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The Role of Radical Animal Activists as Information Providers to Consumers

Joshua Frank*

1. Introduction

The use of illegal activity to fight the exploitation of animals has both costs and benefits. When utilized to liberate animals who are suffering in extremely cruel and inhumane conditions, it can have a direct benefit to those particular animals liberated. Direct action can also successfully gain media attention when legal means seem to have little impact. A good example of this is the recent increase in press devoted to foie gras following a series of animal liberation actions focusing on restaurants and production facilities in Northern California. Although the press accounts following these incidents were typically not favorable to the animal liberationists, there was at least some coverage of the issue. This was a dramatic change from the media treatment of the issue before illegal activity took place. In addition, the coverage explored the possibility that the production of foie gras may be inhumane, potentially increasing public knowledge on this topic. However, at the same time, a credible argument can be made that activities which lead the public to distance itself from animal causes may in the long term erode public support, while activity which leads the public to identify with animal causes builds long-term public support (Carlisle-Frank & Frank, 2003).

In assessing the costs and benefits of illegal acts, one dimension that is often overlooked is the role of animal liberationists as information providers. There are institutional barriers between the public and industries that exploit animals which cause the public to base consumption and political decisions on very limited information. Often the only information available to the public has its origins in illegal activity. Animal liberationist activity plays an important role in bringing this information to the public—a role that has often been overlooked and that is explored further here.

2. The Economics of Ethics and Ignorance in Consumption

Economists and policy makers often assume the relevant attributes of a consumer product to be either directly or indirectly observable upon consumption. This is inconsistent with reality since consumer preferences often contain important intangible components, including an ethical dimension. In fact, almost every consumer product has been subject to boycotts or a change in demand due to

*FIREPAW (The Foundation for Interdisciplinary Research and Education Promoting Animal Welfare, Inc.), 228 Main St. , #436, Williamstown, MA 01267-2641, email: firepaw@earthlink.net; Phone: (518) 462-5939; Fax (518) 658-0979

some ethical consideration at one time or another. In addition, when it comes to regulation, proponents of an extreme free market perspective sometimes argue that regulation is unnecessary because ethical issues can be resolved within the marketplace by consumers making choices based on their ethical preferences (for example by choosing “humanely” farmed products).

However, for consumers to effectively “vote with their dollars,” they must be fully aware of much information that is not visible in a final product. There is a growing movement internationally to provide greater information to the public in general known as the “Right to Know” movement. Much of what this movement is concerned with is the rights of citizens internationally to know information about their government. However, the movement also covers actions by corporations. In fact, a coalition of prominent organizations have formed the “International Right to Know Campaign” to push for legislation that provides the public with information on the conduct abroad of U.S. corporations regarding human rights, worker treatment, and environmental damage (IRTK, 2004). Though the focus has not been on animal treatment domestically, increasing information available to the public on this subject fits in well with the goals of the movement.

The ethical dimension of a consumer good is generally intangible and therefore highly sensitive to the information environment. For industries that use animals, the production process is of vital importance to consumers if they are to make an ethical choice. However, this is generally proprietary information that is not accessible to consumers. The recent case of Mad Cow disease in the United States demonstrated that there are other reasons in addition to ethical concerns for production process information to be considered relevant. The use of rendered animals as feed for livestock and the processing of downed animals both create risk for disease that cannot be observed in the final product by beef consumers.

If two final goods are identical, economists and policy makers often erroneously assume that the production process is irrelevant; and since this assumption is often unspoken, it goes unchallenged. The one arena where rules regarding the relevance of process have been made very explicit is in trade organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. According to WTO rules, mandatory labeling for process and production method information is not legitimate unless it is related to product safety (Hobbs, et al., 2002). Conclusions of these trade organizations which exclude ethical considerations as irrelevant to the final product have some very important implications.

The discourse in the United States over both recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) and genetically modified (GM) foods implies an assumption that ethics and other process attributes

unrelated to safety or final good characteristics are irrelevant. In the debate over rBGH, although there were legitimate animal welfare concerns and other ethical concerns at issue with the use of the technology, the technology's proponents argued that labeling products would imply a safety hazard to the public that did not in reality exist (Buttel, 2000). Thus, the validity of labeling for non-safety issues was pushed aside. GM foods also present possible environmental and moral issues aside from any safety issues (Giannakas and Fulton, 2002). Yet nevertheless, the debate regarding GM food labeling again focused on whether food safety concerns were scientifically legitimate (Scandizzo, 2002), thereby once again marginalizing any ethical and environmental concerns.

Intangible ethical considerations clearly have an effect on consumption. For example, a can of tuna may be labeled "dolphin safe." Without the label, the product cannot be differentiated by the consumer from a non-dolphin safe can of tuna; yet nevertheless, Teisl et al (2002) found the label to be relevant to consumers. When the authors estimated tuna consumption as a share of all canned meat products, the dolphin safe label was found to raise tuna's market share by about one percentage point, implying that the label increased tuna consumption between five and seven percent. It is worth noting that there are still significant ethical issues with the "dolphin safe" label. First, many consumers may not realize that thousands of dolphins are still killed even after implementation of the label. Furthermore, there are issues with international standards that have resulted from the Bush administration's recent efforts to loosen standards allowing Mexican tuna to be imported as "dolphin safe" (Defenders of Wildlife, 2004).

Economists have a long history of following the principle "*De gustibus non est disputandum*" (there is no disputing taste). In other words, economists must accept the preferences of consumers, whatever these preferences might imply. Using this principle, ethical attributes of consumer goods are relevant regardless of whether they are observable in product performance. They are relevant for the simple reason that consumers care about these attributes.

Strong proponents of free market capitalism should be the first to recognize and encourage the provision of full information in markets. Virtually all economists would agree that the proper functioning of economic markets depends vitally on access to information. Why should consumers not make decisions based on all information that they find relevant? Even if only human interests were assumed to matter, surveys suggest that most consumers find the treatment of farm animals relevant. Therefore, consumers should have full information regarding any production conditions that are relevant to their purchase decisions.

Animal exploitation is clearly of significance to consumers. A 1983 survey found that 15 percent of people said they had boycotted

a company or product because they were believed to harm animals (DDB Needham, 1983). A recent Gallup poll found that 62% of people believe that there should be strict laws passed regarding the treatment of farm animals (Moore, 2003). Another recent national poll found that two-thirds of people agreed that an animal's right to live free of suffering is just as important as the right for a human to live free of suffering (ICR Survey Research Group, 2003). A poll in New Jersey similarly showed high levels of concern regarding animal suffering (Murray, 2003).

Consumers clearly care about animal issues if they are adequately informed, but they have little to no direct information regarding these attributes of products. Without labeling or other additional information, animal treatment during the production process is unobservable in the final good. But even when traits are unobservable, economists would generally acknowledge that a socially optimal market would provide consumers with all information they find relevant (note here that we are talking about what is socially optimal for the *humans* involved—this does not take into account the utility of the animals themselves). Therefore, with animal-based goods, there is an information deficit and consequently serious problems in getting markets to function properly.

3. Ignorance in Consumption and Animal Exploitation

Ethical considerations and ignorance are particularly important to the consumption of animal products in society. Becoming aware of the processes behind creating animal products can have a powerful effect. Observing footage, or otherwise being given detailed accounts of animal exploitation, is a “moral shock,” and has often been the turning point in recruiting members of the public into the animal rights movement (Jasper, 1995). Observing footage of factory farming has also often been a catalytic event in the decision for some to become vegan (McDonald, 2000). From personal experience as the executive director of an organization that screens videos involving graphic animal exploitation, I have observed that this footage often has a powerful impact on people, even those who have low involvement and knowledge regarding animal issues.

It is likely that much of the public would be strongly opposed to many common practices in the production of animal-based goods if they were fully informed. Therefore, ignorance plays a large role in perpetuating the mistreatment of animals. One example of public opinion changing after a major revelation came following publication of Upton Sinclair's “The Jungle” in 1906. The book affected confidence in the meat supply and sales, and led to major legislation within six months. However, Upton Sinclair was not satisfied with the results, since the public focused on the book's health implications rather than the implications for labor, capitalism in general, and animal exploitation. As Sinclair put it, he had intended to reach the

public's heart but instead only hit them in the stomach (Block, 2004).

A survey was conducted recently by Rutgers University of residents of New Jersey regarding humane standards for the treatment of livestock (Murray, 2003). The survey was prompted by new proposed animal treatment standards created by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Roughly nine in ten residents knew "not much" or "nothing" about the new standards. Yet between 74% and 83% of residents were opposed to common farming practices that would still be legal under the new regulations such as tail docking, severe confinement of veal calves and pregnant pigs, and forced molting after simply being informed of the practice. The researchers conclude that the public is largely ignorant of farm practices and that the public in New Jersey is concerned about humane treatment of animals.

The greatest barrier to reform in the exploitation of animals for commercial purposes appears to be ignorance. Because of the institutional framework of the United States and developed countries in general, the information available to the public is limited. In addition, the information that does become available often comes in forms (such as the internet) that require active searching or are limited in their distribution. Animal exploiting industries have strong incentives to deceive the public or to downplay the nature and extent of the harm caused to animals. Furthermore these industries have repeatedly demonstrated in practice their willingness to mislead the public and even use false information when not diligently monitored and challenged.

Ninety-six percent of Americans say that animals deserve at least some protection from harm and exploitation (Moore, 2003). Yet often this concern does not translate into behavior given the high level of animal exploitation in a variety of industries such as factory farming. There is strong anecdotal evidence from people who work to educate the public regarding animal issues that (1) the public is largely ignorant of the details of animal abuses, and (2) many members of the public do react strongly against such exploitation when they learn the full details of the harm to animals. In animal use industries, the public is kept far-removed from the details of the production process. From re-labeling animal parts as something that does not resemble an animal to using euphemisms for killing and inflicting extreme suffering, the wording used in animal exploitation industries is designed to distance the public from the gory details of the production process (Dunayer, 2001). The public is generally not aware of the extreme level of confinement and sensory deprivation occurring in factory farms or animal laboratories, the high error rate in stunning animals that results in them being dismembered or boiled alive in slaughterhouses, the level of pain involved in many animal tests, the level of suffering inflicted by prevalent fur farming and trapping techniques, nor the death and suffering involved when

elephants or marine mammals are captured from the wild to perform at a circus or amusement park. Generally, the public is highly sensitive to all these issues and many others, but they have little access to the relevant information. Examples of negative public reactions when animal exploitation information becomes available include the decline in veal sales when some of the public gained partial awareness of the process, the decline in fur usage as awareness rose (though most of the public still had only a dim awareness of the process and fur sales have started to rise again), and the “dolphin-safe” tuna example previously discussed.

It is important to make a distinction between superficial information (such as a one sentence description of animal confinement in an opinion survey), and more rich information sources such as videotapes that actually show mass confinement facilities. Anderson (2003) demonstrates that the use of pictures can dramatically alter survey responses. Anderson hypothesizes that items without pictures may be discounted or dismissed. Among the examples he gives demonstrating the power of visual stimuli is the effect footage of seals being clubbed had on reducing the market for baby seal skins. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine how the campaign could have been nearly as powerful without the images of seals actually being killed. While some may argue that such footage is emotive rather than information enhancing, it is probably closer to the truth that words like “baby seals were clubbed” simply cannot give a reader or listener the full impact of what is happening the way a simple photo or video clip can. In fact, this is true for most animal exploitation situations. Saying an animal was “severely confined,” was “beaten into submission,” “gnawed it own leg off in a steel-jawed trap,” or “squealed while being cut up alive” simply cannot fully convey the reality of the situation. Only showing extreme suffering in photo or video images or other nonverbal stimuli can come close to bringing across the level of harm done. Even with a video, saturation with video violence and the general tendency towards protective denial suggests that, if anything, there will still be bias towards underestimating the harm done.

Clearly even footage of the torture or death of a living creature is much less traumatic and powerful than actually being at the actual scene. And even the actual live viewing of the death or suffering of a person or other animal is far less powerful without full contextual background regarding that animal—i.e., seeing that creature in enough depth and varied settings to view it as a true individual with preferences, awareness, intelligence, personality, and the ability to suffer. Only in the last situation would a person be truly “fully informed” regarding the process behind the production of a hamburger. Thus, even providing every consumer regularly with graphic footage of factory farm conditions and slaughter is giving consumers only partial information, though it is vastly superior to the

level of knowledge most consumers currently possess.

4. The Role of Animal Liberation Activity

Fur processors, factory farmers, puppy mills, animal laboratories, circuses/animal parks, and other animal exploiting industries all have a strong vested interest in minimizing the amount of information that the public receives. General privacy laws limit the ability of the public to gain access to these facilities, and additional legislation with very harsh criminal penalties for anybody attempting to trespass at animal-related facilities was introduced in seven states in 2003 (Nguyen, 2003), including California, New York, and Texas. The Bush Administration has also drafted legislation that would expand on the original Patriot Act including targeting “domestic terrorism.” What would qualify as illegal activity under this potential federal legislation could be interpreted to include investigative reporting or other nonviolent actions such as photographing the abuse of animals (Best, 2003).

One early example of a law specifically designed to suppress information regarding animal exploitation was Canada’s “Seal Protection Act.” The law was hastily put together in 1976, specifically in response to plans of activists to campaign against the seal hunt. Contrary to what the title suggests, the law did not protect seals, but rather protected seal hunters by preventing people from approaching areas where the seal hunt was taking place. The law appeared to be enforced with the intention of suppressing information. In 1981, the law was used to impound an International Fund for Animal Welfare aircraft used to take photographs of the hunt. When Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society was sentenced to twenty-one months in prison under the Seal Protection Act, the case was taken to the Canadian Supreme Court, which resulted in the law being overturned.

Although government inspections are required at some types of animal facilities, the regulatory bodies are closely linked with the industry and may have a shared interest in maintaining the status quo. Individual “whistle-blowers” and pro-animal organizations give a long list of specific examples of information regarding animal cruelty and regulation violations being suppressed. For example, Fleshler (2003) cites an example of a whistle-blower allegedly being fired for complaining about animal cruelty, while SHAC (2003) cites an alleged example of USDA inspectors finding violations and reportedly being told by supervisors that “this is political” and that the alleged breaches should not be filed. Food producers have also been fighting an active campaign to suppress public information. “Food disparagement” laws have been passed in at least 13 states and there is an orchestrated campaign by food producers to pass similar laws in all 50 states (Lilliston and Cummins, 1997). These laws make free speech difficult by shifting the burden of proof onto the speaker for

proving that their claims are scientifically sound. In addition, often the threat of legal action by a powerful industry is enough to suppress the speech of individuals who are not in a position to pay for a court battle. In fact the use of “SLAPP” (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) has been an ongoing strategy by animal industry organizations to suppress critics by intimidation rather than by winning actual monetary awards (Munro, 1999).

Given the huge barriers to legally obtaining animal exploitation information, illegal animal liberation and undercover activities play a vital role in recording and publicizing information that is currently inaccessible to the public. Some of the effort to record and publicize information on animal exploitation can be conducted legally using undercover methods. The undercover method has been used both by the media (e.g., by shows such as Dateline) and by animal organizations (e.g., PETA has sent workers undercover into animal laboratories). However, legal undercover investigations have their limitations. The media has shown a strong reluctance to investigate systematic animal abuse by industry. Perhaps this is due to the great influence these industries have both as advertisers and through political channels. Legal undercover work by animal organizations is limited by the time, expense, and difficulty of successfully passing an investigator off as a legitimate employee with the skills needed for a particular job and keeping them on the job for a sufficient amount of time to gather evidence. It also requires finding a person who cares deeply about animals yet who is simultaneously willing to stand by and not take action when they potentially observe horrific acts of cruelty and abuse. Surreptitiously filming some activities, particularly in secured facilities, may also prove difficult. In addition, even filming animal exploitation could be illegal. In addition to recent laws that specifically seek to prohibit the free flow of information regarding animal abuse, recording without consent is illegal in some states. Furthermore, confidentiality and other contractual agreements between the employer and employee could also leave the undercover investigator vulnerable to legal action. Therefore, in many situations illegal activity is necessary to uncover animal exploitation.

Some of the most compelling information on animal exploitation has come from taking possession of existing records and footage, which typically requires breaking the law. A good example of this was a videotape taken from the Head Injury Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania by the ALF. The tape not only clearly showed severely painful head injuries being inflicted on baboons at up to one thousand times the force of gravity, but also the unprofessionalism of the researchers, who joked about, mocked their subjects, and treated them roughly. The video also revealed that the baboons were not properly anesthetised, contrary to the researcher’s claims. Importantly, we might note that this case illustrates that

cooperation between underground activist groups and above ground organizations can be both politically efficient and successful, since PETA used the ALF footage to create the well-known video “Unnecessary Fuss” (Newkirk, 2000).

