how the average citizen can help elephants. There is not a great preponderance of researchers writing exclusively on elephants, and as the canonical literature grows it is apropos to present actual methods by which one can help the elephant. Many of the methods require no activity at all, save restraint from certain goods and activities which are clearly leading to the possible extinction of the three remaining species of elephants.

One does not have to go to Kenya, South Africa or India to truly help elephants. In fact, some of the most helpful methods can be done from the comfort of home. Primarily, avoiding all animal circuses is one of the easiest and most effective means. Due to the previously discussed intertwined problems of poaching, trapping, the ivory trade, and supplying young elephants to circuses, non-attendance is among the most active ways one can help. If circus attendance continues to wane, eventually running an animal circus

will not be financially viable. Ken Feld has famously said he will only stop using animals in Ringling's Greatest Show on Earth when people no longer show up. Since they do, he feels there is a public interest in his circus. People need to tell friends and family why the circus is ethically problematic concerning wild animals.

Also, never buy or own any product made from ivory. Poachers know the global demand for ivory is very profitable.. Despite the many years of the ivory ban, ivory poaching did not completely vanish. In many parts of Africa, rangers shoot poachers dead on sight. Being well known to poachers, this serves as an illustration of the significant profits that can be made from killing elephants and selling them piecemeal. Now, if the poaching ban is lifted or more one-off ivory sales are authorized, the ivory trade could once again begin decimating elephants.

Concerned persons can also donate to one of the two elephant sanctuaries in the United States. Both of them require huge amounts of hay, fencing, fruit, vegetables, exotic veterinary care, tools, vehicles, and other needs as well as formidable monthly payments on thousands of acres of land. The Tennessee Elephant Sanctuary has numerous ways in which citizens can help their ever-expanding herd. Donations are always accepted, and they offer memberships. More financially capable donors can engender an elephant endowment, and their "feed an elephant for a day" program is very popular, as is having produce delivered. Elephants love all manner of produce and they need, literally, tons of it. All non-captive conservative elephant facilities have numerous easy ways one can help. Also, one of the most rewarding ways in which one can help is to go to the facility and volunteer if one's proximity permits. Volunteers perform all manner of activities for elephants and elephant facilities.

If one has the means to travel overseas, elephant voluntourism is a very exciting and viable option. In Thailand, the Elephant Nature Park ran by Lek offers rare opportunities to live and coexist near its herd of Asian elephants for very reasonable rates. Some of the Asian elephant parks offer elephant rides and are not as ethically consistent as they should be; however, Lek's Elephant Nature Park is among the best and most ethical in the world. As for the African elephant, there are several protected areas in malaria-free zones voluntourists can travel and see elephants, sometimes very inexpensively. This eco-tourism money goes a long way for the African and Asian parks. For one example, Kenya collects around \$50 million a year from elephant viewing tourists. Bringing in much needed income to these national parks, eco-tourism, voluntourism, and tourism are sustainable because they do not deplete elephant and animal populations.

Elsewhere, the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) and other organizations have adoption programs. The DSWT, headed by Dr. Daphne Sheldrick, takes in rescued orphaned elephants and cares for them until they are released into the wild. Concerned elephant lovers can adopt one of these orphans by donating reasonable amounts of money and in turn the foundations will use the money to care for one specific elephant whose information and pictures will be provided to the benefactor.

Ultimately, however, it is paramount that the public gets educated on the plight of performing elephants and other performing animals. Children often love to see elephants at circuses and zoos. It is the difficult responsibility of the parent to realize that their child seeing a thoroughly depressed and restrained animal forced to do unnatural tricks for human profit does not foster true education and compassion for these animals. Some people feel anti-animal circus activists are trying to take away humans' rights to see

elephants. After all, the vast majority of humans will never see an elephant in person unless it is in captivity. Perhaps humanity has no intrinsic right to see elephants in person at all. Consider the ancient plight of war elephants and the long service of Man into which they were pressed. Still other uses of elephants as logging elephants in Thailand or temple elephants in India have not been discussed in this piece and also merit close examination. Nonetheless, consider what has been presented and consider the probably five thousand years in which humans have taken elephants from their natural habitat and forced them into service. If the only way to save the elephant is to keep them from most humans, then so be it. They deserve sanctuary. Once, millions of elephants roamed the entire continent of Africa. Now only a little over half a million are scattered in Sub-Saharan regions. They once spread vastly throughout Asia and are now only found in India, Thailand, Sri Lanka and China. It is time the world at large and the global scientific community took a close look at how to conserve and save the elephant and how to no longer profit from their might, power, body or for entertainment. It is time to save the elephant.

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Mythologies and Commodifications of Dominion in *The Dog Whisperer with Cesar Millan*

Lisa Jackson-Schebetta¹

The dog calls forth, on the one hand, the best that a human person is capable of – self-sacrificing devotion to a weaker and dependent being, and, on the other hand, the temptation to exercise power in a wilful and arbitrary, even perverse manner. Both traits can exist in the same person. (Tuan, 1984: 102)

In 2004, *The Dog Whisperer with Cesar Millan* premiered on the National Geographic Channel. Each half hour episode follows its star, Millan, as he uses his “innate gift” to solve or fix dogs’ behavioral issues in twelve-minute-made-for-television segments. Millan, a first generation Mexican immigrant, performs his expertise at establishing dominance over the troubled canines, and the dogs, both rescue mongrels and designer purebreds, perform their neuroses and subsequent submission to him, all to the amazement of the mostly white and often middle-to upper-class owners. Meanwhile, in the comfort of their own living rooms, a mass human audience enjoys the entertainment.

In *The Dog Whisperer*, the relationship between humans and dogs, and culture and nature, is mythologized into a narrowly conceptualized dominance paradigm through which the non-human animals are presented as commodities that conform to the human animal’s desires. Not only shall a dog not bite, but s/he should also get into a swimming pool, sit quietly while a mass of kindergarteners sing at him or her, and instantaneously overcome neurotic behaviors, even those originally fostered by humans. The humans in the show

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are trained by Millan to be “pack leaders:” to substitute themselves for the dominant male in the social hierarchy of “wild,” or “natural,” canine order. Although these methodologies may be erroneous, either wholly or partially false, they are ideological beliefs that are, as Terry Eagleton (1991) writes, *real enough*; that is, there is an effective benefit received from them, both relationally (between human and non-human animals) and economically (for Millan and the National Geographic Corporation). The clients buy Millan’s time and want results; the program’s producer wants good television and happy endings sell; Millan wants to earn an income. In this arrangement of benefits, however, the dogs are largely left out.

How we represent dogs, and receive those representations, affects and informs not only our relationship to the greater animal world, of which humans are only one facet, but also to the social forces of production that underpin our subjectivities and our daily lived relationships with commercial industries. *The Dog Whisperer* represents all dogs, regardless of developmental or genetic specificity, as products that submit to and adorn a consumer-based lifestyle. Contingently, Millan, as the dog expert, accesses and performs a hybrid identity as a product himself. While he embodies, on the one hand, the fulfillment of self-invention promised by the “American Dream,” Millan also participates, both by coercion and volition, in a legitimation of United States imperialism. Millan is at once constructed both as an American who has “made it” and as a colonized subject, an immigrant struggling to assimilate. *The Dog Whisperer* presents a chain of excluded and displaced socio-economic, inter and intra-species identity signs unmoored from material

histories. I am interested in exploring, one, why this might be so and, two, what an alternative might look like.

Inspired by Katherine Perlo's declaration that "An animal-conscious historical materialism would include the productive, reproductive and appropriative needs and activities of all beings throughout evolutions" (307), this paper is prioritized towards the non-human animals and their histories. Although necessarily, implicated as dogs are in human lives, both species will be examined as bearing on one another. My hope is that this project will fuel further interest in reconceptualizing the present and the past from a perspective of plurality and difference, where the human is just one being in a constellation of historical, social and economic struggles, in order to destabilize narratives of dominion predicated on class and naturalized practices of anthropocentrism and imperialism.

For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the television program and its narratives and methods of representation instead of on Millan's books, podcasts or blogs. I will also limit myself to season one of *The Dog Whisperer*. As the program continued to air on the National Geographic Channel, controversy around Millan and his methods swelled; additionally, human celebrities as well as organizations such as the Los Angeles Police Department began to guest star.

A larger study could be pursued around the polemical arguments his program incites as well as the counter media campaigns engineered to stem, control and deflate the criticism.

By following that line of inquiry, however, and tracing the evolution of the program's dramaturgy and marketing, the dogs themselves, I contend, would be overshadowed by human celebrity.²

Pet and Owner or Companion Species

"As the United States became a modern industrial and commercial society," writes Katherine C. Grier in *Pets in America: A History*, "pet animals... (became) commodities, reared specifically for the purposes of sale, to be purchased as inventory by store owners and as goods by customers" (2006: 231). Grier traces the genesis of the pet store as a small business into what we now know as a pet industry. As a productive force, the pet industry encompasses everything from mongrel animals, expensive rare breeds, and designer canines to dog shows and agility competitions; vegetarian biscuits, pre-packaged raw food diets, massage, and glittery dresses; overcrowded shelters, cyber communities, and dog birthday parties. In short, the pet industry disseminates a host of manufactured goods that rely on myths about what a dog is or should be.³ The co-evolutionary history of dogs and humans, as well as the specificity of dogs as a distinct but contingent species, is displaced by a mythology that sustains itself by evacuating the dog-human relationship of behavioral and ecological difference. The consequences for the non-human animal in the equation are detrimental: the dogs are left vulnerable to becoming victims of ignorance, abuse, and waste.

² See the NGS website for synopses of episodes: http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/dogwhisperer/episodes_season1.html. See also Milio, Jim and Melissa Jo Peltier. *Dog Whisperer with Cesar Millan: The Ultimate Episode Guide*. The American Human Society issued a letter to NGS stating that "The training tactics featured on Cesar Millan's *Dog Whisperer* program are inhumane, outdated and improper. . ." For the full document, see <http://www.americanhumane.org>.

³ Roland Barthes, in "Myth Today," identifies myth as a connotative semiological system predicated on robbing a denotative semiological system of its material history in order to enforce, and naturalize, a bourgeoisie ideology (1972). It is from this discourse that I am drawing.

Two familiar relationship formations between humans and dogs that operate as mythologies are anthropocentrism (in which the dog is regarded as a furry human) and idealization (wherein any dog is expected to be a perfectly behaved super-companion). Heidi J. Nast characterizes the anthropocentric relationship as unqualifiedly positive; the pet replaces the child as an “ideal love object.” She points out that the dog is expendable where the human child is not:

Dogs can be dressed up as your baby forever. If a pet-animal becomes onerous (scratching furniture, pooping on a carpet, or spraying the house when you are gone too long), you can have them de-clawed, euthanized, or given away. If a pet becomes a financial or mobility burden (you change towns or jobs), it can be given up for adoption or taken to the SPCA. And if it dies, you can have it cloned. All advantages that human children do not share (2008: 302).

The point of view espoused by Nast, that expendability is exactly what makes pet-dogs marketable, is a disturbing underside to, and a propelling force of, the consumer driven pet industry.

Furthermore, when a dog is shifted socially into a “baby” or a “kid,” humans’ ability to understand the specific needs of the dog is inhibited and elided. If the dog is not discarded at whim, he may be made into a reflection of the owner’s self rather than permitted the autonomy or behavioral boundaries appropriate to a separate species. While Millan works to expose this myth, placing love as a third priority behind exercise and discipline in the dog-human relationship, he still permits it to exist in the television program and supports its continuation. In multiple episodes of season one, he linguistically extends the parental instincts and habits of dog owners towards their human

children to their pets.⁴ I am not trying to declare that we can know what the dogs want; indeed some may enjoy being dressed up, respond to baby-talk, or sleep well in a pseudo-bassinet. I *am* arguing that anthropocentrism sets up unrealistic expectations of what kinds of treatment a given dog may be able to endure. If a dog does not respond well to being cradled on his back like a human baby, for instance, and nips or bites the human, the dog faces dismissal, punishment or disposal.

Just as dangerous for dogs is the myth of an *ideal*: a loyal sidekick, well-adjusted, house-trained, tons of fun and ready to give love unconditionally. The expectations of the dog owner can be unreasonable, informed by cultural icons such as Lassie and Rin Tin Tin or predicated on the cuteness of a “helpless” puppy. “Being a pet,” that is, simply learning to co-habitate with a human family, let alone save Timmy from the well or endure dress-up time, is already a “demanding job for a dog, requiring self-control and canine emotional and cognitive skills matching those of a good working dog” (Haraway, 2003: 38). If the dog cannot live up to her owners’ ideals, she can, once again, fairly easily be discarded.⁵ Dogs are abandoned or given to a shelter for just about any reason: moving to a new house, going on vacation, kids outgrowing him, she got too big, she’s too much work and so on. In the pet industry, there is too much of *one* product, at least: the dogs themselves. The dogs become animate surplus value with nowhere to go.

To combat this waste and disregard, Donna Haraway, in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003), argues for a reevaluation of the dog-human relationship by attending to

⁴ Episodes 9 (“Maya”), 3 (“Ruby”), and 4 (“Coach”).

⁵ When referring to dogs in this paper, I will alternate between masculine and feminine pronouns.

the history of the co-evolution of both species and the genetic predispositional needs of individuals, both human and non-human. This requires humans to shift the paradigm of “pet and owner” towards an understanding of mutual biological and ecological evolution and existence across species. In Haraway’s vision, dogs and humans are accountable to each other; one is not, in the relationship, more valuable than the other but neither are both beings the same. Furthermore, the relationship between the human and dog is not an instantaneous bond, but a process of “significant otherness” involving change and adaptation predicated on commitment, patience and education. Yi-Fu Tuan points out that the dog-human relationship is not, cannot be, one of equality (1984). The dog is dependent on the human and the human must set boundaries for their lives together. The human, however, rather than being simply an owner enjoying their possession, could be more attentive to how their dogs come to be their possession. Practices of training, breeding and mating are, Tuan writes, “repressed” in the dog-owner relationship (1984: 108). Haraway proposes they be foregrounded. With these two theorists in mind, I suggest that humans have options in how they choose to perform as the animal with the most power.

The specific and ethical investigation, along with its attendant interspecies accountability, that Haraway argues for could expose the material underpinnings of the ideological apparatus (capitalism, individualism, primacy of the human, disposability of the other, and so on) that produces and supports nonhuman and human abuse and waste. This exposure, in turn, might offer an opportunity to critique and change the naturalized

systems that govern our living relationships amongst and between species.⁶ *The Dog Whisperer*, airing on a legitimate science channel, widely popular and with a large audience, could be an effective platform for just such debate. The possibility, however, is evaporated by the program's efforts to sell quick fixes and "good dogs." The dogs are not historicized in terms of their own lived existence or their relationship with their humans. The dogs are transformed into essentialized, simplified types: "the bad dog," "the goofy dog," "the child dog," "the ideal dog" and so on.

The humans, in fact, are largely excused from history by the dominance paradigm, the Pack Leader mentality espoused by Millan, in which the dog is required to submit to the human's wishes and the human, is automatically given a narrowly defined right of dominion. For example, in episode five, we meet Brooks, a Burmese Elkhound, who was purchased by his owners because he "looked like a *real* dog!" The couple traveled from southern California to Oregon to buy him as a Valentine's Day present to themselves. The woman simply *wanted* him, in true capitalist desire; she did not research, as far as we can tell from the television program, the breed and its needs nor the breeder. The dog became a fetishized product; the owner, and the viewers at home, are permitted to purchase a dog based on the drive of consumer desire. For Brooks, the consequences of being a product to satisfy humans had pathetic consequences.

When Brooks was a puppy, it was funny, his owners relate, to make him chase a laser pointer. Five years later, the dog has been so conditioned to play with lights, he cannot

⁶ Eagleton is not addressing cross-species ideology but his arguments hold for my investigation. He envisions a challenge to ideology in the form of "as many people as possible actively participating in a discussion of these matters in conditions as free as possible from domination" (1991: 30-31).

stop panting and searching for flashing shadows or reflections. The neurosis was engendered and cultivated by his owners; now they want him fixed. Millan forces the dog to abandon his game: when he chases a flash or a shadow, Millan jerks his choke collar to surprise him into stopping. The human, Millan tells the couple, must become dominant, must become the Pack Leader. The human owners are slightly implicated in the dog's history but not held seriously accountable for the ignorance that created their dog's problems in the first place. They do not need to be. The dominance paradigm permits a power relationship not only of owner over pet, but of human over animal, and culture over nature. However, as Erika Fudge argues, "nothing which is used to maintain power is innocent, however it is presented" (2002: 11). The Pack Leader mentality gives dog owners the permission, because of their constructed superiority, to do whatever they want to their dog: to forcibly "fix" a neurosis but also, because of the power relationship inherent in the paradigm, to create one.

