

**Bangor University**

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**The social construction of human beings and other animals in human-nonhuman relations : welfarism and rights, a contemporary sociological analysis**

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*Award date:*  
2004

*Awarding institution:*  
Bangor University

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THE  
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION  
OF HUMAN BEINGS  
AND OTHER ANIMALS  
IN HUMAN-NONHUMAN  
RELATIONS.

Welfarism and Rights:

*A*

*Contemporary  
Sociological Analysis.*

by

ROGER YATES.

A doctoral thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
of the University of Wales, Bangor.

# *The Social Construction of Human Beings and Other Animals in Human-Nonhuman Relations.*

*Welfarism and Rights: A Contemporary Sociological Analysis.*

*The Social Construction of Human Beings and Other Animals* investigates dominant socially-sedimented attitudes toward human-nonhuman relations. It seeks to examine routine practices that flow from such social constructions. Human attitudes toward other animals are socially constructed, institutionalised, widely internalised, and culturally transmitted across generations. Essentially, the thesis explores many elements of the social transmission of 'speciesism'. It is about how and why modern human societies exploit and harm other animals.

Annually, billions of nonhuman animals are deliberately bred and eaten by human beings; experimented upon in biomedical and commercial laboratories; used as items of clothing; hunted; and utilised in various forms of human entertainment, such as circuses and rodeos. The moral and ethical attitudes that justify such treatment are predicated on centuries of philosophical, theological and social thought and practice. The thesis investigates how social attitudes constrain and shape thinking about other animals. Their status as 'sentient property', codified into law in 'developed' nations, is reflected and articulated within the powerful institution of animal welfarism. It further investigates the 'reception' and impact of a recently emergent 'second wave' animal advocacy that challenges orthodox views about humans and other animals.

Morally, nonhumans are regarded as a great deal less important and valuable than *all* human beings, regardless of their respective capacities and interests of individuals concerned. This 'lesser-than' status has a devastating consequence that may serve to seriously harm the interests of human beings as well as (more obviously) nonhuman ones. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how 'dehumanisation processes' rely on a low moral regard for nonhuman life, expressed in acts of war, genocide, relations of gender and 'race', the commercial production of pornography, and other situations of human and nonhuman harm. Within an examination of the construction of the 'species barrier' and protective 'rights', the project also sets out to critically question whether the basic rights of many nonhuman animals can continue to be denied with any moral justification. It suggests that sociological analysis brings to issues vital understandings of the socially-constructed nature of much of what is regarded as the 'just is' of human-nonhuman relations; and points to its continuing usefulness in examining how societies may react to new moral ideas, often within complex systems of knowledge denial and evasion.

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### Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank the following people who have helped me in many different ways in the research for and production of this thesis (in order to avoid creating a fight - *I hate violence* - I have placed the names alphabetically): Carol Adams, Piers Beirne, Paul Bradley, Mary Brady, Brenda Clare, Kim Cook, Julie Davies, Howard Davis, Graham Day, Lee Hall, Shirley Harris, Neil James, Don Jenkins, Miho Kaneko, Chris Kelly, Alexandra Plows, Paddy Rawlinson, David Robinson, Alex Stewart, Sharon Stewart, Merlin Tomkins, Sian Weldon, Lynne Yates, Ms. Harriet Yates, and Carole Zdesar.

**I would like especially to thank Dr. Chris Powell for all the usual things one thanks a well-qualified Ph.D supervisor for – including being patient and not laughing (outloud) at my ideas.**

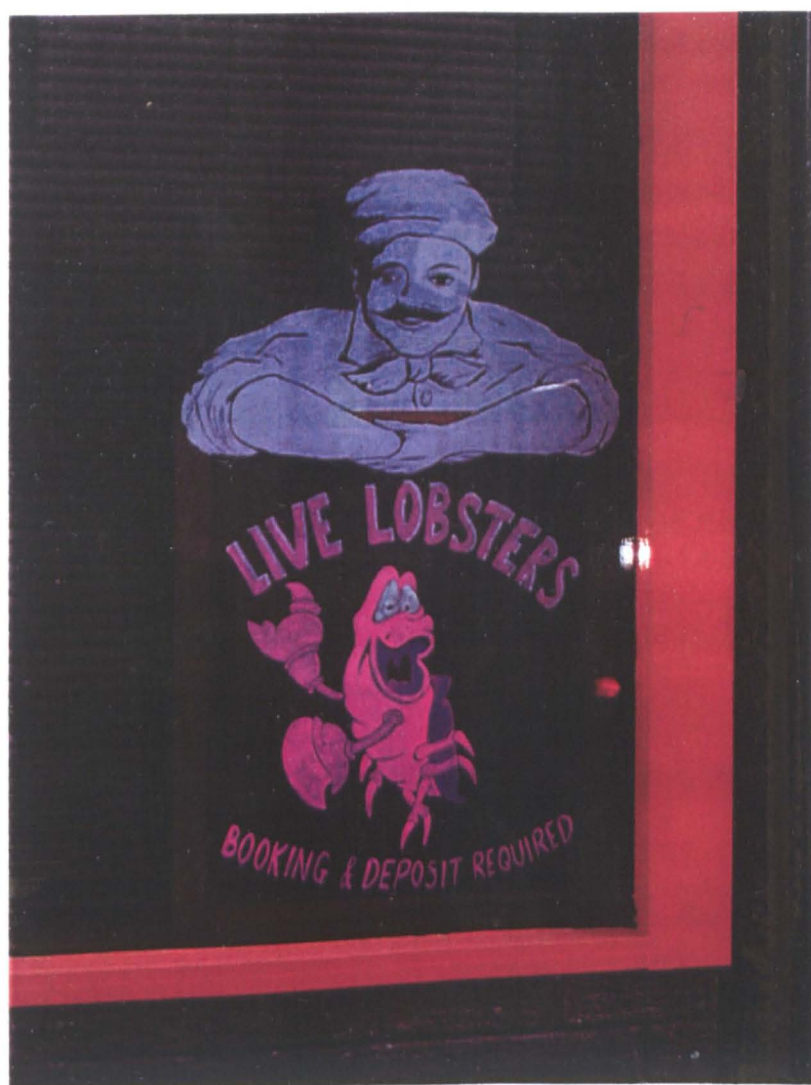
On language and form.

Sociological language is usually filled with latinised concepts and complicated sentence structures. It is as if the use of ordinary words and sentences might decrease the trust in arguments and reasoning. I detest that tradition. So little of the sociology I am fond of needs technical terms and ornate sentences. I write with my “favourite aunts” in mind, fantasy figures of ordinary people, sufficiently fond of me to give the text a try, but not to the extent of using terms and sentences made complicated to look scientific.

Nils Christie.

*Crime Control As Industry* 1994.

Routledge.



## The Visibility of Animal Exploitation.

It is simply not possible to walk down any high street without encountering evidence of instrumental and sentimental orientations toward other animals: evidence of apparent animal hating and animal loving. Butcher shops with the freshly killed, the dismembered, on display. During deliveries, nonhuman bodies are slung over human shoulders, from lorry to meat market door, feet kick lifeless in the air. Gutted cadavers limply hang; smaller body parts arranged among plastic greenery and models of 'farm animals' made of pottery. Outside, perhaps a jolly caricature: maybe a figure of a *smiling* pig, dressed-as-butcher, holding a meat cleaver. Perhaps a *laughing* cow, like those on TV advertisements, welcoming customers into the meat store.

Outside the fish and chips shop, perhaps an emblem of a happy fisherman with his arm around a large *smiling* fish who offers, 'Me and Chips'. On every main thoroughfare one or several 'McDonald's', 'KFCs' or 'Burger Kings'. In newsagent stores, hunting and fishing magazines, and general and specialist magazines full of advice about how to cook animal parts.

In the majority of clothes shops, even R.S.P.C.A. charity shops, the skins of those Richard Ryder calls 'sentients' presented as fashionable leather items. In every single supermarket, aisle after aisle of products containing animal ingredients: animal body parts in tins and neat packages; calf food in row after row of white bottles and cartons for a never-weaned population. Sometimes, in a special section, nonhuman animals cut up and presented for sale under a remarkable (yet rarely remarked-upon) sign reading, 'Freedom Foods'. A casual walk down any street means meeting people clothed with bits and pieces of other animals: leather shoes, leather jackets, perhaps a full fur coat or, more often in recent years, fur trimmings on collars and cuffs. Shoppers or passers-by may be attached to their animal property by leather lead or (more hip) by a rope: they may be engaged in buying meat for their animal property to eat. A glance into the front windows of houses and flats may reveal any number of animal 'lifers'; perhaps some are in the homes of criminologists and their students: imprisoned in cages or other forms of containers such as tanks for fishes.

Travel down any major road to encounter (if not fully register what they are) refrigerated lorries with cargoes of whole dead animals, and animals cut in half, and separated into many parts. Every traveller is likely to pass articulated lorries, live animals this time, in 'transporters' on their way to or from farms or toward slaughterhouses, or animal markets and air and seaports. A traveller may run into tractor-drawn trailers transferring sheep or 'cattle' from one field to another. For, it is difficult to travel any distance without passing a field of sheep (*legs of lamb, chops*) or cows (*sides of beef*), or - far more rarely - 'free-range' pigs (*pork shoulders, sausages*) and hens (*eggs, drumsticks, breasts*).

Is it possible to glance at a TV or radio schedule without being immediately aware of the number of cookery programmes describing the various ways of transforming animal corpses into food items? As well as treating other animals *as if* they were food, the TV schedules are filled with details of numerous wildlife documentaries about 'wild nature' and pets. In recent years in Britain it has been difficult to avoid the 'animal hospital'

shows extolling the virtues of 'pet' ownership. Horse racing programmes are not hard to find; while coverage of the 'Grand' National and Cheltenham Festival is hard to avoid: 'hard-hitting' national radio news and current affairs programmes feature racing tips every morning in their 'sport' slots.

#### Animal Exploitation: Less Visible.

It is practically impossible to travel far, certainly in Britain, without passing by largely unseen, unrecognised, low-slung, windowless structures: intensive pig-breeding and fattening units, or windowless, hanger-like, 'broiler chicken' sheds, or windowless 'battery hen' units with grain silos standing by. Vegan and vegetarian activists are far more likely to recognise an animal agricultural 'unit' than would the people who actually buy its produce.

Abattoirs are usually located in secluded places, away from main thoroughfares, or on outlying industrial estates. Of course, not one is made of glass. Similarly, most commuters, holidaymakers, lorry drivers and even many 'locals' are likely to pass by blissfully unaware that they are near now heavily-defended, security-guarded, razor-wired, vivisection laboratories.

Any journey through countryside is as likely to pass small and medium sized woods, 'coverts' (pronounced 'covers'), within which game keepers' gibbet lines are hung and where semi-tame pheasants and partridges are purpose-bred for shooting estates and gun clubs. Travellers are likely to innocently drive by hunting kennels or areas where hunts have set up artificial 'earths' to maintain foxes. More rarely, they may unknowingly pass the secret location of illegal dog fights or badger baiting pits, and are almost certain to pass alongside scrub land and fields where official and unofficial 'lamping' (hunting with powerful lights) and hare coursing takes place.

Returning to shops and supermarkets consumers can find - if they read a product label or two - animal tested make-up, detergent, soap, toothpaste and every other imaginable household product. Easily located are animal parts in the ingredients lists of all manner of products, bits and pieces of nonhumans: 'secretions', and so-called 'by-products' from the meat industry, are labelled as 'gelatine', 'lactose', 'animal fat', and found in several common 'E'-numbers.

## Introduction.

This thesis is about deliberate harm in human-nonhuman relations. It is about the social construction of institutionalised and internalised knowledge and societal categorical attitudes about both human and nonhuman animals on interlinked macro and micro levels. It is therefore about how human individuals, groups, and whole societies use such knowledge, social attitudes, and taught assumptions to make claims about human-nonhuman relations in a variety of social contexts.

The primary concern here, as a contribution to an emerging interest in the ‘sociology of human-animal relationships’ (Scarse 1998) or ‘the discipline of animal studies’ (Baker 1996), and as an example of what may be regarded as a ‘nonspeciesist<sup>1</sup> zemiological perspective’ (more of which below), is to provide a sociological analysis of exploitative human attitudes toward nonhuman animals in particular, and toward ‘the natural world’, or ‘nature’, in general. It is suggested that the following pages help to reveal that the varied ways in which nonhuman animals are routinely perceived and systematically treated in modern societies are inevitably and intrinsically linked to the ways in which members of society are encouraged to view them, both instrument-ally and, less obviously, sentimentally (Jasper 1999).

As the principal focus of this thesis is the socially-constructed nature of attitudes to human-nonhuman relations, it is about significant social claims-making that constructs important society-wide ideas about human and nonhuman beings as general categories. Within societies in which the

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of nonspeciesism may be regarded as problematic for a number of reasons. As discussed later in the current work, the best animal advocates may hope for is a *less* speciesist world.



use and exploitation of other animals is institutionalised and overwhelmingly internalised, nonhuman animals are generally regarded as human resources; treated *as if* they were items of food, or experimental ‘models’, for example. Moreover, the sentimental use of nonhuman animals as ‘family companions’ is widely accepted and encouraged, even by individuals and organisations that express concern about the human treatment of other animals.

That nonhumans may be systematically used as human resources is an ethical issue. The thesis investigates the particular claims-making that asserts that humans are morally justified in exploiting nonhuman animals for human (and sometimes nonhuman) ends. Such claims have been constructed in societies that explain the justification to utilise nonhumans in terms of the moral significance of human interests and the relatively trivial regard of nonhuman interests. Thus, in most human societies animals other than human are regarded, in law, as human property, as ‘things’ (Francione 1995).

‘Things’ are codified in law as the private property of ‘persons’, be they human beings or corporations (thus distinct from ‘people’). In law, the interests of persons tend to systematically override the interests of ‘things’: indeed, the notion that a ‘thing’ can have any interests at all is legally problematic. In this sense, the social construction of human-nonhuman relations creates legitimate exploiters of nonhuman property. What this thesis sets out to do is explore how the ‘species barrier’ - understood to exist between human beings on the one hand and all other animals on the other - is culturally transmitted as morally significant. Much to the chagrin of traditionalist opponents of most things ‘politically correct’ (such as philosopher Roger Scruton [2000]), psychologist Richard Ryder (2000)

suggests that a new ‘ism’ was recognised in the 1960s and 1970s. This is the notion of *speciesism*. According to Ryder, speciesism functions in a similar manner to sexism and racism: it represents a socially constructed prejudice that may, and should, be challenged as an ethical and legal matter. The assertion that society may be ‘speciesist’ has created new claims about right and proper relations between human beings and other animals.

In that nonhuman animals are conventionally regarded as ‘utilisable natural resources’, the harming of their interests is socially sanctioned, and has been historically justified by means of theological, philosophical and social discourses. A whole series of claims continue to be made suggesting that there is a ‘vast gulf’ between the moral worth of human beings and the corresponding worth of nonhuman animals. Human beings around the globe are traditionally brought up from childhood to believe that their own species (if not ‘race’) is in various ways ‘special’. This ‘vast gulf thesis’ is culturally transmitted within processes of socialisation and significantly, in Ryder’s terms, the vast majority of human beings are practising speciesists - and before they can be regarded as ethically aware social and moral agents.

The sociology and social philosophy of Zygmunt Bauman (1989; 1993) suggests the devastating consequences for *human beings* of the routine, linguistic - and, indeed, bureaucratic - use of ‘us’ and ‘them’ categories. Specifically in terms of the relationships between human beings and other sentient animals, the present dissertation attempts to explore connections between such relationships and these categories. This involves gaining a clear understanding of what human beings tend to think of themselves and other animals as *categories* (Baker 1993); and thus, what ‘they’ have been socially constructed as. In general, therefore, much of this work is designed to explore sociologically exactly what terms such as

‘animal’, ‘animals’, ‘beasts’ and so forth are said to mean in contemporary Western cultures; that is, in those very societies informed by centuries of philosophy and theology that frequently talks about nonhuman animals in order to speak about human ones.

The thesis seeks to underline, then, how constructions of human and nonhuman categories appear very important, perhaps surprisingly, even with regard to the human treatment of *other human beings*. Just as the various meanings attached to ‘animal’ (etc.) may have important ideological relationships to what the category ‘human being’ means, Lynda Birke (1994) argues that how human beings understand themselves in relation to other animals matters greatly with regard to the well-being and treatment of all. Most obviously, what human beings are socialised to think about other animals - what ‘we’ as human society say ‘we’/‘they’ categories mean in human-nonhuman relations (Adams 1990) - bears a direct experiential impact on very many hundreds of millions of nonhuman lives. In terms of harm and harm causation toward animals, what is said about human and nonhuman classifications on all levels of social discourse is regarded as extremely important (Dunayer 2001) as, ethnomethodologically, social-construction-through-talk directly, if often subconsciously, informs generations of humans ‘the facts’ about the nonhuman world.

Historically, linguistically and ideologically, constructed social knowledge about human beings and other animals, especially ‘knowledge’ regarding views about the ‘proper’, ‘justified’, ‘traditional’, ‘ethical’ relations between humans and nonhumans, has indeed led generation after generation to regard many (selected) nonhuman animals *as if* they were ‘resource items’. These to instrumentally use as food, or as laboratory tools; at the same time (selected) nonhuman others are also regarded sentimentally

as pets, while yet other nonhumans are often denounced as menacing and dangerous ‘pests’, and labelled as ‘wild’ or ‘tame’ and so on.

While this thesis will clearly take seriously the recently suggested connections between the harmful treatment of nonhumans and the harmful treatment of human beings, there will be little suggestion here that such links are explicitly causal, or should (or can) be located in individual pathology. In other words, the present project is not similar to recent research (for example, Ascione 1993; 1998; 1999; Arluke et al 1999; Boat 1999) that explicitly suggests that many of those who are directly ‘cruel’ to nonhuman animals may be the most likely to subsequently act harmfully toward other humans too. Therefore, while the link between human and nonhuman harm is explored - and suggested as ‘real’ in the current work, such a linkage will be seen abstractly, tenuously, and above all else, sociologically. Connections are therefore to be located in institutionalised cultural forces, common societal rituals, routine social practices, and in orthodox perceptions which are widespread within animal ‘using’, animal harming, or as Ryder would have it, ‘speciesist’ societies.

The position adopted is based on the idea that widespread, often daily, social practices, along with foundational philosophical and ideological constructions, can ultimately engender a *suggestive societal ambience* which, for the vast majority of people, on some level, serves as a functional normative framework for both social attitudes and day-to-day action related to the treatment of nonhuman beings. In general, the approach here bears a number of similarities to recent strands of feminist scholarship which has been increasingly receptive to the suggestion that multiple and ‘interlocking’ oppressions have a great deal to do with each other (see, e.g., Vance 1994). In seeking to emphasise such linkages between different yet interwoven

‘modes of oppression’, the approach is also somewhat similar to the position of some ‘ecofeminists’ (Warren & Cheney 1991; Pincus 2001), and limited elements of the ‘feminist vegetarian critical theory’ of Carol Adams (1990; 1994). Collectively, such writers have tended to question why theorists have been slow to recognise and acknowledge that the interwoven oppression of human beings, nonhuman animals and ‘nature’ in general could be a central and integral part of the analysis of incidence of harm.

Therefore, although such a perspective will likely not be generally accepted within the social sciences, or within orthodox social views about human-nonhuman and human-human relations, this work reflects recently articulated views that it is an error to regard the investigation of, and opposition to, animal abuse - Ryder’s ‘struggle against speciesism’ (2000: 1) - as something of an inconsequential side-show to ‘more important’ (meaning, of course, *human*) concerns. Rather, the position adopted seeks to explore and understand a great many institutionalised and widely internalised forms of oppression, modes of violence, and incidences of abuse and harm (human, nonhuman, sexual, ethnic).