The cases where illegal or undercover documentation have been key to advancing knowledge and public debate regarding animal exploitation are too numerous to fully cover here. Some recent examples include the previously mentioned *fois gras* activity in Northern California, which resulted in activist footage of *fois gras* farm conditions being aired on television, an undercover investigation of Iams animal testing conducted by PETA, and footage of a dolphin slaughter in Japan by Sea Shephard Conservation Society. Well known films such as “Meet your Meat” and “The Witness” have used such footage for a powerful effect. “Unnecessary Fuss,” as already discussed, came from footage obtained illegally through the ALF. Many other well-known raids by the ALF have resulted in footage or documents which were later used by the media or investigators. The 1984 raid of “City of Hope” included video documentation and logs that helped to lead to the loss or suspension of millions in grant funding. A 1985 raid of University of California at Riverside resulted in powerful footage of “Britches,” a baby monkey whose eyes had been sewn shut for questionable experiments. A 1986 raid at the University of Oregon again resulted in documents and photos that had a media impact. This tactic has been so successful that an animal liberation-affiliated publication declared that “it was the A.L.F.’s steps to ‘expose’ which would ultimately be the vivisectors’ biggest threat and what would bring the A.L.F. and the animals their greatest victories” (No Compromise, 1999).

There can be no doubt that such illegal and covert entry is vital to monitoring animal exploitative industries, particularly in an environment where regulators are frequently lax or have an unhealthy connection with the industries they regulate. Again, one of the chief problems facing animal welfare advocates today is disseminating accurate information to the public, which is countered by the ease with which animal exploiting industries can simply discount or deny the accuracy of charges from whistleblowers. This is a simple yet effective tactic on the part of such industries since there is so much asymmetry in the information producers have relative to that available to the public, and since animal exploiters and their allies have been successful in portraying the perspectives of animal advocates as radical in the minds of ordinary people. The best method of counteracting this tactic is to have well-documented evidence that cannot be easily denied. Yet this information is simply not readily available to the public or other outsiders. The media, just like any other third party, also does not have wide access to this information. Furthermore, there are strong corporate interests that

can exert influence to limit journalistic investigations towards gathering such information. In the current institutional structure, therefore, obtaining and publicizing documentation of animal abuse often requires non-violent illegal action.

5. Conclusion

Even when they are for a worthy cause, direct action strategies have both positive and negative consequences that must be weighed carefully. However, regardless of the other social consequences of these actions, covert and sometimes illegal animal liberation/animal rights activity is necessary to provide information to the public in the current institutional system.

It has been established here that providing additional public information about animal exploitation is important and socially beneficial, even when only human interests are taken into consideration. When animal interests are taken into consideration, this information becomes even more vital. This information, though important, is also generally inaccessible to the public through legal means. Therefore, animal liberationists play an important and socially beneficial role as information providers, even though they must sometimes use illegal methods to obtain this information. With animal exploiters attempting to direct public attention to the property damage and alleged intimidation conducted by animal activists, the role of animal activists as providers of valuable and socially beneficial information has often been overlooked. Given the frequent criticism of animal liberation activity in the media, whereby the ALF and other direct action activists are branded as “eco-terrorists,” those in the movement would be well-served to focus attention on the important role they have played in monitoring animal exploitation and providing much-needed industry scrutiny to the public.

Animal liberation activists do have a credibility problem among the public and mainstream media. This reduces their effectiveness in bringing instances of animal exploitation to light. One way to help counter this, as previously mentioned, is to bring forward hard evidence that speaks for itself and is difficult to dispute, such as the footage from “Unnecessary Fuss.” Even then, building credibility is a slow building process since cases that are brought forward are often dismissed by the opposition as “exceptions” or even as somehow “staged.” This argument may be convincing to the public in individual cases. However, it can be countered if the animal advocates are viewed by the public as credible, or if the weight of evidence is strong enough that these counterarguments start to ring hollow (i.e., if enough cases are brought forward, it is hard to call them all exceptions.)

Animal liberationist credibility issues could also be partially addressed by putting more of a focus on media relations and being more savvy and organized in handling this aspect of their efforts.

However, this is difficult to do given the considerable power, sophistication, and media access of the organizations attempting to discredit animal activists. Some credibility can be gained simply by highlighting the role of activists discussed in this essay—i.e., liberationists' role as providers of socially beneficial information.

A more extreme but perhaps appropriate measure would be to delink organizationally efforts to expose animal abuse from other illegal activities by creating a new underground organization that is solely focused on exposing abuse and providing information to the public by whatever means are necessary. Currently, these two functions often share information, personnel, and resources. Sometimes, documenting abuse and other illegal actions are done in the same event. However, from the public's perspective, activities linked with vandalism, sabotage, and intimidation will be viewed unfavorably. At the same time, documenting abuse depends critically on the documentor's credibility. Therefore, it would be beneficial to isolate the important job of documenting industry abuse. This would also serve to highlight the information gathering function for the public, making it more difficult for supporters of animal exploiting industries to portray illegal activity as only about property damage and intimidation (in their efforts, for example, to push for anti-activist laws).

From a public policy perspective, activities which the public may find objectionable should become transparent, thereby making illegal activity unnecessary for information collection purposes. Most likely, consumers will not have the time or resources individually to monitor industry activities, even if they are publicly accessible. Therefore, intermediaries such as animal advocacy organizations should be encouraged and enabled to perform such monitoring. As a starting measure, the current trend in laws that increases penalties for nonviolent activities that have been labeled "domestic terrorism" should be reversed.

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Two Movements and Human-Animal Continuity: Positions, Assumptions, Contradictions.

Barbara Noske*

Introduction

This article is about the images, representations, and treatment of animals in two movements: the animal welfare/rights/liberation movement - the animal movement for short - and the deep green/deep ecology movement. More specifically it wants to look at the way in which each of these movements comes to terms with - or fails to come to terms with - the natural continuity existing between animals and humans.

No matter how each movement is typified, any definition will contain some form of generalization. This is inevitable since there are people, among them ecofeminists (Warren 1994), who would define themselves as animal advocates as well as deep green.

Individualistic reductionism

Members of the animal movement tend to focus on animal individuals as sentient beings and on our ethics vis-à-vis these beings. The domain for animal defenders is *that* nature which has evolved individual and sentient, *that* nature which can feel pain, pleasure and fear (Singer 1990).

Because many animal advocates (short for: the members of the animal movement) live in urban areas, are city dwellers (Francione 1996, Montgomery 2000), the animals they encounter tend to be those we have incorporated into our work and living places such as production animals in factory farms, animals used as organic instruments in laboratories, and companion animals. That is: urban individuals encounter animals that are either domesticated or been made to live (and die) in human-manufactured habitats (Sabloff 2001). Having said this, animal advocates do focus on hunted animals and this concerns wild rather than domesticated animals. Recreational hunting has a long history, especially in North America (Cartmill 1993, Flynn 2002).

The animal movement's focus on *sentience* stems from the understanding that there is continuity between the human and animal condition. Human sentience has ethical significance. It is at the root of the condemnation of oppression, torture, genocide. Human-animal continuity implies the acknowledgement that many animals have bodies and nervous systems that resemble ours. If well-being is important to humans, it cannot but be important to animals also. Not

*Research Fellow for the Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sydney, Australia. Telephone: (612) 9351 5344
Fax: (612) 9351 5700
Email: rihss@arts.usyd.edu.au

only do many animals have bodies like ours, their subjectivity - their mind and their emotional life-bears resemblance to us. Like us, animals are, in Tom Regan's terms "subject-of-a-life" (Regan 1983). Human-animal continuity in body and mind calls for parallel continuity in ethics, such that ethical obligations vis-à-vis animals cannot be radically different from those vis-à-vis humans.

Many people in the animal movement tend to be almost indifferent to all nature other than animal nature. Supposedly non-sentient living nature, such as plants and trees, is generally not taken into consideration. Neither are non-living, inorganic natural entities such as rocks, rivers, or even ecosystems. In themselves these parts of nature are not sentient and individually they cannot suffer so the animal movement often overlooks or dismisses them (Hay 2002).

The animal movement is highly critical of the traditional Cartesian notion of 'animal-machine' and constitutes the most important group worldwide to condemn factory farming. But it seems to have no objection against similar things done to plants (Dunayer 2001). A concept such as 'plant-machine' and the intensive vegetable and plant farming that is currently taking place do not raise the same eyebrows. The movement's critique of objectification and exploitation seems to rest solely on the aforementioned notion of sentience. The objectification -including things like genetic manipulation- of the rest of nature goes largely unnoticed or is dismissed.

By concentrating on sentient beings, animal advocates abstract from the environmental context of animal existence. Many animal activists have no conception of how animals, even as individuals, are integrated into other nature. One sometimes encounters a certain uneasiness among members of this movement about nature's meat-eaters - as though the eating of animals by other animals were something that ideally should not exist. Some animal rightists and liberationists tell me that, were it possible, they would like to 'phase out' predator-prey relationships or at least liberate (save) the prey animal from the equation (pers. comm. in several countries).

Another example of refusing to accept animal meat-eating as a zoological necessity is the tendency among vegetarian/vegan animal advocates to turn their carnivorous companion animals into vegetarians as well by feeding them plant-derived food often accompanied by special dietary supplements. Admittedly in North America standard pet food is hardly ever fresh and tends to come out of a packet or tin, unlike Europe where one can get fresh and increasingly organic free-range meat for one's companion animals at the local butcher. While many of these people do acknowledge that their animal's body may not 'be built' for vegetarian or vegan food, it is apparently no problem for them that the necessary daily intake of supplements will make that animal totally dependent on the health

industry. Inadvertently these people are turning animals into duplicates of themselves: modern consumers of the manufactured products of an industrial age. The animals' lives are humanized and *colonized* – their alienation taken to another extreme. Is this about protecting companion animals from non-ethical food or about imposing human ethics on the animal other? Incidentally, much plant-based and processed food happens to be the end-product of unsustainable monocultures - to which many animal habitats have had to give way - and has been put on the market by the same globalized and diversified agro-industrial complex which also produces standard pet foods (Noske 1997).

Many animal advocates thus seem to have trouble accepting nature as an interdependent system where everything has its place, function, and appropriate physical organisation. Organic beings took a long time evolving in relation to each other and to non-living inorganic nature. Nature is a community where every living thing lives off everything else (food, even vegan food, is living nature in a killed state), and in the zoological realm this means that both plant-eating and meat-eating have their respective *raison d'être*. Predation is neither a negligible anomaly nor an ethical deficiency in the ecosystem (Plumwood 1999).

At the risk of generalizing too much I see a lack of environmental awareness and environmental critique among many animal advocates. Urbanization, technological optimism, the modern urbanocentric mind-set (Lemaire 2002) are often taken for granted. I have met animal rightists, themselves living in high rise blocks in a North American city, who feel they should persuade Inuit people in the continent's north to move down south. The argument offered is that by abandoning the frozen lands their ancestors lived on for so many generations these Inuit could take up a more moral lifestyle vis-à-vis animals and become vegetarians (which at present they cannot be for the simple reason that where they are living hardly anything grows.)

I also have come across animal shelters whose managers on principle do not give companion animals to people with a garden, for fear that by going outdoors such animals could escape and come to harm. Accidental death in traffic was seen as infinitely more horrific than a lifelong existence indoors.

Many members of the animal movement seem to move surrounded by machines in an entirely humanized, electronic technoworld and tend to treat this circumstance simply as a given. The hegemony of the car in modern society, for example, hardly seems cause for concern to them. However, even apart from everything else that the car represents, this type of private transport does result in numerous animal deaths. According to Wildcare, a wildlife rehabilitation centre in Toronto, most injured and orphaned animals brought in are victims of auto transport and to a lesser extent cat

attacks (pers. communication with wildlife rehabilitator Csilla Darvasi, see Braunstein 1998 for the US). While cars are causing direct death or injury, habitat destruction connected with automobility and road building cause extensive indirect death and even extinction. Members of the animal movement often show no awareness of the violence involved in bulldozing an acre of land or building a road. One doesn't see much blood but it causes whole communities of animals and plants to perish (Livingston 1994).

In sum: the animal movement tends to portray animals as though they were isolated, city-dwelling consumer-citizens, living entirely outside of any ecological context. Such a view amounts to a form of reductionism: *individualistic reductionism*.

Ecosystemic reductionism

Animals for people in the deep green/deep ecology movement are first and foremost wild animals, i.e., fauna living in the wild. It is not sentience or cruelty issues that are central here: it is nature, naturalness, and environment (Baird Callicott 1989). Incidentally, the word *environment* itself is a very problematic term: it literally means that which surrounds us. By definition it is not 'us ourselves'. In the term environment the separation between ourselves and nature is already final (Noske 1997).

Deep greens tend to come down hard on anything that is no longer considered 'environment', no longer pristine or positively contributing to the ecosystem. Feral animals and domesticated animals are not popular in these circles. Central concepts are nature, species, and biodiversity (Low 2001). Only those animals that are still part of a given ecosystem really count for this movement. Animals are approached as representatives of their species. They are almost equated with their species or with the ecosystem of which they are part. The animal as individual is often downplayed.

Feral animals seem to be getting the worst of both worlds: they are neither an interesting species, nor individuals worthy of somebody's moral concern (Rolls 1969, Soulé/Lease 1995, Reads 2003). If anything, they are seen as vermin. It goes without saying that as species they do pose a threat to the natural ecosystems. Rats, cats, rabbits, dogs, foxes, horses, donkeys, pigs, goats, water buffaloes - animals intentionally or unintentionally brought into the Australian or American continent (by humans) - are threatening local biodiversity. These feral animals can and do destroy the balance in naturally evolved communities. The predators among them sometimes totally wipe out indigenous species whose members have no natural defence against these 'foreigners'. Herbivorous feral animals can totally devastate habitats that native animals are dependent upon (Reads 2003). (Unfortunately such ecological hazards are sometimes belittled or downplayed by the animal movement.)

Deep green-leaning people perceive feral animals as members of unwanted species and advocate their destruction, often by very inhumane means. Until recently the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Australia was in the habit of shooting brumbies (feral horses) from the air, thereby indiscriminately massacring herds and disrupting whole horse societies and families. In the north of the continent water buffaloes are being run down by 4WDs equipped with huge 'roo bars'. Rabbits are purposely being targeted with introduced deadly diseases, often by means of specially infected fleas which are then released into their burrows (Reads 2003). Foxes and feral cats and dogs are being killed by means of poison baits. From the literature on human poisoning (Bell 2001) and from quite recent cases of food poisoning in China (newspaper reports September 2002) we know what horrendous suffering is involved in death by poisoning. It can't be all that different for animals. Among deep greens, however, the suffering of feral and farm animals hardly counts.

Sentience in the deep ecology/deep green discourse is often treated as some sort of byproduct of animal life. So is individuality. The natural capacity of sentience is never included in any notion of environment, ecology or nature.

Some deep greens/deep ecologists such as Aldo Leopold, Gary Snyder, Paul Shepard, (cf. Leopold 1949, Shepard 1996) endorse modern recreational hunting as a way to be at one with nature. Not many deep greens are taking a critical position on hunting except when it involves endangered species. The issue tends to revolve around numbers rather than the preciousness of individual lives. Neither do deep greens tend to take a critical stance on animal experimentation. After all professional ecologists and conservation biologists often conduct experiments themselves.

Mostly, experimenters are using individuals of numerically strong species or species especially bred for the purpose such as white mice and rats. In the eyes of deep greens and deep ecologists these are no longer 'nature' and so their well-being is low on their priority list.

Deep greens/deep ecologists have been known to argue that hunting is part of human nature when it was still in tune with other nature. They usually point toward hunter/gatherer societies. Hunting is natural, they say.¹ In deep green circles the hunting of animals is felt to be more natural than having animals for companions, which is often seen as degenerate. However the roots of the phenomenon of companion animals go as far back as hunting. All societies from Paleolithic times onwards have been known to keep animals as pets or companions. It occurs in all societies, in all periods of history and in all economic classes (Serpell 1986). It may not exactly be 'human nature' but apparently many people have felt the need for a face-to-face or touch-to-touch relationship with individuals of another

species (Lévi-Strauss 1973, Tuan 1984). So much for the ‘unnaturalness’ of companion animals.

Because deep greens do not have much time for domesticated animal nature they tend to be rather uninformed and unconcerned about what happens to animals in factory farms and laboratories. During various ecotours in the Australian outback it strikes me time and again how no effort whatsoever is made to avoid serving factory-farmed meat to the participants of such a tour. When queried on the issue, the often ecologically astute tour guides tend to demonstrate an entirely value-free and neutral attitude to where the tour food was coming from. Deep greens/deep ecologists might disapprove of factory farming because of its unsustainability and its polluting effect on the nature outside, but not because of the things done to natural beings inside. Production and companion animals simply do not figure as ‘green’ (Noske 1994).

In sum: the deep green/deep ecology movement tends to equate animals with their species. Equating animals with their species or with their ecosystem amounts to another form of reductionism: *ecosystemic reductionism*.

Disembodied empathy versus embodied antipathy

Both movements are potentially united in their struggle against anthropocentrism: the idea of humanity as the measure of all things. But apart from this there seem to be few platforms where the two groups actually meet: only during some international campaigns such as the ones against seal-hunting and whaling. The first time a group like Greenpeace showed any concern for individual animal welfare was when many years ago in Canada three whales got stuck in the ice. The International Fund for Animal Welfare, though essentially an animal welfare organisation, does from time to time put forward arguments to do with habitat destruction and extinction of endangered species.