Naturalizing Domestication and the Dominance Paradigm

Tuan points out that "Domestication means domination: the two words have the same root sense of mastery over another being – of bringing into one's house or domain" (1988: 99). Yet, it seems to me that we need to parse out the nuances of meaning between these words in order to cultivate a curiosity about our complicity in the exploitative measures of the pet industry and our responsibility to other species. This is not to propose that we can speak for dogs, for their wants or desires, although dog owners certainly have habits of doing so which can be productive in pet care.⁷ Rather, I suggest that we examine what

⁷ See Arluke and Sanders' chapter, "Speaking for Dogs," in *Regarding Animals* (1996).

we accept as “givens” in the enactment and representation of dog-human “relational moments.”

Relational moments, writes Haraway, the instances in which a dog and a human make contact, are the smallest units of analysis in terms of the human-dog companion species, its “inherited histories” and “necessary joint futures” (2003: 7). In *The Dog Whisperer* there is, for each dog, a web of relational moments with which she has to contend: she must interact with her owners, the camera crew, and, by extension, the viewers at home, all of which are arranged around her interaction with Cesar Millan.

Each episode is constructed as follows: the dog is filmed performing his problem behavior, a male human voice-over describes the situation briefly, the owners share their exasperation with the film crew, and Millan arrives. He meets the people and shares with them his basic philosophies: “a dog needs exercise, discipline and love: in that order,” and the human “has to be the Pack Leader.” These mantras are the answer to every dog’s problem, regardless of where the dog has come from or his or her current state of agitation. Although there are alternative theories about dog behavior and training, any discussion of these is omitted.⁸ Millan then meets the dog, the dog submits to him, and the owners celebrate, often voicing their amazement in referring to the “miracle” they have witnessed. The formula—problem dog meets Millan, dog submits, and owners are overjoyed—does not waver. Although the footage is clearly edited to construct the predictable story, each episode presents itself as natural and spontaneous.

⁸ The slogans are re-enforced in each episode of the television program and distributed through the internet and product sales. From Millan’s website, you can purchase shirts, for example, emblazoned with “Pack Leader.” Millan also tours. See <http://www.cesarmillaninc.com/>

Describing shark documentaries, Nigel Rothfels explains that “these films are highly constructed endeavours in which, among other things, camera angles and exposures are carefully worked out in advance; animals are enticed, coerced, or otherwise manipulated into becoming performers; and overall story lines are fashioned to meet specific, conventional narrative expectations” (2002: x). *The Dog Whisperer* employs the same techniques. We never see the film crew or the camera, but each segment is dramaturgically manipulated, in terms of its documentary style and melodramatic plots, to convey the *otherness* of the dog and the superiority of the human. The humans on *The Dog Whisperer* are filmed in stationary positions, looking straight on at the camera, talking directly to it and establishing a connection of sameness with the human audience at home. The dogs are filmed in styles similar to wildlife documentaries: we might see through their eyes in a distorted lens, but most often they are objects that react to, or even attack, the camera. There is one important difference, however, between Rothfels’ sharks and Millan’s dogs. Shark documentaries work on the viewer by tapping into *human* fear; *The Dog Whisperer*, in contrast, takes advantage of the *dog’s* fears.

The camera intentionally zooms in on and is placed in close physical proximity to dogs who are aggressive or fearful of strange objects, such as Nunu the Chihuahua, Coach the Boxer and Ruby the Vizsla (episodes 1,2,6).⁹ The dogs are provoked into snarling and bearing their teeth futilely; their fear is exploited for dramatic effect. Nonaggressive fears are taken advantage of for comedic effect. For example, in episode one, Kane the Great Dane is afraid of shiny floors. Through Kane’s eyes (supposedly), we see the floor: it

⁹ Additional provocations of reactivity also occur in episodes 2,4, 8.

wiggles and wobbles while “scary” music plays. The fear is made silly even though it stems from a real experience: the dog slipped and fell as a puppy and knocked himself out. With the Dominance/Pack Leader theory in mind, however, the fear of Kane is simply irrational and the human must show him so. The solution is to put a choke collar on him and force him to confront the floor by running and pulling him along behind. Technically, Kane could have been left alone; his home does not have shiny floors, and he walks fine on carpet, cement, tile, grass, stairs, sand and so on. But his owner wanted him to come to her pre-school classroom so the children could sing “Happy Birthday” to him. At the end of the episode, Kane, ears back, eyes rolling and tongue lolling as he pants heavily in distress, sits in a circle of shouting and clapping children while his smiling owner looks on.

Regardless of the method of training used and whether we agree with it or not, the representation of the dog is that of a clown or a goofball whose sole purpose is to entertain his human. Both aggressive and nonaggressive dogs “perform” as aliens, either wild beasts to be domesticated or inexplicable, irrational mysteries to be solved. In *The Dog Whisperer*, the goal is always a product (a dog that behaves according to its owners’ desires) and the method is rightful domination based on the human action of domestication.

Behaviorists have critiqued and questioned the application of dominance theory to dog behavior. Because it is based on a study of wolves in the wild, it does not take into account the genetic morphologies or behavioral adaptations that domestication

engenders.¹⁰ Dogs and wolves share genes and physiognomy, but their social arrangements are necessarily slightly, yet vitally, different. Evolutionary biologists continue to debate the development of the dog. Although one possible narrative is that “man took the (free) wolf and made the (servant) dog and so made civilization possible,” it is equally likely that canines adapted themselves to share the resources of early hominids (Haraway, 2003: 28). *The Dog Whisperer* does not permit multiple narratives of the dog-human relationship; it is mired in a bourgeois ideology of man’s dominion over nature, in which dogs are the lowest class.¹¹

Dog Training and Ahistorical Product Pets

How to best train a dog is hotly debated in the behaviorist world. In the last decade, positive reinforcement training, in which the dog is rewarded for behaving appropriately with a treat, affection or a toy, has become increasingly popular. Positive does not mean permissive; discipline is still prioritized but it is conditioned without physical punishment. Inappropriate behavior, including reactivity to other animals, fear, aggression or simple bad manners, are not rewarded or punished; they are *reshaped*. That is, the undesired behavior is counter-conditioned. For example, my dog is scared of snowmen. I lead her towards a snowman and with every step she takes closer to the snowman, or for every moment she does not spin out of control or bark, I reward her with a treat. This can take weeks and requires patience. I do not know what caused her fear and I cannot know the

¹⁰ On the relationship between dogs and wolves, McConnell writes: “Domestication itself, whether it resulted from natural or artificial selection (most probably both took place), includes a process of developmental inhibition in which adult individuals retain docile characteristics of the young. In one sense, dogs *are* wolves—their genetics are so similar that they freely interbreed. . . . And yet, dogs aren’t wolves at all. Those who work with wolves unanimously agree that one never, ever commands a wolf to do anything. No matter how skilled or experienced you are, you work with wolves on their terms or not at all” (*For the Love of a Dog*, 2006: 171-2).

¹¹ In “Marx and the Underdog,” Katherine Perlo argues that “animals, working or not, do constitute a class. Kept animals, like the human proletariat, were reduced to their status through dispossession, not only of autonomy within their own habitat but even of their genetic make-up” (2002: 306).

extent of it, therefore, I am to remain respectful of her thresholds for information and tolerance for fear, reading her body language moment by moment while also monitoring my own. The slightest tension on her leash may alarm her. Proponents of positive reinforcement training argue that its effects are lasting and predictable, no matter who is holding the leash. The dog and human in this situation are working reciprocally, as a team, and history is just as important as progress.¹²

In negative reinforcement training, an undesired behavior is punished with fear, pain or surprise. If my dog is afraid of snowmen, I punish her for her fearful behaviors by using a choke collar, a leash pull, an ear pinch or a collar grab, or by forcing her to face her fear and tolerate it until I am satisfied she has overcome the phobia. In this instance, we are situated in a dominance paradigm where I insist she acquiesce to me on my time schedule—or *else*. The catch is, of course, that she may associate the pain with other stimuli. With snowmen this may not matter, but she might be very excited by children and in her exuberance jump all over them. I could reshape her with treats, reinforcing calm behaviors or leading her away from her beloved kids if she cannot behave; or I could pull or pinch her when she starts to react to the approaching children. It is possible, in the latter case, that she will associate pain with children, and become fearful or aggressive towards them: “child approaches, I get hurt, I have to make child go away.”¹³

¹² For an evolutionary investigation of dogs’ cognitive abilities, see Coren (2004). For positive reinforcement learning theory, its scientific support and examples of its applications across species, see Pryor (1999).

¹³ For a detailed analysis of genetic and experiential fear development in dogs and counter conditioning it with positive re-enforcement, see McConnell (2005, 2006, 2003).

Millan subscribes to negative reinforcement, the most effective for the Pack Leader/Dominance paradigm, and uses it successfully. I do not doubt that Millan believes he has the animals' best interests in mind; he insists he is humane and he is affectionate and gentle towards them once they have learned to submit to him. Millan is also devoted to exercising the dogs in appropriate ways, yet, and this is key, only if the owner has the time to make the effort. On the television program, the dogs' possible best interests are circumscribed by their owners' desires, which are often more about the human than the dog. The nonhuman animals are lifted out of their histories, as if where they came from and what they have experienced has no bearing on the present moment in which they live. The human animals, consequently, are excused from taking responsibility for any part they may have had, directly or indirectly, in shaping the dog's present.

Ruby, for example, a rare and pricey Hungarian Vizsla, was purchased from a breeder at two years old (episode 3). She is fearful, possessive of toys and food, and aggressive. While Millan instructs her owners about being dominant leaders, she cowers at her female owner's feet; when the camera moves in for a closeup, she visibly shakes with anxiety. The owners, a white, clearly upper class family, are not only frustrated with Ruby, but disappointed. Their previous dog, of the same breed, had been gentle and affectionate, just as her breed "is supposed to be." Millan's solution is, again, to use negative reinforcement to force her to submit to objects she is afraid of, such as the camera, and to relinquish toys she usually growls over. Necessarily, the dog may be afraid of him as well, and he uses this to his advantage. Finally, the children of the family, because it is summer, want Ruby to go into the swimming pool. Millan pulls her into the

pool by her choke collar to the cheers of the family; then the children, with the choke collar on the dog, leap into the pool, dragging Ruby with them. Finally, after her swim, Millan holds Ruby down and cuts her toenails, yet another fear of hers that she has miraculously conquered all in the space of one day, thanks to Millan.

Millan's methods work, it appears, but again, the family's possible complicity in establishing, or nurturing, their dog's fears and lack of socialization is barely addressed. The symptom is treated but preventative education is not presented. Furthermore, Ruby has, in some ways, been tormented if not outright tortured. She has endured repeated exposure to all of her worst fears, amidst the strangers of the film crew and in the space of a few hours, in order to please her owners and the television audience at home. At the end of the episode, the children splash in the pool (Ruby still with her leash and choke collar on) and the grownups promise their commitment to being dominant pack leaders.

A "happy" ending; but what happens when Millan leaves? When someone else has the leash and he is not present? What new scars or trauma might Ruby now be saddled with? Not all animals can be fixed so quickly (presuming Ruby's apparent and expedient change is permanent), and not all humans can afford Millan's services. Furthermore, by leaving out any possibilities for viewing the dog-human relationship besides the dominance theory, *The Dog Whisperer* ideologically subscribes to an empirical narrative of human's dominion over nature. The non-human animal *always* serves and changes while the human animal remains the beneficiary.

As in the pet industry, the dogs in *The Dog Whisperer* are surplus. In consumer culture, domestication has displaced them from their use value as guarders or herders and situated them in the far more nebulous “job” of “companionship.” At the same time, they are private property and expected to serve their human owners on the human’s terms. The dominance paradigm of the human and nonhuman animal is, again drawing on Eagleton, real enough; so is the subordinate Mexican, the US border to be protected and the American Dream. *The Dog Whisperer* perpetuates all four.

Neo-Colonialism and the “American Dream”

A critique of Millan’s methods and philosophies cannot be divorced from an investigation of how Millan himself performs, both by choice and by capitalist coercion, for his clients as a colonized subject. Through the television series and its attendant commercial industry, we can see Millan constructed and sold as a human product. Yet, Millan also participates in this construction, enacting his own version of the American Dream.

Millan crossed the U.S./Mexico border illegally as a youth; he did not know any English. He was sheperded by a “*lobo*,” a Mexican guide experienced in border crossings. Into the United States, Millan brought his deep affinity for and knowledge of dogs. He learned about canine behavior from his grandfather, a fact he proudly acknowledges. In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in 2007, for example, Millan tells his readers that:

“My grandfather was one of many workers and ranch families in Mexico who earned a meager income working parcels of land rented from the richer families. On every farm in the area including his, there were working dogs... Through observing my grandfather's behavior with the pack on the farm, I learned much of what I apply in my work with dogs today (Millan, 2008)

Once in California, Millan “worked his way up” from dog groomer to dog trainer of the stars. He remains still clearly physically marked as a Mexican of indigenous heritage, with brown skin and accented English.

Neither the Millan industry nor Millan deny his background. The very presence of Millan as a national star and pop culture icon makes visible and valuable the unseen or disappeared histories of economically oppressed Mexican migrants, both those who are undocumented and those who successfully become American citizens. Millan's history, however, is necessarily also tailored to fit the desires of his clients and customers. *Lobo* literally means a “wolf.” The transformation of self that Millan's border crossing ultimately allowed him was aided, metaphorically, by a wild canid. On the National Geographic Channel, Millan carries with him a trace of the primitive, of the wild to be tamed.

In the opening credits of *The Dog Whisperer*, a montage depicts Millan running with his pack of canines, swimming, climbing and playing with them. He is almost a dog himself, albeit the one in charge; the opening sequence also shows him wrestling ferocious-looking dogs, teeth bared and bodies tense, into submission. We see him enjoying his dogs and taming them, by himself. These images hearken back to his familial history, to the lessons learned from his grandfather. They also portray a man who is able to spend

his time doing the thing he loves, who has been able to sell his unique skills, who might be a role model for others who look like him. At the same time, the introductory montage constructs Millan as closer to nature, as distinctly *other* than his American clients *because* of his relationship with the dogs. He is constructed as a mystical, primitive native born with a gift that makes him more nonhuman than human. With his human clients, Millan often imitates their dogs, panting and wiggling. The dominance paradigm Millan sells includes himself: he can acceptably be the alpha male of the dog pack because he is like a dog, and therefore, is himself subject to culture's dominion over nature, the developed and colonial United States' dominion over the backward and developing Mexico.

Albert Memmi identifies two ways in which the colonized can survive colonization: he can assimilate or he can revolt (1965). Assimilation is denied by the colonizer; the colonized will never be given complete access. Revolution requires a violent upheaval of the colonial structure. Millan proffers a third option: assimilate just enough in order to remain nonthreatening. In doing so, Millan partially both preserves and sacrifices his heritage, creating opportunities to both put forward and sublimate parts of his "Mexican-ness."

Millan, despite having a wife and two children who sporadically appear as his helpers, is shown to be happily more comfortable with dogs. His clients, therefore, do need not to worry about him jostling for a position more powerful than theirs; he contentedly performs for them according to their wishes. Additionally, he always comes from

elsewhere: that is, he arrives at his clients' homes in his truck. They need not worry about him crossing any more borders by moving into their neighbourhood. Millan is assimilated just enough into the power structure of bourgeois American culture to remain outside of it as a South of the Border servant. Because he does not threaten to revolt against the power structure, he is acceptable as a "good Mexican" who has learned to be civilized in and from America.

The tension between Millan the product and Millan the man, both of which are mediated through a consumer culture, creates an unstable identity in which the "real" Millan perpetually comes into focus and slips away. For his economic wellbeing, and for his survival, Millan negotiates, in his multiple performances, a bridge between two cultures by way of his relationship with dogs. Memmi writes, "a man straddling two cultures is rarely well seated" (1965: 124). Perhaps Millan, however, seems to have found a way to be both American and Mexican, an embodiment of layered histories dependant on his relationship with nonhuman animals. The dogs are placed in service of their owners' desires *and* Millan's identity formation.

Millan gains license to participate in the ultimate American Dream of remaking one's self: a person can come from nothing and, with hard work, rise to the heights of riches and fame. Millan also legitimates a colonialist cycle of oppression and dominance, performed by a brown body who mediates the exchange of dog bodies between white bodies. Both races exploit nature; Millan remains complicit in the capitalist system of the pet industry. The dogs, once again, are the extra bodies that permit the economic exchange of

monetary value *and* cultural hegemony. As Millan walks across the pavement to pull Ruby into the gorgeous swimming pool of his affluent clients, he strolls past meticulously cared for landscaping. What we do not see is who cleans the pool and who tends the flowers. In southern California, it may well be Millan's countrymen and women, possibly illegal, disenfranchised or impoverished. *Their* absence combines with each dog's missing history and moves from a local to a national scale, in which "bourgeois norms are experienced as the evident laws of a natural order" (Barthes, 1972: 140). Millan's presence may critique the culture of the colonizer, but his presence is also an image of how the colonizer wants to see him. Boundaries between species are used to support boundaries between race and class and vice versa.

