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The History and Philosophy of the Center on Animal Liberation Affairs

When a liberation movement attains a significant level of influence and success, invariably it becomes an object of serious political, historical, and philosophical discussion. In the past, this has happened with organizations such as the Black Panther Party, the Irish Republican Army, The Basques, the Japanese Red Army, the African National Congress, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation, and the Zapatistas. Whether in favorable or critical terms, all have been written about in countless books and articles and are now an important part of social history.

The time is ripe for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) also to receive serious scholarly attention. Since its inception in England in the 1970s, its migration to the United States in the 1980s, and the subsequent spread of ALF cells around the world, the ALF has racked up an impressive record of successes for the cause of animal liberation. They have broken into hundreds of laboratories, factory farms, fur farms, and other hellholes of animal exploitation to liberate tens of thousands of animals that otherwise didn't have a chance. They have inflicted millions of dollars of property damage on institutions of animal exploitation in order to slow down or shut down their blood-stained operations. They have inspired countless activists with their courage and conviction. They surely have captured the attention of the FBI who, in the age of the Patriot Act, elevated them and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) to the top two "domestic terrorist" groups in the nation. And so long as animals are being maimed, poisoned, burned, confined, tortured, and murdered at the hands of butchers in white coats or in search of greenbacks, the ALF is here to stay.

Two years ago a vision for CALA began to form throughout the academic animal rights activist community. Academic animal rights activists realized that the animal liberation movement needed not only activists working in anonymous cells but also the above ground presence of scholars, writers, teachers, and professors. Radical practice needs radical theory, and without others to write the history of the ALF, to clarify its ethical principles, and to support its politics, the practice might not be accorded the integrity it deserves. Considering the kind of intellectual presence that Ward Churchill brought to the American Indian Movement, or that Subcomandante Marcos achieved for the Zapatistas, they saw a need for such writers and intellectual voices to represent the animal liberation movement.

It was important, that those who would learn about the ALF be able to correctly understand and contextualize their actions. If the public learned that the ALF has supporters other than their stereotyped images of young punks with spiked purple hair, nose rings, and combat boots, and that -- in their perceptions -- there are other people explaining and defending animal liberation with strong logical positions, then the ALF could gain the popular support it needs to grow as a mature liberation movement. Rather than marginalized to obscure zines and secret email lists, there could be books, articles, journals, and conferences discussing the ALF in the most serious manner and bringing ALF actions and ideas to new audiences such as university students, the literati, and community forums.

The first step was to find other academics (a notoriously conservative and tepid lot) to support open dialogue about the ALF, and then to find a way to create and institutionalize a new community. Anthony J. Nocella II sent out a call for papers on the topic of the Animal Liberation Front with the aim of having them published in an anthology. During this process he met Dr. Steve Best, chair of the philosophy department at the University of Texas, El Paso, and a well-known author and animal activist. While it was Anthony who organized the notion of the academic animal rights activist community, it was Steve who spoke and wrote eloquently about the plight of animals and the just cause of fighting for their rights and liberation. After many months of working together to collect and edit contributions from some of the leading voices for animal liberation, they sent the manuscript to Lantern Books. *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals* (2004) is a groundbreaking volume. It is the first collection of essays on the ALF, and it brings together historical documents, both activists and academic perspectives, and an appendix of direct action resources

In the process of finishing the volume, Anthony and Steve discovered that there were a number of academics concerned with the ethics, history, and politics of animal liberation as issues worthy of serious and professional discussion. There was enough interest throughout the country to prompt them to develop an academically-oriented animal liberation research and advocacy organization. They named it the Center for Animal Liberation Affairs, created a website and email list, and began to organize an editorial and advisory board to be served by prominent academics, doctors, lawyers, and researchers committed to analysis and support of the ALF. It must be mentioned that no one in CALA is a member of the ALF, or likely even knows anyone in the ALF. Rather, CALA members are professionals who lend their skills, support, and institutional positions to discuss the ALF and its profound social and historical significance.

With the book in production, the membership growing, and the FBI beginning to launch its neo-McCarthyist witch-hunt against animal rights activists, CALA organized its first conference, the appropriately-titled “One Struggle” conference in Houston, Texas in December 2002. The conference was a one day event designed to bring together representatives from numerous human and animal rights and liberation organizations. The differences in perspectives were taken for granted; the idea was to explore the commonalities among various types of human and animal oppression. Conference speakers included activists and academics representing animal rights, eco-feminism, the American Indian Movement, the Anarchist Black Cross, and feminism in the IRA. Panels discussed topics such as the nature of the Patriot Act, FBI harassment of activists, the relation between human and animal oppression, veganism, Earth First!, and mothers in social movements. In the level of discussion, the learning promoted, the understanding of what liberation movements share in common, and the alliances forged, the conference was a success. It was there, for example, CALA members developed a stimulating relationship with American Indian Movement members, particularly Lawrence Sampson, a current CALA board-member.

In February 2003, during three infamous days, the seeds planted by members of CALA to organize a conference discussing the ALF and ELF came to life at California State University, Fresno. The conference was carried forward with the untiring assistance of

Fresno professor Mark Somma, chair of the Political Science Department, and Mike Becker, political science professor. Former members and spokespersons of the ALF and ELF, Earth First! activists, Paul Watson of the Sea Shepard Conservation Society, and pro-liberation academics such as Rik Scarce, Bron Taylor, and Steve Best provided the star billing for an unprecedented conference on “Radical Environmentalism.” In harmony with the vision of CALA, the activists and academics addressed numerous student classes and faculty workshops, spoke in morning and afternoon panels, and participated in an evening community forum attended by over 600 people.

The provocation of inviting to a conservative agricultural university and community notorious figures like Rod Coronado, Gary Yourofsky, Craig Rosebrough, and Paul Watson, all of whom have been in jail or persecuted for rescuing or liberating animals, did not go unnoticed by the media. When the conference was over, people with an open mind learned much about the plight of animals and why some activists go outside the law in pursuit of a higher ethical norm that commands all of us to help the animal nation crying out in pain. The conference provoked a national firestorm of controversy that still rages in Fresno and that demonstrated how future conferences spotlighting animal and earth liberation issues could work as constructive education and debate forums.

For about a year, CALA focused only on dialogue about the ALF with other academics. Hoping that Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? would accomplish much along these lines, we subsequently decided to develop CALA into a full-blown scholarly center. We added two new aspects to the organization: the Conference Committee and the Animal Liberation Philosophy and Policy Journal. Since that time the board has grown to include a number of new colleagues.

The Journal editors are senior editor Dr. Steve Best, Dr. Stephen R. Kaufman, Dr. Anuj Shah J.D., Jason Edward Black, Jennifer Laurie Black, Richard Kahn, and Dr. Matthew Calarco. The Conference Committee is comprised of chair Anthony J. Nocella II, Lawrence Sampson, Sunshine Swallers, and Michael Greger M.D.. Richard Kahn established the Animal Liberation Philosophy/Policy Syllabi collection the first of its kind. Sunshine Swallers initiated the Civil Liberties Controversy Database, an extensive archive of articles, links, and groups as they relate to the attack on civil liberties in the era of the Patriot Act. Matthew Calarco heads up the Animal Liberation Philosophy and Policy E-Groups, a scholarly online discussion group, and Matthew also is organizing CALA’s Animal Liberation Philosophy and Policy Conference the first of its kind, which will be held in 2004 at Sweet Briar College. Anthony J. Nocella II has begun efforts to launch an “Academic Awareness Day on the Animal Liberation Front.” A key purpose of this action is to de-escalate the frustrations that some people feel in response to extreme tactics in the animal rights movement. The goal is to learn more about why the ALF originated, their goals and nonviolent philosophy, and how they are viewed by opposing groups both inside and outside of the animal advocacy movement.

Each individual within our collective has contributed to our mission in their own unique and important way. It is with great pleasure that we invite you to read our first issue of the Animal Liberation Philosophy and Policy Journal, the only strictly animal liberation journal in the world. While that is a great responsibility, it is something that our staff and board can

shoulder. Our hope with this journal is to initiate academic programs that concentrate on the study of the philosophy and policy of animal liberation. We invite you to contribute to the Journal, to support CALA's goals, and to become an active part of the new liberation movements.

Animals Liberation Philosophy and Policy Journal, Editorial Board

The Son of Patriot Act and the Revenge on Democracy by Dr. Steve Best (<http://utminers.utep.edu/best>)

In October 2001, one month after the 9-11 attack, the Bush administration forced through Congress an assault on civil liberties perversely titled the "USA Patriot Act" (a surreal acronym for "Uniting & Strengthening America Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act"). Exploiting the new climate of fear, the Bush team claimed that a free nation must give way to a secure nation. From the offices of a stolen Presidency, we now have neither.

The Patriot Act violates numerous constitutional rights, such as the First Amendment right to free speech and freedom of assembly, the Fourth Amendment right to be secure from unreasonable search and seizures, and the Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights to basic protections during criminal proceedings. Among other things, the Bush administration arrogated to Executive government the power to demand from librarians and bookstores lists of material checked out or purchased, to undertake clandestine sneak and peek operations in homes and workplaces, to monitor citizen communications by phone or the Internet, and to detain foreigners indefinitely without legal counsel. In the new Surveillance State, all government agencies can collect and share information on anyone without judicial review, as the Executive office minimizes the information citizens can collect on it and corporations through Freedom of Information requests.

Perhaps most alarmingly, the Patriot Act created a new legal category of "domestic terrorist" that is defined broadly enough to have a chilling effect on free speech and political activity. Casting its dragnet across the land, the Patriot Act states that the crime of "domestic terrorism" occurs when a person's action "appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population [or] to influence the policy of government by intimidation or coercion." Interestingly, through this new form of citizen coercion the Patriot Act falls under its own definition and by logic should annul itself. Instead, civil disobedience and virtually any protest activity meets the definition of "terrorism" and could easily land one on the radar screen of the state. In a democracy, the role of citizens precisely is to influence government policy, but now this is considered coercion and so in Bushspeak, citizen = terrorist.

In the era of the Patriot Act, the Executive branch of government usurps ever more power, and thereby destroys the checks and balances among the three branches of government crucial for the functioning of liberal "democracy," such as it is. When the Executive branch makes important legal and policy decisions, Congress often is ignored and the courts are stripped of independent review and decision-making power. Consequently, one can expect more state repression and less accountability to Congress, the courts, and citizens alike. As stated by the Center For Constitutional Rights in their "Erosion of Civil Liberties in the Post 9/11 Era" report, "Executive Order and agency regulations violate the laws of the U.S. Constitution, the laws of the United States, and international and humanitarian law. As a result, the war on terror is largely being conducted by Executive

fiat and the constitutional liberties of both citizens and non-citizens alike have been seriously compromised.”

“Shock and Awe” Attacks on Democracy

The Patriot Act set back the struggle for civil liberties by decades, but it was only the opening volley of the Bush administration as it launches another front in its war -- the blitzkrieg on democracy. Every bad horror movie has its sequel, and it is no different in this case. Whereas the Patriot Act was enacted to hurt foreigners and non-citizens the most (after 9-11, as many as 2,000 people, mostly foreigners, were rounded up and jailed for months without formal charges and the right to legal counsel), its potential successor is designed to come after American citizens themselves. The Son of Patriot Act authorizes increases in domestic intelligence gathering, surveillance, and law enforcement prerogatives that are unprecedented in U.S. history.

In February 2003, a watchdog group called the Center for Public Integrity reported that they obtained a leaked copy of draft legislation – dated January 9, 2003 and stamped “confidential” -- the Bush administration told the Senate Judiciary Committee did not exist. The legislation is titled the “Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003,” or as it is unaffectionately known, Patriot Act II. Like the opportunistic debut of Patriot Act I that exploited the 9-11 tragedy and widespread fears of additional terrorist attacks, Patriot Act II reveals that the Bush administration was waiting for the next terrorist attack or its war with Iraq to spring more booby trapped legislation on Congress requiring emergency approval. If approved, Patriot Act II will plant dangerous landmines in the path of every activist and nonconformist in the land. Many members of Congress, however, are more circumspect and skeptical this time around and are challenging further efforts to erode the Constitution.

In addition to increasing secret surveillance and requiring even less juridical or political oversight of Executive power, Patriot Act II creates new crimes and punishments for nonviolent activities. It calls for fifteen new death penalty categories for “terrorism.” It authorizes secret arrests for anyone involved with an organization deemed “terrorist” and it makes giving donations to such a group a criminal action. As the government and sundry industries involved in animal exploitation try to make the “terrorist” tag stick to groups like PETA and Greenpeace, contributors to those organizations risk being identified as “terrorists.” If Patriot Act II is passed, moreover, the government will keep a DNA base on all “terrorists” and put their pictures and personal information on a public Internet site. Most alarmingly, the government could strip Americans of their citizenship and deport them if they belong or give “material support” to a “terrorist” group.

These blood-curdling measures far transcend anything established in Patriot Act I. They assail legal forms of protest and dissent, while threatening to exile all the “terrorists” who belong to organizations like PETA and Greenpeace. They subvert the very principles and logic of democracy in the name of patriotism. With a broad brush, the state intends to paint a scarlet letter on the forehead of every activist, who will then be treated like a common sex offender once their picture is posted on the Internet. Laws previously

created to curb organized crime, hooliganism, and sex offenses are now being used against animal rights and environmental activists, and these activists are being demonized accordingly in a war of public perception.

Lobbying for Tyranny: The Texas Eco-Terrorism McBill

The assault on animal rights and environmental organizations is happening from the top down and the bottom up, from both the federal level and from new initiatives of individual states. The bills currently debated in various states are the result of alliances between corporations and professional lobbying groups, and their goal is to thwart any challenge to industry rights to predation.

Deepening a dynamic as old as our nation, corporations are finding new methods and resources to gain access to politicians and policy makers. Powerful corporate lobbying organizations such as American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) operate as think tanks and policy makers that charge corporate clients thousands of dollars a year to join. Membership earns corporations privileged access to policy meetings that invite their input in drafting new laws and that bring them into direct contact with politicians. Corporations and trade organizations can dictate laws and public policy while hiding their tracks behind lobbying organizations. ALEC has been in the business of corporate policy prostitution for 30 years and currently operates with an annual budget of nearly six million dollars.

One key function of groups like ALEC is to draft model bills that advance corporate interests and then float them in state legislatures across the country. ALEC has drafted over 3,100 bills and passed 450 into law. Not coincidentally, as they push legislation criminalizing dissent, ALEC has over a dozen corporate clients involved in the prison industry and it has played a crucial role in passing dozens of tough anti-crime bills such as the three strike laws. The group has, consequently, helped to significantly increase incarceration rates in the U.S. and it intends to add animal rights and environmental activists to their client list.

This is obvious if one considers Texas House Bill 433, a recent draft legislation that seeks to capitalize on federal efforts to criminalize animal rights and environmental activism, and is being applied in Pennsylvania, Maine, and New York, with other states to follow. Texas HB 433 involved a partnership with ALEC and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance (USSA). The USSA is a militantly anti-animal rights organization comprised of hunters, fisherman, trappers, and "scientific wildlife management professionals." They defend their right to kill animals through grassroots coalition support, ballot issue campaigning, and direct lobbying efforts. In August 2002, Rob Sexton of USSA spoke to ALEC's Task Force on Criminal Justice about the growing "terrorist threat" of animal rights groups. In December 2002 the committee, headed by Representative Ray Allen (R-Dallas), voted to accept HB 433, and in February 2003 the "Animal and Ecological Terrorism Act" was sent to the Texas legislature.

As evidence of the interests sponsoring the bill, it singles out animal and environmental industries alone for special legal protection. HB 433 defines an “animal rights or ecological terrorist organization” as “two or more persons organized for the purpose of supporting any politically motivated activity intended to obstruct or deter any person from participating in any activity involving animals or an activity involving natural resources.”

Like the Patriot Act and its bastard offspring, the language here is willfully vague, but the purpose is quite specific: to cripple the animal rights and environmental movements by kneecapping their right to dissent. With HB 433 and its numerous clones, you can be labeled a terrorist if you leaflet a circus, protest an experimental lab, block a road to protect a forest, or potentially impede industry profits in any fashion. Consequently, following measures that have been attempted in Illinois and Missouri, the bill defines another “terrorist” action to be photographing or videotaping animal abuse in a facility such as factory farm or slaughterhouse. Thus, the terrorists are not the monsters who club pigs to death with metal pipes, but rather the activists, whistleblowers, or investigative reporters trying to document such sadistic abuse. Like Patriot Act II, the Texas eco-terrorist bill aims to criminalize donating money to any group smeared as terrorist, and requires that all guilty individuals supply their names, addresses, and a recent photograph to post on a public Internet database.