In terms of ‘animal rights thought’, the interwoven nature of various forms of oppression was first articulated by the social reformer and ‘humanitarian’, Henry Salt (1851-1939) (Salt 1980, and see Hendrick & Hendrick 1989). Salt argued in his ironically-titled autobiography of 1921, *Seventy Years Among Savages*, that violence was not a product of ‘this bloodshed’ or ‘that bloodshed’. For Henry Salt, ‘all needless bloodshed’ must cease in the spirit of universal kinship (cited in Wynne-Tyson 1985: 301). As shown in the latter part of this thesis, contemporary scholars are increasingly incorporating some notion of interlinked and interwoven perspective in their work on harm, abuse and suffering, for example, within

the recent development of ‘zemiology’ (or ‘harmology’)<sup>2</sup> and in the emergence of ‘nonspeciesist approaches’ in criminology (Piers Beirne 1995, 1997, 1999; Cazaux 1999). Indeed, given that the remit of zemiological investigation explores the idea and definition of the constituency of ‘social harm’,<sup>3</sup> this thesis could reasonably be described as a work of - or allied to the interests of – nonspeciesist/less-speciesist zemiology.

Interpretative sociological traditions most obviously associated with Max Weber recognise human beings as meaning-giving mammals (although putting an emphasis on humans-as-animals – and especially as mammals - is far from usual). Berger and Luckmann (1966) would contend that human beings routinely cognitively construct the world. Thus, rather than merely ‘being around’ the other animals in the world, there is a sense in which human societies *create* them within a complicated social framework of meaning construction. The present work therefore examines the incidence of animal harm in, for example, the social construction of nonhumans within the category of ‘food items’.

Of course, most if not all sociologists would agree that understanding social life means understanding its socially created character: thus it can be argued that in some senses the term ‘social construction’ may be rendered rather devoid of substantial meaning (Marshall 1994: 484), or may be viewed as a relatively trivial sociological matter (Jary and Jary 1995: 605). However, it is important to maintain an emphasis on two important factors in relation to such claims. First, the absolute certainty that human society is creatively and actively produced by human action (given that social actors are for many socio-economic and cultural factors differently endowed with

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the Greek word *zemia* meaning ‘harm’.

<sup>3</sup> A zemiological conference in Devon explored such notions as part of a conceptual move to go ‘beyond criminology’ in February 1999.

respect to notions of societal influence): however, it may be understood that society is an increasingly complex on-going human product. Secondly, it is as equally important to constantly underscore the fact that this 'production' takes place minute-by-minute, often within long-sedimented and structured frameworks of power relations and social forces, regularly mediated by the erection, maintenance and utilisation of self-serving ideologies.

Given such factors, the relatively recent emergence of 'animal rights', 'animal liberation' and some strands of ecofeminist thought have provided a new, and fairly radical, set of claims relating to nonhuman animals (for example, nonhumans as right holding sentients with interests and preferences, moral patients, justified members of 'the circle of compassion' or the 'moral in-group',<sup>4</sup> and as morally valuable beings, valued independently of their utility to humanity). Such claims critically challenge conventional and orthodox views about animals other than human. The extent that this modern re-evaluation of human-nonhuman relations has caused a discernible degree of societal reaction - some amount of 'social disturbance' to conventional attitudes - is implied at least by the huge amount of press coverage of social movement activity associated with ideas such as 'animal rights' and 'animal liberation'.

Recent years have also witnessed the emergence of several 'pro-use countermovements' (organised alliances in favour and defence of the human exploitation of other animals), and a growing academic interest in the emergence of animal rights thinking (Sperling 1988; Garner 1993; Guither 1988; Kean 1988 are examples of this interest). While recognising that rights in 'animal rights' is commonly used rhetorically, a part of this thesis

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<sup>4</sup> These ideas are seen clearly in titles written by pro-animal rights commentators and activists. For example, *The Extended Circle* (Wynne-Tyson 1990) and *Animal Rights: Extending the circle of compassion* (Gold 1995).

acknowledges many elements of the contemporary emergence of distinctly animal rights thinking, while also attempting to provide a sociological analysis of *reaction* and *opposition* to - and indeed the *evasion* of - emergent animal rights views. This endeavour is admittedly made much more difficult by the general lack of differentiation of various 'pro-animal' positions and perspectives, such as 'animal rights', 'animal liberation', 'animal welfarism', 'scientific anti-vivisectionism', 'anti-bloodsports', 'animal lover' and so on. This 'complicating factor' deserves careful and indeed patient analysis, and will feature in greater detail in part two of the present thesis.

Bauman (1990) states that sociological analysis can appear to act like 'a stranger', effectively 'defamiliarising' the familiar in everyday life. Therefore, one of the first lessons one learns when 'doing sociology' is that the majority of phenomena viewed sociologically are rarely what they seem to be at face value. Such an insight also seems absolutely valid with regard to human-nonhuman relations. Thus, for example, investigating the historical meanings attached to the term 'animal(s)' *does* undoubtedly investigate social attitudes about what modern Western humans think (and are steadfastly encouraged to think) about themselves *as human beings*. According to Agnew (1998: 177-78), it has been psychologists and philosophers who have taken the most interest in animal abuse issues until very recently. The recent sociological exploration of the subject is greatly to be welcomed for the increased interdisciplinary depth sociology brings to the analysis of human-nonhuman relations. However, since it is quite apparent that psychology and philosophy are major influences in the construction of the various 'meanings' the present work seeks to investigate, psychology, social psychology and philosophy will inform the thesis



throughout. For, just as virtually no individual person could exist in total isolation, devoid of social influence, no body of knowledge with any validity can ever be free from the social (meaning the socio-political, economic and ideological) context in which it is, or has been, produced. Therefore, there is a great deal that sociology can contribute to the study of the relationships between human beings and other animals. As mentioned above, and will be detailed below in Chapter 15, the sociological study of these relationships and connected issues - evident in the work of zemiologists and sociologists of crime - is growing, if still limited, at the present time.

As briefly noted also, the recent social phenomenon that is 'animal rights' advocacy, a development which - although this can be seriously contested - is commonly traced to its origins in the 1970's in Britain (see Garner 1993; Gold 1998; Guither 1998), has resulted in a perceivable 'disturbance', and even the 'disruption', of orthodox and somewhat hitherto 'settled' aspects of social life. To the extent that this may be true, present social attitudes about the use of other animals for a variety of human ends are increasingly being rendered a little unstable by various nonhuman protection perspectives.

It perhaps should be immediately acknowledged at this point that, historically, many claims over many years concerning human-nonhuman relations have resulted in considerable amounts of public controversy, along with a good deal of organised social movement activity; philosophical reflection, and numerous acts of legislative action, all well before the so-called 're-birth' of 'animal rights thinking' in the mid-1970's (see Kean 1998). However, as shown throughout the present work, prior to the modern emergence of distinctly animal rights thought in the 1980s, along with some animal activism in the last few years, a firmly established, seemingly widely

accepted, and largely ‘functional’, normative mechanism has existed in society to *cater* for most aspects of human relationships with other animals. By and large, this institutionalised mechanism has adequately ‘dealt with’ – or perhaps more accurately, *smoothed over* - any emergent misgivings, qualms, and any practical or ethical ‘problems’ created by a range of traditional and routine ‘usage’ of other animals by humans for human ends.

### Animal Welfarism.

This mechanism is *animal welfarism* and, effectively, the recent emergence of genuine and rhetorical animal rights thinking and activism has exposed traditional animal welfarism as a fairly non-radical and conventional orientation with regard to human-nonhuman relations. Essentially, it may be claimed that orthodox animal welfarism ultimately serves to *regulate* and *control* the human use and exploitation of other animals, and rarely attempts to totally end or abolish such use and exploitation (Regan 2001). In essence, emergent animal rights views, along with non-traditional welfarist ideas such as animal liberation have, with some degree of success, questioned the validity of the long-institutionalised conventional animal welfare paradigm.

Traditional animal welfare orientations toward other animals do, however, remain prevalent and hugely influential in terms of how the majority of human societies view their relations with the sentient nonhuman world. This thesis will suggest that this situation and state of affairs can hardly be overstated. From a critical sociological point of view, animal welfarism cannot be solely regarded as simply a set of legislative

interventions enacted in Britain and elsewhere from the beginning of the nineteenth century to control, regulate and enforce the “humane use” of other animals (see Radford 1999; Francione 2000). Orthodox animal welfarism undoubtedly performs its regulatory function: yet sociologically it appears to do far more than this. For example, it seemingly operates as a firmly entrenched institutionalised ideology that effectively helps to normatively promote ‘kindness to animals,’ and an ethos of ‘caring’ for nonhumans, while at the same time justifying systematic and routine harmful practices – and time-honoured social attitudes - toward other animals.

Moreover, orthodox animal welfarism is the generally adopted societal lens through which issues of the ‘humane treatment’ of other animals by human beings are viewed and made sense of. As seen in subsequent sections of this document, animal welfare views are so common, and so socially sedimented and fixed, that regarding human-nonhuman relationships in *any* other way is most unusual, and exceptionally difficult, even for ‘pro-animal’ organisations and individual campaigners in the nonhuman protection movement. Therefore, the ideology of traditional animal welfare, claimed in this thesis to have been successfully institutionalised and overwhelmingly internalised, has not only served to regulate the human exploitation of nonhuman animals but has also, for generation after generation, been a central *support system* justifying and excusing what humans have done, and still do, to nonhumans in the name of science, agriculture and entertainment.

Conventional animal welfarism - its very name implies as much - is generally seen in a positive light. It is so firmly entrenched in the modern cultural imagination that it is, argues Barbara Noske (1998: 284), regarded

as ‘an accepted good in Western society’. Furthermore, reasonable animal welfare legislation and ‘good welfare practice’ has always been claimed, increasingly so in recent years, as the most serious concern - often *the* number one interest - of those who themselves wish to actively exploit nonhumans as a commercial or ‘sporting’ resource in some way or other. In other words, it is fairly rare to find even animal ‘users’ - or the exploiters of nonhuman resources (‘animal abusers’ in animal rights discourse) - who do not regularly articulate fervent support for the concept of orthodox forms of animal welfarism (Guither 1998). Since the emergence of animal rights philosophy represents both a fairly radical rejection of the human use of other animals (Regan 1985; 2001) and also a fundamental challenge to its regulatory mechanisms (Francione 1996), conventional animal welfarism responds ideologically to rights views with a generalised charge that the latter are *unwarranted* interferences, *extreme* opinions and, most of all, *unnecessary* ideas. Orthodox animal welfarism reacts in a similar way to animal liberation. Essentially, traditional animal welfarism suggests that any desire to go *beyond* its own established precepts makes no sense, and serves no positive function, even for nonhuman animals themselves.

As a consequence of the prevalence of orthodox animal welfarism, it is suggested in this thesis that what may be regarded as genuine animal rights thought, and even the radical ‘new welfarism’ of animal liberation, has attempted to enter a rather ‘crowded’ social space already ‘filled’ with traditional animal welfare. Not only does traditional animal welfarism stand like a monolith to inform the vast majority of discussions about human relations with other animals, fundamental and historically sedimented social convention and routine practices also give succour to mainstream society-wide views that firmly state that

(1) human beings are entirely justified by many religious and philosophical canons in their use of other animals for their own purposes and

(2) this exploitative use, precisely because it is thought to be strictly controlled and regulated, can be properly regarded as ethically acceptable since the animals so used do not actually suffer in the course of their usage.

As will be indicated during the course of this thesis, fundamental social truisms concerning human-nonhuman relationships are thought and repeatedly said to be so *self-evident* that the norms and values which support established mainstream views about other animals are virtually unconsciously, and certainly without controversy, transmitted on a daily basis at every level of primary, secondary and adult socialisation. Since the ‘normal’, ‘justified’ and ‘proper’ use of other animals is a central feature of main-stream Western cultures, the apparent self-evident character, and the unequivocal ‘correctness’, of these embedded cultural attitudes means that any challenge to them can be almost automatically regarded as unneeded, beyond the pale, unreasonable, invalid, irrational and even ‘dangerous’. Increasingly, indeed, ‘terroristic’.

Claims from animal rights and animal liberation positions state that society is so prejudiced on the basis of species membership that, fuelled by notions of ‘human chauvinism’ (Hayward 1997), most people quite unproblematically instil speciesist ideology into children day after day through routine discourse and everyday social practices (for example, and perhaps most obviously, at every mealtime). Similarly, speciesist sentiments are

culturally transmitted in common stories told to children, and can be seen reflected beyond food choices, for example in clothing, social rituals, forms of entertainment and social gatherings. In terms of what children learn about human orientations toward other animals, the vast majority of youngsters are effectively *socialised as speciesists* well before they can be regarded as ethically aware individuals. In other words, most children are encouraged to participate in organised animal-harming activities (again, for example, at every mealtime) prior to developing the ability to morally evaluate what they are brought up to do with nonhuman property and animal produce.

Furthermore, they are routinely exposed to, and enticed to believe and accept, the justifying ideology that accompanies the human exploitation of nonhuman resources - this before they know for themselves what their own and others' conduct entails for the lives (and, of course, the deaths) of other sentient beings. Indeed, in effect, adults may feel a pressure to effectively *mislead* their own children, to put it no stronger at this point, about the starkest realities of many human-nonhuman relationships (Sapon 1998).

This suggests that many parents may feel the need - at the very least - to obscure many of the *details* (if they know them) of what happens to the animals their children consume, especially those animals consumed as if they were food. As seen in later sections of the thesis, Robbins (1987) suggests that several commercial concerns, such as those involved in 'animal agriculture', are likewise engaged in such 'protection' of children: protection from 'hurtful knowledge' that is. After all, as Adams comments (1990), does anyone *really* want to know the ins and outs of what humans do to other animals when they exploit them? A part of this thesis asks a stark question; one of potential interest to every pro-nonhuman advocate: why should anyone volunteer to know these details?

The generally 'hidden' nature of much animal harm caused by human activity means that, if and when individuals come to reject some of their long-internalised orientations about human-nonhuman relations, they must perform the apparently difficult task of seriously negating some of their fundamental, hitherto stable, apparently steadfast, and solidly sedimented social norms and values (Bauman 1990; DeGrazia 1996). Subsequently, this may perhaps require a rather difficult - and undoubtedly uncomfortable - period of 'resocialisation'; a serious re-think about what 'we' humans should or should not do to nonhuman animals (Sapon 1998). These widespread social processes are commonsensically and culturally understood, constructed and structured; and it is these processes which will particularly benefit from the scrutiny of a sociological lens.

Connections between human and nonhuman harm have been alluded to. A feature of this thesis will investigate the degree of harmful utility provided by attitudes concerning the conception of the 'species barrier'. While making no claim that such a barrier has not been intelligibly identified within the social construction of species membership (Midgley 1983; Elstein 2003), the thesis outlines how 'absolute division' and 'vast gulf' views, contra Darwin, means that to label a human being an 'animal' is to generally confer an extremely negative classification upon any individual (Clark 1984; Birke 1994). Sociologists have long since appreciated the important consequential effects of labelling and categorising from interactionist and phenomenological perspectives (Husserl 1931; Becker 1963). Thus, social attitudes concerning species barriers – most obviously 'the' species barrier between human and nonhuman animals - have often been used to justify the most violent infliction of harm to human as well as nonhuman beings.

Pointing out the practice, *and virtual tradition*, of deliberately constructing their enemies as sub- or nonhuman individuals means recognising that humans can successfully ‘re-cast’ or ‘re-conceptualised’ human as well as nonhuman others as ‘killable beings’ (Bauman 1989; Tester 1997; Bourke 1999).

Effective and successful dehumanisation and depersonalisation processes appear to rely on factors wholly central to the present work; such as *a priori* social understandings that many, in fact most, animals-other-than-human occupy this category of beings who may be legitimately harmed and killed. This is to say that there are distinct understandings which recognise that orientations toward the idea of the species barrier explicitly acknowledge that there are ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ sides to it. Moreover, it may be categorically understood and fully appreciated that the ‘wrong’ side of the species barrier is an extraordinarily dangerous location in which to find oneself. What is also apparently *known* on a commonsensical level is that the ‘wrong’ side of the species barrier is - can *only* be on the face of it - the nonhuman side of it. Clearly, the ‘wrong’ side of the species barrier is a potentially lethal location for all animals - including human ones – who are, or who find themselves ideologically placed and presented as being, on that ‘far’ side of moral consideration and inclusion. To regard human individuals or human groups as ‘killable’ (or ‘rapeable’, or ‘harmable’, or even ‘eatable’), one may apparently and effectively be able to facilitate this state of affairs if one *successfully* casts a person or the persons in question ‘over’ the species barrier; away from the ‘safe’ *human* side, and into that thoroughly dangerous and essentially nonhuman territory.



Spector & Kitsuse (1987: 92-3) follow C. Wright Mills' (1940) position on the role of motives, assert that claims express demands made within a moral universe: thus people do not simply say 'stop that!'; instead, they may say something like, 'it is *not right* that this is happening'. Thus, claims-makers try to articulate their ideas on the basis of moral criteria to explain *why* a particular situation is wrong. Similarly, negative reactions and responses to new ideas are often grounded in values - moral, religious, social, philosophical - which can 'surface' quickly when some forms of conduct or belief are questioned. Thus, claims-making can likely create controversy, the disruption of established patterns of thought, and a feeling of discomfort - or even a degree of quite intense psychic pain - both in individuals and in collectives. It is in such circumstances that various defence mechanisms may be required. Taking many and complex forms, defence mechanisms involve the utilisation of complicated justifications and excuses (see Scott & Lyman 1968; Blum & McHugh 1971; Robins 1994; Cohen 2001). In relation to the case of nonhuman animals, the present work will investigate many of these points by means of the work of philosopher Stephen Clark (1984) and his conceptualisation of several 'devices of the heathen'.

### Audience.

In the preparation of particular sections of this doctorate, a specific and largely *non-academic* audience is being addressed. Thus, much of the information provided in the following pages is, with no apology, intentionally targeted in order to (hopefully) assist the cause of those involved in -

specifically – genuine animal *rights* advocacy. In saying this, it is openly stated that the present work is not *about* such advocates and campaigners, it is very much more *for* them. Some theorists have suggested (see, for example, Hester & Eglin 1992, following Spector & Kitsuse 1987) that a strict distinction must be made between social and sociological problems. The former are to be seen, sociologically, as a product of successful claims-making - or successful ‘defining’ activities. Sociologists such as Stephen Hester and Peter Eglin argue that sociology should investigate the processes that lie behind ‘something-should-be-done-about-this’ claims, rather than trying to actually do something for those involved in constructing ‘do something’ claims. From their early 1990’s perspective, Hester & Eglin characterise radical feminism as ‘arguably the most significant social-problem-defining movement in recent history’ (ibid.: 40). Since then, the world has witnessed the growth of grass-roots environmentalism, ‘roads protests’ and the very recent and visible emergence of anti- and counter-globalisation movements (see Barker & Tydesley 1995). It seems reasonable to suggest that these recent concerns, along with (often interwoven with) animal rights and animal liberation advocacy, can join radical feminism as important claims-makers in contemporary history. Thus, on one level, this thesis *will* simply investigate a new claims-making social phenomenon; however it is also openly designed as an overt political act (rather like much feminist theory, especially of the 1970’s ‘radical’ varieties) to actively be of *use* to particular social movement activists and thinkers.

## Theoretical Grounding and Methodology.

### Sociology. 'The Crisis Arrived', or 'After the Crisis'?

In 1970, Alvin Gouldner warned of the coming crisis of Western sociology (Gouldner 1971). Both Seidman (1998) and Lemert (1995) suggest that a crisis arrived within a decade of the publication of Gouldner's book. Both may suggest, as Lemert certainly does, that 'crisis' may well characterise and define sociology at the present time. In terms of *what happened* to sociology, according to Seidman (1998), it found itself subject to 'scientisation'. For Seidman, the original moral character of sociology, although never lost completely, became overwhelmed by some other concerns of the professional social scientist. Seidman argues that sociology may be thought to have three chief elements, philosophical, scientific, and moral. The latter suffered, he claims, as sociologists - for apparently logical reasons in terms of requirements of 'the discipline' - emphasised the former.