Reimagining the Dog: Past, Present and Future

Environmental historian and philosopher Clare Palmer proposes we start to look at our ethical responsibility to animals through the paradigm of human benefit (2008). That is, if a person benefits or has benefited in any way from an industry involved in keeping animals—and conceivably everyone has benefited, either directly or indirectly, from animals by way of food, technology, medicine or clothing—then the person is obligated to care about how animals are treated. I propose we extend this responsibility to the way animals are represented, as a presence or an absence, in narratives of history, media and nation. In terms of domesticated dogs, this would mean reconfiguring the way we view human history as well as evolution; the human animal would have to be resituated in the entire constellation of animals that inhabit the world, not as the ruler of a kingdom, but as one more sentient being dependant on a host of other sentient beings for its livelihood. It

would also require an exposure of and debate over the material underpinnings of domestication and dominance myths. Structured to benefit the material and ideological conditions of the human (culture) over the dog (nature) in the dog-human equation, these myths also legitimate, as evidenced by *The Dog Whisperer*, colonial and economic oppression amongst nations, in which the capitalist system benefits most.

To truly revolutionize the canine-hominid relationship would require a considered evaluation of, and acquiescence to, individual as well as shared histories. Dog training debates must be moved out of futile and circular arguments about instinct and “humane-ness,” and interrogated instead for the cultural myths and material conditions they perpetuate. If a training methodology is based solely on dominance, on a slave and master dichotomy, it is simply not acceptable if we are, as human animals, to accept our biological history and change our environmental future. The dog-human relationship must move toward a complex of mutuality and reciprocity, of, as Haraway argues, “significant otherness.”

“Human,” writes Fudge, “is always a category of difference, not substance... ‘human’ relies on ‘animal’ for its meaning. By refusing humanism, and therefore, anthropocentrism, we place ourselves next to the animals, rather than as users of the animals and this opens up ways of imagining the past” (2002: 14). It also opens up ways of imagining the future, our relationship to all commodities and the animal bodies, both human and nonhuman, that produce them.

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FENVAL

Rituals of Dominionism in Human-Nonhuman Relations: Bullfighting to Hunting, Circuses to Petting.

Roger Yates¹

Introduction

A Social Ritual Makes the Headlines for All the Wrong Reasons

It is traditional for the British 'royal family' to spend their annual winter break at the Queen's Sandringham estate in Norfolk, England. The family shoots pheasants there every year. In December 2008 the ritual created headlines all over the world, not for the killing of pheasants, for that is routine, but due to one of the royal princes being photographed possibly striking gundogs who were fighting over a shot bird. The plight of the dogs, who may have been hit with a stick, not that of the pheasants who were certainly killed by shotgun fire, filled the column inches: included in them were comments by members of the public, Buckingham Palace spokespersons, and representatives of the animal protection movement.

Social rituals play an important part in the shaping of human cultures. Rituals can have a fundamental social function in articulating, reinforcing and spreading the shared values and beliefs of societies. Rituals can create a firm sense of group identity and create social bonds. The sociological analysis of the role of social rituals ranges from the writings of 'classical' sociologist Emile Durkheim (1954), through Erving Goffman's (1971) dramaturgical approach, into Marxian views on consciousness (Block 1986) and beyond. Although a Durkheimian understanding of ritual would tend to emphasize its importance in the sacred rather than the profane, others see ritual as influential in both realms. This begs the question: what can social rituals tell us about human-nonhuman relations?

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Sociologists suggest that it is useful to consider a distinction made in some studies based on the difference between ritual *behavior* and ritual *action*. However, the former is regarded as rather devoid of meaning and associated with an overly reductionist view of the instinctual behavior of nonhuman animals. In stark contrast, the latter is regarded as imbued with shared social meanings for participants. These shared meanings are culturally transmitted through custom and tradition and, therefore, Jim Mason's (2005) multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of human-nonhuman relations is helpful in terms of investigating both social ritual and important socialisation processes central to the social constructionist perspective employed in this paper. For this reason, Mason's perspective provides the core resource for the beginning of this article and acts as a commentary throughout.

As a general matter, Mason states that he is dedicated to uncovering the roots of our destruction of nature. To this end, utilizing the concept of 'rituals of dominionism,' he describes a 'bull run,' such as those that take place in Pamplona Spain and made famous by Hemingway (1995). Mason argues that rituals involved in bull running teach humanity to dominate nature. Such rituals contain a degree of instrumentality in order to produce just the sort of 'beasts' required. For example, according to Mason (2005: 242) the bulls used in this spectacle have typically been starved for days. They are therefore in a 'frenzy of hunger' before being forced onto the streets by men wielding whips, knives and clubs. The bulls are chased through the streets, with townsfolk slashing at them and attempting to club them. Fireballs may be thrown; people attack the bull's eyes and try to cut off their tails. The bulls meet their ends eventually: "Wounded and exhausted after three days

of torment, the bulls are finally killed and eaten” (ibid). Meanwhile, in another town, men fasten wax and resin balls to the horns of three bulls who are driven into the streets once the wax and resin has been lit. The bulls are nearly blinded by the dripping wax as they run through the crowd-lined streets. The bulls are pelted with stones and attacked with sharpened poles. After four hours of this, these bulls are also taken away to be slaughtered and eaten. Similar events are being repeated in towns nearby, while “in one town, a live female goat is thrown from the church bell tower. She falls to the plaza below and struggles to get up on her broken legs” (ibid). In yet another town, children are socialized into callous attitudes towards other animals as men dressed as clowns ‘entertain’ them by slowly killing some young calves. Chickens may also be hung by their feet across a street; the ‘sport’ here takes place on horseback as competitors gallop by attempting to grab the chickens by their necks.

Mason asks us to consider in what century such things took place: ‘3000 B.C.?’ ‘A.D. 500?’ 1300? In fact, these are descriptions of Spanish festivals (‘popular fiestas with acts of blood’) which occur in the present day. According to Mason, more of these festivals happen now than thirty years ago. Similar festivals take place in Brazil, celebrating Easter Week, New Year’s Day, and during weddings. The repeated nature of these events raises another sociological distinction to add to the differentiation of ritual *behavior* and ritual *action* - that of ritual *occasion*, which focuses on deliberately manufactured ceremonial aspects of social rituals. *ArcNews* (1999: 20) cites *The Times*’ report that hundreds of young Hemingway-inspired American men travel to the annual Spanish ceremonies which they apparently regard as a ‘rite of passage into manhood.’ When it

comes to explaining such festivals, Mason rejects biological or psychological theories advanced, for example, by the fox-hunting philosopher Roger Scruton.

Scruton (2005: 83) argues that hunting can reunite modern humans with the hunter-gatherers' "intense communion with nature." He states that, if we become separated from nature, we may become damaged, for example, by thinking *distorted* thoughts. It is vital, Scruton says, that humans should do the things they were built by nature to do. Mason (2005: 244) also rejects other theories based on the notion of biological determinism in explanations of human aggression - the Lorenzian version of aggression-in-our-genes. Instead, he talks about the cultural and sociological roots of male aggression in "rituals of dominionism." Such rituals, Mason holds, explaining his definition of "dominionism," should be regarded as part of the dominant agrarian Western worldview: the socially-constructed hierarchy of living beings or the "ladder of being" in which humans (*mainly male humans*) are at the top. These "acts-of-blood" rituals, incorporated in the practice and ideology of male supremacy, do for women as they do for animals, nature and everything else that is labeled within the dominant patriarchal agri-culture as '*other*'. The point of these rituals is to demonstrate and practice (usually male) power and domination: "We have built such festivals...into our culture over the centuries in much the same way that we have built religious rituals: to remind us that we are on top and in command of the world...Rituals, as anthropologists know, serve to express, remind, reaffirm, and perpetuate a society's worldview and ways of life" (Mason, 2005 p. 243).

Mason argues that in dominionist rituals, which amount to ironic displays of spectacular brutality to demonstrate and celebrate human ‘civilisation’, nonhuman animals perform two chores for human beings. The first chore consists of the material benefits gained from exploiting animals: the meat, the leather, the muscle-power and so on. The second is *symbolic* and *ideological* and part of ongoing socialization about what the terms: ‘human’, ‘animal’, ‘nature’ and ‘other’ may be taken to mean. Thus, other animals are material *and* ritual resources, the latter exists “to reaffirm the body of assumptions and myths that make up dominionism” (2005, p. 244). A quick tour of several regions of the modern world dramatically illustrates Mason’s point. Mason concentrates on the Spanish corrida and claims that once the bullfight has been stripped of the pretensions of cultural tradition and art form – notions of the ‘sacred sport, the ‘stylized ballet’, the ‘religious ceremony’ - what remains is a ritual contest demonstrating human dominance over ‘bestly nature.’ Mason contends that, in bullfighting, the deck is stacked in favor of the bullfighters to make sure the ritual comes out right in public. Bullfighting involves men first dominating, then, as the ritual comes out right, vanquishing ‘dark’ and ‘savage’ nature. Thus, the bull - however meek and mild the actual living individual may be - must categorically be seen as wild *and* dangerous: thus, all the more heroic is his beating. In contrast to such wild savagery stands the representative of human society: the matador: cool - cold even - but tough and hard and, most importantly, *fearless*.

The complete ‘macho’ man is one who greets death and pain with disdain: “His performance defines civilization as a patriarchal accomplishment - one produced by the male heroics of warriors and strong men” (Mason, 2005, p. 245). In the bullfight, this is

the setup: the human master versus animal savagery. But, precisely because it is important that the spectacle comes out right in public, little in practice appears to be left to chance. The bull himself is primed for performance; his 'savagery' is *man-u-factured*, if necessary. Until the actual fight, the bulls are often all kept together in a dark pen beneath the grandstand. Suddenly an individual animal is thrust forcibly into a bright and noisy arena. Isolated from the herd, he is blinded by sunlight, deafened by trumpets and the roar of the crowd. In this strange and frightening situation, Mason says a bull tends to "rant" about the arena in confused terror, looking every inch like a 'brave' bull, thus fulfilling all of human expectations. However, as said, the odds are stacked.

For behind every fearless matador is a whole team of other people known as his *cuadrilla*. There can be five men in this team: two *picadors* on horseback and three *banderilleros*. The latter, along with the matador, are the first to test a bull, noting his movements and his ways. Then the picadors dominate the arena to 'work' the bull, often spearing him in the neck. The loud trumpets sound again as the banderilleros reenter the scene for the second phase of the so-called fight. They jab small barbed spears (*banderillas*, hence their name) between the bull's shoulder blades. This results in the production of a properly enraged bull, however, one with painful, weakened, muscles.²

Trumpets sound again as the matador enters to tease the bull with a *muleta* - the world famous small red cloth mounted on a short stick. Skill with the muleta means bringing the bull close, dangerously close; thus, bringing all that savage nature into striking distance.

² See http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2008/07/running_with_the_bulls_in_pamp.html

Yet, despite such dangerous proximity, the matador stands firm - *proud and aloof* - in his tight-fitting suit of lights: according to Mason (2005: 246) each matador is “a picture of male condescension and narcissism.” The matador’s display is designed to be a show of pure (yet brave and risky) domination: he is there to personify humanity - or about half of it - in an act of pure dominionism. As a final touch, some matadors conclude with the *displante*. In this act, human mastery and control over nature is theatrically proclaimed, while the nonhuman’s utter degradation is emphasised and amplified: “With pure macho bravado, the matador shows contempt for beasts by stroking the bull’s horns or nose, usually with an arrogant gesture to the audience that shows his disdain and fearlessness.” (ibid) The actual kill follows in which the matador attempts to thrust his three-foot-long sword into the bull’s heart. With further gestures of arrogance, “the matador may clean his bloody sword by wiping it across the animal’s body” (Mason, 2005, pg. 247). Mason sums up the bullfight experience with these words:

“The entire corrida, then, is a ceremony for the exercise of agrarian society’s values on subduing wild, dangerous nature. It parades its fine, brave men with their horses and weapons before the entire community. It displays the fearsome, dangerous bull - the beast of nature. It enrages the bull to emphasize his wild, evil nature, which symbolizes the wildness and evil of the rest of nature. And into this arena steps the matador, the elaborately dressed, rationally controlled representative of human civilization. Coolly, fearlessly, he faces the beast (and beastly nature), subdues it, and degrades, dominates, and humiliates it in cooperation with the entire community.” (ibid)

Many of the ritual elements of the bullfight are found in the dominionistic spectacle of the North American rodeo - another social spectacle with yet more brave men and their weapons. Thus, while the rodeo first and foremost replays the cowboy’s work out on the

range, it also displays the cowboy's skills and power over other animals, and his society's values on fearlessness, violence, strength, domination, and obliviousness to pain. Mason (pp: 248-249) cites *Rodeo*, a publication of anthropologist Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, who asserts that the modern rodeo is the result of a long history of herder values and culture. Like the matador, the rodeo cowboy is often viewed as a patriarchal, macho, figure of male sexuality, self-control and bravery in the face of danger. Rodeo riders display a certain degree of stoicism as part of North American competitive and rugged individualism: these guys do not complain when things get rough. Indeed, they personify the slogan: *when the going gets tough, the tough get going*. For example, rodeo performers regularly continue to ride even with broken limbs and strapped-up chests. And, as part of the image, these guys try to look like they would out-cool Cool Hand Luke every time.³

What the rodeo is all about, however, is a socially-constructed dominionist representation of human mastery over nature in general and nonhuman animals in particular, which emphasizes the pioneer within the cowboy. As the Europeans did in Europe, the white cowboys felt they must *conquer, subdue* and *vanquish* the moral vacuum that is wild nature (Spiegel 1988: 14). On the symbolic level, the rodeo's major theme is the herder's literal conquest of nature, as men physically wrestle nonhuman animals to the ground. However, as with the case of the bullfight, the deck is loaded. For example, several rodeo performers may work together in teams; they are often on horseback, and have ropes,

³ There is one bizarre feature in some rodeo shows where cowboys sit playing a game of cards as if they were in a saloon. A charging bull is entered into the arena in which they continue to coolly play. The cowboy who is the last to lose his nerve and dive for cover wins.

whips and other weapons. Furthermore, some of the animals used in rodeos are little more than frightened babies, used for example in the spectacle of “calf-roping.” Calf-roping often results in neck and back injuries to young animals. When calf-roping was covered regularly by US cable news service ESPN, the camera would deliberately pan back to horse and rider so viewers were spared seeing the calf “hitting the end of the rope and being slammed down to the ground” (*ArcNews* 1996: 17). In addition, again just like in bullfighting, it is sometimes necessary to employ artificial means to provoke naturally docile individuals into acting like the ‘wild broncos’ the public are led to expect to see being ‘tamed’ before their very eyes.

When hunters from different countries talk about hunting, they are often describing quite separate activities. The main forms of hunting in the U.S. are what many European hunters, certainly British ones, would call “shooting.” Therefore, in North America, hunting often means tracking and shooting deer, bears, turkeys and moose with bows and rifles. According to Spiegel (1988: 57), citing information from the U.S. Committee for Humane Legislation, 81% of North American hunters target deer in what Mason (2005: 251) calls “the great seasonal ritual.” In Europe, the term ‘hunting’ is most likely used to refer to fox and deer (or stag) hunting on horseback, and perhaps boar hunting also - in mainland Europe. Therefore, hunting for Europeans tends to mean hunting with hounds (or, in the language of recent legislation in Britain, ‘with dogs’). Hunting furthermore also describes hare hunting, hare coursing, mink hunting and the minority pursuit of drag hunting in which there is no live prey. For many Europeans, shooting is regarded as an activity separate from hunting: thus, concerning British field sports supporters will talk of

“hunting and shooting,” the latter also referred to as “stalking” in Scotland. Mason (2005, pg. 250) describes (North American) hunting as “the quintessential man-beast contest”. It is the enactment of a ritual designed to clearly assert that humans have supremacy over all the other animals and, importantly, enjoy the right to kill and eat many of them. Indeed, hunting ideology is intrinsically bound up with Spinoza’s notion that civilization itself would be put at risk if it were to attempt to “act justly” towards nature, or the idea that humanity would be somehow weakened if society were to succumb to the superstitious “womanish tenderness” in the objection to killing animals (Spinoza, quoted in Thomas 1983: 298). The hunting ritual, therefore, invokes the notion of Man-the-Predator, who stands at the top of the food chain.

Marjorie Spiegel (1988) argues that the term hunting can connote often contradictory images: perhaps “a carefree day in the woods with ‘the boys’.” (pg. 55) Or perhaps it means “a show of skill”(ibid). However, hunting for her is ultimately a demonstration of absolute power over someone else: “a demonstration of the ability to *end* someone’s life” (ibid). By deliberately using the pronoun ‘someone’ to define other animals, Spiegel emphasizes that hunting transforms a life into a *thing*; it turns “a vital, living being with a past and potential future into a corpse” (p. 55). Indeed, it is noteworthy that “wild” animals become property once - but not until - they are killed (for an account of the socio-legal importance of the property status of nonhuman animals, see Francione 1995; 2008). As Bernard Rollin (1981: 77) explains, “wild” or “stray” nonhuman animals are regarded as the property of the public, or the property of individuals states in the U.S. When an individual nonhuman animal is killed, a living sentient is being transformed into

an owned *object* and *legal thing*. What hunters do, Spiegel (1988) suggests, is provide visible proof that they have the power to bring about this transformation. Hunting, therefore, is an overtly masculine⁴ demonstration that ultimate power over life and death can be exerted over someone else. All of these strands of thought about hunting are fundamental ideological constructs based around humanity's "agri-culture" (Mason 2005: 251-253).