The USSA claims that they only seek to protect “wildlife” interests and prevent illegal actions, and do not intend to inhibit the constitutional rights of their critics. This lie is contradicted, first, by the fact that Texas already has law in place to prohibit criminal actions against property and, second, the bill unambiguously attacks basic rights. The real agenda of the USSA clearly is not to stop actions that already are illegal, but to criminalize any currently legal activities such as protests or demonstrations that pose threats to their bloodletting.

After being slammed with criticism from outraged citizens and groups including the Humane Society of the United States, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Texas Humane Legislative Network, the Sierra Club, and the American Civil Liberties Union, Allen backed off HB 433. But he did not disavow his mission to help his friends in industry, for he resubmitted a similar bill, HB 1516, which aims to escalate criminal penalties for actions against animal and natural resource industries. Clearly, animal rights and environmental activists are becoming a threat and corporate exploiters will go to any lengths, including shredding the Constitution, to protect their profits. Michael Ratner, a human rights lawyer and vice-president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, claims that the Texas bill is unprecedented in its draconian assault on freedom. “This is unique. Even under the definition of domestic terrorism in the Patriot Act, you have to at least do something that arguably threatens people’s lives, The definitional sections of this legislation are so broad that they sweep within them basically every environmental and animal rights organization in the country.”

Creeping Fascism

As the U.S. government moves closer to tyranny, it collapses differences between foreign and domestic-born, between violent and nonviolent protest, between terrorist and citizen, between the Al Qaeda and PETA. Patriot Act I was just the first incursion in the new war against democracy, and the enemy is quickly advancing on our positions.

We are all under attack -- not just the Animal Liberation Front, but mainstream groups too – and it is important the diverse tendencies within the movement respect one another's place in the struggle and stay as unified as possible. It is absurd to blame the ALF for the new state repression. The industries and state are responding to the strength of the movement as a whole, and mainstream groups like HSUS enjoy the credibility they do specifically because the ideas and actions of more radical activists make theirs seem more moderate in comparison.

The new concept of patriotism is marketed with as much truth and logic as the packaging of happy meals. The government talks in Orwellian doublespeak that defines peace as war and war as peace, (corporate) criminality as principled moral action and principled moral action as criminal behavior. But one needs to stop expecting truth from the government and begin to see the state for what it really is – a professional bureaucracy that monopolizes the means of violence and exists largely as a political tool for the economic interests of ruling elites.

Just as the CIA's purpose abroad has been to stop democracy through any means necessary, so the FBI's function at home always has been to impede civil liberties and halt all radical movements dead in their tracks. The stories of heroes fighting to protect American democracy against gangs, the mafia, and sundry evil types are but the fables (always encouraged and pre-approved by the FBI) of comic books and television shows. The reality is otherwise. Since its inception the FBI has monitored domestic radicalism and dissent, and it has jailed, beaten, murdered, and executed radicals in this country. As evidenced by their infamous counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) during the 1960s and 1970s, the FBI has infiltrated, disrupted, and destroyed radical social organizations, using techniques ranging from surveillance and agent provocateurs to framing and murder. To the extent the animal rights, environment, and anti-war movements grow strong, they will do it to us too.

The current climate is one of hysteria and intense repression. National media conservatives routinely brand anti-war protestors as traitors who should be jailed. Neil Cavuto of the conservative Fox News channel that boasts "fair and balanced" coverage said to critics opposing the "liberation of Iraq" that "you were sickening then; you are sickening now." Cavuto is a news anchor, not a commentator. The yellow-ribbon-tying masses equate patriotism with blinkered jingoism, as Paleolithic "America, Love It or Leave It" cries ring throughout the wasteland of talk radio. The shrill attack on the Dixie Chicks (much of it organized by conservative media giant Clear Channel Communications) for voicing their right to a viewpoint about President Bush is a clear indicator of the barbaric impulses stirring in the nation, irrationally oblivious to the fact that if the troops in Iraq were fighting for anything, it was precisely for the Dixie Chicks to have the right of dissent. In the current neo-McCarthyist climate, blacklisting is back in

Hollywood as outspoken critics of Bush's war against Iraq (Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins, Martin Sheen, and others) are being banned from events and suffer retaliation for their views. For some time now, conservative organizations in academia have been monitoring what "liberal" professors say about topics such as the war and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, founded a new conservative group, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, which blasted dozens of professors for not showing sufficient patriotism after 9-11. Cheney considers college and university faculty to be "the weak link in America's response to the attack."

Throughout the country people have been questioned by the FBI for expressing anti-war views. In February 2003, a man was arrested in a New York shopping mall for refusing to remove an anti-war T-shirt he was wearing, following earlier events in 2002 where FBI and police questioned a college student for an anti-Bush poster hanging in her dorm room and an activist who refused to use stamps bearing the image of the American flag. Many such outrageous incidents result from one person reporting another to authorities. In 2002, John Ashcroft tried to implement Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information Prevention System) whereby individuals were asked to monitor their fellow citizens and to report suspicious behavior. The program was not approved ultimately, but its website claimed that over 200,000 tips have been filed since September 11. Here as abroad, police monitor and gather intelligence on anti-war demonstrations that are violently subdued. Delta airlines is the first to institute a new computer system that conducts background checks on all passengers and assigns them a threat level – red, yellow, or green – to determine if they should be subjected to increased levels of security or even refused boarding. The newly created Transportation Security Administration has put over 1,000 citizens on a "no-fly" list, targeting "security risks" such as Greenpeace activists.

Increasingly, animal rights activists are being brought before grand juries and charged with violations of the RICO – Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations – Act of 1970 originally designed to fight organized crime. Grand juries are nothing but repressive mechanisms of the state that try to coerce activists to supply them with information under the penalty of 18 months in prison for non-compliance. In the wake of the controversial Fresno State "Revolutionary Environmentalism" conference in February 2003 that featured former representatives and spokespersons of the ALF and Earth Liberation Front, Virginia Tech's Board of Visitors unanimously approved a resolution to ban from the campus any group or individual that has advocated or participated in "illegal acts of domestic violence or terrorism." In a March 2003 presentation to Minnesota law enforcement officers and emergency management officials, Capt. Bill Chandler noted that although his state harbored violent neo-Nazi and right-wing militia groups like the Aryan Nation and Posse Comitatus, ALF and ELF cells are the most dangerous threats and in fact are "more dangerous in Minnesota than Al-Qaeda."

During the same time, the FBI interrupted a University of Minnesota meeting of the Student Organization for Animal Rights, asking for the names of all members of the group during the past few years. On the same day in late April 2003 the FBI raided the New Jersey office of the animal rights group Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) and the Seattle home of ALF-supporter Josh Harper. In the UK and New Jersey, SHAC

now has to contend with new “exclusion zone” laws that severely inhibit their controversial protest tactics. And in May 2003, the FBI successfully subpoenaed Fresno State University for the tape of the direct action panel that addressed a public audience of over 500 people. In May 2003, the Rocky Mountain Animal Defense group, a mainstream animal advocacy organization in Boulder, Colorado, learned that the University of Colorado police had been monitoring them as suspected “extremists” and forwarded documents about group activities (such as organizing yard sales) to Denver police. At the May 16-17 World Agricultural Forum in St. Louis, Missouri, police raided buildings housing activists and indiscriminately harassed and arrested people. On a local cop chat room, one officer wrote salivated over the kind of stun gun technology he desired to deal with the protestors: “I want that 220 Volt model that blows the teeth out of their head, just before they crap their pants.”

These are dangerous times for speaking one’s mind and for the preservation of civil liberties. If one analyzes the key defining criteria of fascist regimes in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere -- such as militarism, jingoism, national security obsessions, disdain for human rights, state controlled mass media, disdain for human rights, and bogus elections – the comparisons to the U.S. during the reign of the Patriot Act are uncanny. A crucial element in fascist systems of domination is the loss of privacy. Clearly we live in an advanced surveillance society – what some call the “transparent society” -- where our every move and word is potentially monitored by computers, cameras, recording devices, retinal and facial recognition systems, and fingerprints. Some of these measures protect us from assault or identity theft, but they also erode our privacy rights and supply personal information to businesses and the government. Bush’s Total Information Awareness System is already operating, as it develops special data mining techniques that collect all the informational footprints an individual leaves behind, ranging from doctor visits and travel plans to ATM withdrawals and email correspondence. Reversing the logic of a sound justice system, everyone is now guilty until proven innocent. In its war on Iraq, foreigners, and U.S. citizens, the Bush administration resembles the “Pre-Crime” strike force in the movie *Minority Report*, which aimed to preempt every potentially criminal thought before it became an action.

The Patriot Act has not been around for long, but it has already changed the political landscape. On March 24 2003, the Washington Post reported that since 9-11, Attorney General John Ashcroft personally has signed more than 170 “emergency foreign intelligence warrants,” three times the number authorized in the preceding 23 years. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the FBI and Justice Department have issued dozens of “national security letters” that require business to turn over all electronic records on finances, phone calls, emails, and other personal information. The story makes no mention of surveillance on political activists, although from the government’s perspective they may well fall under the vague category of “other national security threats” Ashcroft and crew can target at will.

Congress will re-examine the Patriot Act in 2005, but by then inertia may have ossified the new security culture and the “war on terrorism” may still be considered the nation’s top priority. On May 8 2003, Senator Orrin Hatch, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary

Committee, tried to pass a bill that would make the “anti-terrorism” powers of the Patriot Act permanent, and thereby abolish the “sunshine” review of 2005. Fortunately, Hatch was firmly checked by both Democrats and Republicans who are increasingly alarmed about the Bush agenda to erode civil liberties in the name of national security. Still, a compromise bill passed in the Senate by a vote of 90 to 4 that expands government power to use secret surveillance against “terrorist suspects.”

Beginning with the Reagan administration in the 1980s, conservatives labored to roll back the clock on the environmental and social gains of the 1960s, and the social welfare policies dating back to the 1930s. Indeed, Bush’s time machine reaches back centuries, not decades, as he and his cronies try to annul the Constitution itself. The Bush administration, corporate lobbying groups like ALEC, and pro-violence organizations such as USSA are exploiting fear and paranoia of terrorism for their own advantage in order to justify their assault on freedom. They are shamelessly trying to gain from the tragedy that took the lives of thousands of innocent civilians on 9-11 in order to advance their agendas and protect their profits, while they shield themselves from public scrutiny. Indeed, the current wave of tyranny is part of a larger class war where Bush is subverting liberties, destroying social programs, and creating tax programs to benefit the super-wealthy. Bush has quickly distinguished himself as one of the most insane and dangerous individuals to emerge in recent history and he is hell bent on resurrecting the glory days of the Roman Empire to fulfill what he takes to be God’s plan for him and American imperialist power. The differences between Osama Bin Laden’s terrorism and George W. Bush’s terrorism are difficult to discern.

Clearly the stakes of fighting for animal rights are higher, and this should prompt new reflection on tactics. We must not be afraid or intimidated, but we also need to know our rights, or what is left of them, and to exercise particularly high levels of security. Words define reality, so we must resist being defined as violent and extremists. We must defend ourselves rhetorically and philosophically, establishing a sharp distinction between animal liberation, property destruction, protests, and demonstrations on one side, and bona fide terrorism – the willful harming or taking of life for profit or a political purpose – on the other side.

We need to spread awareness about the history and nature of state repression, from the first Red Scare of the 1920s to COINTELPRO operations in the 1960s and 1970s to today’s neo-McCarthyism. It is important to know what murderous crimes the U.S. government has committed against radical individuals and groups in the past in order to understand what it is capable of doing today.

Although the U.S. has every right to stop genuine terrorists who pose threats to the nation and its citizens, it can and must do this without violating the Constitution, basic human rights, and international law. The state cannot hide its own crimes under the mantle of national security. The government wants us to believe that security not liberty must be our overriding national goals for the indefinite future. If we let them, they will deploy this false dualism from now on to keep chipping away at our liberties until none are left. There is one sign of hope, namely that across the U.S., over 100 towns and cities have

passed resolutions against the Patriot Act. Sometimes the opposition is merely symbolic, but in some cases such as Amherst, Massachusetts, local governments are actually resisting federal mandates.

The war on freedom does not advance the war on (real) terrorism one iota; it only creates more terror within our own borders. Liberty is security: how secure do you feel knowing that Big Brother might be watching you, that you might go to jail for protesting animal abuse, that Ashcroft alone can authorize secret warrants for wiretaps and searches on you, and that all power is being centralized in the executive branch and an increasingly few number of corporations? How secure do you feel as the economy teeters on disaster, as bombs rain down on Iraq, and as the blowback against the U.S. is about to increase?

One Struggle, One Fight

If it is not already obvious, the struggle for animal rights is intimately connected to the struggle for human rights -- for free speech, freedom of association, freedom from search and seizure, and so on. The animal rights community can no longer afford to be a single-issue movement, for now in order to fight for animal rights we have to fight for democracy. It is time once again to recall the profound saying by Pastor Martin Niemoller about the fate of German citizens during the Nazi genocide: "First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out -- because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the communists and I did not speak out -- because I was not a communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out -- because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me -- and by then there was no one left to speak out for me."

Attacks on foreigners are preludes to attacks on U.S. citizens, which are overtures to assaults on the animal rights community. In the world of Bush, Ashcroft, Powell, the FBI, and corporate conglomerates, we are all becoming aliens, foreigners to their pre-modern barbarity by virtue of our very wish to uphold modern liberal values and constitutional rights. The war on terrorism is a front for the war on democracy.

It is urgent, of course, that our movement create as many vegans and animal rights activists as possible, and it is significant that conservative Matthew Scully's excellent book *Dominion* has reached a new constituency among the Right. But while Scully -- special assistant and senior speechwriter to Bush -- goes off to write more justifications for the warmongers whose policies kill human and nonhuman animals alike, unaware of the palpable contradiction between his ethics and economic policies and affiliations, we ought to consider who our real allies are.

Instead of pandering to the likes of "compassionate conservatives" the animal rights movement should forge alliances with other peace and justice movements. If we want to grow in strength and numbers we need to interface with current movements opposing patriarchy, racism, war, violence, corporate globalization, environmental destruction, exploitation, injustice, and prejudice of any kind.

All peace and justice movements have one foe in common – capitalism and the pernicious effects of its profit logic and inherent disregard for life. This means that we need to position animal rights as a progressive social movement. As the animal rights community awakens from its political slumbers, it needs to engage in a mutual education dialogue with progressive movements. They can teach the animal rights community a few things about capitalism and social injustice, and the animal rights community can educate them about animal rights, the limitations of humanism, and the need to adopt a vegan diet.

Human rights, animal rights – it truly is one struggle.

**Teaching Animal Rights at the University:
Philosophy and Practice
by: Julie Andrzejewski**

Background and Context

Coming of age in the 1960's, my involvement with social movements taught me to seek critical views and accurate information outside of the university since institutional education is dominated by western, capitalist, patriarchal, white supremacist, and elitist interests (Bowles and Gintis, 1977). Over the next three decades, I re-educated myself and changed my teaching and scholarship accordingly. I came to value independent non-profit publications where investigative reporting and social justice values take precedence over profit maximization. I also learned that, contrary to conventional wisdom, neither scientific nor scholarly publications are neutral, value-free sources of information since they can easily be compromised by funding, cronyism, and underlying imperial values (Smith, 1999, Stauber and Rampton, 2001).

I resolved that my students would have access to critical and activist perspectives in their "normal" university education. Toward that end, I moved into the field of "human relations and multicultural education" because it was an emerging field with the most openness to alternative viewpoints in the 1970's. By the 1980's, I initiated a human relations (read: social justice) minor with a capstone course in activism which quickly became the largest undergraduate minor in the State University System of Minnesota. In 1995, a colleague and I co-developed and fought for approval of a Master's degree program in Social Responsibility. These programs address issues of race, class, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, physical appearance, and the environment within a critical examination of imperialism and globalization. In addition to a critical knowledge base, these programs emphasize the development of skills in personal and collective activism. Within this context, I integrated the issue of speciesism into all my courses in the 1990's, and began teaching a separate course on Animal Rights in 2000.