Strangely enough - because one would expect it the other way round - it is the animal movement rather than the deep ecology movement which invokes animal-human continuity as a line of reasoning for considering animals as individuals. On the other hand, many animal advocates are themselves almost the embodiment of human-animal *discontinuity*. As mentioned before, in this movement there hardly exists any critique of the way present-day technology is alienating humans from their ‘animalness’. This issue is tackled by the deep green/deep ecology movement rather than by the animal lobby.

Again consider the car issue. For all other species, bodily movement is first and foremost organic movement: it involves muscle power, fatigue, or sweat. But for modern humans bodily movement is more and more being replaced by mechanisation and computerizing. They let machines do the moving for them and as a result they are becoming more and more *unanimal-like*. Hardly

anybody in animal advocacy circles looks upon this as something problematic which could stand in the way of the natural human condition, i.e. our physical animalness. For them this issue appears to have nothing to do with human-animal continuity. But continuity is not just about the 'humanlike-ness' of animals but also about the 'animallike-ness' of humans. There is an existential and crucial connectedness between the two. In circles of the animal lobby, however, human-animal continuity remains largely an abstract moral principle which is hardly 'lived' in reality. One could perhaps say that this attitude is characterised by *disembodied empathy*: the empathy is real but its material basis forgotten.

The deep green/deep ecology movement, by contrast, does appreciate the wonders of nature, is conscious of animal-human continuity, and denounces various technologies (including the car) as alienating and harmful to nature. But there exists a strange contradiction here too. Though in deep green circles it is acknowledged that modern human practices have been extremely exploitative of nature and the wild, this does not seem to have induced much sympathy for exploited animals. Animal victims, be they domesticated or feral, are blamed for their own predicament and in some cases for posing an active threat to what is perceived as real nature.

Although the deep greens, in contrast to their city-based counterparts in the animal movement, are more likely to opt for a natural lifestyle and to be more mindful of a shared animal-human past, this doesn't translate into sympathy with animals that have fallen by the wayside. This attitude could be characterised as *embodied antipathy*. Human-animal continuity is lived and 'realised', but instead of empathy is often accompanied by a disdain for those beings that no longer lead natural lives in the appropriate ecosystem. Denatured though such beings may be, they nevertheless are still close enough to nature to possess the *natural* capacity for suffering whether it be pain, boredom, listlessness, social and ecological deprivation or agonizing death.

Another contradiction is apparent here as well. In regions like North America and Australia the ecosystemic focus is strong and as mentioned before is often expressed by advocating harsh measures against the exotic and the feral (Aslin/Bennett 2000, Reads 2003). One wonders what self-image underlies such attitudes. Is this a curious case of human foreigners (in the ecological sense) condemning animal foreigners? Would such people advocate the eradication of themselves, members of a group of exotic white invaders whose adverse impact on the local ecosystem has been well-documented? Would they be in favour of curbing all - non-aboriginal - human lives and births, not to mention more drastic measures? If the answer is negative, how can such measures be justified with regard to animals? Downplaying animal sentience and animal cruelty

issues while at the same time upholding human sentience arguments endorses ethical discontinuity between humans and animals, albeit perhaps unintentionally.

The recent developments in animal biotechnology are going to be a test case for both movements.ⁱⁱ Some animal welfarists have claimed that genetic engineering may enable us to design animal species that are fully adapted to factory farming conditions (Rollin, 1995). Others, among them veterinarians, are toying with possibilities of cloning and engineering 'more suitable' and 'made-to-measure' transgenic companion animals (Quain, 2002). For deep greens the issue of genetic engineering highlights pressing dilemmas with regard to species integrity (Birke/Michael 1998).

How will the animal movement react? And will the deep ecology movement tackle the issue at all? Admittedly, the deep green/deep ecology movement concerns itself with species but only with species in the wild. Deep greens may be worried about what will happen if transgenic populations come into contact with naturally evolved wild ones. How will that affect the community of species? Most genetic engineering is done to already domesticated species, the ones the green movement isn't interested in. But recently there have been calls by green-leaning scientists to bring back extinct wild species such as the Tasmanian tiger (thylacine) by way of genetic engineering.

Common ground?

How we are to navigate between individualised ethics and ecosystemic reductionism?

The animal lobby bestows on the sentient in nature a status of individual humanness: it asks how animals are part of human society and ethics. The movement could perhaps bridge the gap which separates it from deep ecology by overcoming its exclusive focus on sentience. It could extend its compassionate ethics so as to include the non-sentient and even the inorganic. The tricky part would be how to include the whole earth without simultaneously humanizing and colonizing it. Moreover there always will be clashes of interest between animals and animals, animals and plants, individuals and species, the organic and inorganic.

If compassionate society is about extending ethics as far as we can, deep ecology is not. It is about compliance with and obedience to nature's measure, nature's rhythm, nature's limitations (Livingston 1994). It concerns compliance with a nature that includes things like mortality, predator-prey relationships, the 'previousness' of species, imperfect bodies, our own finiteness. Instead of asking how animals are part of ethics, deep ecology asks how animals *and* humans are part of nature.

Consider Val Plumwood's musings about 'Being Prey'. In 1985 this vegetarian ecophilosopher barely survived a crocodile

attack in Kakadu National Park, in Australia's Northern Territory. Thereby she came face to face with her own *edibility*. It made her realize that not only had she a body, like all animals she *was* a body: she was (potential) meat for another animal to devour. The experience has forced her to rethink the ethics/ecology dualism. It is good to focus on large predators such as crocodiles, bears, sharks - those that can take a human life - Plumwood states, because these animals present a test for us (also for the two movements, I would add). Are we prepared to share and co-exist with the free, wild, and mortally dangerous otherness of the earth, without colonizing it into a form that eliminates all friction, challenge, or consequence? Predator populations test our recognition of our human existence in mutual, ecological terms, seeing ourselves as part of the food chain: eaten as well as eater. (Plumwood 1999)

The two viewpoints – compliance with nature and societal ethics – at times seem incompatible. It is a difficult dilemma. Mary Midgley (1983) and Baird Callicott (in Hargrove 1992) tried to solve it by arguing that wild animals deserve our protection as part of the ecosystem and that domesticated animals are entitled to our care, because they are part of a mixed human-animal community and we have ethical obligations to *all* the individuals of such a community. The problem is: this arrangement would not cover all animals. Feral animals and exotics belong neither to the first group (the original ecosystem) nor to the second (the mixed domestic community). The reason commonly given for persecuting and eradicating these animals is precisely that they do *not* seem to belong to any community. 'Pests' are neither interesting as species nor as individuals, it is felt, and this turns them into outlaws.

Nevertheless all of us, animals as well as humans, somehow exist in nature and also in society (or at least in a human-defined nation-state). Each and everyone of us is a sentient individual, a species-member as well as a 'place' in the world. In this world nature and society intersect. It is all there is, nobody and nothing exists outside either.

The animal lobby needs to realize the importance of wildness, the relative 'otherness' of non-humans, and what Livingston has called, the "previousness" of species. It should guard against an ethical colonization and humanization of nature. The deep ecology movement will need to pay more heed to matters of sentience, cruelty and suffering in the way it conceives of and treats individual animal beings, including those that objectively do damage to other nature. Many feral species did not choose to live where they are now living. Humanity took them there.

To really do justice to animal-human continuity we must ask ourselves what it is we (should) do with nature but also how we ourselves are 'of nature'. According to Plumwood (1999) we cannot in a neo-Cartesian way divide the world into two separate domains:

an ethical, human realm and an animal, ecological realm. Everyone and everything exists in both. All food is souls, she says – and ultimately all souls are food.

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ⁱ Hunting would indeed be natural if human hunters would kill their prey with their teeth or nails but they happen to use artefacts such as high tech hunting or fishing equipment which makes hunting 'cultural' rather than natural.

ⁱⁱ Incidentally, the two movements have so far not been all that interested in each other's literature. While working in a North American faculty of environmental studies I found that my colleagues were generally unfamiliar with animal ethics and animal rights literature other than perhaps Peter Singer's (whose work they had heard of, not read). A journal such as *Society & Animals* is unknown among deep greens and wildlife enthusiasts. On the other hand, many of the animal ethicists and rightists I met on book tours and at conferences in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand remain unfamiliar with literature of the deep ecology kind.

Who is the Legally Defined Terrorist: HLS or SHAC?

Tim Phillips*

Introduction

The Western scientific world view holds that animal testing is necessary and praiseworthy work that will improve human quality of life, while any activism against animal testing is misguided, anti-human, and sometimes “terroristic.”[1] However, an investigation into the campaign against Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) yields the opposite conclusion. Huntingdon Life Sciences,[2] an animal testing company, is guilty of international terrorism, and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC),[3] the campaign to close HLS, is effectively responding with counterterrorism. In this paper, these terms will be defined according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI),[4] and a short history of HLS and SHAC will be given to defend these claims. I will show that despite the dominant view of animal testing, it may be the activists who are praiseworthy individuals and the companies that are the real “terrorists.”

Violence and Non-human Animals

The following argument is based on the view that maltreatment of non-human animals can legitimately be seen as violence. While animals are legally defined as property, they share morally relevant characteristics with human beings, and as a result they can also be victims of violence. Many people intuitively believe that there is a drastic difference between maltreatment of humans and maltreatment of non-humans, and yet this intuition does not rest on any morally relevant difference. Certainly there are differences in intelligence, but as philosopher Peter Singer asks, “If possessing a higher degree of intelligence does not entitle one human to use another for his or her own ends, how can it entitle humans to exploit nonhumans for the same purpose?”[5] In order to avoid this ethical bind and similar ones, there has been an appeal to the only characteristic that cannot vary between human beings, namely species. Although this may seem to be the obvious morally relevant difference, in the realm of ethics it is arbitrary at best. Furthermore, differential treatment based on a social construction such as species can be no more defensible than discrimination based on similar constructions such as race.[6] Therefore, there is no reason to believe that animals cannot be victims of violence.

*University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM)

e-mail: veganism@hotmail.com

Defining Terrorism

Actions taken by HLS meet all the requirements of international terrorism. According to James F. Jarboe, Domestic Terrorism Section Chief of the Counterterrorism Division of the FBI,

International terrorism involves violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any state, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or any state. Acts of international terrorism are intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government, or affect the conduct of a government. These acts transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate, or the locale in which perpetrators operate.[7]

A strict interpretation of this definition produces some unexpected results, such as the possibility that a corporation (or even the United States government itself) is guilty of terrorism. In addition, HLS meets these FBI requirements by violating animal welfare and laboratory practice laws in order to influence government drug policy. These actions are violent toward animals and put human lives in danger. Also, HLS operates in both England and the United States, and so the company falls under the rubric of international as opposed to domestic terrorism.

Terrorist Tactics by HLS

The first requirement given by Jarboe is that acts of international terrorism are either violent or dangerous to human life. HLS commits both violent acts and acts that are dangerous to human life. While HLS does not commit violence against human life, the company does inflict violence on non-human animals. Animals are forced to inhale, ingest, and/or be exposed to high amounts of various products that are being tested, such as pesticides, detergents, weed killer, diet pills, or Viagra. Lab reports at HLS provide grisly details about how the products affect the animals. For example, in one experiment some animals were documented as “rotting, but still alive.”[8] Specific violent acts of HLS employees include punching four-month-old beagle puppies in the face and throwing them against walls, dissecting a conscious monkey, and transplanting a frozen pig’s heart into a baboon.[9] Some HLS employees have been fired for these acts, but they were only sentenced to 50 hours of community service after being convicted of animal cruelty. A light sentence of this kind has no impact upon the institutionalized cruelty to animals in HLS laboratories.

HLS also threatens human life by using unscientific tests to legalize products that are potentially unsafe for human purposes. No

less than five undercover investigations of HLS document cruelty to animals and confirm suspicions that tests at HLS are unscientific. One HLS worker was caught on videotape saying, "You can wipe your ass on that data." [10] When asked whether or not an experimental procedure was done correctly, another worker replied, "Nope. Not supposed to, never saw it, never did it, can't prove it." [11] Yet another employee explained that animal experimentation is used by HLS because the results are easily manipulated in order to successfully move products onto the market and satisfy HLS customers. According to SHAC USA, "By misleading scientists, the use of non-human animals as research models for human-based disease harms human patients indirectly, by delaying and directing research monies away from life-saving discoveries, and directly by endangering human lives." [12] This claim is supported by the fact that legal drugs, the overwhelming majority of which have been tested safe on animals, kill more people (roughly 100,000 annually) than all illegal drugs combined. Also, approximately fifteen percent of all hospital admissions are due to adverse medical reactions. [13]

The second requirement given by Jarboe is that acts of international terrorism are against the law in the United States or any state. Besides the animal cruelty convictions mentioned above, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) fined HLS \$50,000 for 23 violations of the Animal Welfare Act in 1998. Despite the USDA fine, SHAC research indicates that these violations continued at least until March of 2000. [14] In the United Kingdom, both the Daily Express and the Observer have reported illegal activity inside HLS. [15] "Breaches of law even went unpunished in some cases," according the Observer in April 2003. [16] Although HLS supposedly safety tests human medicine, the company has violated Good Laboratory Practice laws over 600 times. [17]

The third requirement given by Jarboe is that acts of international terrorism are either meant to: (1) intimidate or coerce a civilian population, (2) change the policy of a government, or (3) affect the conduct of a government. Many actions taken by HLS do intimidate a civilian population, specifically the animal rights activists who have been sued for exercising their First Amendment rights. In April of 2001, for example, HLS and ex-business partner Stephens Inc. sued SHAC USA (as well as three other animal rights organizations and "affiliated individuals" [18]) for seven million dollars, [19] only to withdraw the lawsuit a little more a year later. [20] (Although SHAC has been sued many times, it has never been held liable [21]). Despite this and similar incidents, intimidation of animal activists is not the ultimate intent of HLS. Its real purpose is to influence the policy of governments, and this alone meets the international terrorism requirement. HLS does this by treating animals with indifference and cruelty, and then tailoring the test results in order to convince a government to legalize a product.

The fourth and final requirement given by Jarboe is that acts of international terrorism are either performed in more than one country or they are intended to influence the people of more than one country. HLS meets this requirement with its three laboratory sites. The main site is in Huntingdon, England, and the other sites are in Suffolk, England, and New Jersey, United States. It is indubitable that HLS is committing international terrorism, as they meet all of the FBI requirements. This is a striking counterexample to the view that animal testing is always praiseworthy work focused on reliable science and human health.

Counterterrorist Tactics by SHAC

The FBI is not so clear on their definition of counterterrorism, but they do give clues as to what makes up a counterterrorist effort. The main elements that define counterterrorism are using surveillance and analysis to learn about terrorist activity, acting to prevent the realization of terrorist threats, and neutralizing terrorist operatives, cells, and networks, with the ultimate goal of ending terrorism worldwide. Other aspects include using an understanding of the situation in moving quickly to prevent terrorist attacks, and working with regard for the United States Constitution in order to protect civil liberties.[22] According to this description by the FBI, the volunteer-run SHAC campaign fits into the category of counterterrorism, not terrorism.

With the ultimate goal of closing HLS, which was shown above to be an international terrorist organization, SHAC works to make life at HLS both unpleasant and unprofitable. HLS is a Contract Research Organization (CRO), which, as defined by the Food and Drug Administration,[23] means that it assumes one or more of the obligations of sponsoring companies. In this case, HLS stays in business as a result of the companies that contract with it to test products. SHAC carefully identifies these companies and convinces them that contracting cruel and unscientific animal research will not be profitable for them.[24] By convincing companies that HLS is unprofitable, HLS loses business and moves closer to bankruptcy.

SHAC also pressures HLS directly. SHAC demonstrates outside HLS laboratories, the buildings of companies that contract HLS, and the homes of executives from any of those companies (including HLS). For example, there were more than a dozen demonstrations at HLS CEO Andrew Baker's condo in December 2003 and January 2004 alone.[25] SHAC also creates bad publicity for those companies, and asks SHAC supporters to call and send e-mails to company executives in order to jam the companies' abilities to communicate and do business as they usually do. This type of activity by SHAC and their supporters has consistently convinced companies that contracting HLS is not worth the protest activity and bad publicity. Citibank, Merrill Lynch,[26] and over a hundred other

companies have decided to stop contracting HLS for these reasons.[27] Also, the SHAC campaign against HLS has played a major role in HLS being forced off both the London and the New York Stock Exchange.[28]

SHAC does all of its work within the boundaries of the United States Constitution. All of the demonstrations, calls, and e-mails explained above are legal, and protected by the First Amendment. In one case, 39 charges against SHAC demonstrators (including extortion, threatening, stalking, and conspiracy) were dropped after a judge decided that the demonstration was protected by the Constitution as free speech.[29] In another, SHAC USA, Voices for Animals, and website administrator Kevin Mudrick were sued by HLS and Stevens, Inc. for using a company logo on a campaign Web site, but the judge ruled that the Web site was protected by the First Amendment, since it was not for commercial use.[30] SHAC activists have been arrested in connection with the campaign against HLS (e.g. Dave Blenkinsop, for assaulting HLS managing director Brian Cass,[31] Paul Holiday and Paul Leboutillier, for making phone calls to HLS share holders[32]), but their illegal activities were independent of their involvement in SHAC. In sharp contrast, the illegal actions of HLS employees are directly related to their employment by HLS. If HLS took the time and energy necessary to properly care for the animals used in its experiments, it would be far less profitable, and the results of the experiments would be harder to tailor for the purposes of moving products onto the market. On the other hand, if SHAC activists participated in only legal measures in order to close HLS, the organization would still be relatively effective. In a word, the illegal activity of HLS, unlike that of SHAC, is essential to the organization's success.