Mason argues that the development of agriculture has led to two basic beliefs about the nonhuman world which can be described under the headings, "Necessity" and "Nature." All rituals and practices of dominionism, and perhaps especially hunting, are ideologically connected with these two interlinked concepts. Mason claims that *the hunt* is portrayed as an absolute necessity which therefore acts to eliminate questions of choice and morality. Necessity beliefs are based on notions that hunting performs the vital dual role of *people-feeder* and *nature-controller*. In this view, hunting prevents starvation and, by managing nature, it necessarily helps to keep potentially *unruly* animal populations in check. Mason asserts that agri-cultural thought means that controlling nature has become *second nature* for humans, resulting in a popular myth that the natural world - and nonhuman animal populations in particular - can become *ungovernable* to the extent that human existence may be threatened. Without the essential order imposed by human control, nonhuman numbers may 'explode', with disease and starvation - of both humans and other animals - a likely consequence. Ideologically, the hunter is seemingly constructed as humanity's 'protector' and 'hero': in this scenario, humans are pitted

⁴ Since the mid-1990s, women-only 'Bows and Does' hunting excursions have been organized in the U.S. to encourage more women to hunt. See <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/print?id=3092629&type=story>

“against teeming elements of vicious nature” and must rescue us all from “a fate worse than death” (p. 2005, 252). Western nature beliefs incorporate those basic man-the-predator and “survival of the fittest” ideas mentioned above. Hobbesian struggle and Herbert Spencer’s evolutionary hierarchy are prominent in this mode of thought in which humans are constantly described as occupying the top of a ladder of being, or simply being the “highest level” of being.

As part of his general views on the importance of the domination of nature, Spinoza declared in the seventeenth century that “man cannot survive without being a predator” (Thomas 1983: 298), while a modern deer hunter states: “I know these animals well. I have spent much time with them in seasons past. I decide on my target. I am the predator.”⁵ Such views see the living world as a competitive “meat-hungry, snarling mass of predators” in which “everybody is eating everybody” to survive in “Mother Nature’s basic life plan” (Mason 2005: 252). These views, therefore, put human beings above all and everyone else, yet abiding by a general myth of some sort of structured “grand design” in which killing is somehow essential for survival. Thus, the model of humanity-doing-what’s-natural within *red in tooth and claw* nature is a fundamental male value, says Mason. Hunting, along with other rituals of dominionism, becomes symbolically significant as a rite of passage, initiating the young into “the patriarchal model of manhood.” The powerful U.S. National Rifle Association, along with hunting clubs and magazines, suggests to parents that hunting is an extremely positive socialization tool,

⁵ <http://www.scenesofvermont.com/hunting/huntdeer/huntdeer.html>

based on encouraging virtuous notions such as being a strong and healthy “outdoorsman” and “sportsman.”

With the use of search engines and links on the internet to locate accounts and depictions of various forms of hunting by hunters themselves, several expressions of cultural values were found, most extremely similar to those conceptualized as dominionistic by Mason. Modern North American whitetail deer hunters, for example, subscribe to a specialist magazine called *Buckmasters*; its name alone being an example under Mason’s rubric of dominionist values, based on mastering parts of the nonhuman world. The main content of this magazine are hunters’ personal accounts of shooting and killing with guns and bows; technical information about hunting weapons; and advertisements for hunting gear, books, and videos such as: *Big Bucks Volume 3, The Thrill of the Hunt*, and *Big Bucks Volume 4, The Thrill of the Hunt*.⁶

When North American humans go hunting, they do not “kill,” rather they “take” and they “harvest.” Unsurprisingly, dominionist views are embedded in the normal language of hunters. For example, James Ehlers,⁷ a professional fishing and hunting guide, invokes all the manifestations of the caring but rugged patriarch in his account of killing deer. He “loves,” “cherishes” and “takes care” of the countryside and feels “connected” to the earth, often by killing its [Ehlers writes, “her”] occupants. He believes that, “a closeness to earth, the bond between true hunters and their game has existed since man has walked

⁶ <http://www.buckmasters.com/bmstore/c-20-dvds.aspx>

⁷ James Ehlers, “Hunting Deer in Vermont”:
<http://www.scenesofvermont.com/hunting/huntdeer/huntdeer.html>

the earth, and it is no less stronger today. It is truly timeless.” He delights at the “antics” of the various wild creatures he sees, including his ”ghost-like” prey, which he feels he must kill in his capacity of predator. With conservationist themes he can conceive of killing as *caring*; his heavy dominionistic responsibility “feels as real as the arrow shaft sliding back across the rest as my fingers draw back the string.” He remains motionless and unobserved, carrying out society’s sometimes distasteful (but also exciting) task of controlling the nonhuman world; taming the wild; caring while killing:

“The young buck stands before me. A mere 20 yards or so separates us. Intense excitement mixed with anxiety has been building in my heart, stomach and throat since the animal first appeared. A quiet beyond quiet rings in my ears. I let the string slip over my fingers and with it goes as much sorrow as joy.”

“Yes, I have taken its life, and for that I do feel remorse. But, as a human being there is a connection to the earth and her animals that is established only when we take responsibility for the blood ourselves and for this I am grateful.”

In just a few lines of hunter-talk many strands of Mason’s notion of dominionism are indicated. The proclamation, for example, that the role of human predator *means* something fundamentally important; sociologically, in a Durkheimian sense, the hunter’s role is seen as essentially functional, yet almost separate and apart from the *actual individual* who performs it. Furthermore, the notion of nature controlled, and absolutely requiring direct human orderly intervention is clearly identified. Also seen are ideas that paternalist humanity must sometimes (perhaps like a caring but firm father figure) be “cruel to be kind” in its objective dealings with “in-need-of-taming” nature. With an apparent painful mixture of sorrow and joy, humanity gallantly takes on board the

onerous responsibility of managing and tending - as in Bauman's gardening thesis (Bauman 1989) - the savage earth. Even when some necessary tasks are bloody and repugnant, *humanity* does not let "Mother Earth" down because "she" desperately needs his kindly and connected control. What kind of chaos would we see if "Mother Earth" were not subject to this benevolent "ordering"?

The flip side to this conceptualization appears within the notion that human beings also must have in them the strength of character to carry out those *necessary* and probably *messy* tasks which may nevertheless cause harm or suffering. Therefore, although perhaps utterly distasteful at times, "Man" must rule over nature with what Lasch (1991) has named *an easygoing oppression* because it is wholly necessary that he does. Men demonstrate their caring patriarchal control by "taking responsibility for the blood."

On an ideological level, all this can be achieved without causing *unnecessary* suffering (Radford 1999). *Yes it is true: a man's really gotta do what a man's gotta do*. According to the ecofeminist perspective of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993), the Enlightenment thought of men of the industrialized North resulted in a *going away* from nature, seen as emancipation *from* nature. However, despite this "rupture" from the natural world, modern men return to nature in order to commodify it and in a purely consumptionist manner. Within this form of instrumentalism, they act in nature as *voyeurs* rather than actors, like visitors to cinemas or art galleries. In the case of hunting, hunters act in nature as "sportsmen" with a romanticized, nostalgic connection to what they see "as nature."

From this perspective, those who live full time in the countryside are engaged in *creating* nature as a “sports arena” or “visitor center” for urban consumers, be they the North American hunters or the members of the “field” on a British fox hunt. Naturally, the patriarch calls humanity “Man” and insists that his own caring-by-killing relationship with others has existed throughout the history of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. How much harm has been predicated on “tradition”? Mason (2005) notes that modern hunting acts as a symbolic reassurance that modern human beings are “merely” and “naturally” following the same patterns of behavior towards other animals which, they tell themselves and their children, humans have followed since “the beginning of time.”

Significantly, Mason also contends that archaeological evidence (that is, the interpretation of archaeological findings) supports the view that organized hunting was not common in humans until around 20,000 years ago, and debate continues about how important hunting (for food) has been in human history. Until this time, the vast majority of the human diet was plant-based, with the small amount of meat coming from scavenging rather than what might be called “proper hunting” (see Diamond [1991: 163-172] for an account of agriculture’s “two-edged sword” which shows the health and leisure benefits of forager lifestyles over modern sedentary agricultural ones. Apparently many theologians have held that human beings were not originally omnivorous, an argument supported by Mason (2005: 289) “Many biblical commentators maintained that it was only after the Flood that humans became meat-eaters.”

It is also perhaps significant that the lifestyle Mason and Diamond call "foraging," most others tend to call "hunter-gathering." Its ideological significance is surely further underlined, given the quantitative evidence of dietary practices, that they are *not* generally known as "gatherer-hunters." To her credit, the evolutionary anthropologist and ex-animal laboratory assistant Susan Sperling (1988) does use this term in her book *Animal Liberators*. Similarly, Erich Fromm (1963: 353) writes "For many thousands of generations man lived by food gathering and hunting." Of course, many hunting accounts are far more straightforward and less romantic than the account offered above by Ehlers. Yet, they still tend to reveal examples of dominionist thought. For example, the anonymous author of *Vermont's Annual Deer Hunt*⁸ relates how the "shoot-em-up crowd" simply desire to have themselves "a good time". As the yearly hunt gets underway, the trade in "American-made beer in throw-away cans" is brisk, while "the normally serene countryside echoes to the sound of gunfire." Sometimes, the disturbance is so great that it sounds as if "there is a small war on in 'them tha hills!'" Danger caused by stray bullets is real. Another account from the same website talks about people waiting for that "supreme moment" when prey falls within the sights of their high-powered rifles. There is talk about the power and deadliness of weapons and ammunition, and also the satisfaction of seeing a magnificent bull stagger to the ground, writhing in a moment of death.

After such brutal honesty, one author feels obliged to offer more *considered* justifications for the hunt. "It's part of life and death," he suggests. "It's sportsmanship and it's killing

⁸ http://www.huntingforbambi.com/Vermont_deer_hunting.cfm

for food which anyone who eats meat must accept,” he tries. Finally, he settles on: “Why should Vermonters have to buy their food (usually riddled with pesticide) from Florida or California when the local environment can supply something less tainted?” Interestingly, Ehlers offers a similar justification for shooting a deer: “Fast food provides no meaning in my life and I am sceptical that it does for anyone.” Someone else being “brutally frank” is Steve Timm, a contributing editor to the *Varmint Hunter Magazine*. In 1999, Timm had been assigned to visit a gun manufacturer somewhere called Nesika Bay but he’s less than pleased that writing the piece may interfere with his regular hunting routine:

“To be brutally frank, the assignment couldn’t have come at a worse time. I had just finished meeting my last deadline and I was set to kill my fall’s ration of big game. After that, my wife Karen...was scheduled for very major spinal surgery. I was going to be out of commission making meat and tending my bride for about two months... Hunting and family comes first. And that’s the way it’s supposed to be. After I killed my yearly allotment of critters and got Karen relatively stabilized, I made arrangements for the visit to Nesika Bay”.⁹

There are a number of patriarchal, dominionistic, values to note in such an account. Timm does not so much “take responsibility for the blood,” he is out there fearlessly “making meat.” Interesting phrases, “making meat” and “tending my bride,” especially perhaps in the very same sentence. Good ol’ North American family values are seemingly evident here, comfortably nestled alongside the accounts of killing sprees, with the explicit ideological suggestion that this is the way it was *intended* to be.

⁹ Steve Timm, in *The Varmint Hunter Magazine*: <http://www.varminthunter.org/articles.shtml>

According to hunter Jeff Murray,¹⁰ macho values are also commonly seen in hunting with bows as well as with guns. For example, a bow is sometimes chosen because it is large and therefore looks impressive; but often such a bow can be too large for the physical drawing strength of the person who intends to use it. Apparently, insiders in the bow-making industry call bows that are “too long” or “cranked up” beyond a shooter’s natural strength, “ego bows.” The author says he himself was initially attracted to the allure of an ego bow and began with too big a bow; “shooting 85 pounds at 29 inches; now I’m down to 75 pounds at 27 inches and have never shot better.” Clearly aware of the potential of a negative reaction to the macho-man image of bow-hunting - and yet recognizing that hunting is a way of affirming or demonstrating your “manhood,” Murray warns, “don’t let your manhood be measured by your bow’s draw weight.” However, lest we forget what the whole business of bow-hunting is about, he adds, “The fact is that today’s bows set at a modest 60 pounds are fully capable of delivering enough kinetic energy to drive an arrow through the chest of any white-tailed buck.”

Turkey hunters tend to talk about their activities in a particularly macho way, perhaps ostensibly to compensate for the type of prey they seek to kill. A turkey as prey hardly sounds the same as a “wild” and potentially “dangerous” “animal opponent” like a bear, a moose, or even a fully-grown stag. Indeed, possibly for similar reasons, the size of the North American turkey is often carefully emphasized in hunters’ photographs of themselves and “their” bird. Common iconoclastic poses tend to feature dead turkeys with their tail feathers fanned out or thrown nonchalantly over hunters’ shoulders, the

¹⁰ Jeff Murray: <http://www.bowhunting.net/07-June.html>

birds' lifeless heads hanging down limply with large wing feathers cascading below the conquerors' waists. In turkey-hunter talk, male turkeys are termed "gobblers," "tom turkeys" and "longbeards," and these individuals are the more prized prey, while the smaller females are simply called "hens" (see Van de Pitt [1998: 23-39] for a discussion of the "construction of the sexes" in ornithological literature).

With unacknowledged irony, turkey hunters such as John Trout, Jr. speak of the male turkeys being rather macho, almost arrogant; strutting around, scratching at the earth, and "parading" around to attract mates.¹¹ Male turkeys "gobble" at other birds; and they walk-the-walk, checking out the competition and the availability of females. Turkey hunters say they use their considerable knowledge of turkey behavior *against* the birds, evolving clever hunting "strategies" to "outwit" the gobblers. Hunters also often like to emphasize the necessary expertise and skill required to successfully kill wild turkeys, who seem to the hunters capable of forever keeping themselves (the little teasers) just outside "killing distance." Furthermore, dedication and perseverance are essential qualities for successful turkey killing, for any false move on a hunter's part will be inevitably seen by the birds' putative "supernatural vision." When Trout Jr. describes his own turkey hunts, he portrays a mental and physical struggle between "man" and "bird." He keenly passes on his long experience of "bumping heads" with "afternoon gobblers" and says that by following his hunting strategies you may "double your fun" in the wild turkey kill. After establishing the difficulties of battling the allegedly "supernatural" gobblers, the skills of

¹¹ See http://www.sportsmansguide.com/tip/tip_read.asp?tid=175407&sid=7 and J. Trout, Jr., "The P.M. Rendezvous," in *Beards and Spurs Turkey Hunting*, (1999): www.rack-mag.com/bsmag/articles/pmrende.htm

the dominionist hunter are amply demonstrated with accounts of the frequency of their successful kills. Thus, when a gobbler appears behind Trout Jr. the bird soon “falls victim” to the hunter’s “trusty Winchester.” When two turkeys appear out of a huge valley, he wastes no time in “taking” what he expertly identifies as the “best” bird by skilfully “calling” to a gobbler in the manner of a female turkey:

“Almost instantly, three hens and a strutting gobbler appeared on the opposite side of the field, just out of shooting range. Patiently, I raised the gun while Joe [note: two against one] took over the calling and offered the strutting bird a sweet string of clucks and purrs. The hens paid little attention, but the gobbler found the calls irresistible. Slowly he approached, and when he reached the point of no return I squeezed the trigger. The gun roared and the 4-year-old gobbler toppled.”

Another strategy of human skill over animality involves targeting the guy-without-a-gal: or the “lonesome turkey.” After all, according to Gary Sefton, cited by Trout Jr., an experienced wildlife shooter and honored as “turkey calling champion,”¹² any male turkey is more likely to respond to calls if he has “no hens alongside.” Another turkey hunting strategy involves hunters attempting to “scream like a peacock.” This practice is apparently designed to cause “shock-gobble.” It seems that there is nothing like a peacock’s call to intrigue even a weary “afternoon turkey” who is “desensitized after gobbling at crows and other turkeys all morning”: “The peacock call is like an extra stimulant that can force a turkey to talk when he has stopped answering the crows and other sounds that made him gobble earlier in the day.”