Teaching Animal Rights

There is a nascent movement among academics to address animal rights issues in their classes and on rare occasions to teach a complete course on Animal Rights. This article will seek to support this movement by sharing what I have learned from my personal and professional journey of teaching about social justice, environmental integrity, speciesism, and activism and focus its application on the teaching of Animal Rights. Every year I work to improve my teaching toward best practices for social responsibility: pedagogy and methods to which students respond positively by changing their lives to work for a better world. It is my hope that this article will contribute toward the best practices of teaching Animal Rights.

The educational model I use for teaching animal rights is drawn from a number of theoretical traditions. Dewey (1916) proposed that democracy and social responsibility are predicated upon education grounded in experience, reflection, and awareness. Freire (1970) identified the liberatory role that education can play through the study of domination and subjugation, and the critical examination of underlying assumptions and life experiences. Critical theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, multicultural education theory, and indigenous educational theory illuminate various aspects of challenging hegemony and violence through education (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Banks, 1996; Fisher, 2001; hooks, 1994; Sleeter, 1996; Sleeter and Grant, 1994; WIPCE, 1999).

Knowing the students is a key component when teaching controversial issues, and animal rights is no exception. Some of the students enrolling in our classes are attracted to issues of social and environmental justice. Others are simply meeting a university requirement. Most students taking their first class in our department have never questioned their education, the media, science, the government, or capitalism. Thus, in our foundations classes (Non-oppressive Relationships, Human Relations and Race, etc.) students are given the opportunity to explore materials and ideas that challenge the conventional “wisdom” promulgated by these institutions. They develop critical media analysis and investigative skills and begin to understand how various types of oppression affect life on a daily basis. Many students are shocked, depressed, and angry to discover that the “reality” they were taught to believe is not the continual “progress” of “man” based on sound “science” but is a fable fraught with vested interests, biases, myths, and falsehoods (Harding, S. 1993; Shiva, 1995). The journey in these classes is not an easy one even though students know many fragments of information that do not fit into the happy narrative of their pre-college education. The primary objective of my teaching career has been to provide a challenging yet supportive environment in which students can explore these critical materials, learn how to investigate the veracity of information, and consider changes for making a better world. Most importantly, I give them an opportunity to practice active citizenship skills (activism).

Admittedly, most of the students taking an Animal Rights course already have some particular interest in the topic. However, it is a rare student that is well informed about the various aspects of animal rights. It is not unusual for some students to be opposed to one area of animal exploitation (e.g. hunting) but supportive of other components of animal exploitation (e.g. eating animals). When they begin to study and investigate, they discover they have been misinformed about both. It is also possible to encounter students who are hostile to animal rights who might take the course to challenge the professor and materials. In my experience, even students who come into the class as vegetarians or vegans, do not necessarily have the information to support or defend their decision.

Over the years, I have developed and refined various methods to reduce defensiveness and resistance, to address difficult emotions generated by course materials, and to provide inspiration and hope through constructive actions. In my experience it is easier to prevent teaching problems than to fix them. The following recommendations have helped my

students engage with new and critical information about animal rights positively and decide to make permanent changes in their everyday lives.

1. Establish the parameters of the class immediately to give people choices.

Because the content is controversial and emotional, students should be given the chance to change classes if they decide they do not want to study what you are proposing to teach. The very first day, I indicate that this class will expose them to ideas and information that may challenge their beliefs, their world-view, and their own behaviors. Further, I indicate that I will not be presenting “both sides” because I contend, and will demonstrate, that they already know “the other side.” They have already been taught to believe that humans are superior to all other species, most specifically non-human animals. They have been taught to believe that they must eat meat to be healthy, that animal testing is beneficial, and so on. I clearly state that I will ask them to study materials that challenge these seemingly incontrovertible truths. Indeed, I suggest that by studying countervailing ideas, they will be in a better position to decide for themselves what to believe and how they want to act and live. In this way, if they decide to stay in the class, students are much less likely to complain later that I am being biased. Further, I have only had a couple students drop in my entire career, but the option gives them decision-making power over their situation.

This introduction is reinforced by a thorough and specific course description, and clear objectives which describe in some detail what they will be learning, as follows:

Course Description: The content and activities of this course will work to foster global animal, human, and environmental justice. Toward that end, we will examine the interrelationships and consequences of human domination upon all other beings and the earth, with the primary focus upon non-human animals. The class will begin with an examination of how non-human animals are viewed within the dominant western capitalist paradigm. Multidisciplinary perspectives challenging this paradigm will be studied, including indigenous and non-western perspectives. The human use and abuse of animals for food (industrial agriculture), research (vivisection), education (dissection), various products (fur, leather, wool, feathers, jewelry, cosmetics, etc.), entertainment (racing, rodeos, bull fights, circuses, zoos, aquariums, etc.), “sport” (hunting, fishing, target practice, etc.), “pets” (puppy mills, pet stores) replacement organs, and other activities will be critically analyzed. Other human animal activities affecting all life on earth (deforestation, habitat destruction, pollution, war, urban sprawl, climate alterations, etc.) will also be studied focusing on their effects on non-human animals.

Some questions to be explored in this class: Through what justifications do human animals argue that they have the right to use, abuse or kill other sentient beings for their own purposes? What logical, data-based, and moral arguments challenge these justifications? What is the definition of speciesism? Who benefits from speciesist policies

and practices? How is language used to obscure the consequences and responsibility for human exploitation and destruction of non-human animals? What are the negative consequences of these activities on non-human animals? On human animals? Should non-human animals have the right to live a natural life? Should non-human animals be required to suffer and die for the purposes of human animals? What role do animal rights play in a comprehensive framework of personal (and global) social responsibility and environmental justice? Course Objectives: In this course, participants will:

- Critically examine the interrelationships and consequences of human domination upon all other beings and the earth, with the primary focus upon non-human animals
- Critically analyze how non-human animals are viewed within the dominant western capitalist paradigm and the consequences of profit maximization in global economic and political policies and practices
- Explore alternative cultural and philosophical perspectives which challenge this dominant paradigm
- Understand the concepts of speciesism, animal rights, and related ethical issues
- Critically analyze the “benefits” of human exploitation of non-human animals; explore the consequences of resource extraction on the environment and non-human animals. Which humans “benefit”? Which humans lose? What are the consequences to non-human animals?
- Explore the interrelationship between human cruelty and violence toward non-human animals and cruelty and violence of human animals toward other humans
- Deconstruct and critique the hidden values in language which serve to obscure and justify species domination
- Critically examine the underlying profit and/or domination patterns in the use of non-human animals by human animals (in light of objectives 1-7) for: food, research, products, education, sports, entertainment, pets, replacement organs, etc.
- Critically examine the impact of human animal use and treatment of the natural environment and its affects on “wild” animals (non-human animals living in their natural habitat)
- Choose and practice personal actions which are congruent with new information and emerging ethical considerations of the rights of non-human animals and global social responsibility

2. Include written ground rules on the syllabus.

Establishing ground rules so students understand the expectations helps to alleviate some anxiety and puts potential hecklers on notice that disruption will be difficult in this class. Putting them in writing on the syllabus provides a record with which to remind students should some conflict arise later. Here are some ground rules I have found useful.

- This class will introduce perspectives and information which may contradict widely held beliefs or prejudices about human and non-human animals promoted by education, “science,” media, and popular culture. Participants are not expected or required to believe any particular viewpoint but are asked to be open to exploring different and challenging information. This class will take an investigative approach - participants will be asked to study new information, assess documentation, and develop skills in examining how

issues of intolerance, prejudice, discrimination, and privilege affect our lives and the lives of other beings on this planet.

- Students are asked to help create a safe and supportive environment in the class. There will be disagreement among members of the class. Please interact with others with honesty, kindness, and respect. Please avoid self-righteousness, hostility, ridicule or other disrespectful behaviors (such as eye-rolling, elbow-jabbing, whispering while another is talking, etc.).
- If you find that defensiveness, anger, frustration, sadness, guilt, shock, or other emotions are interfering with your ability to learn the materials and skills in this class, contact the professor immediately for suggestions about constructive measures you might take to alleviate this distress.
- Participants are asked to re-examine previous assumptions about human and non-human animals. Participants are expected to study and demonstrate knowledge of information pertaining to all the course objectives above.
- Participants are expected to consider and practice the development of non-oppressive decision-making and actions to help create a safe, respectful, cooperative, healthy, and peaceful world where all beings have the opportunity to live a natural life, as much as is possible.

3. Identify the values on which the class is based.

After the events of September 11th and the passing of the Patriot Act, the messages (United We Stand, etc.) promulgated by the corporate owned media, George W. Bush, and his collaborators, created a jingoistic environment in which questioning and critical thinking became tantamount to treason. University faculty were among a number of groups targeted for making comments critical of United States policies and practices and animal rights activists were labeled “domestic terrorists.” In this neo-McCarthyistic environment, I decided that a statement of values might help protect my academic freedom to teach critical perspectives while placing them in the context of freedoms that the United States, the United Nations, and other respected organizations espouse. Thus, I added the following statement to my syllabi.

Class Values: No education is value free. This class is based on fundamental values identified by the United States in various documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights among others. Some of these values are democracy, liberty, human rights, dignity, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, freedom of speech and religion, and justice for all. This class also draws upon many other cultures and ways of knowing which value cooperation, sharing, compassion, and equitable distribution of resources, natural law and the environment, biodiversity and the right to life and freedom from torture for other species, personal and global non-violence and peace. Finally, this course draws upon the Declaration of the Rights of Animals, the Earth Charter, and tenets of international law, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This course encourages people to become well-informed, knowledgeable, active, respectful, non-violent, democratic citizens with a focus on

working to eliminate all forms of violence and oppression for the benefit of everyone. This course encourages participants to examine our everyday lives and consider the extent to which our actions are congruent with our stated values. "Each moment of our lives we have the option to do right, do wrong, or do nothing...Do the least harm and the most good." Joanne Stepaniak (2001)

4. Teach people how to interact with kindness and respect, especially when they disagree.

In my experience, many people do not know how to disagree with others without hostility, how to explore controversial topics in constructive ways, nor how to introduce new information to their friends and families without engaging in angry and harmful arguments. Because of the volatility of animal rights issues from all sides, I find it necessary to teach students how to interact about these issues with each other, their friends and family members, and others they wish to educate. I introduce these ideas on the first day of class with the ground rules. Most importantly, as the professor, I must model these skills myself, responding with kindness even to those with whom I vehemently disagree. Readings by animal rights activists who have learned, sometimes in painful ways, how to educate others with caring and respect can illustrate the effectiveness and benefits of this approach. Instead of expressing outrage, righteous indignation, or anger, finding creative ways to share information with others is a fundamental skill of an activist working for a better world. Finally, I devote classroom time to discussing, sharing examples, and practicing how such conversations might develop. Then we use examples that emerge in class to discuss and practice these skills further.

When two students in one class revealed that they were hunters and intended to continue hunting, other members of the class reacted with anger, disgust, and self-righteousness. I asked the class to get in a circle so we could discuss our interaction. I pointed out that no one in class could claim that they have never contributed to harm against animals, and that it is likely that we are still behaving in ways that contribute to animal suffering. Indeed, it is almost impossible to live a life that does not. Further, I pointed out that we are all less likely to change if we are defensive. I reminded them that we are here to learn and to decide for ourselves what actions we want to take to work for a peaceful, non-violent world. We cannot force others to make these changes, but we can encourage them in many supportive ways to do so. I suggested that we consider ourselves on a journey, rather than a deadline; that there is much to study and understand, and thousands of ways we can change if we are really committed to eliminating the suffering and exploitation of animals. This discussion helped to calm people's emotions and helped them reflect upon how they would want to be treated themselves.

This was only one of several discussions about how to approach others about these touchy and emotionally charged issues. Two short articles stimulated a powerful discussion. In *The Rhetoric of Protest*, Cave (2000) explains how being an angry animal rights activist eventually made him ill and forced him to withdraw from activism to heal himself. He challenges the efficacy of angry, confrontational interactions with ignorant "troglodytes." In *Like Animals*, Moretti (2002) shares a holiday encounter with her

relatives who bait her about her animal consciousness. She describes her calm and thoughtful response which shifted the conversation to a reflection upon animals as intelligent and significant beings. Examples and discussions like these inspire students to practice respectful ways of educating others. Finding that they did not have to be belligerent in defending themselves, the “hunters” became more open to considering the arguments and information in the video, “What’s Wrong with Hunting?” (1996). They were able to dig into the root causes of Chronic Wasting Disease and consider the connections with feeding deer the rendered parts of other animals (Stauber, 2002), and the involvement of hunters in breeding the biggest bucks with the biggest racks (Irwin, 2002). By the end of the fall class, no student went hunting and several former hunters were challenging their hunter friends.

5. Keep in touch with peoples’ reflections and feelings regularly.

Because the readings, videos, and discussions are emotionally charged and a professor cannot know how all the students are reacting, especially those who tend to be quiet, I rely upon a weekly report called Reflections, Challenges, and Actions. Each of the following questions helps me plan my teaching for the following week. I make sure that I write supportive and encouraging comments on each paper. I may also write some challenging questions for them to consider. I support student honesty especially when they are critical of the class or a particular reading or assignment. If the students do not feel safe to be honest in these reflections, they are useless.

- What are the key things you learned this week (include readings and all in-class activities) that helped you meet the objectives of this class? This question helps me assess whether I am meeting my course objectives, what I might want to review, emphasize, or clarify.
- What things, if any, did you find difficult or challenging this week? (Were you confused at any point? Did you have emotional reactions to any of the materials? How can you deal with these constructively?) This question helps me know how students are responding emotionally. Are they defensive? Are they depressed? Are they angry? If only one or two students express a particular emotional distress, I ask them to come and talk to me so I can help them. If many students are experiencing difficulties, I may initiate a large or small group discussion.
- Are there ways the professor can better facilitate your learning? If so, what are they? Asking students directly how you can help them learn is rewarding. Many times they say everything is going well, but other times they make helpful suggestions. I implement them whenever possible.
- What everyday actions can you take this week to decrease or eliminate animal suffering? How did the learning and challenges of this week help you increase active compassion and justice for all species? This question forefronts personal change and activism, giving them pause to consider and report on what changes they are practicing. I encourage them to explore their struggles as well as their successes, indicating that I may have some helpful suggestions to move them past obstacles or frustrations.

6. Teach people to analyze information, including my own.

Since I am never afraid of the truth, I teach students to analyze the values in all information, corporate and independent. I introduce students to alternative, non-profit media sources, including activist organizations. The internet makes this skill much easier to teach since students have more access to activist media. Students are asked to cross-check information between sources and to analyze what motivations and values might influence the kind of information disseminated from a particular source. Most students have never questioned corporate media, are unfamiliar with alternative or independent sources, and have no experience with media analysis. A media analysis assignment asks questions to help students identify hidden biases by comparing corporate “news” with non-profit organization information on animal rights:

- What information has been selected for presentation? More importantly, crosscheck for what information is omitted. Identify specific examples.
- Which side is presented by the article as being right? Are some viewpoints given credence and others discredited? How?
- Who are presented as "experts" – that is, who is quoted, what reports are referenced, what institutions cited? Which side are these experts on? How can you tell?
- What impression is given by any pictures or personal descriptions presented? Who looks good and who looks bad?
- What kind of language or words are used to describe or analyze the topic? How does this language shape the “reality” being presented?
- What values or biases can you detect in the information? What evidence can you provide to illustrate the se values?

Students use these questions to compare corporate media news sources with animal rights organizations news sources. They discover the differences in the underlying values, begin to understand the myth of objectivity, and to assess credibility for themselves.

7 Use videos and materials that document the attributes of animals as well as the violence against them.

The animal rights movement has an excellent reputation for investigations with undercover cameras. Thus, excellent videos that document almost every type of animal abuse, torture, murder, or exploitation are readily available. Meet Your Meat (PETA, 2003) is a powerful and compelling tool. Even though students are horrified, shocked, disturbed, sick, sad, and other appropriate emotions, they almost universally state that they are glad they saw this video. Many decide to buy it to show their friends and family. Life Behind Bars (Farm Sanctuary, 2002), The Witness (Tribe of Heart, 2000), Lethal Medicine (Burgos and Davoudian, 1997), What’s Wrong with Hunting (The Fund for Animals, 1996), and many others quickly eliminate the myths and disinformation promulgated by industries or governmental agencies.