Seidman states that, between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, 'science became *the authoritative language for speaking the truth about social realities*' (1998: 345, emphasis in original). Thus, the claiming of 'scientific status' bestowed 'public authority' on scientists' ideas. In sociology, it was felt that a clear task was absolutely necessary: make the discipline 'scientific'. 'Being scientific' is the way to *be heard*, both professionally and politically. Although concepts of science differ, by and large sociology became a matter of 'producing knowledge': knowledge 'of the world 'as it is''. The science of 'knowledge production' may be contrasted, in this view, to 'subjective or ideological beliefs' that 'reflect a world of personal experience or particular, ethnocentric social (e.g., class or

ethnic or national) interests and values' (ibid.). It became rather an error in the social sciences to link a 'scientific paradigm' to a political agenda; this goes against the grain of the unique scientific 'culture of truth' that developed. In such a 'scientised' culture:

“Theory” becomes an “autonomous” practice; its charge is to address foundational concerns, for example, to take a position on the problem of objectivity, the relation between the individual and society, materialism and idealism, order and change, solidarity and conflict, power and meaning, and the logic of knowledge (ibid.)

While appealing to 'evidence', 'methodological procedures', 'classical' texts', and 'philosophical argument', this 'culture of theorising has been to the exclusion of moral advocacy and political partisanship' (ibid.) Of course, as is the nature of such claims, none of this is true in any absolute sense. What Seidman is essentially arguing is that the 'moral element' within the social sciences became de-emphasised to a greater degree than it should have. For Seidman, sociology *turned away from public life*, and developed a technical language that effectively separated it from the various 'nonacademic publics' (ibid.: 346).

Seidman dramatically illustrates his point by pointing out that the American Sociological Association's annual meeting of 1989 took place in San Francisco, USA. While 1989 was a year deeply affected by 'the most pressing national crisis since the Vietnam war' (ibid.: 3); that is, by the AIDS crisis, the ASA's main theme for its conference was "Macro and Micro Relationships":

Beyond the tragic loss of lives and the urgent public health concerns stemming from AIDS, it brought communities, ideologies, and institutions into collision.

Not only were specific populations such as gay men and ethnic minorities thrown into social upheaval, but medical, economic, and governmental institutions at the local, state, and federal levels were challenged by the AIDS epidemic. In the midst of this social crisis, in San Francisco where the human turmoil marking AIDS was everywhere apparent, thousands of sociologists gathered. Rather than focusing the conference on the social crisis of AIDS...sociologists marched into San Francisco to clarify the story of the micro-macro link! (ibid.: 3-4).

For Seidman, this is a sure mark of sociology being in crisis. For Lemert, drawing on the varied perspectives of David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, Alvin Gouldner, Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. Du Bois, Charlotte Gilman, and others, including the 'classical' writers, especially Durkheim, the sociological crisis is linked to the loss of the 'world' that sociology promised to explain and instruct:

By the end of the 1960s, the world was on the verge of changes in the very nature of things social. Feminism and gay-lesbian political movements, then just emerging, would become major cultural forces in Euro-American public and intellectual life. Marxism, then riding high, would eventually collapse as a political force and recede as an influential social theory. The Cold War, still the major preoccupation of Western politics, would end. Europe and the Pacific Basin, then still economically weakened by war, would rise to challenge the United States. World Politics, then neatly organised between core and peripheral players, would become the oddly defined field of uncertain forces it is today. State powers, then dominant in the West and expectant in Africa and Asia, would shrivel before the renewed power of ethnic loyalties and other forms of identity politics. Technology and drugs, the oddly coupled sources of new consciousness in the sixties, would become sources of violence and deterioration in villages and cities where weapons and beepers defend and sell the drugs that kill. World health, then considered improving and a near attainable human right, now is threatened by worldwide epidemics of violence, AIDS, starvation, and homelessness (Lemert 1995: 8).

Lemert argues that sociology 'was founded by a generation of thinkers who cared very much for sociology (or its near equivalent, in the cases of Marx

and Freud)' (ibid.: xv). They cared for sociology, he claims, *because* they cared about the world. However, sociology seems to have misplaced this important linkage, as it also failed to concentrate on the social and moral import of social changes, such as those in the quote immediately above. Lemert says, 'Sociology is among those academic fields that have, in part at least, lost vital contact with their most important values, with their reason for being...the field itself has...given up its necessary relation to its only and primary natural resource: the moral concerns not just of individuals in their daily lives but of the hard-to-grasp whole of the worlds in which sociologies must today speak' (ibid.: xiv, xv).

Lemert looks toward a time *after* the crisis; he hopes the loss he speaks of will be temporary: but he has doubts about this. What, he wonders, if crisis is *all* that sociology is? However, he remains bravely optimistic and says that, in the recent work of Robert Bellah (et al), Steven Seidman, Richard Flacks, Patricia Hill Collins, Judith Stacey, Alan Wolfe, and Dorothy Smith, the sociological imagination, the prerequisite of 'a good enough sociology', is rekindled: 'Among many others, [these theorists] are encouraging...the first steps in the deep, patient reworking of the moral basis of sociology itself' (ibid.: xv).

It is in the spirit of the tradition began by Mills at the end of the 1950s (if not earlier by Riesman, at the beginning of the 1950s, in *The Lonely Crowd* [ibid.: 2]) that this thesis is cast. The thesis, furthermore, hopes to offer support toward an active moral re-engagement suggested by Seidman and the other writers named above. However, it also presumes to attempt to challenge speciesism found in all that has gone before, including the recent work by writers seeking to firmly re-establish the moral basis of sociology. And all that reaffirms Seidman's claim that engagement in public life should

be the chief and not secondary motivational drive of any social science. In *The Culture Of Narcissism*, Lasch (1991 [1980]) talks of an 'easygoing oppression'. To date, sociology - disappointingly *following* society – has displayed an easygoing speciesism which this thesis will seek to challenge. For example, when Seidman attacks the American Sociological Association for its micro-macro concerns as the AIDS epidemic raged outside its doors in San Francisco, he states with some anger that, by 1989, 'the AIDS crisis had already taken tens of thousands of lives' (Seidman 1998: 3). However, it may be confidently assumed that Seidman is talking exclusively about lost human lives here; human victims of AIDS. He is almost certainly not including the number of nonhuman lives taken, and continue to be taken, *as if* they are 'scientific models' in AIDS and 'simian AIDS' vivisection experiments in which they are viewed as human resources.

Seidman's (1998) advocacy of 'morally-engaged' and 'politically-motivated' sociology can and *must* be defended, lest the discipline remains drowned in a (main)stream of careerist sociologists who may see little else than their next wage cheque. Seidman's charge that sociology experienced a process of 'scientisation' has resulted, he claims, in many refusing to see the role of the sociologist as that of '*storytelling social critic*' (a phrase reflecting both the limitation and the potential of sociology), or as a 'public educator', actively engaged in the social and political issues of the day. Maria Mies (1983) argues that so-called 'value-free research' can and should be replaced by what she called 'conscious partiality'; in distinct opposition to the notion of 'spectator knowledge', which she sees as being based on the blasé observations of 'disinterested', 'indifferent' and 'alienated' researchers.

Mies also rejects all research which offers a 'view from the top' (and see Layder's [1994: 13-33] discussion of the 'view from on high'). She strongly favours the 'view from below' with a commitment toward using research to further the interests of dominated, oppressed and exploited groups. This is the advocacy of a running, jumping, climbing trees type of research. In this view, research is regarded as integral to the aims of 'liberation movements', with no value given to academic 'ivory tower' gazing. This particular work - predictably - is bound to be adverse to the *ivory tower*!

Following the likes of C. Wright Mills, Alvin Gouldner, Steven Seidman, Steve Best, Rik Scarce and Charles Lemert, the interest here is closely linked to *struggle* and *positive action for change*, toward a general reduction in deliberate harm-causing.

### But...Can it be Critical *and* Valid?

This is the central question addressed by David Wainwright (1997) in relation to qualitative sociological research. As such, Wainwright discusses an almost traditional question fired at sociologists over many years: how scientifically valid is sociology? Of course, this is a regularly debated and hugely contested question, sometimes regarded as part of an even 'bigger' question, such as: how scientific is science? Indeed, *what is this 'thing' called science?* (Chalmers 1982).

This thesis cannot attempt to but scratch the surface of such issues, although it can point toward a selection of the wealth of writing on such



issues (e.g., Bauman & May 2001; Callinicos 1999; Delanty 1997; Keat & Urry 1982; May 1997). Since this thesis is claimed to be orientated toward the 'critical' and qualitative 'camps' within the social sciences, and since critical perspectives and qualitative methodology have been regularly opened up to accusations of methodological and scientific unreliability and invalidity, a few words to address such issues are in order at this point.

Wainwright's (1997) discussion appears valuable here and, although his concentration is on the sociology of health, there appears no reason not to regard his claims relevant to other dimensions of sociological inquiry. For example, setting the scene, Wainwright argues that, 'Qualitative methods of inquiry have often been viewed with ambivalence and a degree of trepidation'. He states that 'such methods offer an important link to some of the main concerns of sociological thought, addressing questions of power, ideology and subjective meaning'. However, 'they may be viewed as suspect in terms of their validity and reliability, particularly when compared with the more 'scientific' methods available to the quantitative researcher' (ibid.)

While it has been often assumed, Wainwright goes on, that qualitative research can be valid, and can be critical, it has been argued that it cannot be both at the same time. Having said that, he says he has noticed in recent years that qualitative researchers have tended to 'acquire a new respectability' but at a fairly high cost: 'most notably, it has entailed, if not a complete capitulation to quantitative criteria of validity and reliability, at least a tendency to meet them half-way'. In other words, Wainwright discerns a move toward 'transforming qualitative research into another weapon in the positivist arsenal' which can 'rob the approach of its critical potential' (ibid.) To the extent that Wainwright's perspective can be regarded as itself accur-

ate and valid, it does underline Seidman's (1998) claim about the 'scientisation' of the social sciences. Further movement away from sociology's moral core toward 'scientific credibility' would disappoint Seidman greatly. The result of the 'compromise' Wainwright (1997) identifies has 'weakened the link between the technical process of ethnographic data collection and its basis in sociological theory', even if, in the eyes of some others, the status and acceptability of qualitative research has thus been increased (ibid.) Not only does Wainwright claim this compromise carries a high cost, he also says it is ultimately unnecessary. He firmly argues that such research *can* remain critical and valid within its own terms and without attempting to accord with 'the narrow constraints of positivism' (ibid.)

Wainwright claims that, despite difficulties, there can be a 'synthesis of the insights that traditional ethnography', providing the subjective experience of everyday life, along with 'the historical and structural insights offered by social critique' (ibid.) A problem may arise, Wainwright accepts, because such a synthesis 'entails combining two quite separate and possibly incompatible formulations of validity':

The possibility always remains that the analysis will slide into either a top-down deductive approach in which a pre-existing theory is simply legitimated by the selective and biased use of ethnographic data, or else into a superficial and particularistic account of the views of respondents. Giving explanatory primacy to the testimony of informants would appear to undermine the validity of social critique by contravening the injunction to always look beneath the surface of everyday appearances; whilst a broader historical and structural analysis might contradict the traditional ethnographer's claim that valid research does not impose a priori theoretical constructs (ibid.)

Wainwright's 'solution' to all this 'lies in ensuring that the analysis is informed by both strands of inquiry'. He insists that 'issues emerging from

participant observation or ethnographic data can be placed in an historical and structural context, and that problems identified in the academic literature can influence the direction of the ethnographic study' (ibid.) Wainwright argues for a critical ethnography involving a reflexive and constant 'interweaving of inductive and deductive logic'. Moreover:

The researcher does not set out to test a pre-conceived hypothesis, nor is an entirely open-ended approach adopted, instead the researcher begins by observing the field of study, both as a participant observer and as a reviewer of academic literature. From the synthesis of these sources a research agenda emerges that can be pursued, again, by a mixture of observation and theoretical work (ibid.)

Given this potentially 'unstable dialectical relationship between ethnographic observation and social critique', Wainwright says it is of particular importance 'to re-conceptualise validity in terms of reflexive practice'. Agreeing with Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) definition of reflexivity – that is, the researcher's conscious self-understanding of the research process - Wainwright promotes a dynamic sceptical orientation toward both researcher and researched. Thus, the key is to constantly ask, 'Are they telling me what I want to hear?' and, 'Am I seeing what I want to see?' (Wainwright 1997).

Wainwright claims that, 'the purpose of reflexivity is not to produce an objective or value-free account of the phenomenon' and furthermore, 'reflexivity is not primarily a means of demonstrating the validity of research to an audience, but rather a personal strategy by which the researcher can manage the analytical oscillation between observation and theory in a way which is valid to him or herself' (ibid.) Noting that his strategy will be 'anathema' to the positivist, Wainwright nevertheless asks whether is it

‘really so different to the process of establishing validity in quantitative research?’

Random sampling and statistical testing may appear to make the assessment of validity transparent to a third party, but such techniques are not immune to manipulation by an unscrupulous researcher. In fact, the validity of particular research findings, be they qualitative or quantitative, ultimately depends upon trust in the researcher’s integrity, at least until the research is replicated. Validity therefore refers to the techniques employed by the researcher to indulge a Socratic distaste for self-deception, and in critical ethnography *this is achieved by reflexivity* (ibid, emphasis added.)

Researchers’ commitments to this ‘reflexive management of the research process in the pursuit of validity’ must be expressed and applied to each and every stage of the research process, Wainwright insists, ‘from establishing relations in the field to writing up the conclusions’ (ibid.)

Wainwright states that at every stage validity depends, ‘for the critical ethnographer,...upon getting beneath the surface appearances of everyday life to reveal the extent to which they are constituted by ideology or discourse’. Rather than attempting to adopt an ‘empty head’ approach, ‘the critical ethnographer is pre-armed with insights gleaned from social critique’ (ibid.)

Following Harvey (1990), Wainwright agrees that critical ethnography differs from traditional forms of qualitative data analysis, ‘by bringing the broader critique of social relations to bear on the structuring of analytical themes’. When this is the case, ‘the final analysis is not derived exclusively from the ethnographic data but from an oscillation between that and the social critique’ (Wainwright 1997). Wainwright also cites Sue Jones’ (1985) perspective on the understandings of researcher and respondent which

appears particularly relevant and important in relation to the present thesis. Jones argues that a researcher may sometimes require to 'go beyond' the concepts and understanding of her respondents. This is valid for Jones so long as it is clearly stated that this is what is happening. For example, she says that a researcher may 'set' their understanding *next* to respondents' 'concrete' ideas and definitions. This process may produce valuable 'second level' meanings, however, such meaning must also remain linked to the constructions provided by the research respondents.

When Wainwright turns his attention toward 'writing up' within the research process, again, his position on the issue bears particular relevance to the current work. He claims that issues relating to writing up are commonly neglected in analyses of sociological research. Wainwright initially follows Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) claim that 'writing up is inevitably a part of the analytical process, suggesting that the structure of the report influences the type of analysis, or at least the way it is understood by the reader' (Wainwright 1997). He also accepts Hammersley and Atkinson's 'four types of report':

the 'natural history' (in which the report reflects the different stages of the research process as they progressed over time), the 'chronology' (also temporally organised, but reflecting the development or 'career' of the phenomenon being studied, rather than the research process), 'narrowing and expanding the focus' (in which the analysis moves backwards and forwards between specific observation and consideration of broader structural issues), and 'separating narration and analysis' (in which the ethnographic data are presented first before theoretical issues are addressed) (ibid.)

Wainwright says the 'natural history approach' is the most often used, however, 'it does not fit well with qualitative research'. More than that, 'it can

lead to a form of dishonesty, giving the impression that the research followed a tight structure of background reading, hypothesis construction, research design, data collection and analysis, and discussion of results' (ibid.) Wainwright states that 'the qualitative research process is less well ordered'.

While it is true that background reading is involved and is essential:

which texts are relevant, and therefore, worth including in a report or publication, only becomes apparent towards the end of the research process, and the literature review should continue throughout the project as the ethnography raises new themes for analysis. Similarly...the sequence of hypothesis - data collection - analysis, is not clear cut or linear, but an ongoing and dialectical process (ibid.)

Wainwright suggests that the other three formats for writing-up are 'more relevant', but that they 'should be seen as different aspects of the process, rather than discrete types'. He says that, 'Whilst the organisation of a report or publication cannot in itself confer validity, it can make the research process more transparent to the reader and allow validity to be more clearly assessed'. What is important, Wainwright insists, is 'to use the report format to illustrate the oscillation between micro and macro analysis that comes from combining the methodologies of ethnography and critical social research'. What this involves, is 'looking in detail at the informants' testimony, but broadening this out to a consideration of structural and historical issues' (ibid.) Even given that Wainwright may be concentrating on 'conventional' ethnographic methodology, the points he makes appear equally valid in cases, such as the current thesis, in which the 'testimony of informants' comes often from secondary sources such as books and newspaper cuttings. Equally useful are Wainwright's comments about the issue of 'generalisability'. While in a quantitative study generalisability is

largely determined by random sampling and statistical inference, Wainwright notes that ‘such techniques are not usually relevant to qualitative research’. This may seem to make generalisation more of a problem in the latter case. However, *a critical ethnographer is much less likely to claim that results can or ought to be widely generalised in the first place:*

In many respects, the way in which generalisation is conceptualised in quantitative studies is alien to both ethnography and critical social research. For the ethnographer what matters most is gaining an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the people s/he studies; the *assumption* is that this worldview will be context specific, and that generalisation to others will therefore be extremely limited (ibid, emphasis added.)

Moreover, the:

critical social research starts from the assumption that society is in a constant state of flux, that the social world and our understanding of it are constantly changing, again limiting the value of generalisation (ibid.)

The present work, very much in line with this reasoning, is to be described as a context-bound ‘snapshot account’ of human-nonhuman relations, although Wainwright claims that findings from such work may be generalised to some degree. For example, he writes: ‘although ethnography and critical research may question positivist/quantitative assumptions about generalisability, both approaches aim to produce findings that have relevance beyond the immediate context of the study’. Furthermore, although the production of ‘laws of behaviour’ is avoided, there nevertheless ‘remains an often almost hidden claim that the behaviour found in the study will shed

some light on the behaviour of others, even if this explanatory range is limited in time and space' (ibid.)

Following the 1993 work of Janet Ward-Schofield on the philosophy of social science research, Wainwright appears to accept that 'a re-conceptualisation of generalisability' may also be in order. Perhaps, rather than the conventionally defined notion of 'generalisability', terms such as 'fittingness', 'comparability', or 'translatability', better 'reflect the process of detailed description of the content and context of a study, so that it can be generalised to examples that match it closely' (ibid.) Wainwright argues that, 'Conceptualising a phenomenon in terms of its conditions of existence and the social relations that characterise it, is a sounder basis for generalisation than the simple description of immediate appearances'.

This is exactly the aim of the present work; an attempt to understand contemporary articulations of attitudes toward nonhuman animals within wider contexts provided by philosophical tradition, everyday convention and practice, cultural transmission, politics, economics, and so on.

Wainwright claims that qualitative researchers should resist 'the bogus belief' that 'positivist criteria of validity confer a degree of authenticity upon research findings that is immediately transparent to a third party'. Furthermore, he again reminds his readers that, 'even the powerful tests of validity which are available to the quantitative researcher, such as random sampling or statistical inference, are not immune to manipulation by disreputable researchers'. He concludes that:



Rather than a clearly discernible hallmark of authenticity, the techniques employed in the pursuit of validity comprise a means by which the researcher can minimise the risk of self-deception. Whilst these techniques can be reported, their acceptance by a third party must ultimately entail a degree of trust in the diligence and integrity of the researcher. This does not mean that all research findings should be blindly accepted at face value; the onus is always on the researcher to persuade his or her audience that the research findings are valid. The appropriate perspective for the reader of research should be, to borrow from Antonio Gramsci, 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will', and this applies equally to quantitative and qualitative research (ibid.)

Wainwright correctly states that the aim of the qualitative researcher is *not* to 'produce a representative and unbiased measurement of the views of a population, but to deepen his or her understanding of a social phenomenon by conducting an in-depth and sensitive analysis of the articulated consciousness of actors involved in that phenomenon' (ibid.) Wainwright maintains that he can stand for 'a re-conceptualisation of rigour and validity in qualitative research' which rejects positivist criteria, 'in favour of the insights offered by social critique. From this perspective validity can be re-couched in terms of reflexively managing the relationship between the testimony of informants and a broader process of structural and historical analysis' (ibid.)