¹² http://www.nwtf.org/nwtf_newsroom/press_releases.php?id=11767

Focusing his analysis specifically on North America, Jim Mason (2005: 251) argues that hunting keeps dominionist values “alive” and “handy for all of society.” He notes that a hunter regards himself as the “leading” and also the *controlling* species on the planet, encroaching on wildlife every day, deciding where wildlife can and cannot live, and which to domesticate in order to eat. Finally, talking specifically about nonhuman animals rather than nature in general, the hunter is aware of the weighty responsibilities of having “total power over them” (hunter in *Greenwich News* [Connecticut], cited by Mason, p. 250). Mason calls hunting “human society’s oldest man-over-beast ritual,” further noting that, although only a small percentage of Americans hunt themselves, society in general tacitly supports it, especially the hunting of deer. For example, the opening day of the deer hunt is described as “a secular day of obligation.” It appears that this North American ritual has a powerful sociological influence in terms of the maintenance of a “misotherous” culture (a term coined by Mason, meaning hatred and/or contempt for animals - explored below in greater detail). For Mason, misotherous culture is transmitted and maintained through peer group and secondary socialization processes. For example, on this significant first day of hunting, “schools and factories close, restaurants offer ‘sportsman’s plates’, local media sponsor Big Buck contests, and a standard greeting is, ‘Get your deer yet?’” Mason further reports that the *New York Times* has poetically described the annual opening day deer-killing phenomenon “the song of the rifle” in the “rite of autumn” (p. 252).

Mason argues that only a few North Americans hunt. Likewise, it is also the case that only a minority of the British population take an active role in hunting (according to

Gellatley (2000: 27) there were about 350 fox hunts in Britain at the turn of the century). If one were to include in the term “hunting” fox, deer and harehunting, shooting pheasants, partridges and grouse, shooting deer, hare coursing *and* angling, the total number of participants would probably number less than four million people (for example, Gellatley (2000: 173) estimates that there are about three million British anglers: angling being by far the most popular form of bloodsport in Britain).

When thinking about British society’s general attitudes to hunting (hunting and shooting), it may be thought that the British situation differs dramatically from the North American context just outlined. British accounts and justifications for hunting by participants and supporters, however, also feature a good measure of romanticism associated with hunting rituals and practice. Scruton (2000)¹³ claims hunting connects people to the land, is a form of totemism involving the “ethics of combat” and the revival of forebears’ emotions. Meanwhile, food author and ‘celebrity’ chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall (2004) speaks of a “symbolic contract” between parties in which hunters act as conservationists, caring for the habitats of those hunted and taking responsibility for issues such as global warming. In legal terms, there does seem to be a growing divide between public and political attitudes to hunting in Britain compared to the U.S., particularly since “hunting with dogs” was made illegal in England and Wales in November 2004 (finally implemented in February 2005 - in Scotland, the ban was implemented in 2002)

¹³ And see “Roger Scruton: The Patron Saint of Lost Causes,” *Independent*, July 3rd (2005): <http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/features/article296509.ece>

following 700 hours of parliamentary debate (Hills 2005: 181, 198). However, the Conservative Party has pledged to repeal the ban once they regain political power.¹⁴

In Britain, particularly in England, and certainly until the end of the twentieth century, heavily ritualized hunting and shooting events were regularly spoken of in terms of social class location and affinities. Fox hunting, "the sport of kings" according to novelist Robert Smith Surtees' *Handley Cross, or Mr Jorrocks' Hunt*, has been largely regarded as a traditional "upper class" activity, somewhat distant and alien to "the masses," or at least distinct from "working class" sports such as angling and hare coursing. This image persisted despite the enthusiastic efforts in recent years of pro-hunting organizations such as the British Field Sports Society (BFSS) and the Countryside Alliance (CA) suggesting otherwise. Class divide has been seen in the practices and rituals within the hunting field, involving a strict hierarchy from "top of the heap" hunt masters, and wealthy landowners with "cut-glass accents" to the "working class laborers," the terriermen, who "dig out" foxes who find sanctuary underground. Somewhere between these categories are ordinary car or "foot followers" who compete to be the first to open farm gates and doff caps when the hunt rides pass. These cronies will also direct the huntsman if the scent has been lost.

While reputable opinion polls have consistently shown public opposition to hunting in Britain, certain hunting rituals have attracted substantial public and media attention and some tacit and overt support at least until very recently.¹⁵ For example, some fox hunting

¹⁴ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article5397912.ece>

¹⁵ www.merl.org.uk/news/images/ruralhistory_issue_3.pdf

gatherings such as “pony meets,” when most of the following riders are children are time for field members, foot followers and the general public to socialize not on horseback and, perhaps especially, the traditional Boxing Day meets have often been supported by large numbers of the general public way beyond the number who physically take part in the weekly hunts or spend the day as followers in vehicles or on foot. This has been especially true of hunts that depart from public houses on Boxing Day mornings.

Typically, the public on such occasions would attend in the late morning when hunters drink the ritual “stirrup cup” and when the hounds and horses were paraded longer than usual on village greens or in small rural town centers. Perhaps of little significance in itself, although possibly providing some indication of a latent cultural acceptance of the use of nonhuman animals, one can still find hunting scenes in public houses, be they in hunting pictures on walls or on the beer pumps at the bar. Furthermore, many British pubs are still called such names as “Horse and Hound,” or “The Sportsman,” suggesting that the assumed widespread opposition to most bloodsports does not extend to serious objections to seeing its cultural representation. It is also the case that it is only in the last decade that the media have not given generally favorable and widespread coverage to the opening day of grouse shooting (at one time typically characterized as the “glorious” 12th of August). The media tended to give particular attention to the annual competition between hotels to be the first to serve grouse on their menu. The flying by plane of freshly-killed birds (much to the disgust of culinary traditionalists who argue that “game” needs to be hung and be semi-decomposed before it is cooked) to London direct from the

grouse moors, and seeing them parachuted in by the “Red Devils” stunt team, used to be featured every year in August 12th news bulletins until the 1990s.

With regard to fishing, many more than the estimated three million British anglers appear to be catered for in media programs and popular publications about this “pastime.” Angling, even with its ritualistic displays of dead fish trophies (see virtually any cover of *Angling Times*), and possibly due to the relatively large number of active participants, has yet to be considered as controversial as other bloodsport pursuits involving hounds and still features prominently in local newspapers and other media.

The arguments - or justifications and excuses - that British hunters have rehearsed over the years are still in use, despite the hunting “bans”: all correspond well with Mason’s concept of dominionism. For example, foxhunters portray foxes as “vicious” and “ruthless” predators who prey on innocent lambs and chickens (in other words, the foxes got to the lambs and chickens before the humans did). Controlling foxes, therefore, falls within the dominionist rubric of controlling nature in general in an attempt to maintain a “proper” balance of creatures in the countryside. Therefore, British foxhunters know that when “Mother Nature” louses up and reduces the fox population to a greater degree than is “proper” and “balanced,” then “her” hunting guardians must conscientiously step in, now in the role of “fox conservationists” rather than “pest controllers,” restoring their version of “natural equilibrium” based on long-standing agri-culturalist values. British foxhunters, like North American deer hunters, argue that they have “cherished” and “respected” the nonhuman animals they prey upon, provided, for example, that fox

numbers are carefully monitored and ordered. Without the foxhunter's essential caring-through-killing, society risks becoming overrun by vermin. On the other hand, without this indispensable human "intervention", "order" and "care," we may tragically never see a fox again.

Gamekeepers employed by British shooting estates, until barred by the 1992 Animal By-Products Order, would commonly display all the animals they regard and killed as "vermin" on gibbet lines. This practice, a dominionist ritual based on the human control and manipulation of nature, involved hanging polecats, mink, blackbirds, thrushes, rabbits, hares, and others, from long strings of rope or wire set in woods and hunt coverts (small woods). The result is a line of decomposed and decomposing individuals acting as a rather grotesque scarecrow, almost as some kind of signpost or warning signal to animals not wanted for the actual practice of shooting. The Hunt Saboteurs Association once produced a post card which depicted a gamekeeper explaining to a "sab" that he shot numerous species of wild birds and other small animals such as stoats and weasels to protect his master's pheasants and partridges. So, what happens to the apparently favored pheasants and the partridges, the saboteur asks. "Ah, the master, *he* shoots them," the gamekeeper declares. Mason argues that hunting is often and falsely depicted as a "primal necessity" of early humanity. This historical exaggeration of hunting's role in providing *essential* human food, he suggests, should be seen as a powerful ideological response to modern guilt and unease about meat eating. If we actually believe the notion that humans "must" kill and eat animals, that we were indeed "meant" to eat and kill

them because humans are “natural carnivores,”¹⁶ then animal deaths can be more easily rationalized as absolutely necessary and utterly unavoidable. Furthermore, if we agree with Erasmus Darwin’s assertion (quoted in Thomas 1983: 299) that the whole of nature is “one great slaughterhouse,” then humans, like other “predators,” have *no other choice* but to take the lives of other animals in order to survive, and may as well simply get on with the regrettable, messy and often violent business.¹⁷ In an ethnographic study of slaughterhouse practices in North America, Esnitz (1997) found such sentiments when she was bluntly told by an animal slaughterer, “someone’s got to do it.”¹⁸

For Mason (2005) early forms of hunting commonly took place as a part of rituals marking a time when fundamental relationships between men and women, and men and “nature” were changing. These changes, and their repercussions, form the substantive part of Mason’s (and most ecofeminist’s) thesis about human relations with the earth - or “nature” - or everything that we now regularly regard as “other.”¹⁹ Mason suggests that

¹⁶ Thomas (1983: 292) notes however that seventeenth-century scientists such as Walter Charleton, John Ray and John Wallis “were much impressed by the suggestion that human anatomy, particularly the teeth and the intestines, showed that man had not originally been intended to be carnivorous.” Similarly, Franklin (1999: 178) notes that Rousseau used the scientific and anthropological knowledge of his day to claim that humans were not natural meat eaters but were rather a “frugivorous species.”

¹⁷ This rationalization for killing and eating animals is, historically speaking, separate from the most commonly used Old Testament mandate argument; that is, “God permits, allows or even commands it”: “BE KIND TO ANIMALS BY USING THEM AS INTENDED! Raise them as stock, love them as pets, learn from them through science, wear their skins to comfort us in the cold, eat their dead flesh to nourish the glorious bodies that God gave to us. ANIMALS ARE BEAUTIFUL, EAT THEM!” (www.mtd.com/tasty/-comments3.html). See Thomas (1983: 287-303) for other arguments such as “uneaten” animals would overrun the world or, conversely, would not exist if they were not eaten by humans.

¹⁸ When Independent TV News reporters interviewed slaughterers involved in the British foot and mouth outbreak in 2001, they were similarly met by this same “someone’s got to do it” response to the mass slaughter of sheep.

¹⁹ Engels (1972 [1884]) contains surprising echoes of this theme. Engels argues that the advent of agriculture altered social relationships in what he characterized as “primitive communism.” He argues that animal agriculture effectively created private property and patriarchal relations to the extent that women suffered “a world historic defeat.” It should be noted that Engels’ use of anthropological data has been severely criticized.

humankind took a giant leap backwards when significant sections of its early population took to sedentary agriculture rather than continuing to forage. The human worldview changed in terms of the role of human beings in nature. Instead of simply being *in* nature, a part of some notion of “the natural rhythm of things,” humankind began to attempt to control nature, to effectively “tame” and order it but Mason is also claiming that the history and modern practice of hunting are ideological and ritualistic dimensions of male-dominated, dominionistic, thought.

Mason traces the beginnings of the modern animal circus to pre-Christian times when the ancient Egyptians kept trained animals in parks. The Greeks also trained animals such as bears, lions and horses to perform tricks and dances, and were the first to develop the idea of traveling circuses. However, he suggests that the Romans, whose circus events could last a hundred days and involve the deaths of thousands of animals, were mostly responsible for putting the notion of animal circuses on the “West’s cultural map” (p. 254). Mason notes that man-beast contests in modern circuses do not have to feature violence on a spectacular level which results in animal deaths. Instead, dominionist rituals in today’s traveling menageries involve the deliberate degradation and humiliation of the nonhuman world dressed up as entertainment and education. While violent rituals involving killing animals reinforce the idea that humans are required to physically manage, conserve and control their populations, Mason suggests that rituals of humiliation “tend to reinforce myths of animal stupidity, inferiority, and the willingness to submit to human dominion.”

This perspective suggests that events such as the circus which feature performing animals contain powerful foundational messages about the “place” of human beings and other animals in the world. When children are taken to the circus, they see the hierarchical ladder of being with a human being - a *ringmaster* - in charge; when adults go to the circus, they are reminded that they stand masterfully on the top rung. Therefore, “going to the circus” may still have a strong effect on children in particular in terms of their socialization. A great many socialized lessons-of-life take place long before children are in the position to hold firm moral positions about what they are being taught and, despite the general decline in circus-going in recent years, it is still not unusual to see even babes-in-arms being taken to “the Big Top” along with their older brothers and sisters. One striking image of nonhuman animals painted by the circus - that they are playthings, clowns, objects of human whimsy - may be internalized by audience members before they can make up their minds about the rights and wrongs of the spectacle displayed before them. When the British tabloid the *Sunday People* investigated Circo Atlas, “in the popular British holiday resort of Albufeira on Portugal’s Algarve,” they found lame horses and sick lions being forced to perform (Garson 1999). Furthermore, audiences clapped and cheered despite the obvious animal suffering before them. They applauded when three Shetland ponies appeared in the circus ring with apparently frightened baboons chained to the saddles on their backs. While families, including children aged as young as two continued to clap and cheer, the baboons became more and more terrified, writes journalist Garston, eventually screaming in panic as the horses were induced to canter faster and faster.

From Mason's perspective, circus shows such as Circo Atlas are exemplars of dominionist values. They encourage people to downplay or turn a blind eye to the suffering of nonhuman animals and teach old and young alike that animals are human playthings. "Performing animals" are often forced to act out highly controlled but unnatural behaviors in the circus ring. For example, free-living elephants do not stand on their front feet and raise their back legs to perform a forward "handstand." This common circus routine places enormous stress on the skeleton of an elephant. Mason suggests that human laughter in such circumstances indicates an acceptance of the "buffoon status" of these animals. Dressed up in showy trappings, their simplicity is affirmed. Their instrumental utility has a dual socializing effect, *teaching* children and *reminding* adults that human beings are the dominant controllers of nature. Of course, part of the attraction of attending circuses, for adults as much as children, is to see at first hand the "clever tricks" of the "animal performers." When a family "goes to the circus," the experience reinforces the belief in adults that other animals are "lesser-than" humans in a moral value construction, while it introduces children to accept or affirm this dominant ideology. Circus rituals, then, in Mason's view, are like the zoos which developed in the nineteenth century, acting as reinforcement rituals of dominionist values, by recycling ideas of humanity's "mastery" and "victory" over nonhumans animals and nature in general. They act as another cornerstone of misotherous dominionism (p. 255).

Who was told what to do by the man.
 Who was broken by trained personnel.
 Who was fitted with collar and chain.
Dogs.
 The Pink Floyd.
Animals,
 Harvest, 1977.

Jasper (1999) explains that “loving” nonhuman animals fails to exclude their use and exploitation. This may indicate why many animal rights advocates resist and many despise the “animal lover” label.²⁰ The phrase “a nation of animal lovers” is best understood to mean the maintenance of a large population of select nonhuman species who are *not* intended for eating. It also means that several profitable industries have developed to service pet owners. The term may also invoke thoughts about the many modern television shows now dedicated to the care and ownership of nonhuman animals, or perhaps the dotty old man down the road seen each evening struggling with three large dogs while not preventing them from fouling the local children’s playing fields.

When Mason discusses the topic of pet animals he begins with the changing values about the nonhuman world beginning in Britain and North America in Victorian times. Writers such as Thomas (1983), Kean (1998) – and Mason (2005) himself - tend to stress that this is another period witnessing a significant shift in human attitudes to animals and nature in general. Thus, Mason claims, as “nature” was beginning to be seen as an object of beauty and serenity rather than something to be utterly feared for its “evil dangerousness,” there was an attendant moderation in dominionist thought. However,

²⁰ Groves (1995: 448) reports that an activist at a North American anti-vivisection rally declared: “I’m not an animal lover. Some animals I like, others I don’t like. To say I’m an animal lover is the same as saying I’m a nigger lover.” This consciousness is far from universal in the animal protection movement. Most animal forums feature sections where contributors can talk about and send pictures of their nonhuman “babies,” or “furbabies.” In 2003, a spokesperson for a British animal group campaigning against the “culling” of pigeons reportedly told the press that he was “a tax payer and bird lover.” If asked, some activists suggest that they merely employ terms of reference familiar to the public. Others say they are emotionally committed to relationships with nonhuman “companions,” sometimes suggesting – ironically like supporters of animal circuses and zoos - that direct contact between human beings and other animals is beneficial in engendering concern in humans for nonhuman beings. This latter point is discussed by Gold (1995: 105-107). Tom Regan has acknowledged that “the pet issue” is a problem in terms of the logic of animal rights thought since nonhumans such as many types of dogs and cats are hardly suitable candidates for liberation into the “wild.”

whatever this shift really meant socially (and contrary to the “massive transformation” in human-nonhuman relations thesis found in Franklin 1999), it did relatively little to shake the basic foundations of dominionist ideology. If anything, by way of Jasper’s (1999) perspective, the development of pet ownership provided yet another strand to the central ideas of dominionism, entirely consistent with agri-culturalist thought based on instrumentally “shaping,” “controlling” and “ordering,” most obviously seen in the manufactured lives of “pedigree” nonhuman captives. Tuan (1984: 51) notes that human desire for power over nature led to the deliberate “manufacture of curiosities.” Tuan says that Tudor horticulturalists experimented by wittily altering the shapes of plants, while Francis Bacon realized that vegetables, fruits, “beasts,” birds, and even humans can be molded in more “accurate figures” (p. 50-51). Discussing the issue of the power and grandeur of nonhuman animals and the human power *over* animals, Tuan (p. 69) relates an exchange between C.S. Lewis and his friend Evelyn Underhill and claims that the correspondence reveals that the former view of animals is, in general terms, “weak in modern men and women.” While dominant social elites through the ages have demonstrated their power through controlling “wild nature” now everyone can do it, symbolically and for real, in their own homes, especially through the keeping of “exotic” pets.²¹ Vets, of course, are cashing in on the growing trend.²² Tuan (p. 80) shows how the nineteenth century general publics of major European cities such as Paris, Berlin, London, Dublin, Bristol, Frankfurt, Antwerp and Rotterdam became fascinated in zoo visiting, not least to see the spectacle of “feeding time.” To facilitate business, zoos feed their “big cats” once a day, whereas once a week would better represent their natural experience of

²¹ <http://www.animalaid.org.uk/images/pdf/pettrade.pdf>

²² http://www.usatoday.com/life/lifestyle/2005-07-24-exotic-pets-main_x.htm

obtaining large chunks of flesh. Particular pleasure was gained, says Tuan, when zookeepers made large animals seem to “beg” for their food. From this, all the onlookers could get a feeling of superiority and power. This may now translate to the home when pet owners make another being “eat out of our hand – *that* yields a special thrill” (p. 80) just like when we see it at the zoo. More ways in which human beings can demonstrate and practice their daily “loving” control over the lives of other animals.