Yet there is another area of study and documentation, just beginning to emerge, that is a necessary and powerful component of education on animal rights, that exposes people to the experiences, emotions, and intelligences of other beings. In order to show my students examples of these unexplored aspects of non-human animals, I had to cobble together bits and pieces of videos from a wide variety of sources. Students are amazed to see female pigs carefully building their nests and nurturing their babies in The Pig Picture (Humane

Farm Association, 1995). Even though documentaries not created by animal rights activists are fundamentally speciesist, I was still able to use a few excerpts from *Why Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry* (Fleisherfilm, Inc., 1999), *Inside the Animal Mind* (Reddish, 2000), the story of Eliza in *The Natural History of the Chicken* (Lewis, 2000), and *Extraordinary Cats* (Simon, 1999) to give students a glimpse of animal ingenuity, courage, intelligence, and emotions. Where speciesist comments were made in these excerpts, I encouraged students to analyze and critique them. Interspersed with videos of animal torture and mistreatment, videos of animal intelligence, joy, and courage deepen the meaning of the undercover footage of animal torture, abuse, and murder. Students were moved by both.

8. Help people explore their own motivations for change and examine the interrelationships between animal rights and other issues.

Although it may seem obvious, it is important to provide information emphasizing different motivations for changing behaviors. As an educator, I try to avoid making judgments about what motivates people to change. Instead, I try to model a non-hierarchical, non-judgmental approach toward motivations. This approach helps students communicate more effectively with those who may not share their same motivations. It also helps students in their efforts to educate their own friends and family members when they realize that motivations are varied, complex, and interactive.

Self-interest is a primary motivating factor for some people. They respond to information about the dangers for humans who eat animals, their ova or milk; the lack of hygiene in factory farming or slaughterhouses; what animals are fed in factory farms; the etiology of Mad Cow disease (BSE: Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) or Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer. The video, *Diet for a New America* (Schuman and Pruzinsky, 1991), showing the removal of fatty deposits from the arteries of a heart has a powerful impact on such students. They may also be moved to action when they discover the dangers of treatments for humans based on the use of laboratory experiments on animals, or the consequences of mass extinctions of animals for humans. Other people may show less concern for themselves than their children (e.g. school lunches) or parents (e.g. eating animals they hunt).

Compassion inspires some people when they discover the torturous daily lives and deaths of animals under factory farming, or the violence used to coerce animals to perform in circuses, rodeos, movies, and other forms of entertainment. Sometimes compassion for other humans is a factor in helping people change their behaviors toward animals. The Global Hunger Campaign (www.globalhunger.net), for instance, helps people understand how an animal based diet results in starvation for millions of people in other countries. Some people are moved to take action for animals whose habitat is being destroyed or who are threatened with extinction, as documented in the video, *Tiger Crisis* (BBC-NHU, 1996). A number of students extend their personal feelings about the animals in their own families to animals used for food or fur. Eddie Lama helps people make these connections by so eloquently stating in *The Witness* (LaVeck, 2000), “a miracle is a change in perception.”

Still other students have a profound connection with the natural systems of the planet and will change their own behaviors for environmental reasons. For these students, understanding the effects of factory farming on water, air, soil, and biodiversity are very compelling. Yet another group may respond best to moral, ethical, or philosophical arguments like *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (Spiegel, 1996) or *Animal Liberation* (Singer, 1975). Others may be interested in investigating spiritual or religious approaches to animals (Goodall, 1999). Most people experience multiple motivations as they explore challenging ideas and information about animals. Many animal rights resources take a multidimensional approach, like *The Food Revolution* (Robbins, 2001), but even these usually do not cover all the possible interests that students might have. I have found that using a broad range of books, articles, videos, speakers, and websites allows for all students to be touched by materials which move them.

Fundamental to the class and encompassing all approaches, however, is the necessity of understanding the priorities of global capitalism: profit maximization and accumulation. Students are often surprised to discover that almost every aspect of animal abuse (as well as human oppression and environmental devastation) is related to huge, often hidden, industries intent upon making money, regardless of the consequences to animals, humans, or the planet. In order to work for effective change, students must be cognizant of the motivations of these industries and their efforts to manipulate, propagandize, and mis-educate people for their own ends.

9. Help people see connections between hope and action.

Because the information and images about animal abuse are so shocking, painful, and overwhelming, it is incumbent upon a teacher of animal rights to provide specific and powerful remedies whereby students can take immediate and long term actions to alleviate this distress. *The Better World Handbook* (Jones, Haenfler, and Johnson, 2001) has an excellent model for moving people from the cycle of cynicism to the cycle of hope. Jones et al identify and challenge nine common traps that create apathy and prevent people from acting (i.e. one person can't make a difference, it's too overwhelming, etc.). When people find out about a problem but see no ways to help, they feel powerless and want to avoid further information that bring about these uncomfortable feelings. On the other hand, taking personal actions that reflect and reinforce a person's values engenders feelings of empowerment and hope. Everyday actions are one of the most powerful forms of learning. When people transform their lives, they transform their thinking, and they educate their family and friends. The changes from one person's life begin a ripple effect.

10. Help people differentiate between solutions addressing the root causes of animal oppression and band-aid solutions.

People need to see that personal decisions and actions can save animals and challenge huge institutional systems like factory farming. They also need help analyzing and identifying what actions have the most powerful impact. One useful distinction is to

differentiate between actions that will address the root causes of the problem (i.e. actions that will prevent the problem from recurring) from band-aid actions that may relieve symptoms of the problem but which leave the fundamental system unchanged. Thus, I encourage people to focus on key questions of speciesism (human supremacy) and capitalism (unbridled greed) to look for root causes of animal abuse. With this focus, any activity that uses animals for human purposes (however lofty), and especially those with a primary goal of making money, must be questioned, investigated, and challenged, in ourselves, in others, and in human institutions and systems.

This emphasis keeps the attention on radical (root) change rather than reform agendas (band-aids). Still, having taught courses in activism for 25 years, I believe it is necessary to avoid rigidity and dogmatism about actions, especially to encourage people toward a journey in personal transformation. Thus, I am supportive of whatever changes a person can make at that moment. In my experience, people are able to change more dramatically and permanently with support and reinforcement than through pressure and approbation. I reassure students throughout the course that they must make their own decisions about their values and their actions. People are also inspired by the actions of others to make changes in their own lives. Seeing some people make a decision to quit eating meat immediately and move toward veganism with little hesitation helps other students consider the possibility of simply reducing their animal consumption. For many, if not most people, dramatic life changes, especially habitual behaviors, take some time to accomplish.

11. Share vegan meals together in class.

Another experiential learning process is encouraged by inviting the class to share vegan meals together. I come to the first or second class with a simple homemade vegan meal for people to taste, usually hummus, pita bread, relish, tomatoes, organic apple juice, and vegan cookies. Students are surprised to have a professor bring a meal and some are hesitant to taste unconventional food, but they also are usually pleased to have the opportunity. When invited to consider if they would like to take turns preparing vegan food for each other, no class has turned the opportunity down. These brief meals add another dimension to the learning. Students are encouraged to share and compare recipes, and other information about cruelty free products, entertainment, and clothing as part of learning to live a compassionate life. Because there is so much interest in this part of the course, I have decided to include some vegan cookbooks as supplemental texts in the future since so many students are eager to try practical delicious recipes to use immediately.

12. Provide numerous options for practicing active citizenship skills and give students complete control over choices.

John Dewey (1916) identified that experiential education, learning by doing, is the most effective way of learning. While educators have known this for decades, we still often fail, for the most part, to implement it into our own teaching – even those of us who agree with it. In keeping with this perspective, a significant portion of the course provides

students with opportunities to practice changing life habits in order to act in congruence with their own stated values. In order to facilitate an attitude toward change, I chose Newkirk's book, *You Can Save the Animals: 251 Simple Ways to Stop Thoughtless Cruelty*, as one of the texts. Since my priority is to change lives and inspire activism, I purposely choose readings which students do not have to struggle to understand the language, the evidence, or the philosophy.

As an integral component of the course, I assign a Personal Citizenship Project. There are two key aspects to this assignment. First, while I provide a long list of possibilities for actions they might consider trying, they are not limited to this list, and they have total choice over what activities they decide to practice. I also encourage students to try out actions which are the least familiar to them so they have a chance to consider changing their lives in areas that may have seemed cemented in stone before. Secondly, I use the term "practice" so students understand that the final decision about how they eventually decide to live is completely their choice. Practicing gives them the opportunity to evaluate the meaningfulness of the activity to their personal philosophies and goals and to have a chance to move beyond initial struggles or difficulties with changing entrenched life habits.

The following are just a few of the possible activities selected from the list of suggestions in the Personal Citizenship Project:

Overview projects:

§ Stop participating in killing and torturing animals (eating them, buying or wearing their skins or other body parts, hunting, trapping, dissecting, using animal products, consuming animal "entertainment.")

§ Do any of the 251 suggested actions in *You Can Save the Animals* (Newkirk, 1999)

§ Challenge or change any activities which maintain or increase corporate domination, imperialism, and profit maximizing at the expense of animals, the environment, and humans.

Specific project examples:

- Question and change your own assumptions about the "superiority" of human animals to other animals. What are the consequences of these assumptions to animals and humans? Compare the impact of animals on the planet with the impact of humans.
- Become a vegetarian or eat substantially less "meat". Educate others about the ecological, human and animal destruction related to meat production & consumption, factory farming, slaughterhouse practices.
- Become a vegan or eat substantially fewer dairy products (milk, cheese, eggs, etc.) Educate yourself and others about the animal, human, and environmental consequences of consuming dairy products.
- Don't buy or consume fish and sea animals. Educate yourself and others about the destructive practices of aqua-farming and the aquarium business.

- Change your everyday language about animals. Stop using euphemisms to describe violence and exploitation of animals. Ex. “meat for animal flesh or corpse, pork for pig, disassembly for killing and dismemberment, etc. (Dunayer, 2001)
- Stop using animal names based on false stereotypes to describe humans and human activities. Identify the negative impacts for animals and humans. (Ex. Snake, rat, mouse, pig/hog, cow, chicken, fox, etc.)
- Educate yourself and others about:
 - * Speciesism. Take a respectful and loving approach. Do not act superior, self-righteous or angry.
 - * Animal intelligence. Examine the power relations inherent in claiming that humans “know” what animals are capable of “knowing” and what skills they have. How have humans used similar justifications to exploit and violate other humans?
 - * Animal feelings and emotions –affection, joy, embarrassment, frustration, fear, discomfort, pain & many others. Examine the consequences of assumptions that they do not experience these feelings.
 - * The consequences of the production and consumption of animals/animal products on land, water, ozone, other species, indigenous peoples, global starvation, global concentration of wealth, and human health.
- Locate, join, and work for animal rights organizations. Call yourself an activist, an animal rights advocate, an environmentalist, etc. and stand up for justice. Work for human rights and environmental justice too. When humans suffer and the environment is destroyed, animals suffer, die, and/or become extinct. Address the root causes of problems rather than band-aid approaches.
- Challenge neglect, harassment, cruelty, and violence towards any animals, birds, fish, insects, etc. Witness, document, assertively challenge, or call authorities about illegal or immoral activities. (The dog never taken out of the kennel, the cat who is not neutered, animals or birds as target practice, etc.)
- Write letters to support justice for animals and humans. Write letters to the editor, to government officials, and to organizations of all kinds. Get others to write.

In my most recent class of 38 students, this assignment moved students to actions of their choice. Some of the following were among the most popular choices. All students worked on changing their eating habits: 10 moved to veganism, 16 became vegetarians, and the remaining 12 reduced their meat and dairy consumption, substantially in most cases. In addition, 17 students influenced others to become vegetarian. All students shared information from the class with friends and family members and 21 students showed videos to others. 31 students threw out and stopped buying items using animal testing or products. 17 stopped consuming speciesist entertainment. 16 stopped buying and using leather, fur, or clothing made from animals. 18 people changed their language about animals and 16 worked hard to challenge their thinking about human superiority. 16 wrote letters to stores, businesses, congress, or the editors of newspapers. 10 joined national animal rights organizations, and another 10 participated in world Farm Animals Day. A few projects constituted enormous changes for a small number of students. For instance, five students quit hunting or fishing themselves, and six students stood up to their fathers who were either avid hunters or entrenched meat-eaters.

While the numbers above give a sense of overall change, only the students' own words can express what happened in their lives. Here are just a few of the comments from their PCP projects:

- Many things in my AR class made me sad. Others made me angry. My emotions, although valid, cannot make change. The action portion of the class allowed me to learn more about myself, non-human animals, and ways that I can fight for change.
- I wish more people could learn just a fourth of what I learn in the 2 hours I am in class, but most people don't. This is where I can make a difference. I want to let people know what the animal had to endure so you could pay \$.49 for a piece of their body, a body and life that never got to run in the fields or enjoy the essence of motherhood. I want people to understand that humans are no more superior than a chicken or a dog.
- One of the hardest things I've learned is that the people that I love the most aren't willing to see my views or take my self-discoveries seriously. They put up a fight against their daughter and friend in order to defend meat. This is the time when I need support and when I don't have them to turn to, I know that I have to find strength within myself.
- I learned that no matter what we do, an animal is probably affected in one way or another. This holds true especially in war. People are worried about all the people that are dying, but how many animals are we putting into extinction by bombing almost the entire Middle East.
- Through the action component of this class, my life has changed dramatically. I have been challenged in ways I could never have imagined and have met many of those challenges. I have been encouraged to ACT to make a difference. The greatest and most significant aspect has been practicing a calm, non-intrusive, non-judgmental way in which to interact and educate others on these issues.

13. Discuss the ethics and effectiveness of various methods of collective action.

The power of individual actions cannot be overstated. Yet, every effective movement for justice must organize collectively to effect powerful and lasting change. Since most students do not have the opportunity to study social movements in their formal education, it is important to assist students in investigating the various types of activist groups and strategies they use. It is significant that many animal activist groups today recognize on some level the role that capitalism, profit-maximization, or vested interests play in animal exploitation. Yet they may apply very different methods to reach different goals. While most groups employ multiple strategies and actions, each group often has a signature style, method, or goal that drives their work. Some groups, like the Humane Society of the United States, focus primarily on animal welfare, trying to improve the lives of animals under whatever conditions they must exist. HSUS lobbies and organizes for legislative changes as a key component of their strategy. Other groups, like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), focus on media exposure of shocking animal abuses to the public. They initiate creative and controversial campaigns to garner media attention for the plight of animals. Still other groups employ direct action tactics to rescue or liberate animals from torture, cruelty, and death. Even these groups vary widely in their philosophical and tactical approaches, from strategic nonviolence and open rescues,

to nonviolent civil disobedience and economic sabotage of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), to more militant and even violent groups.

As the Animal Rights movement matures, excellent materials are becoming available to stimulate discussion and consideration of these varied approaches. Exposure and discussion, within the context of the nonviolent values of the class, can provide beneficial information and consideration of the role of collective action in a democracy. Best and Nocella (2003) provide an invaluable resource in *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals*. This book lays a historical and philosophical foundation for examining key questions about the ethics and efficacy of different approaches, in this case a detailed multifaceted analysis of the ALF in contrast with other approaches. The video, *All My Heroes Still Wear Masks: The Men and Women of the Animal Liberation Front and the Animals of Huntingdon Life Sciences* (Lee, 2001) provides some visual documentation of ALF tactics. Wicklund's (1998) article, "Strategic Nonviolence for Animal Liberation," outlines key factors of power and nonviolent discipline for activists. The significance of people being open, respectful, and willing to accept the consequences of civil disobedience is emphasized. HSUS, PETA, and other activist organizations provide ample readings and videos to support their activities. Through these materials, students can investigate, assess, discuss, and debate their questions and concerns about the ethics and effectiveness of many different types of activism.

14. Base assignment and course evaluations on demonstrated understanding of the materials, not beliefs or specific actions.

While evaluation and grading might seem difficult in a course that has so many controversial issues, there are certain principles that I have learned from teaching social justice issues for many years. Although it may seem obvious, it is important not to grade based on opinions, beliefs, or actions but only on how well the students followed the assignment, the depth of the understanding of the materials, and the insights and learning they acquired from the experiential assignments. Students who do the assignments well, study and learn the materials, and who practice actions of their own choice but indicate that they will not be making permanent changes in their lives must not be penalized for these decisions. Acceptance, caring, and kindness toward students regardless of their personal decisions pays off in the long run. It is not uncommon for former students to let me know that they continued to make changes after the class ended. Others have confided that the class made them aware of compassionate solutions but they continue to struggle with their own decisions.