Because SHAC does extensive research in order to prevent HLS from committing terrorist acts, and because SHAC does not disobey the law, it follows that SHAC is a counterterrorist group (as defined by the FBI) working against the criminal actions of HLS.

Objections

There are two predictable objections to this argument. First, one might claim that actions that are violent toward non-human animals cannot be categorized as terrorism per se. Second, one might insist that SHAC is the actual terrorist organization of the two.

While HLS could still be considered an international terrorist organization without the implementation of violence toward animals (because the process of testing drugs on animals endangers human life), there are persuasive rationales for the view that non-human animals can be victims of terrorism. Even though many people regard equality as a matter of fact among human beings, the belief that people of different genders and ethnicities generally have relatively equal intelligence, strength, and other qualities, could be completely false. Still, we would not want to abandon the idea of

equality, and that is because it is a moral principle, not a matter of fact. "The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a prescription of how we should treat human beings," writes Singer.[33] We treat people as equals because they have similar interests, not because they are equal in all respects.

In order to have such interests, all a being must possess is sentience. Sentience is not unique to human beings, and so it follows that the interests of (sentient) non-human animals must also be considered equally. Therefore, to say that terrorism can be committed against one being (a mentally retarded child) but not another (a cat) is a prejudice based on characteristics that are morally irrelevant and is no less excusable than racism or sexism. This is illustrated in a quote from Dr. Michael Podell, a vivisector who was convinced to resign by an animal rights campaign against his experiments involving cats and addictive drugs. In defense of animal testing, he stated: "It's a small number of animals to get information to potentially help millions of people." [34] Obviously, if the cats in Podell's study were replaced by severely mentally retarded human beings who would never develop any sentience, abstract reasoning, or other characteristics beyond those of a cat, the research would be cancelled and Podell arrested.

Although by definition HLS is guilty of international terrorism and SHAC is using counterterrorism, some have claimed that SHAC is the actual terrorist organization of the two. They point to spirited demonstrations, publicity campaigns, phone and e-mail blockades, smashed windows, anti-HLS graffiti, slashed tires, and arson. Such tactics have elicited negative reactions from groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, which described "SHAC's campaign to harass employees of Huntingdon - and even distantly related business associates like Marsh - with frankly terroristic tactics similar to those of anti-abortion extremists. Employees have had their homes vandalized with spray-painted 'Puppy killer' and 'We'll be back' notices. They have faced a mounting number of death threats, fire bombings and violent assaults. They've also had their names, addresses, and personal information posted on Web sites and posters, declaring them 'wanted for collaboration with animal torture.'" [35]

It is true that according to the FBI definition, these illegal actions would change the status of SHAC from counterterrorism to domestic terrorism. However, this position assumes that the responsibility for any politically motivated illegal action taken against a company can be traced back to a legal campaign against the same company. Richard Berman, Executive Director of the Center for Consumer Freedom, seems to hold just this stance. As he wrote in his testimony at a U.S. House of Representatives Oversight Hearing on eco-terrorism, "While [the Animal Liberation Front] took credit for these crimes [stated above], SHAC publicized them, suggesting that the two are connected if not identical." [36] What Berman and others fail to appreciate are the ample counterexamples to this

argument. When a labor union publicizes the smashing of a Starbucks shop at a globalization protest they attended, this does not imply that the union had any control over the sequence of events leading up to the crime. And without any control over the crime, an organization certainly cannot have any responsibility.

Even though “anonymous activists have made unsolicited contributions to the efforts to close HLS in the form of liberating animals, breaking windows, burning out cars, and other forms”[37] of politically motivated property destruction[38], SHAC is an aboveground campaign. SHAC ideologically supports actions that meet the Animal Liberation Front (ALF)[39] requirements, publicizes these actions, and “will lend tangible support to those tried and/or convicted of” such crimes, but this is entirely legal activity.[40] Although Berman recognizes that “at the end of the exercise, it’s all about the same effort,”[41] this in no way closes his case against SHAC. The ALF and SHAC are two separate organizations, the former using an illegal underground approach and the latter adopting a legal and aboveground presence. Whether or not sabotage is an ethically defensible tactic, the SHAC campaign evades this philosophical question by acting according to the laws and Constitution of the United States. Their work to end dangerous research and terrorism against non-human animals is both legal and ethical. Because SHAC does not advocate or provoke violence, the campaign cannot legally be held responsible for the actions of anonymous members of the ALF or related organizations.

Conclusion

It is an Orwellian irony that violence and dangerous science are commonly considered beneficial while the resistance to this activity is considered terrorism. Delving beyond these considerations and focusing on the current government definitions unexpectedly shows that HLS is an international terrorist organization, and that SHAC is using counterterrorism in its attempt to save countless animals and protect human lives. The dominant view of animal testing fails to accommodate cases of this kind, in which animal rights activists are praiseworthy individuals an animal research is terrorism. Because animals are capable of becoming victims of terrorism and SHAC is not responsible for any illegal actions against HLS, there is no excuse for the current private and state protection of HLS. The cruel and dangerous practices HLS employs for profit warrant not only our attention, but our action as well.

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(Im)possible Witness: Viewing PETA's "Holocaust on Your Plate"

Nathan Snaza*

Those who knew
what this was all about
must make way for those
who know little.
And less than that.
And at last nothing less than nothing.
-Wisława Szymborska

A respectful postmodern approach to representing the Shoah through rethinking documentary photography and its difficult mandate to speak for others, to bear witness, to teach, and to warn is to attempt the task yet acknowledge its inevitable (im)possibilities.... It is precisely the issue that the telling of events *cannot* fit into a cohesive narrative that is at stake.

-Andrea Liss, *Trespassing
Through Shadows*

Probably not unlike a good many other people interested in animal liberation, I spend a fair amount of time being embarrassed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). More often than not, I bristle at their tactics more than their "message," if such a separation is possible. The recent example of PETA preparing pamphlets encouraging children to ask their mothers how many animals were murdered for their coats comes to mind. I suspect that when confronted with such a question from a child, some mothers will struggle to find an answer and will have to give some amount of serious thought to why they wear fur. I suspect that the rest of the mothers will, for reasons not all that hard to imagine, become enraged and teach their children about the ridiculousness of animal rights activists.

The recent Holocaust On Your Plate exhibit (<http://www.masskilling.com>) did something else, at least for me. At first, I was just interested in it, in the sense of what Roland Barthes calls the *studium*. "which doesn't mean, at least not immediately,

*University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
snaz0001@umn.edu

‘study,’ but application to a thing, taste for someone, a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment, of course, but without special acuity” (Barthes, 26). But soon it became “that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me);” it became a *punctum* (Barthes, 26). I couldn’t get the exhibit out of my mind. I still can’t.

The exhibit, it seems, rubs rather too close to a good many problems that I have been unable to think through with any satisfaction, including but not limited to: the status of modernity and postmodernity, where the latter might be thought as following a “rupture” in history (usually associated with the Shoah¹); the increasingly troubling question of whether “human rights,” in their classic liberal sense, guarantee anything with the decline of the nation states’ protections of them; the confusing use of media spectacles for progressive political purposes (playing by the rules of transnational capital in order to “critique” transnational capitalism); and, the question of what pedagogical purposes images of the Shoah are mobilized for and under what conditions. I submit, at the outset, that I do not know precisely how to make sense of any of these problems. But I also submit that in confronting the images in the PETA display, I could do nothing but try to work through these philosophical questions in order to comprehend what I was looking at.



Preliminary considerations

Before exploring some of these philosophical questions, some comments are in order about politics. First, I unequivocally condemn slaughterhouses, factory farming, and any practices that kill or harm non-animals in the interest of human living. Second, I assert that slaughterhouses and the extermination camps of the Shoah are not only analogous but, in fact, trade in exactly the same networks of confinement, execution, de-individualization, isolation from the

(possibly) concerned eyes in the metropole, and normalization under the aegis of “health” (of individuals, of the nation, etc.). Third, I am skeptical of modernist discourses of rights from a strictly pragmatic perspective, which leads me to situate my thinking-through of the PETA exhibit within “postmodernist” discourses.

It is the third claim that I anticipate many readers might object to. Anticipating this, I offer the following. First, I assert that there is no “reliable condemnation rooted in values, priorities, and a sense of right and wrong that *no one would dispute and everyone accept* . . . for the simple reason that there are no such universally accepted values, priorities, and moral convictions” (Fish 34). I would have no trouble in pointing out that any defense of factory farming is interested and biased (owing to profit, convenience, a simplistic dismissal of animals from the realm of ethics, etc.). Because of this, I cannot claim that my condemnation of factory farming is any less interested or biased. This does not stop me from asserting that the use of animals for food is unequivocally wrong, and that I expect everyone—including those who do not share my biases—to recognize it as such and demand that these practice end. I can reconcile these two positions (claiming that there is no non-biased position to speak from and making a universal and unequivocal moral claim) through recourse to one of the most basic insights of postmodernism: that “in order to assert something and mean it without qualification, I of course have to believe that it is true, but I don’t have to believe that I could demonstrate its truth to all rational persons” (Fish 34).

I will attempt to convince readers that there does exist a ground on which to reject factory farms and at the same time demand that no human-animals ever be subject to camps again (this ground will be a rejection of *zoe* as the object of biopolitics), but I am not convinced that there exists a universal epistemological ground on which I can rest my assertions. It is for this reason, unsatisfying as it may seem, that in the end I make a plea for an ethical duty toward “naked life” in all its forms that is not rooted in universals or systems of thought. Pragmatically, what I find is that whether or not I can find or articulate any ethical or epistemological system for rejecting camps in all their forms, I have to act. The faces of the animals and the humans in PETA’s exhibit demand that of me. It is for this reason that the photos of the exhibit are reproduced here.



Preliminary concerns II: Biopolitics and Naked Life

So, I am amenable to the type of analogy the PETA exhibit aims at revealing (I would argue that factory farms and extermination camps are two instances of the same principle), but I am thoroughly ambivalent about the exhibit itself. I want to explore this ambivalence by looking at a heuristic model for Shoah reception in the United States, by considering how the exhibit traffics in representation and knowledge, and by situating my response to the exhibit in relation to (bio)politics and a notion of “witness.” But first, I would like to explain briefly why I think it matters (and this necessarily already moves us into the moral and political sphere).

In his essay “What is a Camp?,” the contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes that “the camps . . . were not born out of ordinary law, and even less were they the product—as one might have believed—of a transformation and a development of prison law; rather, they were born out of the state of exception and martial law” (Agamben *MWE* 38). This is to say that, just like the United States camp at Guantanamo, Cuba today, the concentration camps began as physical manifestations of a state of emergency understood to protect the personal freedoms of citizens. Not unlike Bush’s “enemy combatants,” or the people who could be stripped of their citizenship because of vague suspicion or an appearance of hostility toward the government (see Best; Hentoff; Snaza), the Jews entering the concentration camps had been stripped of all legal rights by the Nuremberg Laws. Thus, Agamben is led to posit the following: “*Inasmuch as its inhabitants have been stripped of every political status and reduced completely to naked life, the camp is also the most absolute biopolitical space that has ever been realized—a space in which power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without any mediation*” (Agamben

MWE 41).

Two concepts from Agamben's analysis are helpful for us in thinking about what is at stake in the analogy between the Shoah and slaughterhouses. The first is "biopolitics," which Agamben takes from Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality Volume I*. In explaining the function of power in contemporary society, Foucault writes that "now it is over life, throughout its unfolding, that power establishes its dominion" and that "the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence" (Foucault 137-8). Across several of Foucault's works, we see him charting and trying to make sense of "a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through" (139), that is, a "biopolitics." We might note, by way of a quick illustration, that even though participation in electoral politics in the United States has become less and less popular, the investments in the health, productivity and definition of bodies have boomed (think, variously, of ergonomics, the explosion of diet programs, plastic surgery, the debates about when life begins [around abortion] and ends [around euthanasia], the governmental and corporate haranguing over managed health care, etc.). The end result of this explosion of investments is that global transnational capital has no need at all of electoral politics. We are so thoroughly enmeshed in technologies of health and participation in the global market that most of us never stop to think about it. As Ani Difranco says, "it's as easy as breathing for us all to participate . . . you know it's all around you but it's hard to point and say 'there'" (Difranco "Next").

The other term which is useful from Agamben's analysis is "naked life." In several of his works which deal with something he calls *homo sacer* (the sacred man, who can be killed but not sacrificed) Agamben goes back to a distinction in Greek between two words for life: *zoe* and *bios*. *Zoe* is "the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, humans, or gods)" while *bios* signifies "the form or manner of living peculiar to a single individual or group" which is unique to humans (Agamben MWE 3). Read with Foucault's notion of biopolitics, we start to glimpse that our current political apparatus functions not on us as humans with distinct ways of life (in the *polis* as it were), but rather on us directly as *zoe*. The concept of the *homo sacer* points to human life stripped of its "distinct way of life" (or, what Agamben calls "form-of-life"), which becomes only *zoe*. It should not surprise us that an entire book of Agamben's focuses on this reduction of human life to *zoe* at Auschwitz. We see this same naked life being operated upon in the factory farms:

Calves raised for veal—the male offspring of dairy cows—are among the most cruelly confined and deprived animals on factory farms. Taken from their mothers only

a few days after birth, they are chained in stalls only 22 inches wide with slatted floors that cause severe leg and joint pain. Since their mothers' milk is usurped for human consumption, they are fed a milk substitute laced with hormones but deprived of iron: Anemia keeps their flesh pale and tender but makes the calves very weak. When they are slaughtered at the age of about 16 weeks, they are often too sick or crippled to walk. One out of every 10 calves dies in confinement. (PETA, "Modern Day")

If the Shoah reveals human life "dehumanized" to naked life, and our current political situation is moving more and more toward power enacted directly on our naked lives, then is not the Shoah necessarily central in our thinking about politics? When we see this same naked life operated upon in the factory farms, shouldn't we understand these camps, and *their* naked life, as being part of the same networks of production which we are all—human and non-human—caught up in as part of globalized capital? Any question of resistance, then, must take its aim at the level of global capital (and not the State, which is everywhere becoming-impotent in the face of capital) and must be able to account for the shared situation of all *zoe* as object of politics.



Holocaust Reception in the United States; or, Modernity vs. Postmodernity (?)

If my question about the centrality of the Shoah for any thinking about politics sounds naïve now, it is only because of a drastic shift in American thinking about the Shoah. Not surprisingly, the shift from a collective silence surrounding the events to what Alan Mintz calls

“a point of moral consensus” followed, primarily, a series of popular cultural representations of the Shoah which became *punctum* for many Americans: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, an NBC mini-series called *Holocaust*, and (of course) *Schindler’s List*. In the process, as Mintz sketches it, the Shoah underwent a thorough Americanization:

While still “belonging” to the Jews, the Holocaust underwent a process of universalization in two senses. The murder of the European Jewry became the ultimate standard for speaking of victimization of peoples in the modern period in spheres that had no necessary connection to the Jews. The Holocaust had become the referent for collective suffering. In the political arena, the Holocaust became a rarity in American life: a point of moral consensus. (26)

If the Shoah has become such a universalized referent in the sense that Mintz articulates, then it makes perfect sense why PETA would look to mobilize it. In the first sense of universality which Mintz points toward, PETA attempts to articulate the suffering of animals in the always already familiar idiom of the Shoah, thereby hoping to link onto existing ethical schemata. This, of course, blurs into the second type of universalization: if the Shoah functions as a politically unquestionable space, if the first type of link works it ushers in the suffering of animals to the moral consensus. This would represent the jackpot for PETA: rather than having to argue against cosmetic testing, fur, circus acts, vivisection, meat and all the other *individual* abuses of animals, for those who accept the analogy the display offers, animals move immediately to full protection.

The stakes being as high as they are (admitting animals fully into the moral consensus, which, we should note, doesn’t extend far beyond the victims of the Shoah, as the American dis-interest in stopping wholesale slaughter of humans elsewhere suggests), it is not surprising that many viewers, including myself, are uneasy about the exhibit. In order to situate my uneasiness, it is useful at this point to set up, again following Mintz, two general frames of reception for the Shoah in the United States. These two frames more or less undergird the questions about representation, politics and discourse that follow.

In his book, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*, Mintz outlines two models of reception of representations of the Shoah in the United States. The first is the “exceptionalist model” which “is rooted in a conviction of the Holocaust as a radical rupture in human history that goes well beyond notions of uniqueness. The Nazi will to murder all the Jews and the abyss of the abasement inflicted upon the victims place the Holocaust in a dimension of tragedy beyond comparison and analogies” (Mintz 39). It is this model that Mintz argues has held sway in the United States, thanks in part to its most prominent spokesperson, Elie Wiesel and

his role in shaping the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The other model, which Mintz dubs “constructivist,”

stresses the cultural lens through which the Holocaust is perceived...Cultures, like individuals, can of necessity comprehend historical events only from within the set of their own issues and interests...acts of Holocaust memorialization, whether in the form of museums, monuments, or days of remembrance, will always reflect as much about the community that is doing the remembering as the event being remembered. (Mintz 39-40)

Put differently, the exceptionalist model holds that meaning inheres directly in the event of the Shoah and in the artifacts (be they the physical camps, the collections of hair or shoes, or in the photographs), while the constructivist model stresses that meaning is socially produced and contingent on time, place, and context.