As Mason writes (2005: 256), following environmental studies professor Andrew Rowan, the pet is seen as something “safe,” “captive,” “loyal,” and “obedient.” The pet is a “subservient” symbol for the “appropriate relationship between humankind and the natural world.” Not only do human beings control virtually every aspect of the lives of the nonhuman animals they keep, including having the legal right to chop bits off them, surgically alter them for cosmetic and “show” purposes or to prevent them desiring and having sex, and dictate their movements and motions (literally, their *motions*), the pet breeding industry even attempts to dictate their exact physical shape through selective genetic breeding programs, sometimes to the clear detriment of animal welfare considerations. Thus, humans control both the *form* and *behavior* of their nonhuman property. “Showing” animals in, say, cat or dog shows, is an extraordinarily ritualistic activity with many formal rules owners must strictly adhere to. This is what the dog owners needs just to attend: tack box, brush and comb, scissors, thinning shears, chalk - block and powder - hair spray, hair dryer, leads, grooming table, noose and arm, exercise pen and mat, pen shade cover with clamps, bath items (i.e. rinseless or regular shampoo, sponges and bucket), towels, crate, crate fan, bait and/or small toy, wheels and bungee

cords, food for dog (after the show), water and water bucket, newspapers/paper towels, pooper scooper/plastic bags/trash bags, and weather gear (i.e. cool coat, rain coat). And for the “handler”: grooming smock/apron, appropriate ring clothes and shoes, bottled water, snacks/ice chest, sunscreen, portable chair, tent or large shade umbrella, emergency raincoat and change of shoes.²³

Since some humans are involved in “ordering” the physical shape of many other animals, dominionist thinking has simply put fresh emphasis on the notion that humans can and should control nature, here viewed as *improving* beings of nature as well as “ordering” them. Furthermore, if the display of exotic animals in circuses and zoos has a powerful socializing potential, so does the direct ownership of various nonhuman “companion animals.” While such contact is often assumed to be positive, pets nevertheless have the legal status of property, which owners can dispose of largely as they wish. For example, the RSPCA states that it is perfectly legal for British pet owners to kill their animal property,²⁴ *so long as they do not cause ‘unnecessary suffering’ in the process.* Therefore, “a pet is a diminished being,” figuratively and literally, says Tuan. Pets are *possessed* by property owners, *possessors* whose vanity and pleasure their existence serves. Pets may be “doted on” and given “lavish treatment” - even viewed as “valued members of a family” to be included in family rituals. However, that in itself may be seen as a display of generous privilege and wealth on the part of owners. Owners can order and control the

²³ http://dogshows.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_night_before_your_1st_dog_show

²⁴ This information came from the RSPCA, responding to an emailed question by the author. Of course, animal keepers often say they have animals “put down,” or “put them to sleep” rather than killed. What sounds more innocent - and caring - than putting someone to sleep?

lives of their playthings, acquiring and disposing of them rather like compact discs and shoes; they can *collect* them like stamps, *trading* and *swapping* them with other “collectors” if they wish. Tuan says that most dogs kept by North Americans are discarded after two years or less, “in other words...these American dogs are kept so long as they are playful, enduring, and asexual pups” (1984: 88). Humans like “furbabies” not adults. Those kept can be “doctored” of course to make them more docile and less smelly, thus “making it possible...to forget the insistent sexuality of all animals” (p. 89). And what of these rights violations sponsored by so many animal advocates?

The cruelty of castration is suggested by the tools used. A modern company offering “all your animal health care needs” lists a variety of instruments that, together with accompanying diagrams, must shock all but the most hardened reader. How is one to choose? Should one use a relatively simple castration knife (“a double-bladed scalpel and hoe in pocket guard”) or a Double Crush Whites Emasculator? A Baby Burdizzo only nine inches long or a Stainless Steel Emasculatome? Farmers have to confront these instruments; pet owners in the cities, a much more genteel breed, are able to look the other way (p. 89).

Tuan observes that, on the surface, human interaction with nonhuman pets appears to be about “love,” “play” and “devotion” but these are “incorrectly perceived.” There are harsher facts to be recognized in human pet keeping.

Conclusion

Rituals of dominionism are social rituals articulating human domination of other humans, other animals, and nature as a general category. Such rituals involving and incorporating nonhuman animals are widespread and sedimented in society by centuries of philosophical and theological thought, and by routine social practices – I have said nothing in this article about the fact that most humans eat other animals and wrap up their own bodies in the skins of others. This paper has been restricted to perhaps “lesser” forms of normative rituals in certain cultures. As Mason (2005: 268) points out, there are dozens more reaffirming the inferiority of nonhuman animals and human groups. By such means we bring meaning to our lives as we generationally transmit values through human societies. In terms of human-nonhuman relations, societies are deeply speciesist, literally saturated in core speciesist norms. These are the powerful social forces that animal advocates must fundamentally challenge if real change is ever to occur. In this light, campaigning — especially single-issue campaigning — that fails to directly challenge speciesist rituals of dominionism, including pet-keeping, and which does not posit ethical veganism as the solution in an unequivocal manner, is essentially tinkering at the edges of the problem. As suggested in this paper, then, speciesist and other harmful rituals of dominionism are deeply embedded in the very structure of society: these are core societal values and motors which need dismantling completely. Reforming such sedimented means of discrimination and oppression is not enough and, as I have long argued (see Yates 1999: 16-17), social movements, as important claims-makers in civil society, need to regularly audit their campaigning methods and effects, and adopt a mature, reflexive,

stance at all times. The changes nonhuman animals need are cultural, for it is widespread and mundane cultural activities, along with taught values and attitudes, that bring billions of them into existence for the purpose of exploitation. Social change occurs all the time and, therefore, change *is* possible but much more likely when more and more animal advocates and activists attack the core of the problem. Their task is aided by a sociological understanding of the social forces at play, identifying the factors at the heart of the issue, such as that offered in this paper.

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The Quest for a Boundless Ethic: A Reassessment of Albert Schweitzer Norm Phelps¹

Compassion [is] the ultimate ethic.

Victoria Moran

Introduction

In September of 1915, while the Enlightenment was dying a bloody death on the battlefields of Europe, one of its last great votaries was hitching a ride on a flat bottom steamer towing barges up the Ogooue River in French Equatorial Africa. At first glance, Albert Schweitzer was an unlikely candidate for hitchhiker on an African tugboat. The scion of a family of Protestant clerics and academics from Alsace, he was a former member of the faculties of philosophy and theology at the University of Strasbourg. His publication in 1906 of *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* had revolutionized the study of Christian origins and established him as a leading figure in liberal theology. Even so, at 40, he was still best known as a classical and liturgical organist whose recitals had filled cathedrals and concert halls across Europe. A master organ builder, Schweitzer was also a musicologist whose study of Johann Sebastian Bach is still read.

But in 1905, at the age of 30, driven by a desire to devote his life to the service of others, he had put four brilliant careers on hold to enroll in medical school, where he specialized

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in tropical medicine and surgery. On the eve of World War I, Schweitzer departed Europe to become a medical missionary in the rainforests of what is now Gabon. In 1917, he was detained by the French and interned for the duration of the war. (Alsace had been part of Germany since 1871, making him an enemy national.) In 1924, he returned to Lambarene, where he remained, with only brief interludes until his death in 1965, not long following his ninetieth birthday.

In 1915, Schweitzer was on a quest to reweave the fabric of the European civilization that had come into being with the Enlightenment and had been coming unraveled since the middle of the 19th century. He considered this “modern” civilization, as it has come to be called, humanity’s highest achievement, and he blamed its decline on a failure to live up to its own principles: the supremacy of reason, the perfectibility of humanity and the virtue of progress. His fundamental assumption, the article of bedrock faith that he seems never to have questioned in an era when it was being rejected by philosophers, artists, and historians all around him, was the Enlightenment notion that philosophers create civilizations and that societies are largely the emanations of philosophical ideas. One of the leitmotifs of Schweitzer’s work is a vehement denial of the conviction that had recently taken hold in Europe that societies are shaped less by ideas than by “irrational” forces such as geography, economics, history, genetics and unconscious psychological drives.

Albert Schweitzer devoted his life to sticking his finger into the crumbling dyke of the Enlightenment in a desperate effort to hold back the sea of Darwin, Marx, Freud,

Spengler, Nietzsche and others who were ushering in the deluge that would eventually acquire the appositely uninspired name of “postmodernism.”

Reverence for Life

In 1923, Schweitzer would publish the book that he hoped would bring his beloved Europe to its senses. *The Philosophy of Civilization* was a rallying cry against the pessimism of Oswald Spengler’s immensely popular *The Decline of the West*, which argued that modern Europe was dying of old age. Schweitzer believed, on the contrary, that Europe was suffering an infection for which he had found the cure. In his Introduction, Schweitzer identifies ethics as the “driving force” behind true civilization and issues a call for Europe to save itself by devoting itself to becoming ethical.

Civilization, put quite simply, consists in giving ourselves, as human beings, to the effort to attain the perfecting of the human race and the actualization of progress of every sort in the circumstances of humanity and of the objective world. This mental attitude, however, involves a double predisposition: firstly, we must be prepared to act affirmatively toward the world and life; secondly, we must become ethical. . . *Civilization originates when men become inspired by a strong and clear determination to attain progress, and consecrate themselves, as a result of this determination, to the service of life and of the world. It is only in ethics that we can find the driving force for such action, transcending, as it does, the limits of our own existence (Philosophy xiii, emphasis added).*

The search for the transcendent ethic that would revitalize European civilization was the problem that had been monopolizing Schweitzer’s thoughts whenever he was not hard at work in his hospital. The answer had come to him on that steamy afternoon in 1915 as he rode a riverboat up the Ogooue River toward his hospital in Lambarene:

“Slowly we crept upstream, laboriously navigating – it was the dry season – between the sandbanks. Lost in thought I sat on the deck of the barge, struggling to find the elementary and universal concept of the ethical that I had not discovered in any philosophy. . . . Two days passed. Late on the third day, at the very moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen, unsought, the phrase “reverence for life.” [*Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*; although he spoke excellent French, German was Schweitzer’s dominant language.] The iron door had yielded. The path through the thicket had become visible. Now I had found my way to the principle in which affirmation of the world and ethics are joined together.” (*Life and Thought* 155).

Nearly the whole of *The Philosophy of Civilization* is a setting of the stage for the final pages in which Schweitzer presents and explains “reverence for life,” the concept that he believes will save Europe, and through Europe, humanity:

“With Descartes, philosophy starts from the dogma, “I think, therefore I exist.” With this paltry, arbitrarily chosen beginning, it is landed irretrievably on the road to the abstract. . . True philosophy must start from the most immediate and comprehensive fact of consciousness, which says, “I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live.” This is not an ingenious dogmatic formula. Day by day, hour by hour, I live and move in it. At every moment of reflection, it stands fresh before me. . . A mysticism of ethical union with Being grows out of it.” (*Philosophy* 309)

At the headwater of the Enlightenment, Rene Descartes had started modern philosophy down a track that led nowhere by proclaiming thought to be the primary, irreducible, undeniable truth from which all other truths derive and upon which they depend, and in so doing he made the massive blunder of failing to distinguish between thought and the substrate of consciousness that sustains it. Thought, Schweitzer is telling us, is not primary; it is, in fact, like sight or hearing in that it is one of the modes by which we experience objects. Arguably, the objects of thought (memories, imaginary images, ideas,

etc.) differ from the objects of the other five senses in that they exist within rather than outside of the mind; but even so, they belong to the category of sense objects. (Schweitzer borrowed this view from Hinduism and Buddhism, which he studied extensively, authoring a lengthy analysis of *Indian Thought and its Development*. These systems recognize six senses: the five we acknowledge plus thought). Descartes' failure to recognize this divorced philosophy from experience and reduced it to an academic exercise unrelated to life, and this was why European philosophy had been unable to develop an ethical system capable of leading humanity forward.

Schweitzer proposed to remedy this situation by establishing the primal substrate that was prior to thought as philosophy's point of departure. This substrate he terms the "will to live" (*Wille zum Leben*). And this brings us to a critical point, which is the way (profoundly influenced by Schopenhauer) in which Schweitzer conceives "will". Most of us think of will as a conscious desire; at its most basic a desire to experience pleasure and avoid pain. But to Schweitzer, as we shall see in a moment, pleasure and pain—indeed sentience in its totality—are secondary manifestations. For him (as for Schopenhauer), "will" is prior even to individual consciousness. And paradoxically, this "will to live", this utterly, fundamentally, quintessentially subjective phenomenon locked inextricably within each living being, forms the basis for an objective ethical principle that transcends the individual to embrace all living beings. Schweitzer explains the paradox this way:

"As in my own will to live there is a longing for a wider life and for the mysterious exaltation of the will-to-live that we call pleasure, with a dread of annihilation and of the mysterious depreciation of the will-to-live which

we call pain; so it is also in the will to live all around me, whether it can express itself before me, or remains dumb (*Philosophy* 309).”

It is the presence of an identical will to live in all living beings that transforms the subjective into the objective and the individual into the universal. And this recognition that what is most fundamental in me is also what is most fundamental in all who live opens the way to what Schweitzer calls “a boundless ethics,” reverence for life, or more precisely but less poetically, reverence for the will-to-live.

“Ethics consist, therefore, in my experiencing the compulsion to show to all will-to-live the same reverence as I do to my own. There we have given us that basic principle of the moral which is a necessity of thought. It is good to maintain and encourage life; it is bad to destroy life or to obstruct it.” (*Philosophy* 309)

A little further on, Schweitzer summarizes his ethic of reverence for life in a single sentence: “Ethics are responsibility without limit towards all that lives” (*Philosophy* 311).

At this point, we might be tempted to think of “reverence for life” as a philosophy of universal compassion. That is, in fact, the common conception of it. Most people who use the phrase today think that this is what it means. But in *The Philosophy of Civilization*, Schweitzer is at pains to make clear that compassion is not what he is talking about.

Compassion is too narrow to rank as the total essence of the ethical. It denotes, of course, only interest in the suffering will-to-live. . . Love means more, since it includes fellowship in suffering, in joy, and in effort, but it shows the ethical only in a simile, although a simile that is natural and profound (*Philosophy* 311).

Amazingly, the simile that Schweitzer has in mind is sexual attraction (*Philosophy* 311). Why a theologian of Schweitzer's commitment and creativity should, at this critical point in the development of his thought, choose to see love as a metaphor for sex instead of as a primary force in itself or as a metaphor for the love of God, I have never been able to understand. Perhaps he viewed sex as the universal force that generated life. But however that may be, the problem inherent in the ethical primacy of reverence for the will-to-live as opposed to compassion and love for sentient beings is apparent in the following passage from *The Philosophy of Civilization*:

“A man is truly ethical only when he obeys the compulsion to help all life which he is able to assist, and shrinks from injuring anything that lives. He does not ask how far this or that life deserves one's sympathy as being valuable, *nor, beyond that, whether and to what degree it is capable of feeling. Life, as such, is sacred to him. He tears no leaf from a tree, plucks no flower, and takes care to crush no insect.*” (*Philosophy* 310, emphasis added)

Here, Schweitzer makes no distinction between the way we should treat sentient and insentient beings. It is life defined as the ability to grow and reproduce that grants ethical standing, not the ability to experience suffering and joy. For reasons that I will discuss in a moment, this constitutes an ethical naïveté that would surprise us in a thinker of Schweitzer's depth and originality if we had not encountered the same naïveté in his one-man crusade to re-make European civilization and reverse the flow of history. Schweitzer's errors are often the errors of noble overreaching. In the Preface to *Fear and Trembling*, Soren Kierkegaard identified the cardinal sin of 19th century philosophy (and Schweitzer is nothing if not a 19th century philosopher) as the urge to “go beyond” established and accepted principles that have stood the test of time. And Kierkegaard's

critique of “going beyond”—that it becomes a denial of the original principle and, therefore, instead of going beyond it, falls short of it—applies to “reverence for life” as well. By trying to go beyond love and compassion, Schweitzer’s ethic—as defined in *The Philosophy of Civilization*—fails even to equal it.