Another evaluation decision I have found especially valuable in teaching controversial and emotionally charged courses is to allow students to revise and resubmit assignments on which they did not do well the first time. Even though this encumbers additional instructor time, it has several advantages. First, the students often learn even more from their mistakes and misunderstandings. They have an opportunity to revisit and rethink what they did not learn the first time. Finally, students will be more open to the content of the course if they are not defensive and worried about their grades. My teaching is guided

by my belief that all students can master the material and skills in my classes if they are provided with the opportunity. If some students choose not to revise their assignment, they cannot blame the instructor or the course for their final evaluation. I do not care nor worry about grade inflation. My interest is in providing all students with the support and opportunity to do well in the class.

Conclusion:

It is difficult to summarize all the myriad components of a complex activity such as teaching in a series of books, much less an article. This task is further compounded by the difficulty of teaching a course that challenges the prejudices, information, institutions, and everyday lifestyles of the students in it. I have tried to select what I consider to be some of the key aspects of the success of our teaching and programs as they have been applied to teaching an Animal Rights course. I expect these methods to change and become more sophisticated as the Animal Rights movement continues to influence, ever more powerfully, the society at large. I look forward to a day when I can write or read articles on teaching advanced courses in Animal Rights as an accepted and core component of global social responsibility.

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Towards Ecopedagogy: Weaving a Broad-based Pedagogy of Liberation for Animals, Nature, and the Oppressed People of the Earth

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I. The Edge of the Abyss: The Dance of Global Capital and Ecological Catastrophe

As we begin the 21st century on Earth, the living inhabitants of the planet stand positioned at the foot a great wave of social crisis and global ecological catastrophe. They are already nearly drowned in an ocean of Post-WWII social transformations, in economies of capital, and in the cultural revolution that has resulted from rapid advances in military science and technology -- that which is frequently referred to under the moniker of "globalization." [1] Thus, our moment is new -- never before have the collected mass beings of the planet Earth been so thoroughly threatened with extinction as they are now and never before have so many of us raised this problem consciously and desperately together in the hopes of transforming society towards a better, more peaceable kingdom. And yet, the present does not arise in a vacuum, but rather out of the concreteness of history itself. We move, then, in a sea of possibilities and swirling energies. Amidst these energies arises the great wave; and it is crashing and we who are threatened with annihilation and asked to threaten others with the same are its driftwood. Will we be smashed to splinters upon the polluted beach of no tomorrow? Will we surf the awesome tube of this grave peril and move laterally across it into newly imagined freedoms? Or will we head outward into deeper waters still, floating upon unfathomable depths, dangers and possibilities even as of yet unforeseen?

To think and live historically is to be ecological, to move in a bed of context. The ecologist Gregory Bateson pointed out that the code for understanding the basic ecological unit of survival is "organism plus environment." This relationship -- to think ecologically is to think about the relationships between things -- declares that a threat to either the organism or environment is a movement towards the ecology of death. The life process requires both and any process that so binds the one or the other so as to threaten "both" is moving away from life. "There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds." [2] Transnational technocapitalism, as we know it today, has arisen historically as a conscious threat to both organisms and environment, turning both into little more than "resources" for its own assault on a greater rate of profit reaped. It plays the one against the other to their mutual demise and while technocapitalist heroes, such as Bill Gates, imagine a new "friction-free" capitalist world in which services and money are exchanged much like oxygen and carbon-dioxide used to be, the fact of the matter is that capitalism as we know it rests by definition upon friction. It is predicated first and foremost by competition and growth, a predatory survival of the fittest approach to life in which "fittest" means most mighty and therefore able to grow further and out-compete rivals. There is no ecology of symbiosis in the dominant system today, no ecology of mutuality and compassion; and again, this lack exists not by accident but rather as the result of concrete historical forces at work in our world -- many of which have coalesced into a global technocapitalist spectacle only these last few decades.

In his book, *The Enemy of Nature*, the ecosocialist and activist Joel Kovel begins by documenting the terrible legacy of natural resource degradation that spans the thirty-odd years that have now elapsed since the first Earth Day and the release of the Club of Rome's benchmark economic treatise *The Limits to Growth* (1969). Echoing the findings of eminent environmental and ecological groups and personages such as The Union of Concerned Scientists and Peter Raven, the picture that emerges from Kovel's work is that of an institutionalized, transnational, phase-changing neoliberalism that acts as a cancer upon the Earth, a form of "endless growth" political economy that is literally over-producing and consuming the planet towards death.[3] Wholly without precedent, the human population has nearly doubled during this time period, increasing by 2.5 billion people. Similarly, markets have continued to worship the gods of speed and quantity and refused to conserve. The use and extraction of "fossil fuel" resources like oil, coal, and natural gas – the non-renewable energy stockpiles – followed and exceeded the trends set by the population curve despite many years of warnings about the consequences inherent in their over-use and extraction, and this has led to a corresponding increase in the carbon emissions known to be responsible for global warming.

Likewise, living beings and organic habitats are being culled and destroyed in the name of human consumption at staggering rates. Tree consumption for paper products has doubled over the last thirty years, resulting in about half of the planet's forests disappearing, while throughout the oceans, global fishing also has doubled resulting in a recent report finding that approximately 90% of the major fish species in the world's oceans have disappeared.[4] Mile-long nets used to trawl the ocean bottoms for commercial fishing enterprises are drowning and killing about 1000 whales, dolphins, and porpoises daily, some of species near extinction from centuries of hunting.[5] Further, since the end of the 1960's, half of the planet's wetlands have either been filled or drained for development, and nearly half of the Earth's soils have been agriculturally degraded so as not to support life.[6] Finally, as giant corporate agribusinesses have consumed the family farm and as fast food has exploded from being a cultural novelty to a totalizing cultural staple, vast, unimaginable slaughterhouses – brutal production-lines in which thousands of animals are murdered for meat harvesting every hour -- have also become the business standard. In his recent book, *Dominion*, Matthew Scully estimates that nothing less than 103 million pigs, 38 million cows and calves, 250 million turkeys, and 8 billion chickens are slaughtered annually in America alone.[7] When we add to these the numbers of animals that are hunted each year for sport or pelt, and those that are cruelly killed in scientific experimentation practices, the numbers magnify by many tens of millions more. All told, then, running alongside the contemporary growth of the global environmental movement is the red stain of trillions of dead animals – a symbol of the radical amplification of the global human population, on the one hand, and of the extreme increase in certain sectors of that population's use and consumption of the planetary life that it deems a "human resource," on the other.

Almost all of these trends are escalating and most are accelerating.[8] Even during what amounts to a current economic downturn, transnational markets and development continue to flow and evolve, and the globalization of technocapital is fueling yet another

vast reconstruction of the myriad planetary political, economic, and socio-cultural forces into a futuristic “network society.”[9] Over the last three decades, then, humanity has unfolded like a shock wave across the face of the Earth, one which has led to an exponential increase of transnational marketplaces and startling achievements in science and technology, but one which has also had devastating effects upon planetary ecosystems both individually and as a whole. Most telling has been the parallel tendency over this time period toward mass extinction for the great diversity of species deemed non-human, including vast numbers of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Comparing the numbers involved in this catastrophe with the handful of other great extinctions existing within the prehistoric record has led the esteemed paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey to coin this age as the time of “the Sixth Extinction,” a great vanishing of creatures over the last thirty-odd years such as the planet has not seen during its previous sixty-five million.[10]

But, lest we make the mistake of thinking that our present globalization crisis proceeds along the simple lines of human flourishing and resource wasting, it should be noted that even as world gross economic product has nearly tripled since 1970, these gains have been pocketed by a relatively few advanced capitalist nations at the expense of the poor.[11] Recently, the United Nations Development Programme issued its Human Development Report 1999 which found that the top twenty percent of the people living in advanced capitalist nations have eighty-six percent of the world gross domestic product, control eighty-two percent of the world export markets, initiate sixty-eight percent of all foreign direct investment, and possess seventy-four percent of the communication wires. Meanwhile, the bottom twenty percent of the people hailing from the poorest nations represent only about one percent of each category respectively.[12] The divide between rich and poor has been gravely exacerbated, with the gap between the two nearly doubling itself from an outrageous factor of 44:1 in 1973 to about 72:1 as of the year 2000. Much of this is directly related to a series of loans begun by the World Bank and the World Trade Organization in the 1990’s, which ultimately increased Third World debt by a factor of eight compared with pre-globalization figures.[13]

So, as approximately 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 per day and nearly 3 billion live on less than \$2 per day, the roaring heights of global technocapitalism have been unfortunate indeed for nearly half of the human population.[14] Globalization has been especially torturous upon poor women and children, who are denied basic human rights en masse and who, in the attempt to combat their situations of mass starvation and homelessness, enter by the millions each year into the relations of slave-labor and the horrors of the global sex trade. Even more tragically, millions of additional poor (many of whom are women and children) have been violently pressed into the circumstance of outright slavery! Thus, when this is properly related to the neo-colonialist conditions fostered upon the Third World by the explosion of transnational capitalist development, we can rightly assert that these very same cultural, economic and politically hegemonic practices constitute a form of global “family terrorism” meant to oppress those who already suffer the most.[15] As these Third World families almost invariably disclose themselves along racial and ethnic lines when compared with their over-developed

Caucasian counterparts, it should be noted that such family terrorism constitutes the oppression of planetary difference generally.

New advances in capitalist lifestyle and practice are then directly responsible for grave exacerbations of widespread poverty and suffering, species genocide, and environmental destruction. It is axiomatic for this paper, then, that the exploitation of species, of the environment, and of the poor by the rich, have a single underlying cause (and those fighting in the name of these, a single enemy) – the globalization of technocapitalism.[16] Those interested in animal liberation and its correlates must find and develop solidarity with those working towards the conservation and preservation of nature; and each of these groups must also expand their reach – both theoretically and practically – to include the fight for social justice. Clearly, the project before us is immense, we face nothing less than the unprecedented transformation and domination of the planet. One might wonder about the efficacy of our successfully seeing through an international revolution that is capable of unifying many different social movements together under the banner of immediate ecological crisis.[17]

Thus, to speak of education – as has the U.N.[18] -- as a key process by which we might fend off the worst aspects of today's globalization, and realize more of the utopia in which animals, oppressed peoples, and the planet are not wholly exterminated but rather ecumenically brought into a new ecological society generally, may be misreading what present educational practices can in fact accomplish. Examining the burgeoning movement of Environmental Education over the last thirty years, we can trace both its positive and negative pedagogical effects – the ways in which it furthered progressive causes and the manner in which it became co-opted by establishment powers, was technocratic, and altogether too marginal. Tomorrow's sustainable society – one that sustains all life, and not just its most powerful elements – if reliant upon education, will require a pedagogical revolution equal to its present socio-economic counterpart. What will this educational movement be if not Environmental Education? In what follows I will attempt to take up this question by first examining the history of Environmental Education and then moving to a discussion of some of its recent critiques and reformulations. I will conclude this essay with an examination on the U.N.'s own Sustainable Education proposal, wondering if it is progressive enough to integrate themes of animal and earth rights, environmental justice, and anti-imperialism into its educational strategy.

II. Charting Environmental Pedagogy's Big Bang and Fizzled Finale

While education has always involved forming knowledge and attitudes about the environment, it is only within the last three decades that Environmental Education as a formal discipline has become solidified. Drawing upon the wide publicity and academic debate furnished by the first Earth Day -- occurring on April 22, 1970, to enhance and preserve feelings for the global environment -- the United States passed the National Environmental Policy Act, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) was founded (1971), and the United Nations held the United Nations

Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden during 1972. However, the initial U.S. policy (while forming the Environmental Protection Agency and sanctioning educational strategies) involved little more than vanguard rhetoric. It was not until the U.N. Stockholm conference, then, that the issue of the environment was recognized as being of truly crucial import for the global community and that a new mode of education needed to be constructed both for and around it, with Recommendation 92 of the Stockholm report stating:

Organizations of the United Nations, especially UNESCO, should establish an international program in environmental education, interdisciplinary in approach, in-school and out-of-school, encompassing all levels of education and directed toward the general public, in particular, the ordinary citizen living in rural and urban area, youth and adult alike, with a view to educating people as to simple steps one might take to manage and control one's environment.[19]

Over the next two decades, further debate and information exchange were held by the world community, with the notion of "environmental education" increasingly contextualized to include notions of participatory approach, the necessity of adequate teacher education and training, a general systems orientation, ideas of holism, conservational strategies and values, and a furthered commitment to "sustainability." [20] In 1990, the U.S. importantly passed the National Environmental Education Act and pledged governmental "support, development, dissemination of model curricula, educational materials and training programs for students of all ages." [21] During 1992, at the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, an attempt at a systematic statement about the interrelationship between humanity and the Earth was conceived of and demanded, a document that would formulate environmental education once and for all in both ethical and ecological (as opposed to merely technocratic and instrumentalist) terms. This document – now known as the Earth Charter – failed to emerge from Rio, however, and instead Chapter 36 of the 1992 Earth Summit Report addressed the issue in the following manner:

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues...It is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making.[22]

In 1994, Maurice Strong along with Mikhail Gorbachev renewed interest in the Earth Charter and received a pledge of support from the Dutch government. This led to a provisional draft of the document being attempted in 1997, with completion, ratification and launching of the Earth Charter Initiative at the Peace Palace in The Hague occurring on June 29, 2000. The Initiative's goal was to build a "sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace." [23] The Earth Charter's announced mission was nothing short of revolutionary, attempting a bold educational reformulation of how humans perceive their cultural relationship to nature,

casting environmental and socio-economic/political problems together in one light, and demanding long-term, integrated responses to the growing planetary crisis.

It was hoped that at the second Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, held late last year – the World Summit for Sustainable Development – that the U.N. would adopt and endorse the Earth Charter, providing a truly comprehensive framework for the Environmental Education agenda the world over. However, in marking the approximate anniversary of three decades worth of global Environmental Education programs, the Johannesburg Summit proved disappointing in many respects and most activists and critics could not see past the neoliberal measures invoked there by the Bush administration (and kind) to find room for the sort of optimistic summary promoted by Kofi Annan at the Summit's end.[24] Certainly, the “WSSD” (as its critics called it) articulated a central divide that had been growing within the Environmental Education movement all along – a split between large-scale corporate and governmental technocrats and the more grassroots-based theorists, activists, and environmental educators proper. With pressure exerted by the interests of the United States (and the additional political and economic interest of the other large states and NGOs), Earth Summit II successfully tethered education about “the environment” to a wholly co-opted neoliberal vision of “sustainable development” – one that meant little more than sustaining increased development on a global scale. Gone, suddenly, was the U.N.'s own holistic, pointedly socialist in spirit, and non-anthropocentric language of the Earth Charter.[25] Instead, the United States has pushed for a commitment to educating for development (and not sustainability), pressing internationally the Bush administration's own domestic criticism that Environmental Education is not “environmental advocacy.”[26] If it's not that, however, we might ask, what is it?

III. From Environmental Education to Ecological Literacy: Recasting the Vision for a Better World

Part of the problem in effectively implementing Environmental Education as a solution to stem the tides of the current global crisis may be that the field itself has never been adequately defined as a discourse. The standard definition has been provided by William Stapp (1969), who is considered the “founder” of the movement. His definition stressed knowledge of the natural environment, interdisciplinarity, and a framework that valued using Deweyan inquiry and problem-solving as a method for overcoming intractable conflict and ideology. More currently, educators such as David Orr, Chair of Environmental Studies at Oberlin College, have attempted to update Stapp's model by stressing “ecological literacy.” This approach de-emphasizes Stapp's delineation of environmental issues as social problems demanding the consideration of national citizens in favor of an Earth-centered approach that perceives the growing wealth of human societies as an environmental problem with which the complex web of natural, social, and planetary relationships (e.g. Lovelock's “Gaia”) must deal.[27]

Complicating the matter in Environmental Education, it was noted only last year at the International Standing Conference for the History of Education at the University of Birmingham, UK, that aside from one purely Australian effort (Gough, 1993), as of yet

there has been no rigorous attempt to reconstruct the History of Environmental Education proper – it is literally a discourse without a chronicle.[28] So while the last thirty years have seen the emergence of Environmental Education as a fledgling utopian hope blossom into a core-curricular requirement operating in over 55 countries worldwide, the truth is that academia itself has been slow to incorporate, ground the discipline, and offer it as a meaningful part of academic debates about global policy and social direction. Most glaring is Environmental Education’s inability to gain a consistent foothold within Graduate Schools of Education proper, with even top-rated Education departments like that at UCLA (a department otherwise admirable and exceptional in its outspoken commitment to issues of social justice) seemingly uninterested when it comes to studying and lobbying for social justice’s environmental components.