These two models of reception should sound familiar to most folks with even a passing familiarity with literature, philosophy, or the social sciences: we are back in the Culture Wars.² The exceptionalist approach would seem to align neatly with a Modernist and positivist conception of the world where meaning exists in objects and empirical observation by knowing subjects can decipher that meaning. The constructivist approach would seem to align with a postmodern approach which rejects the knowing agent in favor of a socially and discursively constructed subject whose ability to know anything is circumscribed by history, culture, education, gender, race, class, etc. There is, within the discourse on the Shoah, however, a problem with this neat alignment that makes sorting through my ambivalence about PETA’s exhibit more difficult. The difficulty lies in how history is conceived of in the exceptionalist and constructivist approaches.

For the exceptionalist, “the Holocaust becomes the event that refutes and shatters the idea of man as it has been established in the liberal thought of the West. The belief in reason that was the legacy of the Enlightenment and the belief in the rapport of the human spirit with the world that was the legacy of Romanticism—all of this was exploded by the fact of the crematoria” (Mintz 55). Thus, the exceptionalists would seem to lay claim to all of the anti-Enlightenment critiques of postmodernism as well as eschewing all belief in historicism as the progressive unfolding of Reason toward a better world. The constructivist model, on the other hand, stresses continuity with the past and the future; it demands that the Shoah not be thought as rupture, but merely as the most extreme and horrific example of tendencies that have been developing for centuries and which continue today and which Reason can address.

The Holocaust on Your Plate exhibit is, as a “vulgar” analogy, without question an emergence from the constructivist model, albeit a confused emergence (I shall have more to say about this point below). The argument that “the methods, machinery, and logic used in the concentration camps were deeply interconnected with the rise of modern factory farms” (Prescott 2) takes its power from an understanding of history as cumulative and progressive. This is the exact argument made by the historian Reivel Netz about barbed wire: “the extension of the use of barbed wire from the control of animal to the control of human movement was not a perverse but a natural development of its capacities” (Netz 20). That is, the *telos* of barbed wire, invented in 1873, was the concentration camp. As long as barbed wire, slaughterhouses, and other apparatus of the extermination camp are still with us, the risk always exists that we will slide into barbarism again. The political imperative then, as Theodor W. Adorno has said, “is that Auschwitz not happen again” (Adorno “Education” 191).

The exceptionalist mode, on the other hand, understands the Holocaust as a historical singularity, without any possible comparison. Ariella Azoulay explains the discourse this way: “at the center of the discourse concerning the Holocaust stands a deviant, unique, rare, and extraordinary event comparable to none other . . . the uniqueness of the Holocaust will not be allowed to concede ground before the uniqueness of any other event” (61-62). *As such*, the Shoah cannot happen again. In a sense, the responsibility for those of us after Auschwitz is not to a political will that it not happen again (since, as singularity, it cannot); the imperative is rather to *remember*. It is at this intersection of political demand for action and historical/ethical demand for remembrance that the Holocaust on Your Plate exhibit must be situated.

Representation and Knowledge

The exhibit itself “consists of eight 60-square-foot panels, each showing photos of factory farm and slaughterhouse scenes side-by-side with photos of earlier victims of exploitation and slaughter in Nazi concentration camps” (PETA press release). The aim of the exhibit is “stimulating contemplation of how the victimization of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and others characterized a ‘life unworthy of life’ during the Holocaust parallels the way modern society abuses and justifies the slaughter of animals” (PETA press release). How do the eight panels stimulate contemplation? The answer rests on how we understand the photographic images.

Photography was long thought to be a neutral means of presenting the world *as it really is*. “The Enlightenment valued empiricism, the belief that experience, especially of the senses, is the only source of knowledge. Photography seemed the perfect Enlightenment tool, functioning like human sight to offer empirical

knowledge mechanically, objectively, without thought or emotion” (Pultz 9). In this conception, the world exists in front of a camera lens that records events without comment, interference or bias. As Roland Barthes thinks it, this is precisely the virtue of photography:

What the photograph reproduces to infinity has only occurred once: the photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially. In the Photograph, the event is never transcended for the sake of something else: the Photograph always leads back to the body I see; it is the absolute Particular . . . (Barthes 4)

This would seem to be precisely the conception of the photographic image that the Holocaust on Your Plate exhibit trades in. In their arrangement, the photographs, as reproductions of what cannot be reproduced but which had a factual existence *in front of the camera*, function as evidence. The photograph is an unquestionable reality that demands the absolute belief of the viewer.

This unquestionable reality of the photograph, of the camps and the slaughterhouses as they are depicted, is possible only within a positivistic conception of photography. What I mean by this is that, stripped of any context detailing the circumstances of the production of the images, the photographs contain within themselves their own meaning. The fact that PETA can pick up the exhibit and drop it off in whatever city they wish without modifying it only further underscores this point. The viewer, in front of these eight panels, is to understand that what s/he is looking at is an absolute reality, or rather two absolute realities (the Shoah, the slaughterhouse) and that these realities in some way *mean the same thing*.

Such a conception of meaning situates the exhibit not within the constructivist model of reception that it seemed to operate from within but rather within the exceptionalist model, upholding the inherence of meaning within the events of the Shoah independent of context. By laying claim to a positivist use of the photographic images, however, the exhibit moves into the realm where the Shoah becomes a singularity, a non-repeatable event that is unique. The thrust of the exhibit is not to argue for a conception of the Shoah that differs from the one popularly received (which is a “moral consensus” in America), but rather to suggest that slaughterhouses are, objectively and obviously, part of this same constellation of meanings, apparatus, and political questions. What the exhibit presumes is that a viewer comes to the exhibit with an existing set of assumptions about the Shoah and it makes no attempts to problematize these assumptions, no matter what they are. In this way, the exhibit *does* move dangerously close to using the remembrance of the victims of the Shoah in the service of some other end (even if it is an end that is justifiable), if only because it makes no demands at all

on the viewer to question what s/he might think about the Shoah (which is likely a product of pop cultural representations).

The danger here is that the Shoah, through the exhibit's reliance on photography, becomes understandable and easily explained; or, what's worse, immediately intuitible through the simple act of looking. Discussing the work of filmmakers Alain Resnais and Claude Lantzmann, Ariella Azoulay writes:

Both Resnais and Lantzmann are opposed to memory as a purposeful activity whose role is to understand the past or to transmit its lessons to the future. Both of them come out against economies of memory centered on the practice of the gaze—the investigative gaze or the incisive gaze—whose aim is to present the spectator a meaningful story, which features causal development and a teleological structure, a readable story based on convictions amenable to decipherment, a story that ostensibly evokes an identification with it, a tangible story that provides visual evidence. (Azoulay 57)

The difficulty, for Azoulay and also Resnais and Lantzmann, is that such a functioning of the gaze inevitably turns the representation into a spectacle, something which I think the PETA exhibit is thoroughly guilty of. The function of this spectacle is glossed by Azoulay in the following way: “A spatial attitude toward horror stands at the basis of the ethics of the modern gaze. The body—wounded, mutilated, shot, beaten, disfigured, dying—is the very heart of the spectacle in the public sphere. It is the object of a desire to see, to see more, to blow up the body, to open it to the gaze, to penetrate into the body (corpse) and allow it to appear” (Azoulay 78). The spectacle does not confront the spectator as a call to remember or to act, it is the object of an insatiable *desire to see* which is part and parcel of the entire hegemony of modern visual communications. Here, the exhibit moves into the same space of deterritorialized yet omnipresent images of death that we know from televised broadcasts of war, the circulation of images of Saddam Hussein's sons' corpses, and the now numbingly familiar images of airplanes flying into the World Trade Center. Rather than invitations for serious consideration, these spectacles fulfill little more than scopophilic desire.

Andrea Liss, in her book on photography and the Shoah, claims that, “what is at stake in the picturing of the Shoah is precisely what idioms are presented in the name of bearing witness” (Liss 9). She situates her concern at the juncture of intelligibility and justice:

What would it mean to create a representation of the Holocaust that would render it accessible, easily understandable? Among the many dangers of such an impossible formulation would be to place the events in the framework of the normal, as if they could

be historically assimilated. If the Holocaust could be falsely assimilated through too facile explanations, it risks being explained away, covered over. The impulse may well be to do the events justice lest they remain in obscurity, but the gap between the acts of cruelty and their vindications is too vast for justice to fall into any sense of its normal place. Hence, Lyotard's notion of the *différend*, the sign, and the reminder that justice in the case of the Holocaust goes far beyond any justice that could be granted through legal procedures and either-or modes of argumentation. (Liss 118)

The risk of placing the Shoah in "the framework of the normal" is more dangerous than Liss signals here. Adorno reminds us that "the word that is designed to be understood becomes, precisely through this process of calculation, a means to degrade those to whom it is addressed to mere objects of manipulation and to harness them for purposes that are not their own" (Adorno "Words" 191). That is, the risk faced by making the Shoah intelligible is that it becomes an advertisement, something that circulates in the already existing networks of capital without any recourse to questioning or undermining the system. If the Shoah can be historically assimilated, does it risk being an aestheticized object of visual pleasure like so many others? In presenting the Shoah and slaughterhouses in this way, might PETA be doing the opposite of what they hoped? Instead of ushering in animals into the "moral consensus" of American society around questions of killing, does it not open the way for a further aestheticization of the suffering of animals?

(Bio)Politics (Revisited) and Witness

The problem gets further complicated when one considers the ultimate political aim of PETA: the expansion of liberal democratic notions of "rights" to animals. My concern, noted earlier, that such "rights" are proving inadequate to protect human lives in the current political scene, coupled with the realization that the concentration camps were possible because of the ease with which such rights can be suspended (The Nuremberg Laws), makes me quite skeptical of such a project. My skepticism is strictly pragmatic. While I support all attempts to extend legal protection to animals and to force nation states to honor the rights already granted to human and non-human animals, I do not think that either the humans across the globe already in camps or the animals suffering everywhere can wait for rights to protect them. A project which seems more promising, drawn from the work of Giorgio Agamben, but which revises a key aspect of his thought, would be to create a political situation in which *zoe* is not the direct object of political power, coupled with an ethical commitment from each of us, independent of laws and nation states, to do whatever we can to immediately halt camps wherever they

arise.³

Agamben's concern is with tracing how human life is reduced to *zoe* for political purposes, thus becoming the *homo sacer* in the realm of biopolitics. In using Agamben's thought to situate a response to the analogy offered by the PETA exhibit, I am rejecting Agamben's insistence on human life as the only life capable of politics.⁴ Agamben is concerned with how "thought" can create something he calls "form-of-life" which makes it impossible for power to function directly on *zoe*. Such a form-of-life, were we able to bring it about for both humans and non-human animals, would open the way for a world in which not only Auschwitz but also slaughterhouses would "not happen again."

Agamben writes that

Thought is form-of-life, life that cannot be segregated from its form; and everywhere the intimacy of this inseparable life appears, in the materiality of corporeal processes and of habitual ways of life no less than in theory, there and only there is there thought. And it is this thought, this form-of-life, that, abandoning naked life to "Man" and to the "Citizen," who clothe it temporarily and represent it with their "rights," must become the guiding concept and the unitary center of the coming politics. (Agamben *MWE* 11-12)

This rejection of the concept of "Man" along with "rights" would seem to echo the concern with an absolute rupture in history that the exceptionalist model of Shoah reception holds. I find Agamben's rejection compelling: abandoning the concept of rights seems to be an utterly pragmatic move in the current moment. To my thinking, this further opens a possibility for including non-human animals in whatever the "coming politics" might be. Agamben's political writings would seem to be demanding what we might call a "new idiom" for political thinking, one that is more or less incommensurable within our current discourses.⁵ It is the possibility that a new discourse might provide a means of combating and resisting the globalized terror of transnational capitalism, daily visited upon the *zoe* of human and non-human animals alike, that I am drawn to here.

When I suggested that the PETA exhibit was a confused emergence from the constructivist model of reception, what I meant is that the possibility of an analogy between the Shoah and something else only exists within a constructivist framework, and because PETA demands a political response to the Shoah as something still functioning, it participates in a certain discourse of postmodernism. However, PETA makes a political claim to a liberal democratic framework of "rights" and also makes a claim to meaning directly

inhering the photos of the victims (which is not possible within the constructivist model), thus participating in a discourse of modernity. In this case, the two models of reception outlined by Mintz do not easily equate with the positions of modernism/postmodernism. We must acknowledge that neither “modernism” nor “postmodernism,” and neither the constructivist nor the exceptionalist model can either fully account for the exhibit or help us to make complete sense out of what our response should be.

My sense is that my response to the exhibit, that is my inability to stop thinking about and deep ambivalence over its use of representations, has a lot to do with the conflicting and uncertain philosophy and epistemology underlying it. If I reject PETA’s goal of simply including non-human animals within the liberal democratic and spectacular order of human politics (with its rising body count among the supposedly “protected”), and I am unable to make sense of the claims to knowledge and history that the exhibit mobilizes, what possible “way forward” can I suggest?

I think that by reading the exhibit in a certain way, one which is perhaps not so much against what PETA was driving at, but situated within an entirely different framework, we can get something important from the act of looking. It seems to me that the images in the exhibit do, in fact, point us to a *différend*: “the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim” (Lyotard D 9). In this situation, neither the victims of the Shoah nor the animals in the factory farms have recourse to an accepted language in which to make their case known to us. Here, “in the differend, something ‘asks’ to be put into phrases, and suffers the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away” (Lyotard D 13). What form does this “asking” take?

. . . someone speaks to me; he places me under an obligation. . . . What kind of an obligation? The obligation to retell. But not necessarily to my teller. . . . I am obliged in the way of a relay that may not keep its charge but must pass it on. . . . It is clear that it is not a question of first understanding, no! First, one acts from the obligation that comes from the simple fact that I am being spoken to, that you are speaking to me, and then, and only then, can one try to understand what has been received. (Lyotard JG 35-42)

It is this demand from the Other, from the victim of the Shoah and the animal in the factory farm, that must be responded to. The “asking” is a demand for witness, and this is exactly the reason why the exhibit became *punctum* for me. Given that Lyotard’s concern is with how the question of witness used to deny that the Shoah happened (“in order for a place to be identified as a gas chamber, the

only eyewitness I will accept would be a victim of this gas chamber . . . there is no victim that is not dead; otherwise, the gas chamber would not be what he or she claims it to be. There is, therefore, no gas chamber” (Lyotard *D* 3-4), we must think of “witness” otherwise. We need a conception of witness such that we can speak to the differend of the victims of the Shoah and the animals in the factory farm.

Giorgio Agamben, in his book *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, provides one possible conception:

Precisely insofar as it bears witness to the taking place of a potentiality of speaking through an impotentiality alone, its authority depends not on a factual truth, a conformity between something said and a fact or between memory and what happened, but rather on the immemorial relation between the unsayable and the sayable, between the outside and the inside of language. *The authority of the witness consists in his capacity to speak solely in the name of an incapacity to speak.*” (Agamben *RA* 157-158)

Such a conception, which allows us to speak on behalf of those who suffer but who cannot speak directly for themselves (because of a differend), is what we are asked for. It matters little that we do not understand, for as Claude Lantzmann reminds us: “There is an absolute obscenity in the project of understanding . . . this refusal of understanding [is] the only possible ethical and at the same time the only possible operative attitude” (in Liss, 117). Following from this, would it not be obscene for me to “understand” what happens in the factory farms? Is not the ethical gesture to acknowledge that the suffering of the animals is beyond anything I can rationally account for and *because of this* demand that it cease immediately?



The Holocaust on Your Plate exhibit, as PETA intends it, does not ask this of me (PETA intends me to add animals into my pre-existing “understanding” of the Shoah). Rather, the faces themselves and incommensurable space between the faces of the humans and the faces of the non-human animals makes a demand of me to speak, even as I am incapable of speaking. I am incapable of speaking because what I am seeing is not possible to understand, but *for that very reason* I must speak. When I speak, I demand that *zoe* cease to be the direct object of politics and that the bodies of human and non-human animals be excluded from camps. And by my speaking the obligation to retell falls on all who hear.

End Notes:

1. I use the term “Shoah” throughout the essay instead of “Holocaust.” The reasoning I follow is sketched out by Giorgio Agamben in *Remnants of Auschwitz*. As he notes, “the unfortunate term ‘holocaust’ (usually with a capital ‘H’) arises from this unconscious demand to justify a death that is *sine causa*—to give meaning back to what seemed incomprehensible” (28). He traces the “unfortunate”ness of the term to two problems: a) the etymological relation of the word to sacrifice (often of animals) *for a purpose*, and b) the term, beginning in 1189, has a history of anti-Semitic use (28-30). In using Shoah as the preferred term, I still risk subsuming the events into some comprehensible realm: Andrea Liss, in *Trespassing Through Shadows*, notes that “although the term *Shoah* tends more toward implications of metaphysical doubt than toward punishment, it still resonates

with the concept of divine retribution” (Liss 4). In the end, Shoah seems to be the least overdetermined and dangerous word.