To Will or to Want, That is the Question

Like its English cognate, the German noun *Wille*—at least in everyday usage—implies intention and desire, and therefore, consciousness. Likewise, the related verb *wollen* (first and third person singular, present active indicative: *will*), which can be translated into English as either “to will” or “to want,” is the common, everyday verb meaning “to want.” When a German speaker wants a stein of beer, she says “*Ich will ein Stein.*” “I want to go home” is “*Ich will nach Haus gehen.*” In the jargon of 19th century German philosophy, however, especially the bastardized Buddhism of Arthur Schopenhauer, the noun *Wille* acquired the meaning of a vital, but impersonal, force that is the ultimate reality underlying the world of appearances that we experience day-to-day.

With this in mind, let’s revisit a statement of Schweitzer’s that I quoted above in the standard English translation. In Schweitzer’s original German, “I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live,” is “*Ich bin Leben, dass leben will, inmitten von Leben, dass leben will*” (Association Internationale), which can just as easily, and a lot more naturally, be translated, “I am life that wants to live surrounded by life that wants to live.” But the translator could not use the more straightforward, natural translation because “wants” implies conscious desire, and Schweitzer makes it clear in

the passage about not picking a leaf or plucking a flower that he is including in *Leben*, “life,” everything that grows and reproduces, not simply beings who are sentient and conscious.

In the course of identifying his own will-to-live with all other wills-to-live, Schweitzer systematically confuses the technical, Schopenhaurian meaning of *Wille* with the commonsense, everyday meaning, a confusion that is facilitated by the happenstance that *wollen* can mean both “want” and “will.” We can empathize with other wills to live, he tells us, because we can experience our own. But if another will-to-live cannot experience itself (or anything else), what is there to empathize with? Consciousness can empathize with consciousness, but to say that consciousness can empathize with an unconscious force is to commit a pathetic fallacy. In short, Schweitzer anchors his ethical thinking to consciousness, which he initially identifies with the “will-to-live.” But he then uses the dual meaning of “will” to extend his ethic to unconscious beings, apparently failing to realize that he has cut it loose from its original moorings.

This equivocation is the undoing of reverence for life as Schweitzer describes it in *The Philosophy of Civilization*. An ethic based on love and compassion is grounded directly in experience. I know from immediate, undeniable experience that my pain is evil. Therefore, I can empathize with your pain and know apodictically that it is also evil. The empathy of an ethic based on love and compassion is a valid empathy. An ethic based on will-to-live understood (at least sometimes) as distinct from and prior to consciousness is grounded in an intellectual abstraction, not direct experience. In this regard, Schweitzer’s

“will-to-live” differs little from Descartes’ “thought”. Its empathy is an illusion of abstract thinking.

To use Schweitzer’s examples that I quoted above, if I crush an insect I have destroyed a will-to-live that is conscious of itself and wants to continue living, wants to experience pleasure and avoid pain. I know that this is evil because I know directly, immediately, unarguably, that it would be evil if done to me. But neither the leaf nor the tree, the flower nor the plant on which it grows, is conscious. And so when I tear a leaf from a tree or pluck a flower, I do nothing wrong unless I indirectly harm a sentient being, such as a caterpillar for whom the leaf was food or shelter or a honeybee who needs the nectar from the flower. I have caused no pain. I have deprived of life nothing that wanted to live, nothing, in fact, that experienced life in any way. In terms of the suffering I have caused, I might as well have broken a rock with a hammer. All sentient beings are valid objects of love and compassion, and only sentient beings are valid objects of love and compassion. Comparing the crushing of an insect to pulling a leaf from a tree or picking a flower trivializes the crushing of the insect by negating the insect’s consciousness, and it is in that regard that reverence for life, as Schweitzer originally conceived it, falls short of an ethic based on love and compassion by trying to reach beyond it.

An Easy Way Out

If we apply the same ethical standard to both sentient and insentient life, as Schweitzer tried to do, we either treat insentient life in a way that renders living all but impossible—we don’t harvest grain or pick vegetables and fruit—or we engage in unnecessary cruelty to sentient beings—we kill them for food, conduct medical experiments on them and the

like.² Ethical standards that are appropriate to sentient beings are inappropriate to insentient beings and *vice versa*. It is entirely proper to treat insentient beings as a class, without showing great concern for individuals—to protect forests, for example, but not individual trees (except, as I noted above, for the indirect harm that may be done to the insects and birds who live in the tree). But because the ability to suffer and the love of life reside in the individual, we must protect sentient beings as individuals, not as aggregates. Schweitzer's will-to-live as formulated in *The Philosophy of Civilization* ignores a crucial element, perhaps *the* crucial element, in the ethical equation.

Like water, people follow the path of least resistance, and given a choice between treating plants as if they were sentient and treating animals as if they were insentient, most of us will choose the latter every time. Even Schweitzer—who went to extraordinary lengths to practice his boundless ethic in his daily life—illustrates the point. For most of his life, he continued to eat meat, becoming vegetarian only in his final years (Free 40). Better late than never. I was in my forties before I became a vegan. But what is troubling here is that Schweitzer arrived at his ethic of reverence for life at the age of 40 and for another four decades was able to justify to himself continuing to eat meat. Another example is vivisection, which Schweitzer, the medical doctor, defended to the end of his life, arguing only that it should be conducted as seldom as possible and then with every effort to minimize the animals' suffering (Free 36-37).

² Hierarchies of sentience, such as that taught in Jainism, are not relevant here because they are clearly not what Schweitzer had in mind, which is curious because Schweitzer was familiar with Jainism, and the Jain hierarchy of sentience would accommodate itself very comfortably to his view that it is sometimes necessary to do harm, but that we must always strive to do as little harm as possible.

Here, however, we have to admit that a semblance of a case can be made for vivisection on the basis of “reverence for life” that cannot be made for meat eating. It is, in essence, the case made by Utilitarian philosophers like Peter Singer. Vivisectors balance one set of lives against another set of lives. And it can be argued—as Singer and Schweitzer do, although from different philosophical premises—that a scientist could in good conscience decide that the suffering that his experiments will alleviate outweighs the suffering that they will cause, as in the case of the polio vaccine, where the suffering and death of millions of primates led to a vaccine that saved even more millions of human children (Singer 67).

There are two problems with this argument. The first is that ultimately, however you formulate it, it depends on a utilitarian calculus that presumes it is acceptable to cause suffering to one being for the sake of alleviating the suffering of another. Except in cases of warding off direct and immediate attack, I think that this is a very problematic premise on which to base public policy or societal behavior—and Schweitzer was attempting to construct an ethic that would undergird all of civilization—because ultimately it is the excuse behind which all tyranny, oppression and cruelty hide. It is a premise that has loosed far more suffering on the world than it has ever assuaged. Nearly everyone who promotes evil as public policy does so on the grounds that it will lead to a greater good. “The greater good” is the most destructive force ever unleashed upon the world.

The second problem—of which Singer is aware, but Schweitzer was not—arises from the fact that vivisection of unwilling or uninformed human subjects is practiced only rarely

and usually behind a veil of lies and secrecy; when it comes to light, it is invariably the subject of universal condemnation.³ Vivisection upon unwilling and uninformed nonhuman animals, however, is business as usual and widely approved by the global public as important to human health and longevity. In today's terminology, vivisection is speciesist (Singer 67-68). In the context of "reverence for life," this systematic infliction of suffering and death upon a class of beings with which the vivisector does not identify in order to benefit a class with which he does identify undercuts Schweitzer's cardinal rule of showing "to all will-to-live the same reverence that I show my own." Vivisection devalues the will-to-live of animals in favor of the will-to-live of human beings. And when the case-by-case balancing that Schweitzer talks about can result in the consistent devaluation of another category of living beings for the benefit of one's own category, reverence for life becomes an empty phrase.

Schweitzer was, however, acutely aware of the larger problem that living beings regularly come into mortal conflict with other living beings in ways that sometimes require us to destroy one life in order to preserve or support another. No ethical system yet devised has been able to cope successfully with this moral flaw built into the structure of the universe. Most ethical systems presume that it is always *possible* to act ethically, no matter what situation we may find ourselves in. We may not always do so, we may not always see

³ The largest scale experiments ever conducted on unwilling or uninformed human beings were, of course, the invasive and lethal experiments conducted by German doctors upon countless thousands of Jews, Roma, and other prisoners during the period of Nazi rule. (See, for example, Annas and Grodin, Lifton, and Spitz.) The most notable American example was the notorious Tuskegee experiment which ran from 1932 until 1972, in which nearly 400 impoverished and poorly educated African-American men suffering from syphilis were told they were being treated for "bad blood," when in fact they were not being treated at all so that researchers could observe the course of their disease (Brunner). In both of these instances, it was deeply ingrained racist attitudes that made the experiments seem morally acceptable, just as it is deeply ingrained speciesist attitudes that make animal experimentation seem morally acceptable today.

clearly what the ethical course of action is, but there always is an ethical course of action open to us, however unpleasant it may be. And so, traditional ethical systems tend to be guidelines for deciding which of the available options in any given situation is the ethical option.

The presumption that there is always an ethical course of action available to us—or to phrase it differently, that necessity can render moral an act that would otherwise be immoral—makes ethics relative to the situation. That is to say, what is unethical in one situation might well be ethical in another. Schweitzer tells us that in an absolute ethic, such as reverence for life, it is never ethical to take life, no matter what the circumstances. Since sometimes you will take a life—whether by action or inaction—no matter what you do, according to Schweitzer, *it is sometimes necessary to act unethically*, not for the sake of some greater good, but simply because there is no course of action available that does not result in the death of a living being. A variation on an example that is frequently invoked in the animal rights debate will illustrate the point.

Following a shipwreck, you are alone on a life raft in shark infested waters. A human child and a dog are swimming in the water beside you, and a crate of food and water comes floating by. It is a tiny life raft, and you can bring in the dog, the child or the crate. Or you can jump into the water yourself and put the child and the dog into the raft or put the food into the raft with either the child or the dog. But if more than two of the four entities in play are in the raft, it will swamp. The question is, What is the ethical thing for you to do?

The premise of the exercise is that there *is* an ethical course of action, and that the task of ethics is to help you find it. But this presumes that it is sometimes ethical to sacrifice one life for another, and the only questions to be decided are, Which life? and In what circumstances? And this presumption creates what for Schweitzer is an unacceptable compromise between ethics and reality, and in so doing makes ethics relative to the situation. That is to say, what is unethical in one situation—letting a dog drown, for example—might well be ethical in another.

When we fail to acknowledge this, as most of us do, we avoid responsibility for our actions by pretending that they are ethical, which makes it easier to act more unethically than is absolutely necessary. In order to salve our consciences, we willingly walk out onto a slippery slope. In a case where we have no choice but to act unethically, we must carefully review the specific circumstances and the likely consequences of each possible course of action and then simply do the best we can without any ready-made set of rules to guide us.

“Ordinary ethics seek compromises. . . . they produce experimental, relative ethics. They offer as ethical what is in reality not ethical but a mixture of non-ethical necessity and ethics. . . . The ethics of reverence for life know nothing of a relative ethic. They rank only the maintenance and promotion of life as good. All destruction of and injury to life, under whatever circumstances they take place, they condemn as evil. They do not keep in store adjustments between ethics and necessity all ready for use. . . . They do not abolish for [a human being] all ethical conflicts, but compel him to decide in each case how far he can remain ethical and how far he must submit himself to the necessity for destruction of and injury to life, and therewith incur guilt. It is not by receiving instruction about agreement between ethical and necessary that a man makes progress in ethics, but only by coming to hear more and more plainly the voice of the ethical, by becoming ruled more and more by the longing to preserve and promote life,

and by becoming more and more obstinate in resistance to the necessity for destroying or injuring life.” (*Philosophy* 317)

The point that Schweitzer is making here is of crucial importance for believers in an ethic of compassion for the same reason that it was a crucial point for Schweitzer. Sentient beings live in mortal conflict with one another. And try as we might, we cannot make ourselves exceptions to that rule. It is, as I said before, a flaw built into the structure of the universe. Even the vegan food I eat was produced at the cost of the lives of insects, worms, small mammals, and ground nesting birds. We can strive to minimize our participation in the conflict, but we cannot eliminate it. And the only guidance that Schweitzer gives us for resolving our dilemma is that we must become “ruled more and more by the longing to preserve and promote life, and [become] more and more obstinate in resistance to the necessity for destroying or injuring life.” It is not a lot of help. But Schweitzer doesn’t intend it to be. Relying on outside help in the form of codes that lay down specific rules for behavior governing every circumstance leads to confusion about what ethical behavior really is; it makes us morally lazy and irresponsible. It is only by recognizing evil as evil every time we do it that we will be able to reduce over time the evil that we do.

A Mixed Legacy: Schweitzer and Philosophy

Albert Schweitzer was a European nineteenth century philosopher writing in a global twentieth century. His love for the Enlightenment was such that rather than build a future, he tried to repair the past, an exercise in futility. Relatedly, his faith in European civilization—as informed by Christianity and the Enlightenment—made him a provincial

in an increasingly cosmopolitan world. In reverence for life, Schweitzer failed to discover the new ethic that he thought would be his crowning achievement. But “reverence for life” soon took on a life of its own, as the phrase resonated with millions of people who took it to mean exactly what it sounds like it means: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” applied to all sentient beings. In Schweitzer’s failure, people discovered anew a timeless ethic that can never be transcended or gone beyond.

There is reason to believe that Schweitzer himself may have quickly come to accept the public reading of the phrase that he had coined.⁴ At various times, he spoke in terms that made “reverence for life” sound very much like the love and compassion from which he had differentiated it in *The Philosophy of Civilization*. As early as 1924, for example, he argued, “Because the extension of the principle of love to animal creation means so great a revolution for ethics, philosophy shrinks from this step” (*Out of My Childhood and Youth*, quoted in Free 25), implying that “reverence for life” did precisely this, while neglecting to mention flowers and leaves. In 1931, he described reverence for life as, “the ethic of love widened into universality. It is the ethic of Jesus, now recognized as a logical consequence of thought” (*Life and Thought* 235). And in the final years of his life Schweitzer stopped eating animal flesh while continuing to eat grains, fruits, and vegetables. As he lay dying, he refused his daughter’s offer of beef broth, unwilling to buy strength for himself with the death of another sentient being (Free 40).

⁴ Henry Salt had actually used the phrase in his 1897 book *The Humanities of Diet: Some Reasonings and Rhymings*: “The logic of the larder is the very negation of a true reverence for life, for it implies that the true lover of animals is he whose larder is fullest of them.” (quoted in International Vegetarian Union) Schweitzer, however, was unaware of this.

To sum all of this up, despite his virtuous overreachings and parochial shortcomings, Albert Schweitzer made four major contributions to ethical thought, and taken together they form a coherent vision that ranks him among the most profound thinkers of the twentieth—or any other—century. First, he rediscovered, in spite of himself, the eternal truth that love and compassion are the only valid foundation for ethics. Then he applied that love and compassion to all living beings whom we have the power to help or harm. This, in turn, led him to the recognition that a society is only worthwhile to the extent that ethics is the driving force behind it, and that, in fact, the only valid way for a society to justify its existence is by protecting and nurturing all who are subject to its power. And finally, by way of offering us a means to assure that we do not betray our own ideals, he warned us that in a structurally imperfect world, it is not possible to act ethically in every situation, and that because of this, there is no way to maintain our ethics, and preserve the worth of our society, except by unrelenting mindfulness. There are no rules; there are only principles. Eternal vigilance is the price not just of liberty, but of love and compassion, as well.

A Mixed Legacy: Schweitzer and Africa

Mahatma Gandhi's reputation has endured in large part because he was on the right side of liberation movements for the non-European peoples of the world. By contrast, Albert Schweitzer's reputation has suffered greatly because he was on the wrong side of those same movements. Gandhi made the white race face its own rapacity and injustice, while Schweitzer, the medical missionary, grew into an old man who insisted on bearing the

white man's burden long after most Westerners had abandoned the Kiplingesque delusion that being ruled by Europeans was a blessing for the "primitive" peoples of the world.