Without the large-scale support of the academy, and with little grounding in university teacher-training programs, “environmentally-oriented” curricula have had trouble finding their way into schools – even at a time such as this when the need for their establishment is critical.[29] In lieu of a sure academic base, Environmental Education has had to rely upon a complicated and diverse network of governmental policy makers, private think tanks, NGOs, activist-oriented organizations and individual scholars for its framework. Thus is the case, for instance, with the contemporary movement for Humane Education – which stresses humane character formation (via non-violent and respectful learning experiences with animals, the environment, and living things generally), a critical understanding of consumerism, and the promotion of good citizenship skills. While platforms for Humane Education exist at the national and state levels, and while it is supported by The Humane Society of the United States and the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), Humane Education has only slowly earned support in North American universities.[30] This lack of university support has made funding Humane Education programs difficult and the lack of these programs has prevented its further integration into schools and other local educational institutions. All told, then, while Humane Education is an increasing force in Education today, its lack of presence in universities may be responsible for both its lack of a clear theoretical definition and also its haphazard and pragmatic adoption on the ground.[31]

The lack of a clear theoretical focus, which typifies Humane Education now, is also typical of Environmental Education overall. A major detriment to the successful evolution of Environmental Education, then, is that a wide-range of disparate information and activities are often allowed to present themselves authoritatively as Environmental Education -- national programs of action have even been funded as such -- that are directly contradictory to the messages of the original Earth Day and the environmental movement it spawned. Nowhere is this more apparent than in recent attempts at corporate educational “greenwashing” – in which corporations promote themselves as defending environmental curricula, even as they work behind-the-scenes to defeat such curricula at the state and national level and act internationally in an unsustainable manner.[32] I myself was victim to such greenwashing on a handful of occasions, in 1998, through my teacher-training Master’s program at Pepperdine University. On one occasion, the California Dairy Council was graciously on hand to guide our mandatory health seminar, in which they passed out a variety of classroom materials that promoted dairy as a

necessary source of nutrition and the Dairy industry as an honored and humane member of society.

Ironically, then, in the midst of a varied and tepid university response and the competing claims of transnational corporations and grassroots activists, Environmental Education today may be chiefly defined and legislated by the same U.S. government (and government lobbyists) that have recently worked to undermine it at the global level. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that, on its online homepage, the U.S. Office of Environmental Education (OEE) connects environmental education up with environmental consciousness and public responsibility, even as it is also explicitly clear that the federal government's notion of environmental education "does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action." [33] That the OEE no longer condones "advocacy" effectively de-politicizes Environmental Education and undermines any attempt to interpret it pedagogically along more radical lines. Further, the Office tethers Environmental Education directly to a neoliberal form of standards-based excellence and presents a version of Environmental Education fit more for a techno-scientific corporate society than it is for either grassroots environmentalism or planetary ecumenical harmony. Finally, among the other stated U.S. goals for Environmental Education is that it should create jobs, promote environmental protection alongside economic development, and encourage the stewardship of natural resources -- all goals that specifically tie Environmental Education to a social vision in which the capitalist economy dominates and remains insignificantly transformed from its current highly exploitative form.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), for its part, takes a more pragmatic approach to the issue, its sole ideology being the necessity to link up environmental organizations with educational institutions around the world and to implement environmentally-based curricula as often as possible and for the widest possible audience. Unlike the United States government, NAAEE has direct connections to many of the local organizations with which it works, and as a private association, it is free to take strong stands on issues like biodiversity and the Earth Charter that public institutions often approach cautiously (if at all). On the other hand, NAAEE does depend upon the Office of Environmental Education for monies and directed leadership. Thus, it is not surprising to find NAAEE promoting a version of "environmental literacy" that is both a "non-confrontational" and "scientifically-balanced approach to promoting education about environmental issues." [34] This hardly seems promising for affecting the sort of shift necessary in the American mind that would either seriously entertain the rights of animals or radically transform cultural lifestyle practices towards global sustainability. In the end, then, the Association tends towards modes of mainstream progressivism -- favoring an educational approach that teaches citizenship and develops students' capacity for understanding scientific complexity. In so doing, it mostly follows federal and state guidelines that are apt to see environmental education as being more about implementing environmental content into the traditional curricula and less about transforming those curricula themselves -- in both form and content -- towards producing a new kind of student and knowledge for a planetary society that exists beyond capitalist domination.

Both the U.S. government's and NAAEE's approach to Environmental Education align themselves with the standard definition of the field first provided by Stapp. In this version, Environmental Education is consonant with training for environmental science, basic citizenship information about products, government campaigns like recycling, team-work, and innovative thinking.[35] Countering this notion directly, the deep ecologist and educational theorist Chet Bowers has produced a number of books about modern education's many environmental and ecological failings.[36] He finds mainstream Environmental Education programs, such as Stapp's, to be typical of (and complicit with) highly problematical forms of modern Western thought practices. For Bowers, the contemporary U.S. psyche is constituted by a programmatic worldview that values a heightened sense of autonomous individuality, cultural impermanence, and human dominance – all factors that lead to wider ecological devastation and capital proliferation and which Western education thus serves to help reproduce in its students. Therefore, Bowers questions techno-scientific fixes regardless of their label and is dubious about the current role computer-assisted and self-actualizing, constructivist pedagogies are playing in and around schools. Instead, he proposes a vision of education for “eco-justice” that promotes community learning and place-based pedagogy, the formative role of traditions that value connectivity and commonality such as in many non-Western cultures, and a respect for value-systems that are non-anthropocentric.

Also contesting the standard account of Environmental Education is Murray Bookchin, the founder of the Institute for Social Ecology and author of such seminal works as *The Ecology of Freedom*. Akin to Bowers, Bookchin is deeply critical of environmental policies, which he criticizes as tending to serve and institutionalize hierarchy, oppress local communities, and reproduce social inequities. In Bookchin's critique, Environmental Education is inherently technocratic, as its central theme -- “the environment” – is a technocratic concept that serves to delimit a space that can then be mapped and controlled by government and bureaucracy.[37] Unlike Bowers's deep ecological perspective, as a social ecologist Bookchin locates his critique of the educational system within a framework of modern critical theory and a radical framework that is more favorable to Western values and norms (such as anthropocentrism).[38] Thus, Bookchin's social ecology is decidedly more eco-humanist in spirit than its “deep” counterpart. Whereas Bookchin ultimately maintains the now dominant division between human culture and nature – though he sees them as importantly related and mutually informing, deep ecologists like Bowers tends to envision the separation from nature itself as a product and development of a particular social pathology (i.e., modern Western industrialism). Despite their differences, however, both of these thinkers share a sort of cultural ethos and sense of political engagement that distinguishes them from other critical educators like David Jardine, whose “Under the Tough Old Stars”: *Ecopedagogical Essays*, draws upon phenomenological philosophy and transcendental imagination to arrive at a critique of the environmental present.[39] Jardine must be mentioned in this account as representing a more New Age alternative to more radical critiques which are attempting to unify around the term “ecopedagogy.”

Frijtof Capra, author of *The Web of Life* (1996) and Chair of the Center for Ecoliteracy, draws upon the systems-oriented nature of ecological thinking in calling for a postmodern

education model that favors the ability to synthesize instead of analyze and which defines systems of relationship in an ever-evolving, holistic perspective. Noting that non-holistic paradigms of Environmental Education are built upon the Cartesian model of science, Capra disavows the language of “building” and instead focuses attention upon the nexus of existence. In Capra’s model, direct experience of natural systems should be balanced with an ever-emerging “network” of relations that learners make as part of their conscious inquiry.[40] Some educators, like Brian Swimme, are experimenting with Capra’s notion of Ecoliteracy by combining it with other pedagogical models, such as Alfred North Whitehead’s rhythm of ideas and process-orientation, Loren Eiseley’s literary naturalism, and Teilhard De Chardin’s notion of an evolving Noosphere of the spirit.[41] On the other hand, in Britain, Capra’s work is being applied alongside the critique of capitalism by Stephen Sterling.[42]

There is also a critique of standard Environmental Education practices occurring beyond the United States. O.I.S.E.’s Transformative Learning Center at the University of Toronto, under the coordination of Edmund O’ Sullivan, is imaginatively combining visions of “Transformative Education” with a biocentric approach that is also critical of contemporary geo-political practices and which attempts to foster positive pedagogical experiences of the art, beauty and spirit of the planet as we might know it. O’ Sullivan himself promotes the Earth Charter as a meaningful example of how radical social positions can be articulated within global institutional frameworks and he is helping to develop a Master’s level course in Education that will be built around the Charter’s core principles.[43] Further, drawing upon Thomas Berry’s notion of the important role of cosmology in education, as stated in *The Dream of the Earth* (1988), O’ Sullivan has called for “a new story” that will value the Earth and planetary equity in place of our current stories built upon notions of human mastery and oppressive domination.[44]

Yet another international perspective that is critical of mainstream Environmental Education approaches comes from the South in the form of the leading Mexican environmental educator Edgar Gonzalez-Gaudio. Gonzalez-Gaudio exhibits a form of highly politicized, critical Environmental Education that he believes is generally to be found lacking in G8-type nations because the terrible issues of environmental justice and cultural racism are for them “not even on the map.” The reason for this, he feels, is because the institutional leaders of highly industrialized and economically well-off nations generally export their environmental problems to less powerful regions (such as his own) that are more easily subjected to social-environmental injustices. Further, drawing upon the modern notion of “security,” Gonzalez-Gaudio calls for a new educational approach to “human security” that would displace common ideas about national security in favor of learning to construct an understanding of how the environmental factors that contribute to disease, famine, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and other forms of sexual, ethnic or religious violence can be examined as complex social problems deserving of everyone’s attention.[45]

In his own work, spanning the last decade from *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World* (1991) to *The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture, and Human Intervention* (2002), David Orr wonders why there might be a general version of

problem-solving Environmental Education that so many environmental theorists, activists, and educators have come to feel is inadequate to the present task at hand. His answer is that built into the emerging environmental discourse of the last three decades has been a sort of equivocation of terms – as is the case, he argues, with the talk surrounding “sustainability.” On the one hand, says Orr, many (chiefly politicians and CEOs) have called for a “sustainable society” that is really a code for a form of “technological sustainability.” Technological sustainability views the human predicament as a rationally-solvable, anthropocentric, scientifically-directed state of affairs, one that will solve its problems through the proper top-down management of an endless-growth economy. On the other hand, many others (chiefly environmentalists) have talked about a “sustainable society” in terms of “ecological sustainability” – a view that questions human rationality and motives, emphasizes the importance of natural systems and their equilibrium for life, and which sides with a critical view of the dominant social practices that appear to breed disequilibrium.[46]

Orr’s notion of “ecological literacy” ultimately arbitrates the problems inherent in disputes over Environmental Education by resolving them within a postmodern “both/and” logical approach which integrates and incorporates insights from all of the various models previously enumerated. While critical of the potential complicity of Environmental Education curricula and policies with truly unsustainable lifestyle practices, Orr nonetheless feels that they too have something to contribute. While drawing upon Capra’s notion of holistic systems, as well as from critical pedagogy’s conceptions concerning power and dialogue, and from ideas about Earth-centered cosmology, Orr’s ecological literacy believes in balancing real experiences of the natural world with scientific perspectives on balancing natural systems. However, where other Environmental Education perspectives may end their curricular objectives here, Orr’s describes this as being but the beginning of a fuller emerging literacy into how to be in the world. As students move beyond the mere observation and understanding of natural and social systems, always with an eye towards harmony and balance, Orr contends that students naturally come to recognize an ethical responsibility to model such balance within their own life practices and relationships with people, other species and the environment. Thus, while Orr recognizes a responsibility to act on behalf of the world (potentially radically when it is being fiercely degraded), he also realizes that part of becoming ecologically literate is the adoption of a standpoint for behavior that values complexity, process, and the sort of temperance that is bred only by being actively involved in a lifelong practice of critical understanding and spiritual wonder.[47] Therefore, akin to what the Freirean educator Moacir Gadotti has articulated as the new practice of “ecopedagogy,” ecological literacy asks of us that we each remain open to listening to a manifold of different knowledge systems, that we act collaboratively with a diversity of others (in a non-anthropocentric fashion), that we remain rigorous and critical in our ethical stance towards life, and that we constantly integrate our own life experiences towards the general end of helping our home planet Earth to sustain the rich and beautiful tapestry of life with which it provides us.[48]

IV. Environmental Education as Contested Terrain

The present moment for Environmental Education is best categorized as a “complex and contested terrain” and it would be inappropriate to describe it simply as embodying a general trajectory of either “rise and fall” or “continuous evolution.” The last thirty-odd years have seen a tremendous rise in the transnational institutional adoption and maturity of Environmental Education as a field of study and practice. But, as was noted earlier, in some sense it is a mistake even to characterize Environmental Education as a new field, for all education has always involved sowing knowledge and values (whether implicitly or explicitly) around the relationship between humanity and the natural world in which it finds itself. Still, it must be affirmed that in the face of a growing ecological crisis – one affecting both global culture and nature – that environmentally-related themes have come to take on a more exact and pointedly formal disciplinary status as a result. There have been an increasing amount of international educational curricula (much of it formally directed by the UN itself) which focus explicitly on such important issues as the mass extinction of species, the role of biodiversity in the world, and the ecological relationship between cultural habits and natural environments. Additionally, nonformal education movements, such as Humane Education, are moving onto the world stage to provide a meaningful pedagogical platform for powerful contemporary ethical developments like animal rights. The effect of this has been to create numerous openings for linkages between nonformal and formal institutions around allied themes and shared strategies, though to this moment very few of these bridges have actually been crossed. Therefore, animal liberationists, rightists, and humane educators should exploit the current vogue within formal Education around the issues of sustainability and the environment by demonstrating the important role of human/animal relations in each of these and by seeking greater integration with formal approaches to these topics wherever possible.

Yet, let us remember that the relatively recent frenzy around the corpus of Environmental Education – especially at the global level – itself represents a sort of danger sign that should be heeded with caution. For over the same period of time that the field has emerged as a legitimate, the planetary environment itself has undergone radical discontinuities, there has begun an unprecedented move towards the whole scale slaughter of creatures large and small, and human culture (in both its rich and poor varieties) has left an increasingly heavy “ecological footprint” across the face of the Earth. Seemingly in response to such dangers, Japan suggested at the recent Earth Summit II in Johannesburg that the years of 2005-2015 be hailed and promoted by the United Nations as “the decade of Environmental Education.” However, notably, under pressure from the global corporate leadership the United Nations adopted Japan’s proposal but went on to distinguish between Environmental Education (EE) as a singular field of reduced importance in comparison with the new State-promoted agenda of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This is also being promoted now as Education for Sustainability. Contrary to both traditional Environmental Education practices and more recent challenges to those practices, then, ESD represents a reactionary new third development within the field – one advertised as especially worthy of international monies, institutional investment and attention.[49] Though UN documents, like the Ubuntu Declaration, also recently called for educators to play an important part in sustainable development policy formation, and for the Earth Charter’s central role as a guiding vision for the same, one cannot help but fear that powerful social forces have

further co-opted whatever legacy and promise Environmental Education still offered. At such a time such as ours, when Environmental Education practices might (it is hoped) come to represent a radical pathway to a more decent, loving and beautiful world, we have much reason to doubt that they will be anything more than a strategy to inculcate the practices of capitalist resource management coupled with rational economic and social planning.[50]

In response to such changes, radical educators concerned with these issues have been left wondering if transnational organizations are capable of interpreting the idea of a “limit to growth” in any fashion beyond permissive neoliberalism. For the present standard of living enjoyed by those across the planet is estimated to utilize somewhere between two to four times the amount of sustainable resources provided by the Earth proper. Therefore, as the world population continues to rise toward nine billion people and living standards increase in commensurate measure, it is reasonably calculated that to have a sustainable planet by the year 2070 would entail techno-scientific advances capable of enabling sixty times as much production and consumption as is presently afforded, while only generating one-half to one-third the amount of present resource and environmental cost.[51] But, according to the U.N.’s own UNEP GEO-3 report, released just prior to the Johannesburg Summit, a vision of continued growth of this kind is consonant only with earthly extinction; either great changes are made in our global lifestyle now or an irrevocable crisis will descend upon the planet by 2032.[52]

In conclusion, then, while Environmental Education appears to be growing professionally as a field and should continue to become ever-more central to educational and political discourse over the next decade(s) under the banner of sustainability, the immediate institutional trend in Environmental Education is a depressing move away from establishing anything like a radical “ecological literacy.” Further, liberation literacies involving topics such as animal liberation, the possible rights of animals, or anything involving students to engage in a real confrontation with the realities of oppressed beings generally, seem not to be up for wide curricular mandate or approval.[53] Instead, schools will trend toward interpreting the present questions surrounding the treatment of animals, rising environmental crises, and burgeoning social problems as requiring little more than training in the (“learn how to be”) technological and (“please don’t do any”) critical thinking literacies that are the fetish of Education today.