However, he is keen to re-emphasise that this engages analysts with 'an uneasy and in some senses contradictory combination' requiring 'careful management at each stage of the research process'. However, and finally, he argues that, it:

does provide an opportunity to get beneath the surface of everyday appearances, to produce theoretically informed accounts of social phenomena that are grounded in people's experience of everyday life, but which take a critical approach to the categories and forms through which everyday life is experienced (ibid.)

## Social Constructionism.

This thesis is a sociological analysis of what Richard Ryder (2000) and Tom Regan (2001) have called a ‘battle of ideas’ about issues arising from considerations of human-nonhuman relations: and this ‘battle’ does indeed shape and inform the categories and forms through which mundane understandings about human-nonhuman relations are forged. Within a social constructionist (or ‘social constructivist’) framework, based on Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) original vision, (but also informed and inspired by the tradition of ‘critical’ sociology that can be traced to the work of C. Wright Mills), this work is largely about conflicting social claims-making; the societal reaction to challenging social claims; and the disharmony and resolutions which may or may not emerge when various social claims are publicly expressed. In Joel Best’s view (1995: 348–49), the general framework adopted as a central approach within the thesis provides the basis for a critical analysis of *claims*, various *claims-makers* and often complex *claims-making processes*.

According to Miller and Holstein (1993: 11), Best and others would claim that the central approach adopted may be correctly called ‘contextual constructionism’, especially because such a perspective does not refuse ‘to evaluate the accuracy of claims-makers’ claims’, something the ‘strict-strong’ social constructionist formulation (see immediately below) is disinclined to do. Miller and Holstein note that contextual constructionists attempt to ‘contribute to public and academic debates about social problems’ (ibid), something that Mills (1967), Christie (1997), Seidman (1998), and others who regard the job of sociologists to engage in the conflicts and

political and moral issues of the day would enthusiastically applaud.

While the analytical approach employed in the following pages is modelled on Berger and Luckmann's original perspective (1966), it also engages Rik Scarce's 'development' of the classical constructionist approach through which Scarce seeks to 'bridge the literatures on environmental sociology and the sociology of human-animal relationships' (Scarce 1998). Scarce's project involves theoretically understanding the social construction of both a single animal species and 'nature' as a general category. There has also been some further recent work in this general area of interest. For example, Lyle Munro's (1998) account notes that a social constructionist stance and orientation has been employed in the study of both 'animal rights' and environmentalist claims about 'defending the natural world' (see Yearly 1992; Hannigan 1995; Henkle 1995; Munro 1998).

In that the present approach most closely follows the 'contextual' form of constructionism (Miller & Holstein 1993), it is, as indicated, somewhat distinct from the so-called 'strict' (Spector & Kitsuse 1987; Kitsuse & Schneider 1989) or 'strong program' constructivism frequently employed in studies of the social construction of science and technology.<sup>5</sup> Without going into all the finer details of the ontological and philosophical differences between various strands of social constructionism (see Best 1995; and Scarce 1998 for this), there is here an overall agreement with Berger and Luckmann that research should focus on the social *processes* that give *meaning(s)* to what is seen as material reality, and yet 'contextual constructionist analyses turn on distinguishing between "warranted" and

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<sup>5</sup> Scarce cites Bijker, Hughes & Pinch (1987), Latour (1987), Knorr-Cetina & Mulkay (1983) and Zuckerman (1988) as examples of this 'strong program'.

“unwarranted” social problem claims, a distinction that implicitly involves treating some putative conditions as “real” social problems’ (Miller & Holstein 1993: 12).

This is largely what makes Berger and Luckmann’s approach a sociology of knowledge that encourages researchers to consider the historical context of their subject as well as appreciating ‘both interactional and macro-level forces as they examine the emergence and maintenance of meaning’ (Scarce 1998). However, also avoiding what Scarce characterises as a ‘serious shortcoming’ in both ‘classical’ and ‘strong program’ constructivism and engaging a necessary ‘critical’ element to the analysis, the present thesis will attempt to incorporate into its approach the important role played by powerful social institutions in shaping and often systematically reinforcing constructions of the social world. This is exactly what Scarce himself did in his own investigation of the social construction of salmon (ibid).

As a construction in itself, there will not, and should not, be any absolute assertion nor pretence that this thesis represents anything like ‘the truth’ about the rich complexities of social attitudes about the human use and/or abuse of other animals, as ‘food animals’ or as laboratory ‘tools’, for example. Rather, this is undoubtedly more of a British Westerner’s snapshot account, a historically and geographically located picture of important social processes; one which attempts to recognise that what is taken as fact in society is often relative: that social contexts and societal systems create social facts. By such means, social circumstances and long-standing ideological traditions serve to shape what is ostensibly ‘known’ about social and political issues. Moreover, such circumstances necessarily involve micro-level interactions and the effect of institutionalised social forces, including

national and transnational political and macroeconomic systems. 'Facts' obviously also change over time - what are recognised as 'facts' change - due to what may be regarded as 'new facts', or through technological change and/or novel developments in ways of looking at the social world. 'Facts', and their moral implications, about the capabilities and abilities of non-human animals change on a regular basis as discovery claims are made, countered and evaluated and remade anew. As Clark (1990: 16) points out, 'Increased understanding of what "animals" are like, how closely related to "us" they are and how poorly they have been served by moralists, may lead to an extension [of animals' rights]'.<sup>6</sup> Animal rights theorist Gary Francione is clear on this matter (1996a; 1996b), arguing that it is morally relevant to know what 'sorts of beings' are under discussion.

In relation to knowledge creation and awareness, Scarce cites Newman (1995) who argues that there are no objective social facts in a universal sense. Instead, lacking universals, 'facts' are a creation of particular social milieus at certain historical moments. Nevertheless, there are ideological and economic interests in play which often attempt to resist, block or delay change; while maintaining and preserving 'facts as they are' in social processes of reification. The present work illustrates this in an examination of 'countermovement' mobilisation to pro-animal advocacy.

As a contribution to the sociology of knowledge, the aim of the present work is to attempt to identify the historical, micro and macro-level

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<sup>6</sup> Not just discoveries about nonhuman physical and cognitive capacities and abilities have the potential to alter the moral picture. It is now common to comment on the 'genetic closeness' of humans and other apes. This awareness that 'we apes' share up to 98% of our genetic make-up is relatively recently discovered. Jared Diamond (1991: 10) says we go back only as far as mid to late 1980's to find this molecular biological revelation. Oxford 'professor of the public understanding of science', Richard Dawkins, predicted in a recent *Guardian* article (27 Dec 2001) that the advent of the human and chimpanzee genome projects will have an inevitable impact on ethics, to the extent of 'very effectively' shattering 'our speciesist illusions'. However, geneticist Steve Jones (*Beyond the Genome*, BBC Radio 4, 16-1-2002)

social forces and processes that inform attitudes about human-nonhuman relations – this within constructivism’s stress on the emergence and the ‘maintenance’ of *meaning*. Thus, the intention throughout the thesis will be to make evident and emphasise that claims are inevitably mediated by power relations. Such mediation may serve to make some claims appear superior to others as ‘world views’ of social phenomena are put forward, challenged and are contested (see also Craib’s [1984: 171-81] account of Georg Lukacs’ position that forms of knowledge ought to go beyond ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ distinctions because new knowledge [and historical context] calls for an orientation towards knowledge revision and refinement).

While the thesis may be labelled a critical social constructionist and a nonspeciesist zemiological approach, the rich tradition of ‘radical’ or ‘critical’ theorising, from Mills (1967), through the Frankfurt School (1973) and Nicholas (1972), to Lemert (1995), Seidman (1998) and Bauman (1989; 1993), each in their own way strong advocates of morally-engaged academic study, is drawn on as its central theoretical orientation.

### Construction Sites.

In his study of the social construction of salmon, Scarce (1998) makes an important distinction between ‘cognitive’ constructions and those he labels ‘physical’ and/or ‘behavioural’. Cognitive constructions are those that ‘reveal meanings ensconced in attitudes, values, and beliefs; they are found

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maintains that the fact that humans are ‘100% human’ makes the ultimate moral difference that effectively enables humans to exploit nonhumans, while being simultaneously concerned for their ‘welfare’.

in texts and discourse'. It may seem that the most obvious way of thinking about social constructions is that they end up 'residing' in individual and the collective heads of human populations.

However, physical and behavioural constructions, the latter type identified by Scarce, and which are not written down or spoken, represent different sources of meaning(s), he claims. These sources are found in society's technologies (for example, he names dams, fish hatcheries and fishing gear in relation to the case of salmon) and in social rituals, ceremonies and daily interactions. As with many sociological concepts, these constructions may only be separated analytically: in the 'real world' they are, as is usually the case, intrinsically interwoven and interdependent. It may be appreciated, then, that a continuous multilevel-process-of-meaning-production exists throughout micro and macro settings and which, as Scarce emphasises, are inevitably affected by economic and political forces.

This detailed complexity is revealed in the following pages with regard to the construction of human-nonhuman relations. For example, some scientific anti-vivisectionist and 'animal rights' claims are about objections to various experimental procedures conducted on nonhuman animals. Discourse about the issue of animal experimentation reflect and illustrate the various 'levels' of meaning construction that Scarce identifies. For example, during claims and counterclaims about what beings should be regarded as rightholders, or during more welfarist claims-making about nonhuman pain and suffering (or the lack of it), or the medical or commercial benefits (or lack of them) of testing medicines and products on nonhumans, the social construction of meanings about notions such as 'science', 'scientific', 'laboratories', 'necessary medical advancement', 'career' and 'researcher' play important cognitive and meaning-filled roles

for different participants, be they experimenters, ex-vivisectionists, various types of nonhuman advocates, government ministers, sufferers of possibly incurable illnesses, supporters of 'alternative medicine', specialist and non-specialist journalists, academic commentators, and so on.

Ideas and attitudes about such categories and social identities, and ideas directly or indirectly related to, or ostensibly entirely separate from, what is overtly said about the use of animals in vivisection procedures; or even ideas connected to what 'the law' might say on the subject; along with perceived economic factors, may be endlessly fed into debates about the rights and wrongs of this distinct and controversial form of 'animal use'. Thus, any 'battle of ideas' on this issue inevitably involves a multi-agency struggle involving a multiplicity of meaning-filled images and social psychologically-attuned notions derived from a myriad of diverse sources such as - in this example - the experience of medical treatment, education specialisation, mass media coverage, picking up a scientific anti-vivisection or other animal advocacy leaflet (or even watching a 'Dr. Frankenstein' film).

In the battle of ideas about vivisection as medical science, animal experimentation may be characterised as *an essential contribution to human health* on the one hand, or as *a scientifically invalid instance of animal torture*, on the other. Less frequently, it may be principally described as a gross violation of nonhuman rights. For, quite apart from the reliability of animal experimentation as a methodology, a genuine animal rights approach would also have a great deal to say about the morality of the practice of experimenting on non-consenting sentient individuals. What seemingly needs to be borne in mind is an awareness that all, or at least many, participants and observers of such debates may have a whole set of cognitive



and physical/behavioural level constructions, possibly firmly sedimented in their thinking and behaviour - and based on various types of 'evidence' and, for them, established 'social facts' - which appear to act as a complex and important set of lens and resources through which claims will be evaluated, judged, welcomed, rejected and/or evaded. Any genuine understanding of, say, the publicly-sanctioned or publicly-opposed practice of using nonhuman animals in experimental procedures must seemingly go beyond necessarily regarding animal experimenters as 'evil', 'sadistic', or unusually 'cruel' individuals, just as any crude characterisation of the 'anti-vivisectionist' or 'animal rightist' as 'being against' scientific research or 'misanthropic' may be well wide of the mark. Since the 1960s and 1970s, social movement theory has tended to move away from early and largely inadequate notions that individual pathology can explain participation in a protest movement or campaign and instead look toward the existence of genuine grievances or important social issues that explain involvement.

In the light of such factors, understanding any individual's involvement in practices that cause direct harm to other animals, or those that organise in opposition, requires a concentrated recognition that complex micro-interactions and macro-forces can sustain and influence such practices and the attitudes that can justify and explain or excuse them.

### Claims-Making.

Clearly, claims-making activities occur in situations of social interaction (Spector & Kitsuse 1987: 79). Claims can only be made in a social context

and, likewise, claims are socially acknowledged *as claims* in their social contexts. However, adding to the complexities involved, Spector and Kitsuse point out that some events not actually intended as claims can sometimes nevertheless be received as such, while deliberate and purposeful claims-making may be engaged with, or ignored, seen as appropriate or inappropriate claims, viewed as a serious contribution to a given issue or an example of insanity (see *ibid.*: 79-81; Best 1995). Recent ‘second-wave’ (meaning post-1970) nonhuman animal campaigns can be recognised as claims-making that has been responded to in all the ways just mentioned above and more. A part of this thesis aims to investigate the struggle to make ‘animal rights’ claims theoretically distinct - and heard within the ‘social arena’ (Squires 1990).

The research direction, as indicated, is to investigate the construction of ‘animal rights’ claims, but a main focus will be on the societal reaction to them. Additionally, within a concentration on reactions to views that are distinctly animal rightist in orientation, the intention is to focus directly on socially-constructed views and institutionalised and internalised attitudes about humans and other animals that serve to inform such reactions. A tendency of academic studies of claims-making is a focus on the personalities and social characteristics of participants who are involved in making claims. There is a long tradition of this approach (see Hoffer 1951; Blumer 1971), and the ‘animal rights movement’ has had its fair share of such scrutiny by both friends and enemies, as well as apparently dispassionate and self-styled ‘moderate’ observers (see, as examples, Sperling 1988; Henshaw 1989; Guither 1998; Kean 1998; Ryder 2000; Regan 2001). However, the present work attempts to maintain its emphasis on the social conditions and contexts of animal rights claims-making and on many of the

sociopsychological circumstances that may help in understanding reactions to it. It is hoped that social movement strategists involved in opposing animal abuse may gain something beneficial by a consideration what this thesis says about hostile, indifferent and *apparently individual* reactions to their campaigning messages.

## Methodology.

This thesis utilises data from documents, texts and from people, which Francis (1997: 28) points out are, inevitably, the major sources of information available to researchers in the social sciences.

However, most of the data employed in the thesis has come from secondary sources; from published books written by philosophers, social movement activists and commentators such as journalists; the social and political scientists and historians who have studied the activities and beliefs of advocates for nonhumans and their opponents; from academic research papers and from accounts written in newspapers, magazines and, increasingly, via the internet and email.

A limited amount of primary data from six sources features throughout, sometimes in the main text and, quite often, by way of footnotes that inform and comment upon the substantive narrative. For the majority of the duration of these doctoral studies, I have subscribed to three ‘closed’ or ‘restricted’ discussion, debating and news electronic mail networks organised by animal advocates mostly located in Europe (Britain in the main) and the United States of America. Such networks have been created for animal

advocates engaged in various campaigning that is generally labelled ‘animal rights’, ‘animal liberation’, ‘hunt sabotage’, ‘anti-fur trade campaigning’ and ‘anti-vivisectionism’. Such lists tend to feature mostly self-declared vegetarian and vegan individuals, with very few contributors who would defend meat eating. In addition to ‘activist’ members of the lists, a number of contributions come from academic sources, for example from law scholars and psychologists, and from university email addresses. I have also joined and contributed to ‘open’ discussion groups on human-nonhuman relations which tend to feature various kinds of animal advocates (but welfarists in the main) and an extraordinary number of opponents to ‘animal rights’, who also often claim the title of animal welfarists. Many contributors to open discussion groups are apparently based in the United States of America and seem to belong to organised ‘countermovements’ who support various forms of animal exploitation, such as animal agriculture, animal experimentation, the fur trade and hunting.

In terms of considerations of contentious issues such as ‘informed consent’ (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995), my mails to such lists have made it clear that my particular interest was often linked to my academic work. Indeed, I have fairly regularly asked direct Ph.D.-related questions on the lists, again indicating that data is being requested for possible inclusion in academic writing or ‘movement’ newsletters, magazines and web sites.<sup>7</sup> As an additional ethical safeguard, individual email authors were contacted privately in order to obtain their permission to use their names if necessary, or to check certain details offered.<sup>8</sup> No ‘official’ material offered on lists (for example press releases) have been used without the express permission

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<sup>7</sup> The response ‘do your *own* homework!’ has been received more than once after such direct questioning.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the email reproduced in Appendix One received on Tue, 3 Aug 1999 was sent to me after I wrote privately to a list contributor to clarify her posting.

of the organisation or individuals concerned. Finally, for the initial period on the lists, my email 'signature' which appeared on every sent contribution read: 'Roger Yates is currently writing a Ph.D. thesis on....' By this method, several thousand email messages relating to 'animal issues' have been collected. Many hundreds have been stored electronically, and thousands have been preserved on floppy disk.

In terms of access to the majority of the information provided by these closed networks, my prior involvement in animal rights advocacy has been invaluable. For example, entry to some electronic mail forums require that candidates are nominated and seconded by animal activists known to the network administrators and existing members. This degree of 'privileged access' facilitated the asking of several questions directly relevant to the interests of the thesis (I estimate that between the three restricted lists, they represent the contributions of at least four hundred individuals from Britain, the USA, the Republic of Ireland, Canada, mainland Europe, Australia and the former Soviet Union). Virtually every section of the thesis has benefited from this valuable input, as animal advocates have debated the important animal-related and general campaigning issues of the day (such as the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak in Britain, the campaigning politics of the so-called 'Chimp Act' in the USA, and legislation brought forward or proposed that effect social movement activity). Advocates on these lists also responded to, and commented on, news-paper articles about human-non-human relations and 'campaigning' in general; they reported on their experiences of attending demonstrations associated with animal and/or environmental protection; and commented on their conferences, and on their meeting members of the public at information stalls and other settings and occasions.

Further, if statistically extremely limited, data has also accrued from a small email pilot study survey conducted in 1999 when mainly non-vegetarians were asked to briefly respond to questions about eating nonhuman animals and the animal rights critique of the practice (see appendices). Moreover, late in 2000, a series of open-to-the-public events entitled 'Animal Rights November' were organised which involved the showing of three 'animal rights' video/films<sup>9</sup> at the main University of Wales campus in Bangor, Gwynedd, which attracted audiences of between 15-40 people over four weeks and provoked some audience debate about the issues raised. Written notes were compiled at the end of each event that created audience discussion and participation. In a similar way to the email network data, the notes taken during these 'animal rights evenings' have sometimes helped inform the substance of the thesis, especially because one or two 'pro-use' advocates (for example, a 'young Welsh farmer') elaborated on their attitudes about human-nonhuman relations and debated points with others present at the video evenings.

For various sections of the thesis, and for the section entitled 'rituals of dominionism' in particular, several pro- and anti-hunting organisations' web sites were visited in 1999 and 2000. Most consulted web sites were 'bookmarked' for the duration of the doctorate (and beyond) for the purpose of revisiting for clarification purposes, and sometimes to send specific questions via 'email links' to particular individuals or organisations. A small-scale review of several books published for children and teenagers about animals and human-nonhuman relations was also conducted during the

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<sup>9</sup> The films were (1) *The Animals Film*, a two-hour documentary transmitted on British television in 1982; (2) *A Cow at My Table*, a 1998 US film made about 'animals, meat and culture' and (3) *The Animal Rights Debate* from an evening of animal-related programmes on BBC2 television in the 1980's. The debate featured animal advocates Tom Regan, Richard Ryder and Andrew Linzey and opponents Mary Warnock, Steven Rose and Germaine Greer and a lengthy discussion involving the invited audience.

period of the Ph.D. Data from this analysis is included in both in sections within the main text and as an appendix to the thesis. Although this data appears representative in general terms for the precise purpose used here, no systematic quantitative research was conducted to attempt to establish such validity claims. As a consequence, the limitations and the suggestive character of the data must be recognised and is made clear within appropriate sections of the present study. As said, as a general rule, the limited empirical element within this thesis is presented chiefly in footnote form throughout the work when the data appeared relevant or provided a comment on the substantive narrative.