In 1921, Schweitzer wrote that colonial rule was justified by the need to educate Africans and provide for their "wellbeing"; that Europeans must not fraternize too closely with Africans because familiarity would erode their authority; and that he was the brother of the Africans, but as a European he was their "elder brother", with "natural authority" over them (Schweitzer, *Anthology* 183-186). In his Nobel lecture, delivered in 1954, just six years before Gabon achieved independence, Schweitzer made only one passing reference to colonialism and its aftermath. "Spurious nationalism is rampant in countries across the seas too, especially among those peoples who formerly lived under white domination and who have recently gained their independence. . . . Indeed, *peace, which had prevailed until now in many areas, is today in jeopardy*" (Schweitzer, Nobel, emphasis added). Oppression and exploitation can be called peace only by those who fail to see them through the eyes of the oppressed and exploited.

On the other hand, Schweitzer was critical (if only mildly so) of colonial injustices such as displacing native peoples from their homes to build roads, cheating local communities out of their land, and forcing Africans to perform "compulsory labor", *i.e.* slave labor (Schweitzer, *Anthology* 166-167, 175-177). On balance, it seems fair to say that he saw Europeans as adults and Africans as children. Therefore, he believed that Europeans had a duty to act *in loco parentis* toward Africans, but criticized the colonial powers when he saw them behaving like neglectful or abusive parents. This was the same paternalistic

view held by many “enlightened” Europeans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and constituted a subtle but insidious form of racism because it infantilized the nonwhite peoples of the world and justified their subjugation for the benefit of Europeans.

Schweitzer devoted his life to healing and helping Africans. But his patronizing sense of European superiority put his very considerable moral authority in the service of colonialism. The genuine love and compassion that motivated Schweitzer to leave his beloved Europe and devote his life to the care of Africans were betrayed by his inability to transcend the European parochialism in which he had been nurtured.

Conclusion

The grand design that Schweitzer pursued was misguided, but the means he chose to pursue it left a legacy of good. Schweitzer’s larger-than-life quest for a boundless ethic was itself driven by the love and compassion that he had once tried to go beyond; and these led him to perform a lifetime of individual services to his fellow living beings at great personal sacrifice. He healed the sick and comforted the bereft of all races and species. Doing the right deed for the wrong reason is not always, as T. S. Eliot would have it, the greatest treason. More often than not, it is the only way that we poor, deluded human beings manage to do some good in spite of ourselves. It is not in our grand designs that we triumph, but in the small works that we perform in pursuit of them, because it is in these small works that compassion and love are best able to exert their force in the world. Works that are small in scope often have the greatest effect on the lives of those toward whom they are directed. Grand designs are rarely achieved, and

when they are, they tend to be destructive, witness the French and Russian revolutions. Grand designs defeat themselves. Small works endure.

Even if Schweitzer pillaged his own reputation as a modern day saint by his support for the European colonial enterprise, his half century of treating the sick, injured, and aged of the Ogooue basin, and his half century of protecting and preserving the nonhuman life that he found all around him in equatorial Africa, are examples of the greatness of soul in its purest form—the greatness of small works. Albert Schweitzer devoted his life to the service of those who suffer, without regard to any factor beyond their suffering. And after all is said and done, his life and work—even with their provincial shortcomings and quaint overreachings—point the way toward the very philosophy of love and compassion for all sentient beings that he had once tried to go beyond.

Perhaps our final assessment of Albert Schweitzer should be this: He was the hero of a modern Greek tragedy who scaled heights denied to lesser mortals until he was brought low by hubris. But in Schweitzer's case, it was not hubris on behalf of himself or his own achievements, but blinding pride in a Europe that was unworthy of his devotion. Albert Schweitzer was better than Europe, but his failure to realize that has diminished him forever.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Redemption: The Myth of Pet Overpopulation and the No-Kill Revolution in America, Winograd, Nathan J. (Almaden Books 2007)

Adam J. Kochanowicz¹

Every year, approximately 4 million animals are euthanized in the United States (Interlandi 1). As long as this practice has existed in animal shelters, the public has long accepted euthanasia as a necessary evil for controlling the pet population. However, in *Redemption: The Myth of Pet Overpopulation and the No-Kill Revolution in America*, Nathan J. Winograd makes a case for an uncommon approach to reforming animal shelters called “No Kill”. The No Kill equation demands no animal to be killed for common reasons like space or adoptability. While most of the blame for euthanasia is put on the public, Winograd criticizes the very institutions and administration established to support unwanted animals. Winograd uses his lifelong dedication to rescuing animals and, among other qualifications, a conversion to “No Kill” for numerous animal shelters to suggest the norm of euthanizing animal for space is, among a list of common problems, a symptom of poor customer service, sanitary care, and a general misunderstanding of population control² (22-31, 229).

In order to make the bold statement that euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals is unnecessary, Winograd not only criticizes the predicates of supposed necessity but the

1 To contact Adam Kochanowicz, e-mail him at: adam@vegpage.com

2 Also footnoted in *Redemption*, while cats and dogs represent the majority of animal killed in shelters, No Kill shelters under Winograd's management maintained a No Kill framework for “mice, hamsters, rabbits, goats, chickens, gerbils, and horses who made their way to our shelter” (97)

criteria by which shelter management judges as “healthy” or “adoptable.” Winograd reminds us of the foundations of lifesaving programs beginning with animal rescue and sheltering patriot Henry Bergh who in 1866 founded the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Bergh is described as “The Great Meddler,” an eccentric protector of animals known to directly confront strangers who mistreated their animals (9). From 19th century accounts of Bergh's work and animal shelters, we see a familiar dichotomy of sheltering formats in which one extreme a shelter is a sort of cleanup facility for the city to remove stray animals as opposed to the other extreme which may arguably be Bergh's model in which a drive for lifesaving and prevention of cruelty is central to the shelter.

Conventional wisdom would hope our city shelters are the latter. This public impression is catalyzed by the assumption that shelters are staffed by individuals with a passion for saving lives through adoptions or a general sympathy for companion animals. The assumption which tolerates euthanasia follows in thinking shelter employees do their best to find a home for each individual animal but were left with no other option than to end the animal's life out of necessity for shelter space. Yet as long as shelter management experience and not the aforementioned mindset is the criteria, shelter administration is likely to follow the traditional format of adopting some and euthanizing those believed to be unadoptable. The acceptance of pet overpopulation is strongly supported by some of the wealthiest animal welfare organizations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals which defends euthanasia claiming No Kill shelters “often find themselves filled to capacity....In the best case scenario, they [rescued animals] will be taken to another

facility that does euthanize animals” . PETA plainly defends the notion of pet overpopulation saying “There simply aren't enough good homes—or even enough good cages—for them all....euthanasia is often the most compassionate and dignified way for unwanted animals to leave the world” (PETA 1).

Redemption sets out to systematically disprove the myth of pet overpopulation calling statements like that of PETA's “defeatism.” Animal Welfare organization the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has long objected to the No Kill approach taking on their own “no kill” approach which states the prevention of euthanasia as a worthy goal, but defends the practice of killing healthy animals as a measure which should be reduced as much as possible. This “no kill” philosophy is confusingly different than “No Kill” in that the mission of the latter does not accept euthanasia as an option³ (Pacelle 1). Winograd defends the possibility of euthanizing no animals for reasons of space with numerous accounts of animal retention from managing shelters (Winograd 56). While these accounts are very convincing, the thesis for this rebuttal is unclear.

Organizations like PETA and the HSUS commonly argue overcrowding is symptomatic of animal rescue. For instance, HSUS CEO and President Wayne Pacelle states:

If euthanasia is not occurring and intake of dogs and cats is significantly exceeding adoptions, then overcrowding and warehousing—and the

³ Winograd's material is sensitive to the rare exception wherein keeping the animal alive may be less humane than euthanasia. From the No Kill Advocacy Website, maintained by Nathan Winograd: “The decision to end an animal’s life is an extremely serious one, and should always be treated as such. No matter how many animals a shelter kills, each and every animal is an individual, and each deserves individual consideration.” (No Kill Advocacy Center 1)

attendant suffering—are the undesirable and also unacceptable outcomes (Pacelle 1).

Redemption makes the following rebuttal:

...No Kill is the opposite of hoarding, filth, and the lack of veterinary care....To imply that No Kill by definition means filth and hoarding, therefore, is a cynicism which has only one purpose: to defend those who are failing at saving lives from public criticism and public accountability by painting a picture of the alternative as even darker (Winograd 56).

Personal experiences from Winograd's shelter experience are omitted for brevity as well as to outline the lack of a plain English introductory rebuttal to immediately follow Pacelle's intuitive conclusion. Rebuttals and solutions are offered for this claim, but the reader must skip a few chapters until finding this section titled "The Myth of Pet Overpopulation." These solutions begin with questioning the claims of overcrowding and its subsequent symptoms and offering simple methods of community outreach and legislation regarding the availability of shelters to the public as a means of adopting out more animals (56, 157-159). *Redemption* also provides anecdotes of shelters with sometimes dozens of empty cages who nonetheless are caught euthanizing healthy adoptable animals. From stories like these, Winograd strengthens the case for defeatist logic being the motivating factor to lifesaving apathy. Overall, the claim that more quality homes exist for animals than the animals that enter shelters is the most succinct and efficient argument made by *Redemption* (161).

Since the publication of *Redemption*, Pacelle may have been pressured to change the wording of HSUS's stance on No Kill. Currently, Pacelle's blog describes "no kill"⁴ as a goal but not possible in the transition phase. However, the transition phase for Winograd has repeatedly shown itself to be a phasing out of policies and procedures which otherwise drive the supposed need for euthanasia. Winograd states disagreement with the assumption of PETA and HSUS that the circumstance of sheltering and adopting all incoming animals necessarily leads to unclean and crowded shelters (Pacelle 1)(Winograd 54). The general argument in *Redemption* states adoptions, funding, and volunteers but not euthanasia to be the logical response to excesses of incoming animals.

The claims for the necessity for euthanasia are too numerous to mention for the purposes of this review but the most prominent claims are that of overpopulation and crowding. *Redemption* describes pet overpopulation as accepted by the public and shelter employees alike. Winograd's clearest objection is the existence of empty cages in shelters who supposedly kill for space. The reasoning for euthanasia in this case must be defeated by the very fact space exists. As detailed early on, animals to be euthanized are not automatically selected as an excess when cages have been filled. Rather, as euthanasia has already been accepted as necessary in a kill shelter, animals are "merchandized," where animals deemed "more adoptable" are displayed to the public while animals tested to be "unadoptable" are never given the opportunity to be adopted, destined instead for death (21-22). The clearest example of this fallacy is Winograd's

4 The lowercasing of "no kill" is an intentional spelling by Pacelle to distinguish between the general policy of not killing and the specific "No Kill" movement developed by Richard Avanzino as described in *Redemption*.

account of animals who would appear difficult to adopt although not in any condition where euthanasia would be a more humane alternative:

The [Thomkins County] shelter had the same [No Kill] success with Oliver, a cat with a broken jaw and one eye. It had the same success with a cat who had neurological problems and could not use stairs. It had the same success with a blind dog. It had the same success with a three-legged dog. It had the same success with a cat who defecated with no control (131).

The format of *Redemption* begins with an introduction or, more appropriately, a reminder of the special treatment we give to our animal companions and gradually becomes a “bible” for No Kill as evidenced by its preamble and blueprint for the No Kill movement in the appendices. As such, conditions and steps should be clearly detailed and stated specifically. Though most of the outline is in concordance with the preceding chapters, several inconsistencies remain between the appendices and the text as to what the initial “steps” to starting up a No Kill shelter are:

The first step in No Kill is taking responsibility (103)

The first part of the model involves responsibly reducing impounds so that more resources can be used to provide care for individual animals (197)

...we did it with a simple yet highly effective three-step process: 1) Stop the killing; 2) Stop the killing; 3) Stop the killing (97)

The guidelines of the blueprint are likely very useful for individuals in charge of reforming shelters, though little is mentioned about how reform can proceed at an individual (rather than a shelter employee or group) level. While *Redemption* effectively challenges the misnomers of pet population, disease spreading, aggression, and feral

animals, readers who are not involved in the administration of shelters will not get much specific advice other than “organizing the community” for encouraging their local shelter to achieve No Kill status. *Redemption* criticizes the legislation which penalizes feeding feral cats showing pet legislation is not always on the side of lifesaving. This could have been an opportunity to mention outlets for independent work such as the availability of traps individuals can use in their own neighborhood. By providing simple methods of trapping, neutering, and returning feral cats, perhaps individuals could educate their communities to the simplicity of lifesaving.

Amongst a wealth of anecdotal evidence from Winograd's experience in shelters, a critical examination of what we call “overpopulation” was missing from the important “The Myth of Pet Overpopulation” chapter. While Winograd defends No Kill because plenty of homes exist for animals needing adoption, deconstructing what is a loose definition of the word would yield human paradigms and conditions of inconvenience rather than conditions of adoption availability. Asking the question, “What determines a species or community is 'overpopulated'?” would demand accepted biological definitions considering predator/prey relationships, environmental conditions and, most importantly, availability of resources.

Redemption is likely to be a playbook for the No Kill movement if one argues it is not already. Virtually any scenario in which a shelter would excuse euthanasia for controlling the pet population is examined critically with powerful solutions. However, the reality of establishing No Kill status requires attention to detail and individual shelters.

Appropriately, most of the scenarios mentioned are that of generic shelter situations so Winograd's creation of the No Kill Advocacy Center⁵ is an appropriate move for addressing these unique needs. *Redemption* could be made a stronger resource for the No Kill movement by appealing to individuals whose access to the administration of shelters is limited but whose involvement is relevant in his/her potential to organize the community to reform the staff and focus of the local shelter.

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5 <http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org/>

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Editorial Objectives

The *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* is open to all scholars and activists. The journal was established for the purpose of fostering academic study of critical animal issues in contemporary society. While animal studies are increasingly becoming a field of importance in the academy, much work being done under this moniker take a reformist or depoliticized approach that fails to mount more serious critique of underlying issues of political economy and speciesist philosophy.

JCAS is an interdisciplinary journal with an emphasis on animal liberation philosophy and policy issues. This journal was designed to build up the common activist's knowledge of animal liberation while at the same time appealing to academic specialists to address the important topic of animal liberation. We encourage and actively pursue a diversity of viewpoints of contributors from the frontlines of activism to academics. We have created the journal for the purpose of facilitating communication between the many diverse perspectives of the animal rights movement. Thus, we especially encourage submissions that seek to create new syntheses between differing disputing parties and to explore paradigms not currently examined.

Suggested Topics

Papers are welcomed on any area of animal liberation philosophy from any discipline, and presenters are encouraged to share theses or dissertation chapters. Because a major goal of the Institute for Critical Animal Studies is to foster philosophical, critical, and analytic thinking about animal liberation, papers that contribute to this project will be given priority (especially papers that address critical theory, political philosophy, social movement analysis, tactical analysis, feminist, activism and academia, Continental philosophy or post-colonial perspectives). We especially encourage contributions that engage animal liberation in disciplines and debates that have received little previous attention.

The reviewing process

Each paper submitted is initially reviewed for general suitability for publication. All submissions will be read by at least two members of the journal's editorial board.

Manuscript requirements

The manuscript should be in MS WORD format, in 1.5 line spacing and 12 point Times New Roman. Good electronic copies of all figures and tables should also be provided. All manuscripts should be run through an American English spell check prior to submission.

As a guide, we ask that articles and reviews be between 2000-6000 words, have limited endnotes. Authors should supply a brief **abstract** of the paper (of no more than 250 words).

A brief **autobiographical** note should be supplied which includes full names, affiliation, e-mail address, and full contact details.

References to other publications must be in Harvard style and carefully checked for completeness, accuracy and consistency.

You should cite publications in the text: (Best, 2006) using the first named author's name or (Best and Nocella, 2006) citing both names of two, or (Best et al., 2006), when there are three or more authors. At the end of the paper a reference list in alphabetical order should be supplied:

For books: Surname, Initials (year), Title of Book, Publisher, Place of publication. e.g. Gray, J. (2002), *Straw Dogs*, Granta Books: London

For book chapters: Surname, Initials (year), "Chapter title", Editor's Surname, Initials (Ed.), Title of Book, Publisher, Place of publication, pages. E.g. Greenbrier, T. (2006) "Against Civilization, For Reconnection to Life!", in Best, S. and Nocella, A.J. (Eds) *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth*, AK Press, Oakland, pp. 198-203.

For journals: Surname, Initials (year), "Title of article", Journal Name, volume, number, pages. e.g. Cudworth, E. (2008), "Most Farmers Prefer Blondes": The dynamics of anthroparchy in Animas' becoming meat", *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, pp. 32-45.

For published conference proceedings: Surname, Initials (year of publication), "Title of paper", in Surname, Initials (Ed.), Title of published proceeding which may include place and date(s) held, Publisher, Place of publication, Page numbers.

For unpublished conference proceedings: Surname, Initials (year), "Title of paper", paper presented at Name of Conference, date of conference, place of conference, available at: URL if freely available on the internet (accessed date).

For working papers: Surname, Initials (year), "Title of article", working paper [number if available], Institution or organization, Place of organization, date.

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For newspaper articles (authored): Surname, Initials (year), "Article title", Newspaper, date, pages.

For newspaper articles (non-authored): Newspaper (year), "Article title", date, pages.

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