This is an ominous indicator on the field’s horizon line (and on society’s as well) -- one that speaks to a deep fracture that exists between the majority of the people in and around Education that favor a rational planning and “wise use” economic approach and the revolutionary minority that are bent on realizing an ethical “revaluation of all values” that will ultimately be capable of meeting the present challenge set before us by the growing global ecological catastrophe. To this end, a rising wave of conservationists, animal rights activists, academics concerned with social and eco-justice, and Earth-centered educators are beginning to search for solidarity and find a common language amongst them. Their plan for action is a radical ecopedagogy – a term both educational and ethical – which marks their unflinching opposition to the murderous, anthropocentric, and technocratic language now invoked by the global institutions of capital exchange as both

the map and the territory. This is the beginning of a new pathway ahead – one that returns liberation to the classroom, or that liberates the classroom entirely even as it liberates the suffering beings in and around it. This is the dream; but to animal liberationists and other radical educators green, red, black, or rainbow, know that in this age of institutional fads, new literatures, and academic innovation, the path ahead in Education is dark indeed. It is out from the developing new social movements, then, such as the movement for animal liberation, that radical educators are attempting to draw strength and insight and to shine what light they find therein into the catacombs of our teacher education programs and beyond. Whether liberationists themselves will find this challenge facing education today compelling enough to warrant the investment of their own energies and interests may be worth their future reasoned debate. At least, they should be informed about the current educational realities and their likely result. On the other hand, as Education remains a primary institution towards affecting social change, it deserves to be fought for, transformed, and wizeden – the Ecopedagogists are placing their feet inside the door and calling in solidarity for the help of liberationists everywhere as we speak: let's storm the entrance! I believe it is worth the chance – it could mean the difference between today's rage and tomorrow's hope.

NOTES: [1] On “globalization,” as the growth of Western technocapitalism since World War II, and its contemporary meanings, see Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *The Postmodern Adventure: Science, Technology and Cultural Studies at the Third Millennium* (New York, Guilford Press, 2001), pp. 205-53. For a similar but abbreviated treatment see Douglas Kellner, “Theorizing Globalization,” *Sociological Theory* (forthcoming) at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/theoryglob.htm>.

[2] Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pg. 492.

[3] Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature*, (New York, Zed Books, 2002), pp. 38-39. For the Union of Concerned Scientists, see “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity” in Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, *Betrayal of Science and Reason: How Anti-Environmental Rhetoric Threatens Our Future* (Washington, D.C., Island Press, 1996), pp. 242-50. For Raven, see “What We Have Lost, What We Are Losing,” in Michael J. Novacek (ed.), *The Biodiversity Crisis: Losing What Counts*, (New York, New Press, 2001), pp. 58-62.

[4] Rick Weiss, “Key Ocean Fish Species Ravaged, Study Finds,” *Washington Post* (May 15, 2003) at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A57139-2003May14¬Found=true>.

[5] Joseph B. Verrengia, “Scientists Raise Alarm Over Sea-Mammal Deaths,” *The Associated Press* (June 16, 2003) at:

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/135004846_whales16.html.

[6] The statistics in this paragraph, unless otherwise noted, are listed in Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature*, pp. 3-5.

[7] Matthew Scully, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*, (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 2002), pp. 284-85.

[8] Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature*, p.4.

[9] Douglas Kellner, “Theorizing Globalization,” *Sociological Theory* (forthcoming) at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/theoryglob.htm> .

- [10] For the connections between transnational capitalism and Leakey's Sixth Extinction see my forthcoming paper for Social Thought & Research at <http://getvegan.com/holesnotwholes.htm> .
- [11] Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature*, p.4.
- [12] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999*, New York, 1999 at <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1999/en/default.cfm> .
- [13] Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature*, p.4.
- [14] World Bank, *World Development Report 1998*, at <http://www.worldbank.org/> .
- [15] For a thorough discussion relating globalization to the oppression of poor women and children, see Rhonda Hammer, *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism: A Critical Feminist Perspective*, (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 187-194.
- [16] In John Bellamy Foster, *Ecology Against Capitalism* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 2002), p. 60: This oft-quoted memo from when Lawrence Summers, President of Harvard and former Treasury Secretary for Bill Clinton, worked for the World Bank serves as the penultimate articulation of how oppression of the environment and poor are linked together by technocapitalist elites:
Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [less developed countries]?...I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that...
I've always thought that under-populated countries in Africa are vastly under-polluted; their air quality is probably vastly inefficiently low [sic] compared to Los Angeles or Mexico City.
- [17] In this light, see Tom Athanasiou, *Divided Planet: The Ecology of Rich and Poor* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1998).
- [18] "Even the most casual reading of the earth's vital signs immediately reveals a planet under stress. In almost all the natural domains, the earth is under stress -- it is a planet that is in need of intensive care. Can the United States and the American people, pioneer sustainable patterns of consumption and lifestyle, (and) can you educate for that? This is a challenge that we would like to put out to you." – Noel J. Brown, United Nations Environment Programme, National Forum on Educational about the Environment (October 1994).
- [19] Charles Hopkins, "Environmental education – A new priority" in *Journal of Outdoor Education*, 25, (1991), pg. 3.
- [20] Richard P. Klecan, *Environmental Education Around the Pacific Rim: A Comparative Study of Secondary School Curricula*, (Unpublished Dissertation, 1997), pp.53-57.
- [21] E.S. Klein and E. Merrit, "Environmental education as a model for constructivist teaching," *Journal of Environmental Education*, 25, (1994), pg. 15.
- [22] United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, "Chapter 36: Promoting Education, Awareness and Training," *Agenda 21*, (1992), pg. 2.
- [23] See online at: <http://www.earthcharter.org/aboutus/faq.htm>.
- [24] For coverage critical of the Bush administration's hand at the W.S.S.D. see the stories dated August 26 to September 6, 2002 on my weblog at <http://getvegan.com/blog/blogger.php>. On Annan, see "Sustainable Development Summit

Concludes in Johannesburg: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan Says It's Just the Beginning" at http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/whats_new/feature_story39.htm.

[25] Moacir Gadotti, "Paulo Freire and the Culture of Justice and Peace: The Perspective of Washington vs. the Perspective of Angicos," Keynote address for the 3rd International Paulo Freire Forum (UCLA, 2002).

[26] North American Association for Environmental Education, "EE Act Information Alert" at: <http://naaee.org/news/eeact.php>.

[27] Richard P. Klecan, *Environmental Education Around the Pacific Rim*, (Unpublished Dissertation, 1997), pg. 17.

[28] CC Wolhuter, "History of Environmental Education: Lacuna on the Research Agenda of History of Education," (Birmingham, 2001), at:

<http://216.239.39.100/search?q=cache:c-OhlGLTM0cC:www.cetadl.bham.ac.uk/ische/abstract/WolhunterA.doc>.

[29] For example, see Julie Andrzejewski's description of her development of a Master's degree in Social Responsibility at her university in her CALA paper at: www.cala-online.org/journal_articles.html#julie_article. Though herself connected with Education, it apparently was not possible to achieve the new sorts of educational "no-brainers" that Julie is offering now within Education proper, demanding a side shift to Human Relations and new programs. This, I am arguing, is typical of Education at present – the discipline that we would expect to be "out in front" towards helping to transform and re-direct our current social-ecological problems.

[30] See, for instance, the Master of Arts in Teaching in Multidisciplinary Studies, with a Humane Education Focus, offered by Webster University at <http://www.humanesocietyu.org>.

[31] For more on Humane education, see David Selby, *Earthkind: A teacher's handbook on humane education*, (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham 1995) and his "Relational modes of knowing: Learning process implications of a humane and environmental ethic" in B. Jickling (ed.), *A colloquium on environment, ethics and education*, (Yukon: Yukon College 1996), pp. 49-60; and Andrew J. Petto and Karla D. Russell, "Humane education: the role of animal-based learning" in Francine L. Dolins (ed.), *Attitudes to Animals: Views in Animal Welfare*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 167-85 and online at:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20010813075458/http://www.e4ars.org/index.html>. But Humane education is also problematically associated with progressive Humanistic education, such as Ron Miller (ed.), *New Directions in Education: Selections from Holistic Education Review*, (Brandon, Holistic Education Press, 1991), or conservative (Cicero the common root) Humanities, see Donald Phillip Verene, *The Art of Humane Education*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002).

[32] For examples of corporate greenwashing in Education by companies like Dow, Shell, and Ford see: "Attacks Aiming to De-Fund Environmental Education" at

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Species as a Social Construction: *Is Species Morally Relevant?*

Washoe was cross-fostered by humans. She was raised as if she were a deaf human child and so acquired the signs of American Sign Language... When Washoe was five she left most of her human companions behind and moved to a primate institute in Oklahoma. The facility housed about twenty-five chimpanzees, and this was where Washoe was to meet her first chimpanzee: imagine never meeting a member of your own species until you were five. After a plane flight Washoe arrived in a sedated state at her new home... When Washoe awoke she was in a cage... When she began to move, the chimpanzees in the adjoining cages began to bang and scream at her. After she regained her senses her human friend asked in sign language what the chimpanzees were. She called them 'BLACK CATS' and 'BLACK BUGS.' They were not like her and if she felt about them the way she felt about cats and bugs they were not well liked. Washoe had learned our arrogance too well.

-Fouts and Fouts in The Great Ape Project, 28-29

Washoe was brought up in an environment in which there was a strong distinction made between humans and “animals”- and Washoe did not think of herself as an animal. She identified herself as a human, because of the social conditions in which she was raised. Certainly her belief that she was fundamentally different from the other chimpanzees and other animals was not *natural*. Had Washoe been raised by other chimpanzees, perhaps it is the humans whom she would see as “black bugs.” One of the many lessons of this passage is that the social influences of human societies are so powerful that they can influence even a biological chimpanzee to believe that there is a fundamental gulf between herself and members of “other” species- even when the “other” species is, by our lights, really her own. Is it surprising that so many humans feel the same way?

Washoe's case is very revealing of the social construction of our concepts of species difference. Some people might instantly reject the idea that the species concept is a "social construction," by claiming that "species" is strictly definable or that species distinctions are a biological fact independent of our own interpretations. Although both of these claims will be disputed in this paper, Washoe's behavior shows that a refutation of these claims is not even necessary for arguing that the species concept is socially constructed. This is because the notion that most of us, including Washoe, have of species difference is simply not reducible to any set of real qualities. It is one thing to offer a definition of species; but it is another matter to offer a definition of species that correctly describes the notion that we *really have*. Washoe could have looked at her own arm and seen that it resembled the arms of the other chimpanzees more than the arms of the humans. But at that moment, it is likely that no empirical fact could have convinced Washoe that she was *not* essentially different from these so-called "black bugs."

Just as Washoe's belief that she was essentially different from the other chimpanzees was not natural, neither was it based upon rational considerations such as empirical observations. It was a prejudice. In the case of Washoe, the prejudice is easy to isolate and criticize. Our own prejudices about species difference, however, cannot be isolated as easily. When we look at our own arm, it really does look more like the arms of other humans than the arms of chimpanzees. But ultimately, our situation is not really so different from that of Washoe. *Though certain empirical differences that we perceive may be real, our concepts of species difference go far beyond the extent of these real, describable differences.*

In what follows, I will argue that the concept of species is socially constructed in significant ways. This will mean that speciesism, or the doctrine that species *in itself* is a characteristic that can justifiably be used as a criterion for discriminating between individuals, cannot be valid. I will argue that speciesists tend to see species as a concept that marks essential natures and boundaries, and they use this fiction in forming moral judgments about individuals. I should preface this by saying that it seems to me that such an argument is unnecessary. It is an implicitly accepted fact amongst the majority of philosophers that the burden of proof always lies on the side of the philosopher who wants to argue that a quality *is* morally relevant. Those who want to argue that language ability is morally relevant, for instance, will give reasons for their position (whether adequate or inadequate)- they will not simply challenge their opponent to prove them wrong. Most philosophers on both sides of the animal rights debate, with some exceptions, have followed this common-sense notion and accepted that until someone presents an argument that species *is* morally relevant, we should go with the default position that it is not. It is for these few exceptions that I am writing this paper and presenting a positive case against the moral relevance of species.

Once the origins and meanings of the concept "species" are revealed, it becomes clear that there is no such thing as species that transcends its aggregate parts. If the aggregate parts are not relevant to morality, neither is species; and species can only be morally relevant in the ways that its component parts are. Species has no essential "core" nature. Therefore, to make moral distinctions based on species *in itself*, without reference to what species consists of, is to make moral distinctions based on nothing. In other words, it is to commit Washoe's fallacy. It seems to me that this is a sufficient reason for

both ethical realists, and all but the most extreme ethical relativists, to give up any conviction that species may be morally relevant.

This does not, however, mean that we should never make moral decisions based upon our socially constructed notions of species. What it *does* mean is that we should never make moral decisions based upon *species*. These are different: the social construction of species is real; it is the reality of species itself that is under examination. There are practical reasons for taking social constructions into consideration in our moral reasoning. Ideas can exist without referring to things that are real. Likewise, ideas can be morally relevant without their referents being morally relevant. An insane person may believe he sees a unicorn, and his belief is morally relevant in that it gives us reason to medically treat his hallucinations, to calm him down if he is frightened, etc. But this certainly does not mean that the nonexistent unicorn he sees is either real or something to be taken into consideration in our moral judgments. It is the idea, not the unicorn, that is morally relevant. Furthermore, it is possible for the man's illusory idea to correlate with something real in the world. Suppose the man thinks he sees a unicorn every time a bulldog walks in front of him. The existence of the bulldog can be taken into consideration in our moral judgments (keep small children away, etc.). Therefore, the man's illusory idea is correlated with something real in the world that is morally relevant (i.e. the presence of a bulldog). But this of course does not mean that unicorns are morally relevant.

Similarly, no animal rights philosopher claims that our *perceptions* about species differentiations, *or* the real patterns with which they correlate, should not bear on our practical moral decisions. Peter Singer, for instance, states explicitly in Animal

Liberation that pigs are not to be given the right to vote, because it makes no sense to speak of giving pigs this right. So it is important to realize that the charge of "speciesism" does not apply to the recognition and moral consideration of real patterns that correlate with our concept of species. This allows us to avoid the parallel problem of being called sexist for discriminating against one of the sexes based upon real differences between men and women; or being called crazy for keeping small children away every time the delusional man starts yelling about unicorns (since this gives us reason to believe there is a bulldog in the room). Singer's example in this case is that it is not sexist to deny men the right to an abortion, since men are not biologically equipped to have one.

How Species Distinctions are Socially Constructed

*I look at the term species as one arbitrarily given for the sake of convenience to a set of individuals closely **resembling** each other, and that it does not essentially differ from the term variety.*

-Darwin, 1859, 52, (emphasis added)

When I say that species is socially constructed it does not imply that differences between humans and non-humans do not exist (e.g. we are taller than hamsters). Nor does it necessarily imply that species concepts are useless in science, everyday language, or even in philosophy. Indeed, the concept has been constructed largely because it is often found to be useful within certain contexts. And further, it is very likely useful because there are patterns in the world that loosely map onto many of our common conceptions of species. In part, evolution can explain the patterns that we see. Geographical and genetic isolation *tend* to lead to greater differences between, rather than within, groups of organisms- but not always. In fact, there is no "objective" way to decide what is a significant enough "gap," and this is further complicated by the fact that we are

dealing with an almost unlimited number of characteristics. To quote one biologist, “How similar is ‘similar enough’ and in what sense of ‘similar’?” (Hull, pg. 35 in Species) To a large extent, the patterns that we see will depend upon what we find useful for our purposes. But what is useful or “convenient” in one context may be detrimental or even nonsensical in another. Historically contingent forces have played a significant role in shaping the species concepts that we have in the West, and therefore the concept is meaningful only within certain contexts.