2. The so-called “culture wars,” which have been the subject of innumerable analyses since the 1970s, generally are conceptualized as fights between a theory-driven “relativistic” Left that supports identity politics, poststructuralist textual analysis, and either an expansion of the Canon of “Great Books” or doing away with such a concept altogether on the one side, and a humanistic, Great Books program-supporting Right that supports unitary-meaning hermeneutic textual analysis (think E.D. Hirsch), patriotism, and “common culture.” While this has played out largely on college campuses (so-called minority studies programs, “political correctness,” debates about curriculum [the Canon]), there are many who would read most political, cultural, and media debates as part of the wars. For the purposes of this essay, what I want to evoke is “one Truth” versus “many truths,” where the former is associated with a Modernist Right and the later is associated with a postmodernist Left. I would like to note that here, and in many places in the essay, I am not using “modernist” and “postmodernist” in precise ways or associated with specific thinkers (Hegel, Marx, Foucault, Baudrillard, etc.). I am, instead, using these terms as they get thrown around in common parlance in various manifestations of the “culture wars.”
3. This would entail, among other things, a commitment to veganism, support for those people willing to risk their lives to get lives out of camps (those who hid people from the Nazis, those who break into and remove animals from the farms, etc.), as well as a commitment to putting pressure on industries, nation states and NGOs that operate directly on naked life (protest, boycotts, letter writing campaigns, etc.).
4. Agamben’s thesis that only human life is capable of politics has to do with how he conceives of thought: “I do not mean by this the individual exercise of an organ or of a psychic faculty, but rather an experience, an *experimentum* that has as its object the potential character of life and of human intelligence. To think does not mean merely to be affected by this or that thing, by this or that content of enacted thought, but rather at once to be affected by one’s own receptiveness and experience in each and every thing that is thought a pure power of thinking” (MWE 9). It seems to me that this conception is due, largely, to the influence of Martin Heidegger, whose *Being and Time*, defines human being as Dasein, where “Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by

the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it” (Heidegger 32). This connection is expanded in Agamben’s thought when he discusses “the face” and “the open.”

5. Cesare Casarino, in his recent book *Modernity at Sea*, has called this project non-dialectical communism and he sees it in the work of Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, and Maurice Blanchot. He notes in these writers a concern with “rescu[ing] that desire that goes by the name of communism from political disrepute and historical oblivion” (Casarino 146).

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Defining Terrorism

Steven Best and
Anthony J. Nocella, II*

“It is important to bear in mind that the term “terrorism” is commonly used as a term of abuse, not accurate description. It is close to a historical universal that our terrorism against them is right and just (whoever we happen to be), while their terrorism against us is an outrage. As long as that practice is adopted, discussion of terrorism is not serious. It is no more than a form of propaganda and apologetics.”
—Noam Chomsky

“It is only worth entering into definitions if something hangs on them. In this case, something does.”
—Adam Roberts, Professor of International Relations
Oxford University

Barely a few years into it, the twenty-first century is already clearly marked as the “Age of Terrorism.” The attacks of September 11, 2001 marked a salient turning point in the history of the U.S. and indeed of global geopolitics. The U.S. declared its number one priority to be the “War on Terrorism,” and its domestic, national, and international policies have changed accordingly. In his address to the nation shortly after the 9/11 attacks, Bush used the terms “terror,” “terrorism,” and “terrorist” thirty-two times without ever defining what he meant.

In the amorphous name of “terrorism,” wars are being fought, geopolitical dynamics are shifting, the U.S. is aggressively reasserting its traditional imperialist role as it defies international law and world bodies, and the state is sacrificing liberties to “security.” One of the most commonly used words in the current vocabulary, “terrorism” is also one of the most abused terms, applied to actions ranging from flying fully-loaded passenger planes into buildings to rescuing pigs and chickens from factory farms.

An urgent project for the contemporary era, then, is to critically engage the political semantics of the discourse of terrorism.

*Dr. Steve Best is Chair of Philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso, 500 University, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Texas El Paso, El Paso, TX 79968. Phone: (915) 747-6617, e-mail: best@utep.edu
<http://utminers.utep.edu/best/>.

Anthony Nocella II is a co-founder of the [Institute for Revolutionary Peacemaking and Education](http://www.instituteforrevolutionarypeacemakingandeducation.org) and Center on Animal Liberation Affairs.. Syracuse University, PARC, 410 Maxwell, Syracuse, NY 13244. e-mail: ajnocell@maxwell.syr.edu
<http://student.maxwell.syr.edu/ajnocell/index.html>

Semantic Chaos

“There has never been any consensus definition of terrorism.”

—Richard Betts, director of the Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University

Everyone uses the term, but who really understands it? What precisely is terrorism? What causes it? Who engages in it? Should terrorists be identified according to their intentions, ideologies, tactics, or targets?

When is violence justified so that it is not “terrorism”? How is terrorism different from assault, murder, and other violent “criminal” acts? How can one distinguish morally culpable terrorists from legitimate guerillas, insurgents, counter-terrorists, or freedom fighters?

Does terrorism include threats of violence as well as actual acts of violence? How important to the concept is the intent to create a psychological state of fear and intimidation, and thereby to inhibit freedom of action and peace of mind? How broadly should one define psychological terms like “fear” and “intimidation”?

What is it to be an “innocent” victim of terrorism? Who is “innocent” and who is “guilty”? Can there be terrorism against military targets or only against “civilians” and “non-combatants”?

Does terrorism involve a sudden, singular, direct dramatic action such as a bomb strike, or can it also include an economic or political policy that unfolds slowly, indirectly, yet devastatingly (such as decisions by a government that lead to poverty, hunger, homelessness, and sickness for millions of its own citizens, or the actions the World Bank takes to suppress justice struggles and enforce economic austerity policies on the underdeveloped world)?

How does the new world of information and computers require changing the definition of terrorism (e.g., “cyber-terrorism”)? And in a world of high-tech chemistry and genetics, what about the new threats of “bio-terrorism” involving the use of a biological agents to infect a large population? And what of “agro-terrorism” which deploys a pathogen against crops, livestock, and poultry? In addition to injury to people, can there be terrorism against an economic system?

Is it reasonable to speak of the “human terrorism” against the animal world?

It seems that the meaning of the term terrorism becomes clear in inverse relation to the frequency with which it is used.¹ This is true in part because “terrorism” is inherently a complex concept,

but more so because it is a subjective, highly loaded, emotionally and politically charged term whose meaning is relative to one's political ideology and agenda, and even one's culture. Since no individual, group, or government wants to accept the negative consequences of the term, "terrorism" is always what someone else does.

There is no consensus definition of terrorism. One recent survey of definitions by leading researchers found 109 different definitions.² Beset by political differences, the United Nations General Assembly was unable to pass a resolution denouncing terrorism until 1985. A recent book discussing attempts by the United Nations and other international bodies to define terrorism is three volumes and 1,866 pages long, yet still reaches no firm conclusion. As the UN puts it, "the question of a definition of terrorism has haunted the debate among states for decades." The European Union also has been unable to formulate an adequate definition of terrorism acceptable to all member states. Yet another illustration of the diffuse nature of the term lies in the fact that the U.S. State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation all employ different definitions.

The Exploitation of Language

U.S. industries and the state capitalize on the vagueness of the term "terrorism" to apply it in any way they see fit to suit their purposes. In post-9/11 America, the term is used so broadly and promiscuously by state and industry interests that a "terrorist"—or "eco-terrorist," if an action challenges the interests of those exploiting animals or natural resources—is simply anyone who disagrees with, challenges, or inhibits their profit-driven agendas. We could not put it better than Dan Berry, who wrote on the Clearinghouse for Environmental Advocacy and Research: "If environmental groups cost business money, then they're eco-terrorists." Under the current administration, protesters, demonstrators, and government critics are denied their constitutional rights, placed under surveillance, harassed, beaten, jailed, and defamed as treacherous conspirators and terrorists.

The political relativity of the concept is manifest in the trite but true phrase "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Depending on the interpreter, violence against a perceived enemy can be seen as terrorism or counter-terrorism, as aggressive offense or legitimate defense. To Israel and the U.S. government, Palestinian organizations are terrorists, but to Palestinians they are freedom fighters opposing the occupation of their homeland. The Indian government considers groups working to liberate Kashmir from Indian oppression to be terrorists, while many Pakistanis embrace them as liberators. The U.S. calls its violent allies friends and impugns its foes as terrorists. If we use violence against our enemies,

it is a just war or strike; if they use it against us, it is terrorism. The Reagan administration championed the contras as freedom fighters, whereas the Nicaraguan people who endured their bombs and bullets viewed them—more accurately—as terrorists. In November 2001, Bush publicly referred to the Northern Afghanistan alliance as “our friends,” ignoring the fact that, “Since 1992, the various Alliance factions have killed tens of thousands of civilians every bit as innocent as America’s 9/11 victims; their rap sheets includes rape, torture, summary executions and ‘disappearances.’”³ The U.S. hailed Osama bin Laden and his comrades as freedom fighters in the 1980s, while many government officials denounced Nelson Mandela as a terrorist. The Western world reviled the 9/11 attacks as a paradigm of evil, but Al Qaeda and other enemies of the U.S. upheld it as a legitimate strike in their jihad, while decrying U.S. bombings of Afghanistan as terrorism. The U.S. corporate-state complex censures the ALF as terrorists, while many activists champion them as freedom fighters.

The problem raised by pluralistic perspectives on terrorism is that of establishing some kind of non-arbitrary foundation by which to condemn heinous terrorist acts. Yonah Alexander proposes the norms of international law as the way to distinguish terrorism from a “lawful war.” Others find the critical issue to be whether the immediate target is civilian. Still others uphold the indeterminacy—the lack of precision and stability—of the term’s meaning.

One important point of clarification is that, while the terms “violence” and “terrorism” are used interchangeably, they are two different concepts. All terrorism involves violence, but not all violence is terrorism. For example, violence may be used in cases of self-defense or against legitimate targets—“combatants” rather than “non-combatants”—in conditions of war. Quite conveniently, however, the U.S. military says, “We also consider as acts of terrorism attacks on military installations or on armed military personnel when a state of military hostilities does not exist at the site, such as bombings against U.S. bases.”⁴ Even the U.S. military can be the target or object of a terrorist attack—but it will never admit to conducting terrorist attacks itself.

The USA Patriot Act shrewdly exploits semantic vagueness. It defines terrorism so broadly (see below) that virtually all political struggle falls under its rubric. The inclusion of attacks on property (see the FBI definition below) means that groups like the ALF and ELF can be considered terrorists by those who accept this definition. Talk of “harboring” terrorists throws out into the political arena a vast net of guilt by association.

Clearly, “terrorism” is not just a word; it is a weapon. The definition is politically motivated by the user in order to target certain individuals or groups.⁵ Speakers routinely brand their adversaries as

terrorists to malign their cause and demonize them while, conversely, legitimating their own cause and any means necessary to secure it. Regarding the politically motivated use of terrorist accusation, Tomis Kapitan acutely observes:

There is a definite political purpose. . . . Because of its negative connotation, the “terrorist” label discredits any individuals or groups to which it is affixed. It dehumanizes them, places them outside the norms of acceptable social and political behavior, and portrays them as people who cannot be reasoned with. By delegitimizing any individuals or groups described as “terrorist,” the rhetoric:

- Erases any incentive an audience might have to understand their point of view so that questions about the nature and origins of their grievances and the possibility [of] legitimacy of their demand will not even be raised.
- Deflects attention away from the policies that might have contributed to their grievances.
- Repudiates any calls to negotiate with them.
- Paves the way for the use of force and violence in dealing with them and, in particular, gives a government “freedom of action” by exploiting the fears of its own citizens and stifling any objections to the manner in which it deals with them.
- Fails to distinguish between national liberation movements and fringe lunatics.⁶

Those who monopolize power and the means of communication monopolize meaning; they can advance fraudulent definitions of terrorism that become widely accepted and internalized as common sense.

Definitional Exclusion #1: The U.S. and State-Sponsored Terrorism

For self-serving purposes, the prevailing definitions of terrorism leave out two key facets of violence: state and state-sponsored terrorism, and species terrorism.

First, they define terrorists as lone individuals like Ted Kaczynski or sub-state groups like the Red Brigade. They thereby exclude state or state-sponsored violence, such as the longstanding U.S. policies that financed and directed coups and political violence against civilian populations in Guatemala (1954), Lebanon (1958), the Dominican Republic (1965), Vietnam (1954–75), Laos (1964–1975), Cambodia (1969–1975), Nicaragua (1980–1990), Grenada (1983),

Panama (1989), and Iraq (1990-1991, 2003-) to name just some rogue interventions.⁷

Terrorism is something that can be directed against a government, but not directed by a government.⁸ U.S. definitions of terrorism include the actions of insurgency movements—social justice movements always demeaned as “communist” in the past—but never the horrors perpetuated by U.S. clients like Somoza in Nicaragua, Pinochet in Chile, and sundry dictators and right-wing death squads.⁹ The chemical warfare the U.S. unleashed against the people of Vietnam caused far more casualties than anything perpetuated by Saddam Hussein (using chemicals and weapons given to him by the U.S.). In its imperialist war against Vietnam alone, the U.S. killed over four million people.¹⁰

Official U.S. state definitions of terrorism always deploy Manichean Good vs. Evil dramas. This strategy allows a double standard whereby the forces of Good ignore or downplay their own violence and legal violations, while hysterically denouncing comparable or lesser infractions by the Evil side. But, as Noam Chomsky observes, the U.S. itself is a textbook case of any reasonable definition of terrorism. In the United States Code and army manuals, terrorism is defined as “the calculated use of violence against civilians to intimidate, induce fear, often to kill, for some political, religious, or other end.” The problem with the official definition, however, is that it “turns out to be almost the same as the definition of official U.S. policy,” though the latter is masked as “counter-insurgency” or “low-intensity conflict.” The official definition, Chomsky claims, makes the U.S. “a leading terrorist state because it engages in these practices all the time. . . . It’s the only state, in fact, which has been condemned by the World Court and the Security Council for terrorism, in this sense.”¹¹

Similarly, if one adheres to the official FBI definition of violence, it is clear that in country after country, as systematic and deliberate policy, the U.S. government has used deliberate “force or violence” “unlawfully,” “to intimidate or coerce a government, [a] civilian population, or [a] segment thereof,” in order to achieve “political or social objectives.” In Philip Cryan’s deconstruction, the U.S. has been “directly responsible for acts of terrorism, and for the ‘harboring’ of terrorists, on an almost unimaginable scale in terms of human death and the creation of fear. When Green Berets trained the Guatemalan army in the 1960s—leading to a campaign of bombings, death squads, and ‘scorched earth’ assaults that killed or ‘disappeared’ 200,000—U.S. Army Colonel John Webber called it ‘a technique of counter-terror.’”¹²

The U.S. coup against the democratically-elected Socialist leader Salvador Allende led to tens of thousands of civilian deaths and torture on a mass scale. Terrorist Henry Kissinger, a key

architect of the coup, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 and the media continues to portray him as a credible policy expert and ambassador to peace. The U.S. backing of the infamous contras fomented massacres and bloodshed in Nicaragua in the early 1980s, and its backing of the fascist government of El Salvador resulted in 70,000 civilian deaths. The U.S. “harbors” terrorists and rogue states on a global scale. Bin Laden’s main line of support stems from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, two major U.S. allies; and the CIA trained and funded the Afghan resistance movement that became the epicenter of terrorist training camps. Speaking of terrorist training camps, let us not forget that at the infamous School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, the U.S. instructed thousands of Latin American military personnel, humanitarian soldiers like Manuel Noriega who went on to become some of the best dictators, torturers, and mass murderers money can buy.¹³

Definitional Exclusion #2: Species Terrorism

Virtually all definitions of terrorism, even by “progressive” human rights champions, outright banish from consideration the most excessive violence of all—that which the human species unleashes against all nonhuman species. Speciesism is so ingrained and entrenched in the human mind that the human pogrom against animals does not even appear on the conceptual radar screen. Any attempt to perceive nonhuman animals as innocent victims of violence and human animals as planetary terrorists is rejected with derision.

But if terrorism is linked to intentional violence inflicted on innocent persons for ideological, political, or economic motivations, and nonhuman animals also are “persons”—subjects of a life—then the human war against animals is terrorism.¹⁴ Every individual who terrifies, injures, tortures, and/or kills an animal is a terrorist; fur farms, factory farms, foie gras, vivisection, and other exploitative operations are terrorist industries; and governments that support these industries are terrorist states. The true weapons of mass destruction are the gases, rifles, stun guns, cutting blades, and forks and knives used to experiment on, kill, dismember, and consume animal bodies.

The numbers of animals slaughtered by human beings is staggering. Each year, in the U.S. alone:

- Over 10 billion farmed animals are killed for food consumption;
- 17–70 million animals are killed for testing and experimentation;
- Over 100 million are killed for hunting; and

- 7–8 million animals are trapped or raised in confinement for their fur.¹⁵

These figures do not include the millions of animals killed by the Wildlife Services division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (formerly known as Animal Damage Control) to protect livestock industry cattle; the 55,000 horses killed in the United States and processed for human consumption; the countless numbers of animals exploited and killed by various facets of the animal “entertainment” industry; and other forms of killing by human predators.