### Language Use.

There has been an attempt throughout the thesis to avoid any language that may be regarded as racist, ageist, homophobic, sexist - or speciesist. With regards to citations of other people's work, say, in 'block quote' form, there is a general tendency within the present work *not* to correct or comment on the language with the use of '[sic]', although this device is employed once or twice to mark particularly incongruous language use. Although there are tendencies to disapprove of racist/sexist/speciesist language in contemporary work concerning human-nonhuman relations, any of the cited writers who do employ such terms, especially those writing before the 1980s, for example, must be seen inevitably as 'products of their time' to some degree or another. Consequently, many may genuinely not have been fully aware of the negative implications of what they wrote. For example, the work of the humanitarian, social-reformer and perhaps the first 'animal rights' advocate,

Henry Salt, 'born amongst the privileged Victorian classes in 1851' (Gold 1998: 5), informs this thesis in various places. However, his language is often blatantly 'un-PC', especially (and perhaps ironically) from an animal rights perspective, as he generally used terms such as 'lower animals' and 'brutes' to describe animals other than human beings.



## 'Nature' and Nonhumans and the Sociological Imagination.

### Sociological Speciesism: The Invisibility of Nonhuman Animals.

In the mid-1990s, criminologist Piers Beirne invited scholars to seriously consider whether the sociology of crime in particular, and the discipline of sociology in general, could be accused of displaying what he described as a 'through-going speciesism' in theorising and analyses (Beirne 1995: 6, 24). In the same year, Wolch, West & Gaines (1995: 735) claimed that 'Contemporary urban theory is anthropocentric'.

Beirne suggests that the vast majority of sociologists must surely plead guilty to such a charge and concludes that, 'the untheorised treatment of animals as mere objects in the literature of sociology and criminology is an embarrassing reflection of how they are massively and routinely treated in factory farms, research laboratories, zoos, and aquaria, and of how, too, they are displayed as items of clothing and, sometimes, as pets. Animals are used and abused by humans in many of the same ways, and for many of the same dominionistic reasons, as males oppress women and whites have enslaved persons of colour' (ibid. 24). However, in stark contrast to investigations of harm caused to women and persons of colour, in which their *own* direct harm is often (but not always) the primary concern, 'On nearly every occasion that animals appear in criminology ... their presence is entirely subservient to human need and to human problems' (ibid.: 4).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> It is suggested that this situation is somewhat analogous to feminist complaints from the 1970s: 'Daly (1973: 118) [alludes] to the transportability of victimhood. In the case of sexual assault, for example, the victim is sometimes seen as an abused woman's spouse. However, this shared victimhood is often derived not from a male's assumed empathy towards a woman's suffering, but from how *his property* has been

According to Hilary Tovey's recent review of the theorising of non-human animals in the social sciences, little has changed since the mid-1990s: she states that, 'Despite an increasing intellectual and social interest in 'the animal question' in recent decades, animals remain largely invisible in social science texts' (2003: 196). Although she clearly believes her criticism applies to the social sciences in general terms, Tovey's criticism is concentrated on environmental and rural sociology. For example, of the former, she writes:

if we look to environmental sociology for a perspective which includes animals, we will not find much to help us. In environmental sociology texts...animals figure primarily in the form of 'species' or 'biodiversity', or as part of the ecological systems which integrate organisms and habitats (ibid.)

The two consequences of this, Tovey argues, are that environmental sociology 'tends to absorb animals into 'wild nature'', resulting in virtually nothing being said about 'domestic', 'service', or 'functional' animals,<sup>11</sup> and it also recognises nonhumans in the form of 'population or generic types, without individual character, knowledge, subjectivity or experience' (ibid.) She states that, 'Paraphrasing [geographers] Wolch and Emel, we might say that to read most sociology texts, one might never know that society is populated by non-human as well as human animals' (ibid.: 197).<sup>12</sup>

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damaged or polluted by sexual assault, thereby depicting him – the property owner – as the real victim' (Yates, Powell & Beirne 2001: 21).

<sup>11</sup> Tovey names 'food animals, experimental animals in scientific laboratories, working animals in circuses, transportation or elsewhere' as these types of animals.

<sup>12</sup> As ever, there are always exceptions within generalised statements. Tovey cites Benton (1993); Martell (1994) and Dickens (1996) as sociological texts that 'recognise animals as fellow experiencers, alongside humans, of social and environmental change'. Eder (1996) and Franklin (1999) also give 'considerable visibility' to animals, 'but mainly in order to identify and explain changing cultural constructions of them' (Tovey 2003: 197).

Tovey argues, taking a similar line to Mason (1993), that the way animals are theorised in sociology is part of the wider understanding of how 'nature' is treated or 'imagined'. Milbourne (2003: 194) says that the theoretical position of nonhuman animals in recent writing on 'social nature' is 'problematic'. A great deal of debate has ensued in efforts to attempt to think about 'wild' and 'domesticated' animals, and Ted Benton (1993) tells his readers that notions of 'wildness' and 'in the wild' are indeed problematic. For example, Benton writes:

Non-human animal populations 'in the wild' already stand in social relations with human populations and are affected by human social practices, by way of human socially-established powers with respect to, and impacts upon, their environmental conditions of life (1993: 67).

Tovey argues that a political economy of nature which sought to examine inequalities in access to nature would have to include virtually all nonhuman animals, be they 'domestic' or 'wild', because 'only very few species remain which are not in some type of contact with human beings' (2003: 202).

Through a concentration on sociologies of the environment, which often claim to be concerned with 'nature' as well as 'society'; or concerned with both at the same time, Tovey investigates what sociologists may mean in their understanding(s) of the term 'nature'. She says some environmental sociologists claim a desire to 'reform sociology' to the extent of bringing 'nature in'. For example, in 1994, Murphy suggested that, for too long, 'sociology has been constructed as if nature didn't matter' (cited in *ibid.*) Others want to "sociologise' environmental science' in order to demonstrate the limitation of discussing nature without discussing people. Tovey finds, speaking in general terms, that most environmental perspectives in sociology

approach 'nature' in similar ways: 'They either scientise it,<sup>13</sup> as matter/material resources/material processes (or accounts of these<sup>14</sup>), or aestheticise it, as landscape and countryside<sup>15</sup> (or claims on these<sup>16</sup>)'. Such ways of 'imagining' the natural world, she suggests, 'considerably constrain the possibilities for recognising animals as part of nature' (ibid.: 198). In all these accounts, '*domestic* animals' remain almost invisible, so much so that, 'claims made about 'nature' often appear strange or senseless if we try to include such animals within them' (ibid.: 199). All too often nonhumans appear *abstractly* within notions of 'living nature' (as opposed to nonliving nature) and ideas about 'wilderness', 'species' and 'biodiversity'.

Sociologists have turned their attention toward groups of nonhumans living 'in the wild', while rather neglecting 'domesticated' animals, who are *enigmatic* in environmental sociology, Tovey claims. However, individuals in the latter category are considerably more subject to human instrumentalism than those in the former. To the extent that sociologists have behaved neglectfully toward nonhuman animals, they have done little more than any conventional orientation to human-nonhuman relations. However, Tovey claims that there is a disparity between the public view of nonhuman animals and that of scientists,<sup>17</sup> environmental sociologists and environmental NGOs. She says, 'In largely ignoring animal issues, environmental sociologists seem to be closer to the pulse of the professional environmental movement than to that of the general public' (ibid.: 203). She further states that:

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<sup>13</sup> Murphy (1994).

<sup>14</sup> Buttel (2000); Freudenberg (2000).

<sup>15</sup> Macnaughten & Urry (1998).

<sup>16</sup> Hannigan (1995).

A social constructionist investigation into the way in which environmental sociology 'accounts for' animals might conclude that it has been much more strongly influenced by ecological science's vision of them as organisms within a system, or by Cartesian visions of them as complicated machines, than by the accounts found in lay society (ibid.)

In terms of this thesis' examination of the differences between animal welfare and nonhuman rights views, Tovey's implication that the 'pulse of the general public' amounts to an 'animal rights' consciousness can be seriously questioned. For example, as evidence of the contemporary public view of nonhumans, she cites Hilary Rose who makes the utterly exaggerated claim that: 'Unquestionably the big British debate about nature is the issue of animal rights and welfare. Increasingly it is assumed that no sensitive caring person can be anything other than into animal rights... the epicentre of today's UK nature politics is animal rights, with green nature in second place' (1998: 93; 94).<sup>18</sup>

Although nonhuman rights advocates would surely wish that any of that were true, sadly it is not. Nevertheless, in terms of Tovey's point about scientists, environmental sociologists and the public (Wynne's [1996]<sup>19</sup> 'expert-lay know-ledge divide'), this probably stands as a fairly accurate reflection of present orientations toward human-nonhuman relations.

When scholars have investigated issues such as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE - commonly known as 'mad cow disease', see

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<sup>17</sup> Tovey cites Wynne's (1996) research in which nuclear scientists are reported to regard sheep as 'systems of response to irradiation'.

<sup>18</sup> Similar sentiments are found on the NAIA's (National Animal Interest Alliance) website. They too claim that public discourse is currently dominated by 'animal rights thinking'. The NAIA is an animal rights counter-movement whose representatives participate in and defend several forms of nonhuman animal exploitation and contribute to discussion groups such as Yahoo's Animal\_Rights\_Debate.

Macnaughten & Urry [1998], and the section on foot and mouth disease in Part Two of the present work) they tend to treat it ‘as a problem for the humans rather than the cows’ (Tovey 2003: 200). Cows suffering with BSE figure in such analysis as ‘physical systems’ and ‘objects of scientific and political control’: ‘the Fordist reorganisation of animal husbandry is treated as generating human problems – fear of food, loss of trust in expert systems, loss of state legitimacy. What it may be doing to the animals is scarcely seen as a relevant topic of discussion’ (ibid.)

Some theorists, such as Hannigan (1995), investigating the genetically engineered bovine growth hormone known as BST, concentrate on claims-making activities of social movements and that of their countermovements. In such analysis, nonhuman animals may feature as individuals or as groups in the sense that they are the subjects of claims made by animal welfare and ‘animal rights’ campaigners as well as scientists and representatives of the dairy industry. Such analysis, however, is limited to the extent of acknowledging that farm animals have a ‘welfare’ which the use of BST may ultimately decrease (Tovey 2003: 200). The chief concern remains the *human* problems caused by scientific developments, application, and matters such as public confidence in political and marketing claims.

Tovey claims that Hannigan’s (1995) book contains a discursive section that ‘is quite revealing of how...environmental sociologists imagine nature and render animals invisible’. She presents an account of the debate as delineated by Hannigan:

Hannigan is here defending the constructionist approach against criticism made particularly by the ‘realism’ school of environmental sociology in Britain,

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<sup>19</sup> Wynne’s chapter is entitled: ‘May the sheep safely graze?’. No, someone will try to eat them sooner or later.

specifically Benton, Dickens, and Martell... He notes that both Benton and Martell criticise constructionism by attacking Keith Tester's (1991) argument that a fish is only a fish when socially classified as such. Benton sees Tester as reducing any reality external to discourse to 'an unknowable ghostly presence', while Martell argues that Tester is wrong to deny that animals have rights because they are of equal value to humans, in favour of saying concern with animals helps us to define ourselves as 'superior moral beings'. Hannigan comments that these 'attacks' on social constructionism have something to do with a 'sociology of animal rights', but his defence takes the form of reasserting that not all social constructionists are 'absolute relativists', and he develops this through reference to 'greenhouse gas emissions', levels of 'resources/waste-absorbent and food-production capacities', 'climatic and atmospheric effects' (p. 188). He makes no comment on the 'equal rights' of animals argument, but discusses instead the difficulties sociologists have in evaluating or adjudicating on scientific (not moral or political, which would seem much more relevant) claims (Tovey 2003: 201).

Much of the above, and perhaps particularly this passage, reveals the 'single central debate' in recent environmental sociology: 'This is the debate between 'realist' and 'social constructionist' understandings of nature' (ibid.: 203). Tovey explains the approaches in the following way:

The realist position is usually represented as treating society and nature as a dualism of separate but interrelated entities, where the task of the social analyst [is] to clarify how they are interrelated and with what effects; social constructionists see nature-and-society as a duality, as a contested cultural reality which exists in diverse forms in the activities of claims-making and social mobilisation around 'nature' and its processes (ibid.: 203-4).

While both constructionists and realists argue that their position is 'embattled' against the other, Irwin has recently argued that the debate between them is sterile and dull (Irwin 2001, cited in ibid.: 204). Murphy (2002) reveals that the debate continues nevertheless. Tovey, however, says that sterile and dull is not the same as irrelevant and, anyway, it is not irrelevant

in relation to the issue of the invisibility of nonhumans in the present work. In a torturous section of her paper, citing the works of Hannigan, Smith, Beck, Benton, Franklin and Dickens, Tovey succeeds in establishing that the labelling of such theorists can be 'mystifactory' and rather unhelpful, especially in the case of some writers, such as Beck, who 'is well-known for his refusal to be defined as either a social constructionist or a realist' (ibid.) Within a single 'school', such as the 'realist school', important theoretical differences may be seen. Tovey states that at least two types of approaches in 'realist theorisations of nature' can be distinguished: 'one addresses nature in terms of its capacity for backlash or boomerang on human actors, while another tries to grasp the shared and common experiences of human and non-human animals which are imposed by social processes' (ibid.: 205). Tovey argues that it is possible 'that realist approaches to nature have a greater chance of making animals 'visible' to sociology than social constructionist approaches do', yet she acknowledges that the 'backlash' or 'boomerang' theories 'help to reproduce the society-nature division' rather than transcend it, which the 'shared' and 'common experiences' approach attempts to do.

Although not equally, perhaps, all perspectives can - with some thought - make visible the lives and experiences of nonhuman animals. Tovey suggests that nonhumans such as 'food animals' cannot but be seen as a part of society, and thus a real concern for the sociological imagination. Environmental sociologists are often fully engaged with Beck's 'risk' thesis but Tovey takes him to task in respect of nonhumans. For example, when Beck (2000) 'revisited' *Risk Society* he claimed he saw a loss of boundary between 'nature and culture/society' brought about by the industrialisation of nature and culture. One effect, Beck argues, is the creation of hazards



that ‘endanger humans, animals and plants alike’ (2000: 221). Tovey claims there are risks for nonhumans that Beck fails to ‘imagine’ (2003: 206). For example, in the case of foot and mouth, it is ‘a ‘natural’ disease (not man-made like BSE)’. Foot and mouth may *not* be fatal to the majority of non-humans who contract it. What *is* fatal for them is how humans ‘interpret’ and ‘manage’ the disease: ‘both the means for its rapid and extensive transmission are largely man-made, and the solutions to it adopted by humans consist in slaughtering animals’ (ibid, emphases in original.)

Such factors mean that it, ‘does not ‘endanger humans and animals alike’, and its management has tended to confirm rather than disconfirm the ‘modernist’ distinction between society and nature and the right, even the necessity, for social actors to treat animals in purely instrumental ways’ (ibid.) Tovey further argues that, in fact:

when we think of food animals, it is hard to avoid concluding that the ‘boundaries between society and nature’ which Beck sees as redefined by the rise of environmental risks are already subject to multiply definitions: there is in fact no single ‘modernist’ understanding of these boundaries (ibid.)

Raymond Murphy (1994) also investigates risk and Tovey argues that his political economy approach to nature ‘would seem to have no difficulty in including animals’, which she approves of since she is keen to ‘rethink society to include animals’ (2003: 207, 209). Having said this about Murphy’s work, it is also true that his perspective does not go out of its way to make nonhumans visible. This is in contrast to, say, Mason’s (1993) approach in which he talks generally about ‘nature’ but claims several times that non-human animals are its most visual and vital component of it. Tovey regards Murphy as ‘devoted to challenging the idea of ‘equality of risk’’ (2003:

206). Murphy devises 'environmental classes' that are different in that they have differing degrees of 'interdependence' with nature. As a so-called 'boomerang' idea, different environmental classes also experience variable degrees of nature's 'recoil' also.

Murphy writes: 'The exploitation of the environment by one group to the detriment of other groups constitutes (1) the exploitation of the latter, and (2) the division of society into environmental classes' (Murphy 1994: 166, cited in *ibid.*) Power differentials also mark 'environmental classes', meaning: who has 'power to manipulate nature, and benefit from of such manipulation. Who, furthermore, experiences differences in terms of any 'boomerang' effect. In other words, who experiences 'differences in suffering the harmful effects of this manipulation' (1994: 170, cited in *ibid.*) In an 'objective relationship to environmental exploitation', the 'most seriously victimised are often not in a position to lead or even participate in the struggle against their victimisation' (1994: 167, cited in *ibid.*) Imagining 'class positions' of 'environmental victims', Murphy is moving toward categories that could include nonhuman animals: who benefits as well as who is harmed by environmental damage; who may be said to be a volunteer in systems that so damage; who are influential within systems; who are merely 'innocent' bystanders'? Even more 'distanced' than those who form this latter category are 'foetuses and future generations' (*ibid.*): perhaps human and nonhuman?

Tovey makes the claim to involve nonhumans because foetuses are included and because, 'Self-conscious awareness of class position and struggle against it are excluded'. She concludes that 'there seems to be no good reason for not including all species capable of suffering from human exploitation of the environment' (*ibid.*) Returning to her emphasis on 'farm

animals', Tovey acknowledges that there would be disagreement about their precise conceptual position (for example, as 'first-party victims' – are they ruled out of this position because they 'benefit' in their involvement in systems of exploitation? – or are they 'third-party' victims or bystanders?) Although she cannot see reason to theoretically exclude 'farm animals', she notes that Murphy – along with so-called 'Ecological Modernisationists' – has a tendency to do just that: 'The absence of non-'wild' animals from [Murphy's] environmental analysis follows from his understanding of nature as external to or the opposite of human social life' (ibid.: 207).

Peter Dickens' work (1992, 1996) may be regarded as examples of Tovey's 'second type of 'realist' theory', that which tries to grasp the shared and common experiences of human and nonhuman animals imposed by social processes. Again, revealing the pitfalls involved in labelling other theorists, Dickens has been described as a 'critical realist', also 'a theorist concerned to establish the 'independent reality' of nature from society', and a 'materialist' reworking Marx's concept of 'species being'.

This latter concern at least, says Tovey (2003: 207), means that it is possible to 're-establish connections' between humans and nonhuman animals through Marx. For Dickens, Marx suggests that humans and nonhumans have a 'natural being' related to their biological and instinctual needs, and humans have a 'species being' based on their self-consciousness, creativity and sociability. Such ideas have served to emphasise dualism and difference between humans and other animals, yet Dickens suggests that they could just as easily point toward continuity and similarity. If the notion of 'natural being' means that many types of animal strive to serve their biological and instinctual needs; they also organise the satisfying of nutritional, sheltering and reproductive requirements. Such needs are satisfied

in various ways but Dickens suggests that, essentially, humans have specific ways of doing what other animals do. Apparently, this idea can be reversed in the sense that his later work ‘applies the same argument to non-human species, and examines the specific ways in which they do, or experience, what humans do or experience’ (ibid.)

Tovey suggests that sociologists have mistakenly ignored such matters, assuming that they are concerns of ‘animal behaviourists’ and some anthropologists, rather than theirs. Academic disciplines often seek to differentiate themselves from others and Tovey suggests that, for this reason, sociologists rarely have ‘strayed’ from considerations of the human world. However, she says that work such as Dickens’ shows that ‘social theory can be illuminatingly applied to animals to explain their position and fate in modern society’ (ibid.) Tovey notes that Dickens (1996):

addresses modern humans’ ‘alienated’ relations with nature but...combines with this an analysis of how other animal species are also alienated, arguing that the advanced division of labour and the expanding penetration of market relations in late modernity are common alienating processes for both humans and non-human animals (ibid.)

Stating that, ‘Like humans, animals can be seen as having a natural being and a species being’, Tovey once more turns toward her emphasis on ‘domesticated’ animals, agreeing with Dickens that modern capitalism ‘undermines and destroys the distinctive essence of being human’ and it can have a ‘similar effect on animals’:

More and more animals are brought into the circuit of money capital, in which they are treated as merely inputs to a process of commodity food production. This affects how the animal’s capacity to develop, given their species being, is realised in practice, distorting it severely. Much like industrial workers, food

animals have been subject to mechanisation, rationalisation, and automation (ibid.)