Species concepts are interest-relative. This is true within the field of biology and beyond. Robert A. Wilson writes in *Realism, Essence, and Kind: Resuscitating Species Essentialism*:

It is widely accepted that there are strong objections to the claim that any of [the] proposals-pheneticism, reproductive views, or genealogical views- are adequate... The different species concepts reflect the diverse biological interests of (for example) paleontologists, botanists, ornithologists, bacteriologists, and ecologists, so these concepts depend as much on our epistemic interests and proclivities as on how the biological world is structured. (Wilson, Species, 192)

Biologists whose main interest is in evolution tend to use species concepts that focus on evolution; ecologists tend to use species concepts that stress ecological niches; biologists interested in morphology focus on morphological characteristics in their species concepts, etc. Thus there is currently no universally accepted species concept in the scientific community.

Biologists have their own uses for their own species concepts, and for laypeople species distinctions serve as a convenient way of describing collections of large numbers of variables. The question is whether “the species concept” is ever useful in moral philosophy, and if so, when? In asking this, *which* species concept we mean is automatically in question. Is it the everyday-language concept of laypeople, and if so, whose? Or is it one of the more than a dozen species concepts currently held by

biologists? Anyone who argues that “the species concept” is useful in moral philosophy must first specify which species concept they have in mind. One cannot simply say "species" is morally relevant as if the term has some precise and obvious meaning- as if species were some sort of essential thing that needs no explanation, because it is God-given and beyond question.

For instance, the philosopher Carl Cohen writes:

We incorporate the different moral standing of different species into our overall moral views; we think it reasonable to put earthworms on fishhooks but not cats; we think it reasonable to eat the flesh of cows but not the flesh of humans. The realization of the sharply different moral standing of different species we internalize... In the conduct of our day to day lives, we are constantly making decisions and acting on these moral differences among species. When we think clearly and judge fairly, we are all speciesists, of course. (Cohen, 62)

I would first note that Cohen is using the term "speciesist" incorrectly, since he is talking not about the importance of "species" but about the importance of qualities that are correlated with our perceptions of species. His argument is therefore irrelevant because it ignores Singer's point that individuals of different species (and individuals of the same species) should be treated differently insofar as they have morally relevant differences- just as men have no right to an affordable mammogram and wealthy white men have no right to the benefits of affirmative action. But what I really want to draw attention to is the question, what does Cohen *mean* by "species"? One might think that it would be giving Cohen the benefit of the doubt to just name one, preferably one that is accepted by many experts. Let's suppose, for instance, he is talking about Mayr's biological species concept, which defines a species as a group of individuals capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring. But surely Cohen does not believe that when we "are constantly making decisions and acting on these moral differences among species," we are making our decisions based upon matters of who is capable of breeding with whom. For, not only do we not need to know any information about the mating capabilities of

these animals to make moral distinctions between them; most of us wouldn't even know what to do with this kind of information if we had it!

So perhaps Cohen means a "commonsense" concept of species. That is, what is morally relevant are the distinctions that we are all capable of making simply *by looking*, with no scientific or philosophical training. What is morally relevant, in other words, is appearance. Yet I doubt that when Cohen wrote this passage he had *appearance* in mind as a morally relevant characteristic. For Cohen, unlike Darwin, the difference between humans and other animals is not merely one of degree, but one of kind. It is difficult to imagine how Cohen might hold this essential difference of kind to be based upon appearance. More likely, he would probably claim that we make distinctions between species based upon appearance, but it is not the appearance that is morally relevant but *something else* that is inevitably correlated with appearance. For instance, we distinguish between worms and cats based upon how they look, but the morally important distinction is 'something else' that is correlated by appearance.

But unless someone can tell us what this 'something else' *is*, it is only prudent to assume that it is a "vivid illusion," as biologists Frank Keil and Daniel Richardson argue in "Species, Stuff, and Patterns of Causation" (Keil and Richardson in Species, 273). And remember, this 'something else' cannot be intelligence, self-awareness, language, or capacity for suffering, because then *those* properties would be the morally relevant characteristics- but no one argues that they are equivalent to "species." *This 'something else' must simultaneously satisfy at least two conditions, which I believe is impossible. First, it must correspond with what we really mean when we talk about species, and second, it must at least be plausible that it is really the basis of our moral distinctions*

between supposed species. Mayr's biological species concept and species concepts based on genes or DNA, for instance, do not satisfy the second condition. And properties like rationality and language do not satisfy the first condition.

In other words, my main reason for saying that species is socially constructed is that we often unconsciously argue as if species has an essence; as if there is something about species in the background that can not be described, but which can simultaneously satisfy both the first and second condition. Given the basis of any species concept, few would argue that *that* basis is morally relevant in any significant way. Given the basis of Mayr's biological species concept, few would argue that whom we have the ability to mate with is a relevant characteristic for determining how much moral consideration we should be granted (Lewis Petrinovich may be an exception, though his work is not altogether clear on the matter). Given the major basis of commonsense notions of species, few would argue that how we look should determine how much moral consideration we should be granted. Why, then, do some philosophers hold that our *species* can determine how much moral consideration we should be granted? I believe it is because they do not equate species with any biological or commonsense way of determining species. Rather, they are probably committing Washoe's fallacy, thinking of species membership as some essential characteristic of an individual that, in reality, does not exist.

Biologists and philosophers of science have had a tremendous amount to say about species, and much debate has ensued on this topic. But in nearly every philosophical discussion of animal rights (with some notable exceptions), the concept has been unanalyzed and taken for granted, as if the "problem" has been solved. The use of the term "species" within the philosophical context of *animal rights* has hardly been

addressed at all. Why is this? That is, why do philosophers feel comfortable discussing questions of the moral relevance of species without first asking what species *is*, or what *we should mean* when we talk about species in the context of animal rights?

In the 19th Century, Charles Darwin refuted the prevailing Western view that the world was naturally divided into essential categories of plants and animals. Formally, his discovery radically altered our understanding of the workings of nature. It taught us not to see the world as Aristotle did: as divided into essential natural kinds with inherent separations between masters and slaves, men and women, and humans and animals. But, often unconsciously, the pre-Darwinian worldview of essentially existing species continues to drive many of our philosophical and moral attitudes. We have abandoned the Aristotelian tendency to believe that some humans are naturally inferior, *because of their essence*, to other humans. But we have not yet done this in our beliefs about nonhuman animals. Biologists Keil and Richardson write, “We have a strong bias towards essences in living kinds.” (Keil and Richardson, 273, in Species) This bias is not easily dispelled, especially given that it has been ingrained in Western culture since Plato.

The concept of species holds argumentative “weight” in animal rights debates largely because it is viewed as an essential category, whether consciously or unconsciously. Most of us now “know,” or claim to know, that different species do not have distinct essences, but we still think and argue as if they do. And if, in the back of our mind, we still hold a conviction that species have essences, it would never occur to us to ask the question “what is species?”- it just is what it is, we imagine. Of course, Darwin too found the question “what is species?” meaningless, calling species “indefinable” and mocking his contemporaries for trying to find a definition that could be universally

agreed upon by people with diverse uses for the term (Darwin, 1887, 88, quoted in Ereshefsky, 285 in Species). But it was indefinable for Darwin not because species have essences, but because, for Darwin, species-talk is nothing more than a convenient conceptual tool for biological inquiry. In contrast to a long line of Western thinkers following Aristotle, Darwin recognized that no divinely determined invisible walls, no Platonic forms, separated one group of animals from another.

It is only because the species concept in animal rights debates has not been thoroughly deconstructed that philosophers like Cohen are able to rely upon it in their philosophical arguments against animal rights. At one point in time, this was also the case with race. Racists may claim that race is a morally relevant category with no explanation. But we can then ask them *what they mean* by race, rather than allowing them to hide behind vague, undefined, and equivocal terms. If they answer "skin color," or "geographical origin," we can then ask them why *skin color* or *geographical origin* should have anything at all to do with moral principles. Although, at this point in history, skin color perhaps seems no more arbitrary a factor than "race" (since almost everyone considers race irrelevant to moral principles), at one point in time this was probably not the case. Thus, deconstructing race reveals the absurdity of using race as a moral criterion. We can similarly deconstruct the term "species" in animal rights debates. When philosophers argue that species is a morally relevant characteristic, we can ask what they mean by species. If they reply that a species is determined by how an individual looks, (the most honest answer, in my opinion), or the capacity to mate and have fertile offspring with certain other individuals, we can then ask them why appearance or an

ability to mate with certain individuals might have anything to do with moral principles.¹ Here, they are on much weaker ground than when they are allowed to simply call this "species." It is much more apparent to most people that appearance and mating capacities are irrelevant to morality than it is that "species," whatever that may be, is irrelevant to morality. The claim that species is morally significant seems to hold more water when we have not said what species is.

Regardless of any definitions that may be placed upon the term "species" by biologists, it is clear that for *most people*, distinctions of species are based solely upon difference of appearance. For example, I distinguish a chimpanzee from a gorilla by the fact that they look different to me. This conforms to Darwin's statement that begins this section to the effect that species determinations are based upon "resemblance." Furthermore, this resemblance is clearly not *mental* resemblance, but *physical* resemblance (just like race). In Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis, we say that the main character has *turned into an insect*, not that he has merely acquired the body of an insect while remaining a human because of his mind. This indicates the commonsense fact that the primary criteria we typically use for determining the species of an individual is the physical traits of the individual, not mental traits. Just because someone has the mind of a human does not make him human- what matters to determinations of species, at least in everyday conceptions, is our perceptions of physical qualities.

¹ While it may not be relevant to moral principles, Peter Carruthers believes that how an individual appears is in fact relevant to matters of practical application of moral principles. He argues that all humans, including "marginal humans," should be granted equal consideration because otherwise we are embarking on a slippery slope that may lead us to disregard the inherent rights of other humans. While it is not my aim to argue at length with points of this sort which do not regard moral principles, nonetheless I find this position to be practically unsound. For, if in fact "marginal humans" are not inherent bearers of moral worth, tremendous benefits could be gained from using these humans in medical testing. I believe that Carruthers underestimates these possible benefits. Needless to say, however, I do not think we should be performing medical tests on "marginal humans" because I believe they have inherent moral worth.

So, just as race is often said to be socially constructed because it is based upon our perceptions and interpretations of physical traits, species is also socially constructed in the sphere of common sense in part because it is based upon our perceptions and interpretations of physical traits. And, it is the nature of interpretations that they can differ from one individual to another or from one culture to another. Not surprisingly, our interpretations of species membership *do in fact* often differ both between cultures and between individuals within any given culture. For instance, within a Western cultural understanding, it is not *obvious* that baboons and macaques do not belong to the same species. And examining other cultures, Scott Atran writes in *Itzaj Maya Folkbiological Taxonomy*:

Generic species *often* correspond to scientific genera or species, at least for those organisms that humans most readily perceive, such as large vertebrates and flowering plants... A principled distinction between biological genus and species is not pertinent to local folk around the world (Atran, 125 in *Folkbiology*, my emphasis).

Species categories often, but not always, correspond across cultures. What differences we find important depend upon many factors, including the values of our society.

And our culture can influence biologists as well as laypeople, since biologists do not live in a social vacuum. Commonsense notions of species based upon appearance inevitably affect how biologists perceive species. Suppose, for instance, that biologists came to a consensus on a definition for species. Suppose they found some gene present in every individual, and certain differences in this gene appeared to perfectly correspond with preconceived notions of species distinctions. Now suppose that all of a sudden, biologists found that there was in fact one problem with this gene: It is exactly the same in humans and in mice. It is clear that biologists would reject what they had previously agreed to be the defining factor in species distinctions, sooner than they would accept that

humans and mice are in fact the same species. Thus, any possible definition that may arise for species distinctions will be partially based upon preconceived, probably unarticulated notions of what a species is. No matter what biological evidence is uncovered, biologists would never accept that humans and mice belong to the same species, nor will they ever accept a conceivable Hindu claim that humans and cows should be considered members of the same species. To give a more realistic example of societal values influencing biological categories: based strictly upon genetic similarity, humans should be considered apes, since we are genetically closer to chimpanzees than chimpanzees are to orangutans. It is only for historical and social reasons that biologists do not consider humans to be apes.

Our culture influences our perceptions of species differences in very important ways, and our perceptions of members of a given species are often misinformed because of our beliefs about the "nature" of that species. Many people assume, for instance, the pigs are "stupid" animals compared to dogs and cats, whereas some research indicates they may actually be significantly smarter than both. The qualities we attribute to the members of a perceived species depend in large part on the nature of our interactions with them. This is why most Americans assume that pigs are "stupid" and "dirty"- we do not usually interact with them on a personal level as we so often do with dogs and cats. For most of us, our perception of "pigs" is inextricably linked with the function that they serve for us. We see them as "farm animals" or "food," as if this were part of their essential nature. But of course this view of pigs is entirely contingent upon social forces.²

² When Cohen writes, "we think it reasonable to eat the flesh of cows but not the flesh of humans," I have to wonder whether he also thinks it reasonable to eat the flesh of dogs and cats. It is important to recognize the moral dichotomy we make between dogs and cats on the one hand, and cows and pigs, on the other, as a form of *speciesism* and not just as another type of prejudice. Speciesism in favor of one *non-human* species is rarely acknowledged as such. Doing so clarifies the position against Bernard Williams, who mistakenly equates speciesism with "humanism" (Waldau, 40).

Similarly, many people feel a moral imperative to protect birds such as parakeets and parrots, who are kept as pets, but feel little sympathy for the chickens and turkeys they eat. They are likely to justify this dichotomy with an appeal to some supposed important difference between the individuals of these species, though they will probably be unable to give an account of what this important difference is.

Species in the Context of the Animal Rights Debate

As already stated, the fact that species is a social construction does not mean there are no differences between, say, humans and chimpanzees. Chimpanzees have a strong tendency to be more hairy, walk differently, look different, sound different, have different mental capacities, and live in different environments; plus they are unable to mate with humans, have different genotypic characteristics, and have a different set of recent ancestors. It is possible that any of these factors could be morally relevant. Which of them determines an individual's "species," as construed by biologists, everyday language, and moral philosophers? Biologists cannot agree. In everyday language, we generally determine an individual's species by their appearance and behavior, along some bits that we inherit from biologists, especially in making distinctions that are hard to call. As for moral philosophers, in their discussions of the role of species in moral considerations, they have, for the most part, not broached the question of which characteristic distinctions count in defining species.

Which characteristics *should* moral philosophers concentrate on in their understanding of species? If biologists use the characteristics that are relevant to their purposes, and laypeople use the characteristics that are relevant to *their* purposes, then

moral philosophers should use the characteristics that are relevant to moral philosophy in deciding what species concept they ought to adopt. Just as evolutionary biologists are interested in evolution, moral philosophers are interested in morality. So, in forming a species concept relevant to moral philosophy, the characteristics that we look at should be whatever characteristics are morally relevant. Currently, most of us use appearance as our major criteria in distinguishing between species. Yet, few people any longer believe that appearance is a morally relevant characteristic. While we may claim to use ‘reason’ or ‘language ability’ as our moral criteria, few would deny moral rights to humans who lack those capacities. It is therefore appearance and a false essentialist assumption that are the *real* basis of our moral distinctions when we deny animals moral rights. Moral philosophers, in forming a species concept relevant to their work, should shift the emphasis from physical to *mental* traits of individuals. The result of this I will call the “Moral Species Concept,” under which individuals are categorized according to their morally relevant properties.

Roughly, the qualities that I propose should be included in the Moral Species Concept are as follows:

1. The ability to feel physical pain and pleasure
2. The ability to feel emotional suffering and joy
3. The ability to experience boredom
4. The ability to have future goals

I have chosen these four for two reasons. First, I believe they have an ascending order of inclusion. Quality 4 includes quality 3, etc. This makes it so that there are exactly four species on the Moral Species Concept, simplifying classification. Second, I believe they are the four most important qualities in making moral decisions about how to treat an

individual. *Ceteris paribus*: If an individual can feel physical pain, she should not be physically harmed; if she can feel emotional suffering, she should not be prematurely removed from her loved ones; if she can feel boredom, she should not be confined; and if she has future goals, she should not have her life taken away. The four species of the Moral Species Concept allow us to classify individuals according to the types of moral respect they require.

Basing moral decisions upon the Moral Species Concept, rather than the species concepts that are intended for biologists and laypeople, would have tremendous implications for animal liberation. Rather than automatically giving preference to any trivial human interest over the most vital interests of other biological species, we would be forced to consider the mental and psychological capacities of each individual. No arbitrary barriers like appearance would enter the decision. As a result, all individuals would be given fair moral consideration of their interests.³

³ The Moral Species Concept favors no particular moral theory, and can be used within a Utilitarian, Rights-based, or other moral framework depending upon how it is meted out.

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