For the animals, every second is a 9/11 attack.

The FBI concept of terrorism defines terrorism as *attacks on property, but not on non-human life*. Thus, by a definitional fait accompli, the ALF is a terrorist group, but not the animal exploitation industries that murder billions of animals every year. The corporate-state complex coined the neologism “eco-terrorism” and currently is expanding and exploiting the meaning of “agro-terrorism,” to bring acts of sabotage against property by groups like the ALF and ELF within the conventional parameters of heinous and despicable forms of violence and evil.¹⁶ Despite national laws against property destruction that already exist, the destroyers of animals and the Earth are intent on reframing sabotage as terrorism, thereby maximizing their ability to vilify and punish strikes against them.

What is Terrorism?

As suggested by the German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, one cannot always precisely specify the necessary and sufficient elements of a definition, but one can provide a cluster of related concepts. There is no single, universally accepted definition of terrorism, nor is there ever likely to be. Key aspects of terrorism—such as political or ideological motives, violence, targeting noncombatants, the aim of terrorizing, the goal to modify behavior—are relatively clear, but formulating them in a clear, compact, quasi-objective definition has proven to be an enormous challenge. As terrorism expert Walter Laqueur writes, “Even if there were an objective, value-free definition of terrorism, covering all its important aspects and features, it would still be rejected by some for ideological reasons.”¹⁷

Any broad, abstract definition of “terrorism” always is open to attack by counter-example, will leave out some important element, will be vague to the point of meaninglessness, and may lend itself to political repression. The State Department definition focuses on subnational groups and leaves out nation states. Government analyses exclude from their definitions of terrorism political and economic policies that slowly but surely kill thousands of millions of

innocent people. No definitions of terrorism, even those advanced by “progressives” like Chomsky, ever take into consideration the human war against animals.

Our own definition below does not incorporate a psychological aspect involving attempts to create “fear” or “intimidation,” because we find these terms lend themselves to overly broad interpretations that legitimate political repression of activist groups. We prefer to focus on physical violence against all forms of life. Given the root word of “terror,” terrorists clearly aim to frighten and intimidate their targets, but their primary intention is to inflict physical injury or to kill (and so we find it a bit of a stretch to call groups like SHAC terrorists but certainly not those who profit from violence against animals). We also exclude from our definition of terrorism acts of property destruction against industries as: (1) these acts are defensible in principle; (2) such illegal actions already have names and penalties that do not merit being upgraded from sabotage, vandalism, or arson to terrorism; and (3) the real terrorism involves the crimes that corporations and governments commit against human beings, animals, and the Earth.

Capturing a diversity of definitions of terrorism is a way to begin building a fair and just working definition. Although co-opted by and for the interests of U.S. industries and elites, the meaning of the term “terrorism” is worth struggling over, because in this obscenely violent world there are real terrorists whose actions need to be defined, condemned, and deterred. The task of shaping an accurate definition of terrorism is of enormous consequence today; nothing less than democracy and the right to dissent is at stake. Vague definitions of terrorism give government greater latitude in persecuting dissent. Rather than be standing targets for the terrorism of “terrorism,” activists and voices of opposition need to provide sound definitions and expose the real terrorists for who and what they are.

The following definitions are examples of attempts to define terrorism, including general statements and U.S. government definitions. The repetition of terms and meanings is unavoidable, but it points to key elements that may be necessary or part of a future consensual definition. Save for our own, no definition below directly includes the violence a human being, industry, state, or human species directs against animals.

That is a key philosophical and political task of the present era.

I. General Definitions

The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a person or an organized group against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing

societies or governments, often for ideological or political reasons.

—The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition

Terrorism is the intentional use of physical violence directed against innocent persons—human and/or nonhuman animals—to advance the religious, ideological, political, or economic purposes of an individual, organization, corporation, or state government.

—Steven Best and Anthony J. Nocella

Terrorism is the deliberate use of violence against civilians in order to attain political, ideological, or religious aims.

—Boaz Ganor, Executive Director of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism is the threat and use of both psychological and physical force in violation of international law by state and sub-state agencies for strategic and political goals.

—Yonah Alexander, Director of the Institute for Studies in International Terrorism, State University of New York

Terrorism is the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about political change.

—Brian Jenkins, founder of the RAND Corporation's terrorism research program

Terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted.

—Walter Laqueur, Chairman of the International Research Council at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, author of *The Age of Terrorism*

Terrorism is the premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder, mayhem, and threatening of the innocent to create fear and intimidation in order to gain a political or tactical advantage, usually to influence an audience.

—James M. Poland, Emeritus Professor, Criminal Justice, California State University, Sacramento

Terrorism is the use of force or the threat of force by an individual, group, or nation-state against a civilian population to achieve a political end.

—Robert Jensen, Professor in the School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin

Terrorism is the systematic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals.... The goals of terrorism are always political.... Terrorism as a political act is a primary means of expression and not a last resort. . . . The targets of terrorist coercion are the civilian population.

—Pippa Norris, Montague Kern, and Marion Just, authors of *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government and the Public* (2003)

Terrorism is the deliberate use of violence, or the threat of such, directed upon civilians in order to achieve political objectives.

—Tomis Kapitan, Professor of Philosophy Northern Illinois University

Intrinsically, terrorism is a state of mind. Political terrorism, presumably, is the state of mind of political actors who are paralyzed by the threat of unpredictable attack. By default the concept has come to be employed to characterize the kinds of actions that are assumed to induce "terrorism." The circularity of this definition is obvious.

—Ted Robert Gurr, founder and director of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management

Terrorism is the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear.

—Noam Chomsky, Professor of Linguistics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Terrorism is an act carried out to achieve an inhuman and corrupt objective and involving threat to security of any kind, and in violation of the rights acknowledged by religion and mankind.

—Ayatulla Taskhiri, Iranian religious scholar

Terrorism is the half-thinking man's conditioned reflex to sustained oppression and lack of personal empowerment.

—Shaukat Qadir, retired Pakistani soldier and political analyst

Terrorism has become an invective that opposing sides hurl at each other for propaganda. The word means those who deliberately harm innocent life for the purpose of forcing behavioral change.

—Mark Somma, Chair of the Political Science Department, Fresno State University

"Terrorism" is a word people use to refer to armed struggles they don't like.

—John Burdick, Associate Professor, Syracuse University

II. State and Political Definitions

All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public.

—League of Nations (1937)

Any act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

—United Nations

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.

—UN Office of Drugs and Crime, Academic Consensus Definition (Schmid, 1988)

Regardless of the differences between governments on the definition of terrorism, what is clear and what we can all agree on is any deliberate attack on innocent civilians, regardless of one's cause, is unacceptable and fits into the definition of terrorism.

—United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

Terrorism is the unlawful use or threat of violence against persons or property to further political or social objectives. It is usually intended to intimidate or coerce a government, individuals or groups, or to modify their behavior or politics.

—Vice-President's Task Force, 1986

1. *It is premeditated—planned in advance, rather than an impulsive act of rage.*
2. *It is political—not criminal, like the violence that groups such as the mafia use to get money, but designed to change the existing political order.*
3. *It is aimed at civilians—not at military targets or combat-ready troops.*
4. *It is carried out by subnational groups—not by the army of a country.*

—Paul Pillar, former deputy chief of the CIA's Counterterrorist Center

Terrorism is the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

—Department of Defense

The term “terrorism” means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term “international terrorism” means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. The term “terrorist group” means any group practicing, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.

—State Department

Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

—FBI Definition (revised July 2001)

III. Definitions of “Domestic Terrorism” and “Animal Rights and Ecological Terrorism”

Domestic terrorism involve[s] acts dangerous to human life that (A) are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; and (B) appear to be intended (or to have the effect): (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government (or any function thereof) by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping (or threat thereof); or (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

—USA Patriot Act (Section 802)

Animal rights or ecological terrorist organization means two or more persons organized for the purpose of supporting any politically motivated activity intended to obstruct or deter any person from participating in an activity involving animals or an activity involving natural resources.

—Texas House Bill 433, “Animal Rights and Ecological Terrorism”¹⁸

IV. Definitions of “Bioterrorism” and “Agro-terrorism”

Bioterrorism is the use of biological agents to intentionally produce disease or intoxication in susceptible populations.

—USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Bioterrorism is the use of biological agents in terrorism. This includes the malevolent use of bacteria, viruses, or toxins against people, animals, or plants.

—Onnalee Hennebery, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Bioterrorism can be described as the use, or threatened use, of biological agents to promote or spread fear or intimidation upon an individual, a specific group, or the population as a whole for religious, political, ideological, financial, or personal purposes. These biological agents, with the exception of smallpox virus, are typically found in nature in various parts of the world. They can be, however,

weaponized to enhance their virulence in humans and make them resistant to vaccines and antibiotics. This usually involves using selective reproduction pressure or recombinant engineering to mutate or modify the genetic composition of the agent. Bioterrorism agents may be disseminated by various methods, including aerosolization, through specific blood-feeding insects, or food and water contamination.

—Arizona Department of Health Services

Agroterrorism is the act of any person knowingly or maliciously using biological agents as weapons against the agricultural industry and the food supply.

—Steve Cain, Agricultural Communications Specialist

Agroterrorism is the use of biological or chemical agents directed against crops and livestock in an effort to disrupt the food supply to a population.

—Vermont Health Alert Network

¹ For an excellent historical and political analysis of the complexity of terrorism, see “The Criminology of Terrorism: History, Law, Definitions, and Typologies,”

faculty.ncwc.edu/toconnor/429/429lect01.htm.

² Ray Takeyh, “Two Cheers from the Islamic World,” *Foreign Policy*, 2002, 128 (Jan-Feb): 70-1.

³ Cited in Dennis Hans, “Bush’s Definition of Terrorism Fits Northern Alliance Like a Glove; TV Interviewers Don’t Notice,” Common Dreams News Center, November 23, 2001, www.commondreams.org/views01/1123-05.htm.

⁴ “Terrorist Group Profiles,” library.nps.navy.mil/home/tgp/tgpmain.htm.

⁵ For an analysis of the self-interested nature of the definition of terrorism, see Brian Whitaker, “The Definition of Terrorism,” *The Guardian*, May 7, 2001.

⁶ Thomas Kapitan, “The Terrorism of ‘Terrorism,’” in James Sterba, ed., *Terrorism and International Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 47-66. Kapitan’s essay is enormously important for the task of creating a credible definition of terrorism that does not render invisible the bulk of violence today and does not demonize peace and justice movements. Kapitan also describes various ways in which sloppy and politically motivated “terrorist” rhetoric increases terrorism, such as by encouraging a cycle of violence and revenge (53).

⁷ For a dated but still valuable account of U.S. state-sponsored terrorism, see Edward S. Herman, *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda* (Boston: MA: South End Press, 1982).

⁸ A 1937 League of Nations Convention, for instance, defines terrorism as “all criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public.” Title 22 of the U.S. Code defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence” against “noncombatant targets by subnational groups” usually with the goal to influence an audience.

⁹ These fascist dictatorships created and financed by the U.S. were euphemistically called (right-wing) “authoritarian” governments to

distinguish them from the allegedly far more evil (left-wing) “totalitarian” governments. See Herman’s *The Real Terror Network* on this distinction.

¹⁰ Edward S. Herman, “Global Rogue State,”
www.zmag.org/zmag/articles/feb98herman.htm.

¹¹ Stephan Marshall interview with Noam Chomsky,
www.guerrillanews.com/counter_intelligence/207.html

¹² Philip Cryan, “Defining Terrorism,”
200www.counterpunch.org.cryan1.html.

¹³ See School of the Americas Watch at www.soaw.org.new. Their site notes that “SOA graduates have included many of the most notorious human rights abusers from Latin America. SOA graduates have led military coups and are responsible for massacres of hundreds of people. Among the SOA’s nearly 60,000 graduates are notorious dictators Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos of Panama, Leopoldo Galtieri and Roberto Viola of Argentina, Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru, Guillermo Rodriguez of Ecuador, and Hugo Banzer Suarez of Bolivia. SOA graduates were responsible for the Uraba massacre in Colombia, the El Mozote massacre of 900 civilians in El Salvador, the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, and the Jesuit massacre in El Salvador, the La Cantuta massacre in Peru, the torture and murder

of a UN worker in Chile, and hundreds of other human rights abuses. In September 1996, under intense pressure from religious and grassroots groups, the Pentagon released seven Spanish-language training manuals used at the SOA until 1991. *The New York Times* reported, "Americans can now read for themselves some of the noxious lessons the United States Army taught thousands of Latin Americans. . . . [The SOA manuals] recommended interrogation techniques like torture, execution, blackmail and arresting the relatives of those being questioned."

¹⁴ On the concept of animals as "subjects of a life," see Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹⁵ These numbers are from the years 1999-2000; fur figures vary greatly according to consumer demand. Hunting numbers have been steadily dropping as factory-farmed animal deaths continue to rise.

¹⁶ In June 2001, at the Frontiers of Freedom ecoterrorism conference, Rep. George Nethercutt (R-WA) unveiled his "Agroterrorism Prevention Act of 2001." The bill proposed to expand the 1992 Animal Enterprise Protection Act to protect the property interests of biotech, timber, and various agricultural and biological industries from "terrorists" and saboteurs. As noted by

PR Watch, "The bill contains increased sentencing for all levels of violation and an expanded definition of types of businesses defined as "plant enterprises," including stores that sell "plant products" (i.e. paper or wood). Under this extremely broad definition, blocking access to an office supply store, or "conspiring" to limit profitability of paper products, could be considered "agro-terrorism" if the loss of revenue met the law's threshold. Likewise, putting "frankenfood" stickers on GMO products in grocery stores, if the profit loss could be proven, would be considered a terrorist act. Tree-sitting or road blocking to prevent a timber sale would almost certainly qualify as a disruption that would meet the revenue loss threshold." "Post 9/11 Anti-Environmentalism Threatens Green Activism,"

http://www.prwatch.org/documents/clear_v9n1.html. In June 2002, President Bush signed into law the "Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2002" (also known as the "Bioterrorism Preparedness Act of 2001"). The act is available online at: <http://www.theorator.com/bills107/hr2795.html>.

¹⁷ Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), pp. 149-50.

¹⁸ For the text of the bill, see www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlo/78r/billtext/HB00433I.HTM.

Listen to Us!: A Dialogue for Solidarity with Lawrence Sampson, American Indian Movement Spokesperson

Richard Kahn

Anthony J. Nocella II

The mantra of solidarity girds most of today's radical groups and revolutionary movements, with seemingly any issue easily replacing the infamous "workers" of Marx and Engels in an updated call of "'x' of the world unite!" But as any member of a militant cell, or even affinity group, well knows, solidarity as an ideal is much different and more easily achieved than the mutual trust and empowerment that is created through ongoing struggle together and the development of a shared history. Real solidarity, then, is a rare bird in a large forest and far from being simply another word for "network," "coalition," or "alliance," it extends through and beyond those meanings to connote loving friendship built upon honesty, respect, and self-sacrifice. Such solidarity as we speak of here is not a value to be upheld, but rather a principle that only emerges from our work together for a better world. It is not a law, or even a code, so much as an evolving language which we are always learning in common – a literacy containing information about our joint enemies and fears as well as our shared joys and dreams.

Too often animal activists, like all other activists, preach when they would do better to listen; they assign responsibility and fault rather than accept accountability and critique of their solutions; they burn bridges instead of animal laboratories and other social horrors. Animal rights activists and liberationists are doing a better job at in-group solidarity – the recent honoring of Rod Coronado and ALF at AR2003 was a benchmark for the movement – and while some such activists remain dogmatically single-issue oriented, most seem to recognize that solidarity with other struggles is not only worthy and right, but is in fact a political necessity. Still, one can spend countless hours searching AR newsletters, magazines, or websites in vain for a meaningful demonstration that animal activists understand, or worry about, how their movement integrates and relates to larger social justice concerns (beyond feminism) and planetary ecological crisis. Part of the reason for this dearth of information is that the movement itself is young and relatively small of numbers, on the one hand, while the average animal activist still tends to more likely be a white, middle-class female, on the other.