Consequential of all this, Tovey argues, nonhumans ‘lose most of their natural capacities – to seek and choose their own food, to chose a mate, to rear their young’. She says that Dickens regards this as a form of ‘de-skilling’:

They are separated from their fellow animals, deprived of communication, social play, social learning. Like humans, they are made to specialise – as ‘beef cattle’ or ‘milk cattle’, as ‘layers’ or ‘broilers’ (ibid.: 208).

Dickens contends that the alienated experience of modern humans under capitalism can be applied to numerous other animals as well. He sees many nonhumans as skilled individuals who possess ‘learned tacit knowledge’. In modern systems of animal exploitation, these individuals are ‘subjugated and marginalised’ by human beings. Tovey states that Dickens is drawn to the conclusion that the fate of many nonhuman animals ‘is the same experience of alienation as captured by Marx in his analysis of...industrial workers under capitalism’. With this thought he brings food animals into ‘human cognitive space, recognising them as creatures both similar to and yet different from humans’ (ibid.)

## Part One.

### Understanding the Social Construction of Boundaries.

Both sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1990; 1993) and animal rights philosopher Tom Regan (1983; 2001) note that the 'the universe of moral obligations' is remarkably 'non-universal'. While Bauman claims that human beings have demonstrated an apparent 'need' to draw categorical divisions and boundaries between groups, Regan asserts that *exercises of exclusion* have created 'less than ideal' moral communities. Both theorists suggest further that a great deal of human effort is expended in 'guarding' carefully drawn boundaries. The following section outlines, in a general sense, how and, to some extent, why, boundaries are socially constructed. Subsequent chapters turn to reflections of modern human-nonhuman relations claims (and various reactions to them); for example, animal rights claims which state that the species 'boundary' or 'barrier' should no longer be regarded as a *sufficient* reason to exclude animals-other-than-human from moral consideration, and that this consideration ought to amount to more than traditional animal welfare views of human-nonhuman relations.

For advocates of animal rights, what follows may serve to inform their campaigning strategies in the sense that animal advocacy challenges some of the relevance of moral boundary drawing and yet, through Bauman's analysis, it may be seen - and must be appreciated by campaigners - that boundary drawing has, historically, had a great deal of utility and advantage for those who draw them. In other words, boundary drawing is an efficacious method of defining notions of 'my group', one of, possibly, several groups that members of society rely on for the everyday knowledge

that they need to survive. Bauman asserts that much essential and routine social knowledge is acquired in early childhood, thus a great deal of what is assumed to be required for 'successful' social living involves boundary-drawing activities that may encourage a resistance toward any subsequent claims that seek to effectively weaken or destroy boundaries of discrimination that exist even among human groups.

All seasoned social movement and political campaigners, along with other advocates of radical change, will recognise much truth in Bauman's implication that human beings are never entirely free from their past in which socialised boundary drawing has created meaningful 'us' and 'them' categories, often based on visible distinctions and differences, where 'they' are poorly understood and therefore defensively constructed as 'outsiders' and 'strangers' who are potentially frightening.

Boundaries effectively produce 'moral distance' with regard to constructed 'others'; thus boundaries keep 'them' at bay, serving to emphasise distance *and* difference, perhaps holding 'them' up to ridicule or 'humorous' debasement. Often jokes and joking relations can construct and reflect the distancing of 'others': often jokes and joking can amplify the putative stupidity of 'the other', serving to dehumanise and depersonalise those placed in 'them' categories, while the moral status of 'us' is simultaneously elevated. A sufficiency of distance (social and moral) can apparently result in untold cruelty and utter disregard for the rights of those successfully classified as 'other'. As seen in subsequent sections, if a boundary of distinction is ostensibly 'sturdy' enough, especially if created and ideologically maintained by authoritative social agents, then one community can end up murdering and raping its way through another.

## ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ Categories.

This section on the social construction of moral boundaries initially rests on Zygmunt Bauman’s powerful and important sociological insights (Bauman 1989; 1990; 1993). For example, in *Thinking Sociologically* (1990), written as an introductory sociological text, Bauman explains in detail the societal prevalence and manufacture of ‘us’ and ‘them’ categories, along with the vital role of the on-going lifelong process of socialisation; the social importance of ‘belonging’; the significance of notions of ‘community’; and the construction of ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’. In sum, Bauman provides a convincing sociological account of social learning and boundary construction which he connects to the concept of the ‘non-universal universe of moral obligations’, based on the putative human need to draw boundary lines and become involved in guarding those boundaries.

As social animals Bauman notes that human beings ‘live in the company of other people’, in groups in which they interactively understand that they are greatly dependent on each other (1990: 9). To say that to live is to live *with others* ‘is obvious to the point of banality’, Bauman notes (1993: 146), *yet* it is just this taken-for-granted, ‘we hardly need to think about it’, character of living with others which endows it with much of its sociological importance. For living amongst others is to live in what Bauman calls ‘manifold webs of human interdependency’, which have important effects on human motivations and social behaviour (1990: 14). One important ‘product’ of this interdependency is something sociology has a special relationship with: common sense.



Apart from considering this special relationship between common sense and sociology, Bauman regards common sense knowledge and common sense understandings as powerful social mechanisms which can fundamentally shape attitudes about the world in which humans live. The apparent 'power' of common sense emerges from its general immunity to being seriously questioned with obvious implications for social movement activists who seek social and political change. It has an effective capacity for self-confirmation; its knowledge is based on precepts which are, by its own lights, largely *self-evident*. Common sense understandings are maintained, argues Bauman, through repetition of the 'routine', and the enactment of the 'monotonous nature of everyday life'. This enactment of routine has two characteristics: it informs common sense while being informed by common sense. Bauman adds:

As long as we go through the routine and habitualised motions which fill most of our daily business, we do not need much self-scrutiny and self-analysis. When repeated often enough, things tend to become familiar, and familiar things are self-explanatory; they present no problems and arouse no curiosity. In a way, they remain invisible (ibid.: 15).

As social beings, humans live in groups which can exert an immense 'hold' on the individual. Bauman says that the group 'makes people', and this means that resisting the important messages of the group can be a relatively hard thing to do. He claims that changing the individual which the group has created requires the 'utmost exertion'. Abiding by - rather than challenging - the norms and values of your group is much the *easiest* and most unproblematic course to adopt: 'Change would require much more effort, self-sacrifice, determination and endurance than are normally needed

for living placidly and obediently in conformity with the upbringing offered by the group into which one was born' (ibid.: 24-5):

The contrast between the ease of swimming with the stream and the difficulty of changing sides is the secret of that hold which my natural group has over me; it is the secret of my dependence on my group. If I look closely and try to write down an inventory of all those things I owe to the group to which I - for better or worse - belong, I'll end up with quite a long list (ibid.: 25).

From this group - and especially from particular significant members of it at different times - we secure the 'enormous knowledge' necessary just for mundane everyday living. It is interesting that Bauman, in the above quotation, identifies a certain 'secrecy' embedded in the whole process he is outlining. He argues that, in general terms, individuals are not especially aware of the ways they have acquired important social knowledge but, nevertheless, acquire it they do; moreover, uncritically abiding by it is much the easiest thing to do. People tend to end up knowing that, somewhere within them, they have the 'knowledge' that they need and depend on to help them fight through their daily tasks and challenges (ibid.: 26). This knowledge is manifested in a set of rules which individuals can recite and can be seen in a set of practical skills needed for living in the social world. With a nod toward an ethnomethodological understanding of common sense knowledge, Bauman says such skills are *effortlessly* utilised throughout life.

Bauman asserts that basic precepts of this essential knowledge are acquired in early childhood, from a time 'which one does not remember much' (ibid). Returning to the notion of the significance of these 'social lessons', Bauman states that this early knowledge is 'so well settled' that it has 'a powerful grip' on the individual. Such knowledge is largely taken for

granted as a 'natural' thing which therefore does not require much questioning. Bauman further asserts that socialisation processes 'sediment' durable social structures (1993: 143). Bauman regularly uses Durkheimian notions of *sedimentation* in his writings, and it is clear here that the suggestion is that social knowledge has solidly settled within the minds of persons, and settled with an influential existential utilisation of a fundamental nature.<sup>20</sup>

Bauman also uses George Herbert Mead's *I and Me* formulation to note that, not only does a collection of beliefs become internalised, but - again - these beliefs have the appearance of being obvious, self-evident and comfortably 'natural'. It is perhaps now high time to note that this reading of Bauman's account seems, thus far at least, to be overly deterministic and therefore such a reading would be a gross misrepresentation of the case he actually makes. When Bauman explains the process of secondary socialisation, as opposed to the details of early primary socialisation, it becomes apparent that the 'one-way process' thus far implied is rather illusory. However, for the purposes of the present study (in particular for a section which appears later in the present thesis), it is important to carefully reiterate and underline that Bauman does clearly claim that there is relatively little agency or dialectical input on behalf of *the socialised* in their earliest experiences of the socialisation process. Echoing Wrong's (1961) well-known objection to overly deterministic views of the process of socialisation, it would seem evidently incorrect to uncritically accept that individuals routinely 'take on board', without any reflection or qualification, every societal value and social norm they are taught in their early

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<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Bauman (1993: 143) notes that socialisation can have a tendency to 'cool off'. Moreover, like most sociological analysis of the socialisation process, Bauman regularly returns to the point that socialisation should not be seen as a one-way process, and that there are other social forces, such as the notion of *sociation*, which may disrupt or counter the process.

upbringing. Nevertheless, Bauman indicates that it would be equally erroneous not to recognise the social and psychological importance and sedimentary impact – and, indeed, the potential longevity - of this early foundational learning. To make these points a little clearer, and to develop the argument somewhat, the introduction of subsequent features highlighted by Bauman which include a greater degree of human agency in the account of socialisation processes is useful at this point.

### Processes of Socialisation.

From the fairly standard starting point that the socialisation process is an ‘on-going’ phenomenon, not limited to childhood,<sup>21</sup> Bauman suggests that later (secondary) socialisation can be regarded as ‘the dialectics of freedom and dependence’ which starts at birth and ends at death (1990: 35). There are two important things to note here. In early socialisation, a child appears to have little opportunity to seriously challenge the content of the social lessons she receives, and perhaps has an even smaller sense of freedom of choice with regards to ‘deciding’ the group which she is ultimately dependent upon. Thus, Bauman argues, very young children effectively have ‘no choice about family, locality, neighbourhood, class or country’ (ibid). However, the older one gets, the wider one’s choices may become; and Bauman suggests that, at last, some dependencies can effectively become

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<sup>21</sup> Gordon Marshall, in his *Dictionary of Sociology* (Marshall 1994: 497-98) notes that the sociological study of socialisation moved on from a specific focus on primary socialisation, based on the role played by agents such as the family and school, in a recognition that the socialisation process effects people throughout their lives.

challenged and rejected, while others are actively sought and voluntarily assumed.<sup>22</sup>

Even so, human beings are never entirely liberated from their past; and perhaps the most frequent experience of social life is the experience of being *free and unfree* at the same time. Furthermore, while some changes may seem to be attractive, in practice they may be impossible to bring about. In respect of those cases in which change is actually possible, Bauman reminds his readers that ‘the costs of change are exorbitant and off-putting’ (ibid). Here, Bauman argues that some social habits become so firmly fixed that the ‘expense of change’ may appear to be just *too much* to take on. In such circumstances, there appears to be just a little too much to ‘de-learn’; too many established habits that need ‘forgetting’, and thus - with age - ‘making a break’ becomes more and more impossible, unlikely, and ultimately *unattractive*. This is a crucial insight as far as this thesis is concerned because, with David DeGrazia (1996: 44), it is suggested that some early socialised ‘lessons’ often appear to be extremely difficult to negate and successfully resist. Put differently, some socially-constructed attitudes and many fundamental internalised and institutionalised values and beliefs become so firmly sedimented, that breaking away from them may well require some supreme effort.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, and this is an extremely important point for all those seeking change in human-nonhuman relations, it is argued that the perceived ‘costs’ of change must seem to make sense and appear worthy of being paid. In other words, given the perceived costs, there must be something that

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<sup>22</sup> However, see Brim Jr (1966: 20-4) for an account of the ‘limits of later-life socialisation’.

<sup>23</sup> One relevant observation regarding this point is evident from email discussions involving animal rights advocates. It appears fairly common for campaigners to underestimate the difficulty others may experience when contemplating, say, lifestyle changes if they themselves found such changes relatively easy.

makes 'paying' attractive - this must outweigh the apparent attractiveness of avoiding change. In terms of rejecting traditional attitudes about humans and other animals in any genuine animal rights sense, that is, beyond traditional animal welfarism (developed in Part Two), the social costs involved may appear to be very great indeed (Adams 2000; 2001). Moreover, and again serving to underline the widespread prevalence of the ideology of animal welfare, the 'need' to pay such a high cost may not be immediately apparent due to the dominance of orthodox orientations toward human-non-human relations. The evidence presented in this thesis essentially suggests that the predominance of welfarist ideology seductively states that there is no need to attempt to fix what is not broken.

### Insiders and Outsiders.

Returning directly to the details of Bauman's (1990) sociological account of socialisation processes, thus far the focus has been concentrated on the social factors involved in 'insider group' construction. However, where there is a notion of 'inside', there is a corresponding notion of 'outside' as well. Indeed, the very notion of 'inside' logically relies on the existence of a clearly perceivable 'outside' in order for the concept to make sense. It may be noted that, in part, 'the dialectics of freedom and dependence' means that, at some stages, there can be opportunities to 'choose groups'. For, there is no suggestion in Bauman's account of socialisation that its processes can successfully manufacture an utterly homogenous population. Miliband (1969) rather earlier asserted (although in another context), that he thought it

unlikely that *any* social process could create such a ‘conservative’ population. Rather, individuals are socialised into particular and varied social groups whose values may oppose - and be opposed by - others. After early childhood, there are greater chances to change - or even form – these all-important groups. In this ‘multi-group situation’, Bauman notes that Alfred Schutz has suggested that individuals often judge other members of humanity by reference to an imaginary line, a continuum, based on the notion of *social distance* (Bauman 1990: 38).

Social distance grows ‘as social intercourse shrinks in its volume and intensity’, Bauman argues (ibid.: 38-9). Variations in social distance also involves a decrease or increase in empathy or ‘fellow feeling’ based on feelings of mental and moral proximity regulated or influenced by physical and/or psychic distance. This, then, is the social construction of morally important ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups populated by ‘us’ as opposed to ‘them’.

Bauman argues that ‘we’ and ‘they’

do not stand just for two separate groups of people, but for the distinction between two totally different attitudes - between emotional attachment and antipathy, trust and suspicion, security and fear, cooperativeness and pugnacity (ibid.: 39).

Bauman also says that ‘the ‘We’ group stands for the group to which I belong’:

What happens inside this group, I understand well - and since I understand, I know how to go on, I feel secure and at home. The group is, so to speak, my natural habitat, the place where I like to be and to which I return with a feeling of relief (ibid).

However, the 'They' group:

stands for a group to which I either cannot or do not wish to belong. My vision of what is going on in that group is thereby vague and fragmentary, I poorly comprehend its conduct, and hence what that group is doing is to me by and large unpredictable and by the same token frightening (ibid).

Bauman maintains that part of being 'trained to live' in a world constructed by human beings involves making boundaries that are 'as exact as possible'. This exactness is important because it is necessary that boundaries are both easily noticed and unambiguously understood (ibid.: 55). Bauman argues that this is a matter of supreme importance. He notes that, 'well-marked boundaries send us an unmistakable signal' in terms of expectations and in relation to which learned patterns of conduct to employ.

Following Georg Simmel, Bauman describes how *others perceived as strangers* can be seen as less morally valuable than non-strangers. Others seen as strangers - by definition, cases in which moral proximity can be regarded as being reduced - means that moral responsibility toward them can be correspondingly lessened. The lack of moral proximity evidently results in the increased possibility of overcoming the 'animal pity' which Bauman - citing Hannah Arendt - argues is generated by humans beings *being with* each other (1989: 20; 24).<sup>24</sup> In other words, a moral 'proximity lack' means that social actors have no special need to abide by what Bauman regards as the *usual* ethical character of human relationships (1990: 54-70). However, this is not to say that, necessarily, strangers are automatically treated like 'enemies'. But, importantly, they *may* be and, if they are, this can mean that

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<sup>24</sup> Such sentiments can be traced at least as far back as Rousseau who claimed that human beings were made weak and 'more brutish' by society: they were 'naturally' gentle and noble (in Franklin 1999: 178).



strangers are liable to end up being ‘deprived of that protection which only moral proximity may offer’ (ibid.: 70).

Bauman notes that there are different ‘levels’ in ideas of moral proximity. Something that may be described as ‘civil inattention’ may be but a ‘short step’ away from the more serious notion of ‘moral indifference’, he claims. Both may lead to ‘heartlessness’ and a ‘disregard for the needs of others’ (ibid). According to Bauman, the construction of *stranger* creates the outsider classification: ‘They’, firmly conceptualised as different and considered opposite to insiders. Again (once more emphasising ideas of being ‘in’ or ‘out’), further influential notions of ‘togetherness’ and ‘community’ are important building blocks to forge a feeling of unity – a unity between *insiders*. Such feelings of unity may be genuine or may be merely desired, suggests Bauman, but it is a ‘*spiritual* unity, subject to a shared spiritual authority, that we have in mind first and foremost’ (ibid.: 72, emphasis in original). According to Bauman:

One shared view which underlies and conditions the sharing of all other views is the agreement that the collection under discussion is indeed a community - that is, inside its boundaries views and attitudes are, or ought to be, shared, and that agreement can and should be achieved if any of the views (merely temporarily, one believes) differ (ibid).

Bauman next describes ‘the community type of belonging’. At its most basic and obvious, a ‘community’ does not exist if the factors which unite people are weaker than the factors that can divide them. What is essential, he claims (adding that he is tempted to contend that this is an ‘overwhelming consideration’), is a certain *similarity* between community members. Returning to the commonsensical elements which run throughout this analysis,

Bauman states that community members view their collectivity as having a *natural* unquestioned unity (ibid). Therefore, this community type of belonging is reified as a thing, a social fact; as *a solid fact of nature*.

As 'community' is idealised - and regarded as simply *there* - its perception is all the stronger during times when it does not need to be talked about. In these circumstances, the 'hold of community' can be significant. Again, its normative strength is gained through its very invisibility. Bauman suggests that the very idea of community is so sociologically important that it may simply exist as a postulate (an assumption without proof). It is therefore assumed that *community* exists even though it may be 'an expression of desire, a clarion call to close the ranks, rather than a reality' (ibid.: 73). Constructions of community are so vital that:

we attempt...to bring to life, or keep alive, or resuscitate a community of meanings and beliefs which has never existed 'naturally', or is already about to fall apart, or is to rise again from the ashes (ibid).

In effect, then, Bauman notes that a social community is largely an ideological construct, no doubt effectively serving many useful and necessary ends for the social beings inside it (some more than others to be sure), not least in the drawing of the apparently essential boundaries between 'us' and 'them'.

Once constructed, boundaries need - naturally enough - to be jealously, or at least studiously, guarded. Important attention must, therefore, be given to gate-keeping activities. After all, insiders and outsiders cannot merely choose themselves in an unregulated manner. Ways of deciding *who's who* are crucial material and on-going requirements. As noted,

Bauman has argued that the ‘universe of moral obligations’ is, in fact, ‘non-universal’. Here the sense of ‘social closure’ is clearly seen, dealt with in all sociological accounts of social mobility. However, there also exists the additional sense of *moral closure* as well. Again, means of differentiation are extremely important.

While it is a sociological convention to focus on notions of social class, ‘race’ and gender to explore social differences which may result in levels of inequality, in relation to issues of morality Bauman appears to acknowledge and accept that perhaps the deepest divide is based on species membership. For example, he argues (ibid.: 138) that humans are most likely to remain categorised as moral subjects *if* they can remain categorised as human beings. Bauman notes that humans have evolved notions that ‘being human’, *on its own*, entitles the subject to special treatment: treatment reserved for human beings only, and regarded (at least in theory) as the proper treatment of *every* human being. As some building block or consequence of human rights thinking, this construction of ‘proper treatment’ is so strong, Bauman claims, that ‘one may even say that the concepts of a ‘moral object’ and ‘human being’ have the same referent - their respective scopes overlap’ (ibid). In terms of moral proximity and physical treatment, there is, of course, a flip-side to this:

Whenever certain persons or categories of people are denied the right to our moral responsibility, they are treated as ‘lesser humans’, ‘flawed humans’, ‘not fully human’, or downright ‘non-human’ (ibid).

If simply being ‘less-than-human’ can be a serious threat to one’s moral standing, the apparently thoroughly unforgiving status of *nonhuman* puts

one furthest away from the likelihood of being treated as morally valuable.<sup>25</sup> Thus, historically, some early human communities deliberately described themselves with names that literally meant ‘human’, thus automatically casting all ‘outsiders’, all ‘others’, into nonhuman categories and therefore outside of the boundary of ethical concern (Midgley 1983: 101). By the same token, human slaves have been commonly regarded as nonhuman - or at least distant ‘beast-like’ barbarians (Clark 1985: 42, writing about the thoughts of Aristotle). Bauman, however – quite possibly thinking about his own powerfully disturbing analysis of the rational, bureaucratic and ultimately ‘modern’ Nazi Holocaust (Bauman 1989) - comments that, ‘Our century has been notorious for the appearance of highly influential world-views that called for the exclusion of whole categories of the population - classes, nations, races, religions - from the universe of moral obligations’ (1990: 138-39).

### The Exercise of Exclusion: Moral Closure.

From his North American perspective, animal rights philosopher Tom Regan (2001) also examines the notion of the non-universal nature of the universe of moral obligations. In a chapter entitled, ‘Patterns of Resistance’, Regan outlines how religious and scientific ideas have been used throughout history to attempt to block access to the ‘moral universe’. He argues that, regardless

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<sup>25</sup> However, as shown in a later section of this thesis, being regarded as entirely inanimate (like a toilet for example) can place people even ‘further away’ from the category of human being than the case of regarding humans as nonhuman animals. The latter are at least conceived of as living, breathing, biological entities with an individual and/or group welfare.

(and because) of the use of the phrase ‘all men’ in the North American Declaration of Independence, not every person was deemed to be possessors of the rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Clearly exploring notions of processes of moral closure, Regan asserts that, ‘the plain fact is that not all humans, not even all men, were included under the rubric ‘all men’ (2001: 108). Regan focuses his attention on four excluded groups: African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and animals other than human. He details the patterns of resistance that were (and are) utilised to preserve their exclusion from the moral ‘in-group’. This historical *exercise of exclusion* is the history of boundary building, boundary guarding and boundary maintenance for the benefit of moral insiders, initially of course ‘white male property owners’ (ibid). According to Regan, exclusion results in the construction of what he regards as a ‘less than ideal’ moral community. He asks, ‘How do the beneficiaries of membership in a less than ideal moral community act to retain their privileged status?’ (ibid.: 109). Brute force is one frequently employed option, he says, but there are other powerful social institutions that can also assist in the process of exclusion, such as religious and scientific ones.<sup>26</sup>

Although these are the forces he chooses to concentrate his particular analysis on, Regan immediately and sensibly acknowledges that other social institutions are involved as well, not least those of economics and politics and ‘the sheer power of custom, including popular culture - the media, the songs that are sung, [and] the art of the times’ (ibid.: 110).

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<sup>26</sup> It should be pointed out, as Regan himself does (2001: 110-11), that he is not claiming that scientific and religious ideas have not played a ‘positive role’ and challenged the exclusion of the groups under discussion.

## Humour.

It has been argued that humour plays an important sociocultural and ideological role in society (Powell & Paton 1988), featuring as it does in popular culture, songs and, indeed, the 'art of the times'. Although not entirely neglected by sociologists, the sociology of humour has not traditionally been included as a major or central interest of the discipline. However, humour can play a substantial role in terms of social control and resistance to such control. Thus, through a 'jokelore', social and political values can be transmitted within and between societies and, as Powell & Paton point out (ibid.: xi), sociologists of all people should appreciate that extracting *any* human activity from its social context is problematic and unwise. Christie Davies' chapter in this collection on 'stupidity and rationality' (Davies 1988) appears to helpfully inform the discussion thus far in this section. For example, his analysis of humour is supportive of Bauman's contention about the moral benefits of 'insider status' - as well as having something significant to say about human-nonhuman relations. For instance, Davies writes that people of various nationalities often use humour to poke fun at and, more seriously, denigrate both the social and moral standing of selected others. Thus, the British have traditionally told jokes about the Irish, North Americans have told jokes about the Polish, the French aim their humour at Belgians and so on (ibid.: 2).

Davies claims such jokes enjoy an 'enormous and universal popularity'. Moreover, part of their ideological function is to present or construct a group of people who are characterised as 'stupid outsiders'. This is not a small or inconsequential matter, he argues, because people have a 'deep-seated' need to manufacture these outsiders (ibid.: 3). As said, Davies'

position appears to directly support Bauman's perspective on the social significance of moral distance and the corresponding link to notions of moral respect. For example, he writes:

By telling jokes about the stupidity of a group on the periphery of their society, people can place this despised and feared quality at a distance and gain reassurance that they and the members of their own group are not themselves stupid or irrational (ibid).

Davies reproduces a selection of the jokes to reveal the 'stupidity' of the victim population: the butts of the joke. In one example, the way of suggesting that a targeted human being is a stupid person is to indicate the possession of less intelligence than a nonhuman animal. This joke concerns a rocket being launched with a crew of one human (a representative of the victim population) and one chimpanzee. Every so often the chimp is instructed by 'mission control' to complete complicated and important flight tasks inside the rocket. Unemployed throughout, eventually the human gets extremely irritated and restless; but then his orders finally arrive. They read: 'feed the chimpanzee' (ibid.: 7).

On one level, the human is simply denigrated by being shown to be intellectually and hierarchically inferior to the chimpanzee pilot. However, when real live chimpanzees have been blasted into space by humans they have been sent there as experimental animals, as 'scientific' models. Thus - in this joke - this human and the other animal share the same designation of an 'experimental tool' or 'model', even though the chimp is given superior status. Keeping the focus on the position of the human, and recalling Bauman's 'holocaust thesis', which involved Nazis subjecting depersonalised humans, that is humans-seen-as-nonhuman-animals, to painful and often

fatal experimental procedures, it is suggested in the joke that once humans can be said to share the same referent as 'animal', they may be used in potentially stressful, painful or lethal experiments. However, as in many jokes, the status of the nonhuman as an exploitable and legitimately 'harmable' being, while essential for the internal logic of the joke, is silently assumed as a given reality.<sup>27</sup>

In another example, Davies (*ibid.*: 1, in the first joke he cites) reproduces a North American joke about a Polish couple who buy chickens and proceed to plant them in the ground like vegetables. Their stupidity is predicated on their surprise that the birds died. However, the deaths - and the property status of the chickens - are not important or problematic within the internal logic of the joke. After all, it is this very lack of importance which leads Bauman, citing Stanley Milgram's infamous social psychological experiments about 'authority', to warn that any successful 'moving away' of people from the status of human being is likely to lead to negative consequences for the individuals involved.

As seen in detail a little later in the thesis, the process of dehumanisation can only 'work' (function) if the successful transformation of humans to the status of nonhuman is widely 'understood' as an act that is imbued with sociopolitical and hierarchical meanings. In other words, intentionally placing people into a category of 'animal' in order to subsequently exploit or oppress them would seem to serve little purpose if many other animals were not already constructed as potentially exploitable or, for various reasons, 'killable' (ideologically 'cullable') beings; or 'human resources' and so on.

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<sup>27</sup> I was reminded of this point when sociologist and now radio pundit Laurie Taylor told a joke about the assumed laziness and slowness of British workers in his BBC Radio 4 programme, *Thinking Allowed* (April 2001): A 'Liverpool docker' crushes a snail under his foot and, when asked to account for his action, complained that the snail had been following him around all morning.



To very briefly recap, some of the prevailing social forces and processes which ultimately result in the construction of 'in' and 'out' groups have been outlined. To 'achieve' allegiance to such categories, groups need efficient social control mechanisms which construct insiders and outsiders. And although these mechanisms cannot in any sense be regarded as absolutely deterministic, the evidence suggests that they function to a sufficient extent to effectively construct these meaningful categories. Utilising concepts of 'in' and 'out', 'community', 'group', 'similarity' and 'difference', it is perhaps quite evident that the categories of 'human' and 'nonhuman' frequently have a significant ideological role to play. Exploring the rational, organised, and 'efficient' administrative genocide in Nazi Germany, Bauman (1989) emphasises the practical necessity of the presence of all the factors discussed thus far in this section. Thus, Jews and other 'others', over a period of time and with systematic care and attention to detail, were physically and psychologically *separated* from the general German population, who were themselves reformulated in Nazi ideology as a Caucasian 'race' of non-Jewish 'Aryans'. German Jews and the other groups of others were, however, subject to a long process of extremely negative but evidently persuasive propaganda which eventually moved (by *reducing* and ultimately *removing*) all Jews, 'gypsies' and homosexuals to dangerous 'outsider status'. After such processes of moral reduction and social removal, these groups were no longer able to enjoy being regarded as constituents of the moral 'in-crowd'. Finally, in extremis, the outsiders were successfully conceptualised as not even being members of the human species. However, and perhaps a reflection of a discernible ambivalence in human-nonhuman relations (Ryder 2000), not just any old animal category would suffice to dehumanise Jews. Thus, they

were often portrayed as lice, and that meant that they were subject to carefully constructed ‘extermination policies’ enacted against such a ‘pest’ species.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Hitler was able to conceive of the genocide as being part of a campaign of ‘social hygiene’. Clearly, the stories (including the jokes) human beings tell themselves, each other, and their children are truly *meaningful*.

### Human Beings and Animals as Utterly Distinct Categories.

Keith Tester is another sociologist who outlines the absolute necessity, as well as the practical pragmatism, of conceptualising others and enemies in nonhuman animal categories. For example, in relation to the My Lai massacre in which a company of highly trained North American soldiers, as he puts it, ‘murdered and raped their way through a whole community’ (1997: 85), Tester found that often the soldiers believed they were not fighting other human beings (also see Bourke 1999). Biologist and feminist Lynda Birke (1994) argues that ‘human’ and ‘animal’ categories are usually regarded as utterly distinct. Human beings commonly conceive of themselves as human by strictly *reserving* the label ‘animal’ for other animal categories, or for certain demonised human individuals or groups. Thus, it is generally only seen as appropriate for ‘bad’ or somehow ‘deficient’ humans to be labelled as animals.

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Vermin’ animals such as rats, or ‘food’ animals such as pigs are also regularly the chosen label for the dehumanised subjects. More seemingly ‘virtuous’ animals - often regarded and categorised as ‘higher’ animals - may be deliberately adopted by human individuals or groups as a symbolic representation of themselves. Commonly, animals used as symbols for humans (and ‘favourite’ animals) seem to be mainly

In a sense, these understandings also account in part for some of the utility in dehumanisation processes. In other words, categorical distinctions are constructed as things that *matter*, and the label 'animal' ultimately becomes what 'we' are *not* - and, furthermore, a label most human beings would not want to associate with themselves. Birke says the word 'animal' may be seen as a 'cultural standard' against which human beings may set themselves. Moreover, humans are in general assumed to be 'better' than those placed in 'animal' categories (1994: 17). Hence, football supporters, at least those who 'go around fighting and wrecking places', find themselves called 'animals' - or (how bad is this?) - 'worse than animals' (recalling the jokes). This linguistic formulation, Birke suggests, is to signify that human beings are 'out of control', and that suggestively means behaving *sub-humanly* (ibid). Displays of 'animal-like behaviour', with notions of 'the beast within', when applied to human beings, are normatively pejorative.

According to Birke, a now obsolete dictionary definition of 'beasts' used to include human beings but 'later usage' specifically and deliberately separates 'us' from 'them'. Thus, in modern usage, the term 'beast' is often associated with passive but strong - but also probably stupid - 'work animals', within categories of nonhuman animals classified as 'livestock'. On the other hand, the term 'beast' is connected to ideas suggesting 'evil forces': the 'devil' himself is part-beast after all (Thomas 1983: 36). Joanna Bourke (1999: 349-63) argues that authorities who sent 'boys' to war were extremely wary of the potentially dangerous 'creatures' who might return; those who were perhaps brutalised by their war experiences and thus may subsequently represent a beast-like threat to their own friends, families,

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carnivores. For example, recent paramilitary forces in Bosnia called themselves 'The Tigers' and 'White Eagles', both 'savage' but 'skilful' and popular predators, of course. (Jamieson 1999: 138).

sweethearts and spouses. Given the negative cultural meanings associated with the term 'animal', it is perhaps not surprising that in Northern English prison argot (and tabloid newspaper headlines), the label 'beast' is often bestowed by 'regular cons' on both unconvicted and convicted sex offenders - especially those who have allegedly sexually assaulted children. These human individuals are also often regarded as passive, and perhaps weak and stupid, but who are at the same time 'evil', 'predatory' and 'animal-like' at least in their sexual proclivities, 'picking on' children, as it were, because they are putatively incapable of a sexual relationship with a grown-up person.

Stephen Clark sees such notions imbued with 'folk-taxonomic meanings', carrying moral significance (1991: 14). Treating people 'like an animal' means treating them 'without due regard for their preferences, or their status as free and equal partners in the human community'. Again, the importance of community in these constructions is clear. Indeed, Clark adds that, 'To behave 'like an animal' is to pay no regard to the normal inhibitions and ceremonies of that community' (ibid). Such 'creatures' surely cannot be community insiders because they do not know how to return friendship; they do not know how to keep or make bargains, they cannot play a social contractual role as they are 'forever excluded from distinctly 'human' practices' (ibid).

Once 'outside the realm of justice', all 'animals' - human or otherwise - may be more easily enslaved, hurt, or killed, and in great numbers. The detail of the harmful utilisation of attitudes concerning 'the species barrier' will be postponed until species barrier 'construction' is considered in part of the ensuing section on the social construction of the species barrier.

## The Species Barrier - Introduction.

How slender so ever it may sometimes appear, the barrier  
which separates men from brutes is fixed and immutable.

Naturalist William Bingley,  
quoted in *Man and the Natural World*  
by Keith Thomas.

What moral difference should species membership make? What may justify such differentiation? There is little doubt that observed species differences have historically been presented as morally significant. In the following chapter, philosophical and theological underpinnings of this significance are outlined and discussed. Following that, chapter 7 will seek to provide some evidence of the importance of species categorisation, based on the harm and violence that can be created by conceptually consigning human beings into carefully constructed 'nonhuman' categories despite, moreover, actually remaining human throughout. Finally, in the last of the thesis sections substantially concerning the species barrier, chapter 8 suggests that its 'maintenance' remains a fundamental way by which human beings can interactively establish and talk about understandings of their own moral standing in everyday life and social practices.

Before embarking on this three-part investigation of the species barrier, a few preliminary remarks may be helpful in order to clarify the 'current state of play' regarding debates about the moral status of nonhuman animals. A further examination of moral theorising about humans, non-humans and human-nonhuman relations, this time in relation to animal advocacy and social movement mobilisation, features in Part Two of the

thesis. These initial remarks begin with Elstein's (2003) challenging perspective in which he argues that the whole notion of 'species' is a social construction. The following closely follows his reasoned claims.

### Species as a Social Construction.

Daniel Elstein (2003) sets himself the not inconsiderable task of persuading speciesists that the notion of species is a *fiction*. At least he argues that 'the concept of species is socially constructed in significant ways' (ibid.) He believes that this means that 'speciesism, or the doctrine that species in itself is a characteristic that can justifiably be used as a criterion for discriminating between individuals, cannot be valid' (ibid.)

Elstein claims that speciesists 'tend to see species as a concept that marks essential natures and boundaries'. This view, he argues, means that it relies on a fiction to form moral judgements about individuals on such a basis. Elstein maintains that once the origin and meanings attached to the notion of 'species' are revealed, 'it becomes clear that there is no such thing as species that transcends its aggregate parts (ibid.) He suggests further that, if:

the aggregate parts are not relevant to morality, neither is species; and species can only be morally relevant in the ways that its component parts are. Species has no essential "core" nature. Therefore, to make moral distinctions based on species in itself, without reference to what species consist of, is to make moral distinctions based on nothing. In other words, it is to commit [a] fallacy (ibid.)

Having said this, Elstein is quick to say that he does not mean that moral distinctions, based upon *socially constructed* notions of species, can never be made. However, 'it does mean...that we should never make moral decisions based on species'. He says that, given that the social construction of species is real, 'it is the reality of species itself that is under examination' (ibid.) For Elstein:

There are practical reasons for taking social constructions into consideration in our moral reasoning. Ideas can exist without reference to things that are real. Likewise, ideas can be morally relevant without their referents being morally relevant (ibid.)

Elstein invites his readers to imagine that an 'insane' man believes that he sees a unicorn. The *belief* is morally relevant, he argues, because reason is given to the idea of treating this person medically, or calming him down if he appears agitated by 'the unicorn':

But this certainly does not mean that the nonexistent unicorn he sees is either real or something to be taken into consideration in our moral judgement. It is the idea, not the unicorn, that is morally relevant (ibid.)

Elstein also argues that 'something real in the world' may correlate with the man's illusion. For example:

Suppose the man thinks he sees a unicorn every time a bulldog walks in front of him. The existence of the bulldog can be taken into consideration in our moral judgement (keep small children away, etc.) Therefore, the man's illusory idea is correlated with something real in the world that is morally relevant (i.e. the presence of a bulldog). But this of course does not mean that unicorns are morally relevant (ibid.)

Given that perceptions and their correlation ‘with something real in the world’ may bear on moral decisions, Elstein points out that pro-nonhuman philosophers have not claimed otherwise. For example, the case for animal rights (or that for animal liberation) makes no claim that pigs, for example, have voting rights that should be respected. Elstein states that this avoids ‘the parallel problem of being called sexist for discriminating against one of the sexes based upon real differences between men and women’. Is it not sexist, for instance, to deny men the right to an abortion (ibid.)

Elstein asserts that he does not intend to deny differences between human and nonhuman beings, nor that species concepts are not useful in common sense usage or in science. He claims, however, that species concepts are ‘interest-relative’, for example:

Biologists whose main interest is in evolution tend to use species concepts that focus on evolution; ecologists tend to use species concepts that stress ecological niches; biologists interested in morphology focus on morphological characteristics in their species concepts, etc. (ibid.)

For Elstein, this means there ‘is currently no universally accepted species concept in the scientific community’. Elstein’s principal concern, therefore, is to ask ‘whether “the species concept” is ever useful in moral philosophy?’ *If* the concept is useful in the context of philosophical thinking, then when is it useful? Once this question is raised, Elstein argues, then the question of *which* species concept is being referred to is automatically raised:

Is it the everyday-language concept of laypeople, and if so, whose? Or is it one of the more than a dozen species concepts currently held by biologists? Anyone who argues that “the species concept” is useful in moral philosophy must first specify which species concept they have in mind. One cannot simply say



“species” is morally relevant as if the term has some precise and obvious meaning – as if species were some sort of essential thing that needs no explanation, because it is God-given and beyond question (ibid.)

Elstein cites a passage written by philosopher Carl Cohen who, according to Regan (2001), provides one of the most coherent challenges to the animal rights case:

We incorporate the different moral standing of different species into our overall moral views; we think it reasonable to put earthworms on fishhooks but not cats; we think it reasonable to eat the flesh of cows but not the flesh of humans. The realisation of the sharply different moral standing of different species we internalise... In the conduct of our day to day lives, we are constantly making decisions and acting on these moral differences among species. When we think clearly and judge fairly, we are all speciesists, of course (Cohen, quoted by Elstein 2003).