Without seeking to denigrate white, middle-class females (or anyone else – save perhaps vicious, bloodthirsty capitalists with a fetish for the animal abattoir), we believe that the demographics of the animal rights and liberation movements must become more diverse and representative of the full panoply of racial, class, cultural and gender differences that are available to inform any group with emancipatory and egalitarian social goals. AR and AL organizations need to become better educated about the broad-base of revolutionary history, and they need to look to begin dialogue and work with other oppressed groups such that they can mobilize greater political solidarity. It is through such dialogical practice, and

Anthony Nocella II is a co-founder of the [Institute for Revolutionary Peacemaking and Education](http://www.institute-for-revolutionary-peacemaking-and-education.org) and Center on Animal Liberation Affairs.. Syracuse University, PARC, 410 Maxwell, Syracuse, NY 13244. e-mail: ajnocell@maxwell.syr.edu
<http://student.maxwell.syr.edu/ajnocell/index.html>

through involving ourselves deeply in one another's concerns and plights, that the great liberatory educator Paulo Freire thought that we might together overthrow the yoke of oppression and establish a new order of peace, freedom, and decency. Animal rights activists and liberators need to take up a Freirean approach alongside their other compatriots, *companeros*, and comrades involved in equal (but different) struggles, who, of course, must do the same! Divided, we are all conquered and we need to begin (all of us) to increase our understanding of one another such that together we are more than the sum of our parts. We can look to figures such as Subcommandante Insurgente Marcos, not as romantic figures of Guevarian warfare, but as a leader who understood profoundly the need to overcome by any means necessary the alienation his movement faced in the forests of Chiapas. Famously, Marcos signaled a united front for liberation and justice with the left resistance movement in the United States when he wrote a letter on April 24, 1999 to Mumia Abu-Jamal in order to congratulate him on his birthday. Later that same year, in October, Marcos wrote another letter to Leonard Peltier to reach out in solidarity towards the U.S. Native American community. Such behavior is typical of this successful revolutionary leader, as Marcos has strategically sought to build bridges with a variety of different socio-political movements throughout hundreds of countries. To this end, one can look to his numerous epistles and communiqués, which have been published in his books, archived on the web, read at protests, and collected in activist and academic texts translated into many languages. The lesson is very clear, then, as radical activists our job today is not merely single-issue reform, or widespread social contestation, it is also educational – we must do for ourselves what the oppressors by definition deny us, we must learn to love and die for one another. This is the pedagogy of the oppressed.

The following interview is the first of a series in which we engage with leading members of other struggles. The point here is not to offer up definitive answers, but rather to introduce fresh perspectives, to stimulate future questions, and to model how we may critically engage one another such that we move beyond reactionary psychology and politics. Again, solidarity is not merely words on a page – Q&A sessions are fine, but should only be regarded as one small means towards a much greater end. Still, when community is lacking and there is much to be achieved, even a few words between groups can be the start of real power between them. It is our great honor, then, to have had the opportunity to begin a dialogue with Lawrence Sampson, a spokesperson for the American Indian Movement (AIM), the North American warrior society for indigenous rights, ways, and values. At the age of five, Lawrence was the victim of the illegal Indian baby adoption programs the U.S. government secretly engaged in. After graduating college, he joined the U.S. army, where he was a paratrooper, and was involved in combat operations in Panama and Iraq. Besides working directly for the AIM in Texas, his home, Lawrence also represents AIM on the international level, where he recently co-organized the Indigenous World Forum in Ireland.

Anthony Nocella: Lawrence, I remember the first time we met at the University of Houston...you were speaking and I was tabling. I guess that was the beginning of our life-

long dialogue in search of truth. I also remember you had some hesitance in working with me because I was an animal rights activist. Why is it that the American Indian Movement is not supportive of the animal rights movement? I remember speaking to a well respected animal rights activist in the United States involved in protesting the Makah (a Native American nation that hunted whales), and him telling me that he “was not respected too highly by Ward Churchill (*the noted Native rights activist*).” I assumed why, but I didn’t want to go down that particular road that day with him. I also remember where we agreed, in effect, to have a true urban revolution - it was here that we began to speak about COINTELPRO, Che, and the Animal Liberation Front. But, today I want to know your thoughts on the animal rights movement. And how you can support the Animal Liberation Front, but not the animal rights movement?

Lawrence Sampson: I would like to think that the American Indian Movement is supportive of any comprehensive and moral effort that seeks to restore balance to society or to the Earth. However, what we have seen, is that those working for the liberation or benefit of what we commonly call animals, are, from our point of view, still coming from a perspective of human superiority. And as long as you assume your superiority, you will never understand your true place in the overall scheme of things. That is to say, some are still coming from a disconnected, "isn't it cute, we must be the saviors" sort of mentality. These are the same types of folks who happened on the scene in the early 20th century, such as John Collier and the "friends of the Indian", who pushed thru the Indian Reorganization Act, with well meaning, good intentions. The end result is, we are still fighting to throw off that yoke of foreign, oppressive, unaccountable governments, and all the avarices of colonization that their efforts brought with them. Sometimes, liberals are just as destructive as the "conservatives"-the mean spirited haters. See, we recognize that our fate, is the same as all that is natural -- the four legged, the winged, and the Earth. The same folks that wish to eradicate us, remove us, and silence our voice, are the same that would do the same to the other inhabitants of the Earth, and the Earth itself. From where we stand, it does not seem that animal rights activists, for the most part, *get it*. They are still coming from a disconnected, "we're at the top of the food chain" mentality. Just because you have recognized that animals should not be slaughtered and abused for profit does not mean you have the world all figured out. Instead of telling everyone what they should or should not be doing, why don't animal activists try to listen? Sit down and truly learn about the animals, learn about those who know more about them, that have lived and interacted with them. And yes, those that have hunted them and engaged in subsistence lifestyles, or at least descend from those that have. I hate to sound like some wisdom spouting Indian, but there is much knowledge gained from generations of being a part of an ecosystem-instead of sitting at the head of the table as the master of the universe. I don't think that most animal rights activists understand the knowledge, wisdom, and yes, love that an Indigenous person has of the animals he/she kills in order to survive. And that's the basis of our gulf of misunderstanding. Who better to understand the innate workings of the planet, than those who have had to have that love, in order to survive with balanced living? Who better than those who know what medicines certain animals, and for that matter, plants have within

them to help us survive in a balanced way, a way that does not endanger the next 7 generations? I think, and perhaps more assume, that many of those in the animal rights movement, would mirror the demographics of many movements, at least on the surface. I imagine that many of them are mere reactionaries, with little substance to support their views of what they are protesting. And if they are protesting, what are they offering as a solution? You can't just be against things, you have to offer solutions. I mean, you can't really be taken too seriously if you're protesting the use of animal hides in things like shoes and clothes, while wearing your petro-chemical based shoes and attire. Really now, just who do you think you're fooling? I hate to generalize, but we both know this element is well represented in your movement.

I would like to say, that in principle, I support the intention of interposing one's self in order to stop the suffering of animals. Direct action, of the sort that it begins to cost exploiters and inflictors of punishment for their malfeasance, is probably the only thing that will have an impact. It is our responsibility, all of us, as human beings, to defend those who cannot defend themselves. It seems all the corporate entities understand is the profit and loss statements. Their ethics, or rather, their lack of ethics, is guided by one principal, and that is profit. Again, the similarities here are striking; The only time we Indians have ever gotten anyone to listen or pay attention to our issues, is when we picked up a gun, or engaged in some other direct action that caused some seriously debilitating embarrassment, or cost somebody the kind of money we can only imagine or read about. It's a shame that we exist in such an environment, but we don't make the rules, do we? We make do with the hand we are dealt, and right now, the corporate monsters hold all the cards-the police, the courts, and the laws all favor the corporate criminal, and those of us that have to live with their carnage, their pollution, the suffering they inflict, are characterized as criminals, or more recently "terrorists", when we face up to them and tell them "it" has to stop. Further, the ethos of sacrifice is one of many values that are sorely lacking in the dominant society today. We, as Indian people, have always understood that you cannot have a balanced life without sacrifice-it is part and parcel of our cultures, and spirituality. It's good to see that some in the animal rights movement are willing to sacrifice for their beliefs. It goes to show that we have an agenda and underlying sense of responsibility that shares common ground. This is at least a partial explanation of why I can support those in the Animal Liberation Front in principle, while still decrying much of the animal rights movement, its participants, and tactics.

Richard Kahn: You briefly touch upon a defense of indigenous knowledge as having a special place in the scheme of the revolution -- I would be interested if you could spell out whether you thought either the AL or AR camps were making overtures in that direction and what possibilities for solidarity might exist. I take it that you see something like the New Age interest in indigenous peoples and shamanism, etc., as illegitimate and unhelpful? Are there any ways in which it might be helpful?

LS: First and foremost, the problem with what is commonly referred to as "NEW AGE" and those who practice it, specifically where it tries to inculcate native beliefs, is that its the same old song and dance, in regards to exploitation. People never seem to want to listen and learn, or when they do, it's so they can become an "instant Indian" and manipulate the teachings, almost always for profit. Really, what we're talking about, is our spirituality. And our spirituality is not a religion. They are lifeways-in other words, a way of living and learning. Non-Indians are generally not pre-disposed to this type of discipline. It's not a go to church on Sunday type of affair. It certainly isn't a for-profit exercise. I know I'm generalizing here, but this is what we are fighting so hard in our community to protect. It's the latest, last stand for our people, to defend our spiritualities. We generally have been willing to share, with some exceptions of course, but those who we have shared with have generally just exploited and twisted what they've seen and heard to fit their pre-disposed industrialized mindsets. Yes, our views towards the other living beings is part and parcel of what others would call our spirituality, therefore one has to at least have an understanding of this to comprehend our views on hunting and subsistence living. But we have to find that happy medium where folks can be exposed and taught without running back to some place in California claiming to be empowered by a medicine man as a Shaman, (a non-Indian word) and running for profit ceremony, or ceremony at all. It basically comes down to respect. It is good that this is getting discussed. In my mind, this issue is the core of our differences.

RK: Also, I had mentioned to Tony, how do you perceive the American Indian's role vis a vis this special place of indigenous wisdom considering the unprecedented physical/cultural/spiritual genocide upon the various tribes and peoples over the last centuries. Much of the scholarship has many tribes effectively displaced, hybridized, and to some extent alienated from their own indigenous wisdom after American attempts at integration/extermination -- many original languages lost, many culture practices degraded, American culture and language either evident or dominant within many communities, etc. To the degree that this is true, might not the American Indian Movement be more tolerable of other's contradictions -- such as the AR movement that is unsure how to replace the factory leather, etc? Perhaps the answer is to work together towards a better approach?

LW: Well, you certainly hit the nail on the head with that one. I want to stress that what is left of Indigenous land holdings, as well as traditions, ceremonies, and overall culture, has been fought and paid for with blood. And so if people will really consider that, maybe they'll understand why it's so important to protect today. The stories of genocide and ethnic cleansing are not words out of a history book, but our family histories. Up thru my generation and even today, our folks are either dealing directly with genocide, or it's fallout and trying to pick up the pieces. If folks can really understand this, they can understand why we are so adamant about protecting our traditions, of hunting, fishing, whaling, etc..Where these things have been lost, it is up to us to do whatever is necessary to bring them back, and that's a very complex thing to do. Because things are not done just for the sake of doing them, because they've always been done. There was reason and purpose in all of it. We believe we are maintaining balance not just for ourselves, but for all mankind and the Earth,

by retaining our ways. At times, we've even had to consult with non-Indians who may have documented things in books or in recordings, in order to bring them back. So, that's a classic example of working together to do what we know must be done. We still have a lot of work to do in our own communities, and a lot of healing to do. Over 500 years of genocide and all its effects do not go away overnight.

In regards to contradictions in the AR and ER Movements, that's a tough question. I mean, our difficulties are rooted in true lifeways and culture, whereas the AR and ER are coming from a moral, ethical, and/or socio-political platform. So, there's a difference there from the outset, as far as where we're coming from. My personal position is, I can be tolerable of anything, so long as it does not, under any circumstances, threaten Indian sovereignty and self determination. But of course, I don't speak for all Indians. And I don't suppose to have all the answers here. But we can definitely empathize with those trying to find their place in this world, especially those seeking a sustainable lifestyle. We definitely have to work together, which could take many different forms. I'd like to see tribal authorities begin a pan-Indian environmental enterprise, to reach out to your Movements, as one example.

AN: In our many discussions the dispute animal rightists have had with the Makah Indians has always been a sensitive issue with you. Do you think the animal rights movement turned their back on the Native American community?

LS: The Makah situation represents all that is wrong with the animal rights movement, from my point of view. Instead of engaging the Makah in dialogue, to understand why they whaled, what significance this practice had to their people, why they voluntarily stopped years ago, why they specifically chose the last few recent years to resume the practice, and why they felt the cultural importance of whaling sufficient enough to re-initiate the practice, Sea Shepherd and others chose to protest. And they didn't just protest. By putting up a phony and inflammatory website demeaning the Makah, and putting out bumper stickers that read "SAVE A WHALE, KILL A MAKAH", they lost the opportunity to learn, and they seriously damaged their own credibility, not to mention the support of Indians for a long, long time. The skyrocketing incidents of assaults on Makah and other Indians in the area was a direct result of the of animal rights activists. It became a racist confrontation, where the white folks, as always, knew better than the Indian. During the weeks of this scenario playing itself out, where the Makah took one whale for subsistence's sake, how many whales did the Japanese, Russian, and Norwegian ship factories kill for profit? 50? 100? Yet these "activists" chose to protest and endanger Indigenous people. Why? Because we are a more convenient, less threatening target? In the end, we see their campaign as one based on racism. The language of dialogue is always better than the rhetoric of confrontation. Your movement lost a vital opportunity here. Think of what of could have been gained.....

This must never happen again, for all of our sakes.

AN: If you were to be heard by the animal rights movement, what would your demands be from to them?

LS: To those who call themselves animal rights activists, I would say the following: LISTEN TO US!! We are the last remaining descendants of those who walked the Earth in balance. Who could you possibly learn more from than those who have an intimate knowledge of what you seek to protect and preserve? Anything else is to merely want to continue your relationship with nature as one of of ignorance, and ignorance will always lead to the very devastation of what you say you wish to protect. Sit down with us, and listen to our stories of where the Earth came from, how the animals came to look and live as they do, why things look and smell and act as they do. Understand the true reason things must be saved and protected. Listen to our stories, practices, and songs, and gain true knowledge. Know that your science does not offer all of the answers to the problems we all face. Listen to us, and we can all help each other. Perhaps we have not done enough to reach out to you. I can say it is most probably because our interaction with others has almost always been based on exploitation, but that we can still do more to reach out to you nonetheless. If we do, will you listen? Will you learn? Will you help to build the bridges that lead to understanding? An understanding not for superiority's sake, but for all those that live here, and the unborn generations yet to come? Try and understand not just the What and the How, but also the Why. What could be a better mission statement for this or any Movement? Respect our ways, and our sovereignty. What remains of them is the last true hope of preservation and conservation. If our voices refuse to be heard, if our ways and our cultures continue to fade, to suffer the same fate as those you would try and protect, then it is as Seattle said, "The end of living, and the beginning of survival".

RK: Finally, in your second mail to Tony, I think you made much clearer the reason why AL (as a liberation struggle that is willing to sacrifice) might be supportable over and against other AR (as liberal reform minded).... which is interesting b/c my experience of liberal reformists is that they hate AR people for being too left and militant, so what we are seeing here is that the general lot of AR appears caught in the political spectrum between the revolutionary left and the liberal left, unable to garner solidarity with either camp thus creating a major fracture and political unviability for the movement. Anyhow, my question to you centers around the antagonism to liberal reform. The age-old argument, of course, is that neither the militant nor the liberal change society but both in effect together, with the militant creating the necessary energy and the liberal providing the socially acceptable platform for change at the right historical moments. I could see why the American Indian Movement might itself question this but I would be interested as to your thoughts. In particular, as I am involved (very peripherally) with the Western Shoshone people in their fight against the government occupation of their land and its desecration as a nuclear graveyard. Corbin Harney is quite specific that he rejects the government's legal right to offer money for the land, but he defends his own right to the land both on the account of its traditional sacredness to the people but also on US legal grounds and the treaty of the 1860's

that delimited it to the Shoshone. What I am getting at is a question about the complexity of how revolutionary groups interpret their relationship to the Law of the oppressors. Are attempts to work within the law to be rejected outright as nonsensical, or are they to be used strategically wherever and whenever possible to grab larger spaces back for autonomy and future self-determination and social transformation? If the latter, which is what I take it that the radical Newe Sogobia strategy is -- also their use of white activists, new media, etc. -- then why is this an unacceptable tactic in the hands of animal rightists?

LS: This is an interesting question that I'm not sure how to answer. We in AIM have had to endure those within our own community that didn't like us "rocking the boat", and had faith in the American system of justice. Curious to say the least, coming from an Indian! But this is the case with all liberation struggles. The IRA have the same demographic to deal with in Irish society. We will never have 100% support, even in our own communities. Some folks just want to avoid struggle at all costs, no matter the cost.

As for what is at our disposal, yes we have to be inventive and flexible as to the tactics we use. Sometimes we will have to become part of a process so as to destroy it from the inside. You can't always stay separate from a system and point out its flaws. But that is a very complicated thing to do, and a decision to arrive at. It can also be very distasteful for those involved. I'm not sure there are any clear and concise answers here. As Indians, we have had to use American law and America's courts to stop the American government, but obviously, that method will not always work. We have to be willing to use a variety of methods to accomplish our goals. It's a delicate process - deciding what to do when. But we have to be willing to do whatever it takes, without limitations, to protect our sovereignty and self-determination.

Again, as Indians, our approach is complicated by the fact that we have our own cultural admonitions to deal with, that come into conflict with dealing with America. It is very difficult indeed to reconcile our own belief structure with resistance in some instances. It is a quandary all Indigenous people face. So, it's really a mixed bag for us, with cultural, spiritual, societal, and political concerns to reckon with, while facing the reality on the ground. And this is a problem we will face forever, I suppose.