Cohen uses the term ‘speciesist’ incorrectly, Elstein maintains, because he does not talk about the importance of ‘species’ but ‘about the importance of qualities that are correlated with our perceptions of species’. Cohen fails to acknowledge that philosophers ‘point [out] that individuals of different species (and individuals of the same species) should be treated differently insofar as they have morally relevant differences – just as men have no right to an affordable mammogram and wealthy white men have no right to the benefits of affirmative action’ (ibid.) Elstein, however, has a more fundamental question in mind: what does Cohen actually mean by “species”:

One might think that it would be giving Cohen the benefit of the doubt to name just one [definition of species], preferably one that is accepted by many experts. Let’s suppose, for instance, he is talking about Mayr’s biological species

concept,<sup>29</sup> which defines a species as a group of individuals capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring. But surely Cohen does not believe that when we “are constantly making decisions and acting on these moral differences among species”, we are making our decisions based upon matters of who is capable of breeding with whom. For not only do we not need to know any information about the mating capabilities of these animals to make moral distinctions between them; most of us wouldn’t even know what to do with this kind of information if we had it! (ibid.)

Elstein speculates that perhaps Cohen may be relying on a “commonsense” concept of species: ‘That is, what is morally relevant are the distinctions that we are all capable of making simply by looking, with no scientific or philosophical training. What is morally relevant, in other words, is appearance’ (ibid.) However, he doubts that Cohen’s passage had appearance in mind as a morally relevant characteristic. ‘For Cohen, unlike Darwin,<sup>30</sup> the difference between humans and other animals is not merely one of degree, but one of kind’. Elstein argues that it is difficult to imagine how Cohen could hold this essential difference of kind to be based upon appearance. More likely, he thinks:

[Cohen] would probably claim that we make distinctions between species based upon appearance, but it is not the appearance that is morally relevant but something else that is inevitably correlated with appearance. For instance, we distinguish between worms and cats based upon how they look, but the morally important distinction is ‘something else’ that is correlated by appearance (ibid.)

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<sup>29</sup> See <http://biomed.brown.edu/Courses/BIO48/20.SpeciesConcepts.HTML>. This document reveals Ernst Mayr’s prominence in the field, and it also briefly addresses the question, ‘Are species real?’

<sup>30</sup> ‘I look at the term species as one arbitrarily given for the sake of convenience to a set of individuals closely resembling each other, and that it does not essentially differ from the term variety’ (Darwin, 1859, 52).

Unless someone can explain what this ‘something else’ is, Elstein suggests, it is only prudent to assume that it is an illusion. Furthermore, ‘this ‘something else’ cannot be intelligence, self-awareness, language, or capacity for suffering, because then those properties would be the morally relevant characteristics - but no one argues that they are equivalent to “species.”’

Elstein says that this ‘something else’ must simultaneously satisfy at least two conditions, which he believes is not possible. ‘First’, he argues, ‘it must correspond with what we really mean when we talk about species, and second, it must at least be plausible that it is really the basis of our moral distinctions between supposed species’:

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

Elstein argues that his principal reason for claiming that species is socially constructed is that debate about it is often unconsciously conducted on the basis that ‘species’ has an essence. Common orientations toward the concept of species treat it ‘as if there is something about species in the background that can not be described, but which can simultaneously satisfy both the first and second condition’ (ibid.) Elstein concludes that:

Given the basis of any species concept, few would argue that that basis is morally relevant in any significant way. Given the basis of Mayr’s biological species concept, few would argue that whom we have the ability to mate with is a relevant characteristic for determining how much moral consideration we should be granted (ibid.)

And:

Given the major basis of commonsense notions of species, few would argue that how we look should determine how much moral consideration we should be granted (ibid.)

Elstein suggests that ‘some philosophers hold that our species can determine how much moral consideration we should be granted’, but *not* because they equate species with any biological or common sense way of determining the term. ‘Rather’, he argues, ‘they are probably committing [a] fallacy, thinking of species membership as some essential characteristic of an individual that, in reality, does not exist’ (ibid.)

Elstein suggests that further theorising is required in the context of the philosophical discourse on animal rights. He says that, compared to the discourse of biologists and philosophers of science, ‘nearly every philosophical discussion of animal rights (with some notable exceptions), the concept has been unanalysed and taken for granted, as if the “problem” has been solved. The use of the term “species” within the philosophical context of animal rights has hardly been addressed at all’ (ibid.) He thinks it is something of a mistake if philosophical discourse about the moral relevance of species occurs without investigating what ‘species’ means. He adds that theorists certainly should have an awareness of exactly what they mean when talking about species in the context of human-nonhuman relations. Elstein claims that, for all his influence, pre-Darwinian attitudes continue to surface in relation to moral thinking about human and nonhuman animals. It is true that, ‘Darwin refuted the prevailing Western view that the world was naturally divided into essential categories of plants and animals’. Moreover,

‘Formally, his discovery radically altered our understanding of the workings of nature’. After Darwin, the Aristotelian view was much less easy to hold, for Aristotle believed that the world was divided into essential natural kinds with inherent ‘separations’, such as those between masters and slaves, men and women, and humans and other animals (ibid.)

Despite the Darwinian attack on such a view, Elstein argues that, ‘the pre-Darwinian worldview of essentially existing species continues to drive many of our philosophical and moral attitudes’. Although humanity has abandoned the Aristotelian tendency to ‘believe that some humans are naturally inferior, because of their essence, to other humans’, it has not yet done this in terms of its beliefs about nonhuman animals. Elstein says that some biologists suggest that humans are strongly biased toward believing in an ‘essences’ in kinds of living beings, and this bias ‘is not easily dispelled, especially given that it has been ingrained in Western culture since Plato’ (ibid.) However, for Elstein, animal advocates may not be free of such biases themselves:

The concept of species holds argumentative “weight” in animal rights debates largely because it is viewed as an essential category, whether consciously or unconsciously. Most of us now “know,” or claim to know, that different species do not have distinct essences, but we still think and argue as if they do. And if, in the back of our mind, we still hold a conviction that species have essences, it would never occur to us to ask the question “what is species?” - it just is what it is, we imagine (ibid.)

Elstein states that Darwin found the question ‘what is species’ rather meaningless, and suggests that Darwin believed species to be ‘indefinable’. However, ‘it was indefinable for Darwin not because species have essences, but because, for Darwin, species-talk is nothing more than a convenient conceptual tool for biological inquiry’. Thus, ‘In contrast to a long line of Western

thinkers following Aristotle, Darwin recognised that no divinely determined invisible walls, no Platonic forms, separated one group of animals from another' (ibid.)

Elstein claims that the species concept in animal rights debates has not been deconstructed sufficiently. Because of this, philosophers like Cohen 'are able to rely upon it in their philosophical arguments against animal rights':

At one point in time, this was also the case with race. Racists may claim that race is a morally relevant category with no explanation. But we can then ask them what they mean by race, rather than allowing them to hide behind vague, undefined, and equivocal terms. If they answer 'skin colour', or 'geographical origin', we can then ask them why skin colour or geographical origin should have anything at all to do with moral principles (ibid.)

Just as someone committed to anti-racism can ask a racist to justify the moral relevance of 'race', Elstein suggests that animal advocates can ask opponents what they mean by species. And what of their answer?

If they reply that a species is determined by how an individual looks, (the most honest answer, in my opinion), or the capacity to mate and have fertile offspring with certain other individuals, we can then ask them why appearance or an ability to mate with certain individuals might have anything to do with moral principles. Here, they are on much weaker ground than when they are allowed to simply call this "species". It is much more apparent to most people that appearance and mating capacities are irrelevant to morality than it is that "species", whatever that may be, is irrelevant to morality. The claim that species is morally significant seems to hold more water when we have not said what species is (ibid.)

If 'race' is socially constructed because 'it is based upon our perceptions and interpretations of physical traits', then, says Elstein, 'species is also socially

constructed in the sphere of common sense in part because it is based upon our perceptions and interpretations of physical traits'. Moreover, 'it is the nature of interpretations that they can differ from one individual to another or from one culture to another' (ibid.) However, in the main, species categories correspond across cultures. Elstein says that, 'what differences we find important depend upon many factors, including the values of our society'.

He uses North American attitudes to pigs to illustrate this point. He claims that, 'Our culture influences our perceptions of species differences in very important ways, and our perceptions of members of a given species are often misinformed because of our beliefs about the 'nature' of that species' (ibid.) Elstein suggests, for example, that many people think that pigs are stupid animals, perhaps especially compared to animals kept by humans as companions, such as dogs and cats. However, Elstein says that there is research indicating that pigs are more intelligent than either cats or dogs. Often, therefore, 'the qualities we attribute to the members of a perceived species depend in large part on the nature of our interactions with them'. While most may regard pigs as 'stupid', they have little empirical evidence to go on, again, especially compared to cats and dogs.

Elstein also suggests that regard for nonhuman animals is bound up with how humans use them. Therefore, he argues, 'For most of us, our perception of 'pigs' is inextricably linked with the function that they serve for us. We see them as 'farm animals' or 'food', as if this were part of their essential nature. But of course this view of pigs is entirely contingent upon social forces' (ibid.) He says a similar situation exists in relation to certain birds. While many people appear to 'feel a moral imperative to protect birds

such as parakeets and parrots', little concern may be expressed for the chickens and turkeys that are eaten. He says that such people:

are likely to justify this dichotomy with an appeal to some supposed important difference between the individuals of these species, though they will probably be unable to give an account of what this important difference is (ibid.)

### Elstein's 'Moral Species Concept'.

If there are historical and contemporary problems in the moral philosophising about the concept of species, how may they be overcome? According to Elstein, acknowledging 'differences' is not the problem. He reiterates that 'the fact that species is a social construction does not mean there are no differences between, say, humans and chimpanzees'. Indeed, differences are obvious: 'Chimpanzees have a strong tendency to be more hairy, walk differently, look different, sound different, have different mental capacities, and live in different environments; plus they are unable to mate with humans, have different genotypic characteristics, and have a different set of recent ancestors' (ibid.) Elstein accepts that it is possible that 'any of these factors could be morally relevant':

Which of them determines an individual's "species", as construed by biologists, everyday language, and moral philosophers? Biologists cannot agree. In everyday language, we generally determine an individual's species by their appearance and behaviour, along some bits that we inherit from biologists, especially in making distinctions that are hard to call. As for moral philosophers, in their discussions of the role of species in moral considerations, they have, for the most part, not broached the question of which characteristic distinctions count in defining species (ibid.)



But which of such characteristics should moral philosophers concentrate on in order to understanding ‘species’? Elstein remarks that biologists use the characteristics that are relevant to their purposes, and laypeople use the characteristics that are relevant to their purposes. It follows that ‘moral philosophers should use the characteristics that are relevant to moral philosophy in deciding what species concept they ought to adopt’. Forming a species concept relevant to moral philosophy means deciding which characteristics should be examined for their moral relevancy. Yet Elstein says that, ‘currently, most of us use appearance as our major criteria in distinguishing between species’. This, despite the fact that, ‘few people any longer believe that appearance is a morally relevant characteristic’.

Using an appeal to so-called ‘marginal humans’, Elstein asserts that, ‘While we may claim to use ‘reason’ or ‘language ability’ as our moral criteria, few would deny moral rights to humans who lack those capacities. It is therefore appearance and a false essentialist assumption that are the real basis of our moral distinctions when we deny animals moral rights’ (ibid.) Elstein argues that a change is in order:

Moral philosophers, in forming a species concept relevant to their work, should shift the emphasis from physical to mental traits of individuals. The result of this I will call the “Moral Species Concept”, under which individuals are categorised according to their morally relevant properties.

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

1.           **The ability to feel physical pain and pleasure.**
2.           **The ability to feel emotional suffering and joy:**  
                  incorporating 1. The ability to feel physical pain and pleasure.
3.           **The ability to experience boredom:**  
                  incorporating 2. The ability to feel emotional suffering and joy,  
                  and

1. The ability to feel physical pain and pleasure.

4. **The ability to have future goals:**

incorporating 3. The ability to experience boredom,

2. The ability to feel emotional suffering and joy, and

1. The ability to feel physical pain and pleasure.

(adapted from *ibid.*)

Elstein states that his model incorporates, ‘the four most important qualities in making moral decisions about how to treat an individual. *Ceteris paribus*,<sup>31</sup> if an individual can feel physical pain, she should not be physically harmed; if she can feel emotional suffering, she should not be prematurely removed from her loved ones; if she can feel boredom, she should not be confined; and if she has future goals, she should not have her life taken away’.

Elstein argues that his Moral Species Concept allows the classification of individuals ‘according to the types of moral respect they require’. He further asserts that, ‘Basing moral decisions upon the Moral Species Concept, rather than the species concepts that are intended for biologists and laypeople, would have tremendous implications for animal liberation’ (*ibid.*) Elstein maintains that the Moral Species Concept would require a consideration of the mental and psychological capacity of each individual meaning that human beings would never automatically be given precedence over non-human ones. He concludes that, if no ‘arbitrary barriers’ such as appearance enter the decision, ‘all individuals would be given fair moral consideration of their interests’ (*ibid.*)

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<sup>31</sup> Other things being equal.

In later stages of the thesis, when the perspectives of animal rights philosophers are outlined, it is possible to see in what ways they correspond to Estein's model. For example, Regan's subject-of-a-life criteria arguable features all the qualities in 1-4; while Francione argues that individuals have moral standing if they correspond to 1.

Presently, however, interest returns to those who have had no qualms about using "species" as the basis of moral theorising to the extent that a deep and meaningful gulf was constructed between the human and nonhuman worlds.

### *Persons and Things.*

In terms of exploring the traditional view of the moral significance of differences based on 'species membership', Midgley (1985: 56) begins with the philosophy of Kant. She states, for example, that Kant created a 'single, simple, black-and-white antithesis' between *persons* and *things* which has led to nonhuman animals being placed in the latter category, a categorical position currently being challenged in various ways by animal law professionals such as Francione (1996a, 1996b), Lee Hall (2000) and Steven Wise (2000).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> One of the first - if not the first - challenge to the legal person-thing dualism occurred in May 1977 when Kenneth Le Vasseur who had assisted in the imprisonment of bottle-nosed dolphins at the University of Hawaii's Institute of Marine Biology decided to free two of them. He tried to suggest in his 'choice of two evils' defence that he was justified in his actions because the law allows acts which prevent consequences of greater evil. The problem for the defence rested on the fact that this law applied only to humans acting for themselves or for 'another'. The judge rejected this line because 'another' implied 'another person', and that ruled out, the judge determined, nonhuman dolphins (case cited in Midgley 1985: 52-3).

As a consequence of this dualistic positioning, Midgley goes on, modern perceptions commonsensically understand that only human beings can be *persons*,<sup>33</sup> and it is understood that, '*Things* can properly be used as means to human ends in a way that *people* cannot' (1985: 56, emphasis in original). 'Things' are objects, not subjects, therefore 'thing-treatment' is theoretically seen as inappropriate if directed toward human beings. Thoughts such as these, according to historian Keith Thomas (1983: 36), resulted in a strong and long-standing interest among human beings in 'maintaining boundaries' between humans and the other animals. This maintenance has been achieved, as might most obviously be expected, through religious and moral traditions, and as a consequence of social habit and routine. Thomas points out that several distinctions have been emphasised to clearly differentiate humans from 'animals'. For example, he cites ideas about the 'polite education' of humans, and notions of exclusively human 'civility' and 'refinements'. It has also been suggested that non-humans are dirty while humans, the 'decent' ones at least, are concerned with 'cleanliness' (ibid.: 38). Furthermore, the lack of nakedness is seen as important in human society: and do humans not generally cook their food?

Boundary maintenance between humans and other animals - that is, between person and thing categories - has led at various times to the promotion of social norms such as not wearing hair long - and even doubts about the appropriateness of humans working after nightfall. After all, the hours of darkness may be regarded as the hours of human rest, whereas 'beasts' may 'run about in the night' seeking prey (ibid.: 39). Historian Thomas goes on to suggest that this apparent need for separation and

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<sup>33</sup> However, this distinction is not entirely accurate in terms of legal usage for, as Midgley notes (1985: 53), corporations are often declared 'legal persons' for the purposes of suing - or when they are being sued.

distinction led to yet more social prohibitions against ‘persons’ engaging in the ‘animal-like activity’ of swimming, or censure of simply ‘pretending to be animals’. The latter activity frowned upon because of its apparent capacity to ‘obliterate’ the glorious image of humankind.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, some of the earliest objections to the use of vaccination were based on the fear that humans may be thereby ‘animalised’ by the introduction of animal-derived vaccines. Given such factors, Thomas is clearly not particularly surprised to find that the activity of having ‘sexual relations’ with other animals was criminalised well before incest was made illegal (ibid).

Once historical factors relating to ethical orientations towards species membership have been outlined; and after an investigation of the harmful utilisation of dividing humans into a privileged moral category; exploring the modern day maintenance of prevailing ideas about the species barrier in this first section, Part Two of the current work turns to an investigation of emerging ‘animal rights’ thought which attempts to seriously question the moral status quo concerning human-nonhuman relations. For, in the face of continuing boundary-maintaining activities, modern animal advocacy not orientated toward traditional welfarism demands an answer to the question at

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<sup>34</sup> On the 20th of May 1998, a letter was published in the *North Wales Chronicle* suggesting that ‘boundary maintenance’ as described by Thomas is seemingly as important as ever. In a missive to the newspaper entitled, *Separating Out the Animals from the Humans*, a Mrs. Mills bemoaned the passing of the traditional convention by which nonhuman animals were said to be ‘in foal’, ‘in calf’, ‘in pup’, ‘in kitten’, ‘in pig’ and so on. Now expectant nonhuman mothers are described as being ‘pregnant’, complains Mrs Mills, which, she argued, downgrades ‘the wonderful role of human motherhood’. As shown in the present thesis, one objection sometimes raised against animal rights views is based on the notion that promoting animal rights must somehow necessarily ‘denigrate’ the rights of human beings. This notion appears to be part of Mills’ perspective in relation to thoughts about human status. I rang Mrs. Mills on the grounds that she had presumably felt inspired or driven to put pen to paper and write to a local newspaper about the matter. I explained my interest in her view in relation to this thesis and asked her what had prompted her eagerness to make her point in print. She told me she didn’t really know why but believed that it was necessary that such a statement be made publicly.

the head of this section: ‘What moral difference should ‘species’ membership make?’

In fact, this question may well represent what the majority of current animal advocates would likely consider as one of the most fundamental questions arising out of contemporary thinking about human-nonhuman relations. Therefore, without denying numerous and significant species differences,<sup>35</sup> what precisely does the ‘barrier’ that has been constructed between humankind and other animals actually mean in terms of the ethical relations between human and nonhuman animals? Does the ability to recognise the existence of a barrier based on ‘species’ classification give warrant to views that, for example, a ‘vast moral gulf’ exists between nonhuman and human animals? Such questions provided the basis of much ‘second-wave’ animal advocacy and inquiry.

In 1977, an international conference was held at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, on the subject of the possible ‘rights’ of nonhuman animals. It is probably fair to note and acknowledge that the whole idea of ‘animal rights’ was even more contentious and considerably more appalling to some commentators in the 1970’s than it is today. Nevertheless, more than one hundred and fifty conference delegates signed a declaration, written by Richard Ryder, entitled ‘The Rights of Animals. *A Declaration Against Speciesism*’, which included the following words:

We do not accept that a difference in species alone (any more than a difference in race) can justify wanton exploitation or oppression in the name of science or sport, or for food, commercial profit or other human gain.

(reproduced in Ryder 2000: 179; Regan 2001: 28).

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<sup>35</sup> Anti-vivisectionists have for many years based much of their ‘scientific validity’ critique of animal experimentation precisely on the apparent inability to overcome species differences problems in the experimental laboratory.

Here is an example of an a position that explicitly sets out its key ethical stance about just exactly what differences in species membership should mean in terms of moral treatment. Thus, are even conventionally accepted species differences *sufficient* to permit humans to utilise other sentient beings in the ways they are routinely used? Alternatively, does this ‘use’ amount to prejudicial and instrumental exploitation that goes some distance in explaining the property designation of nonhuman animals and the social prevalence of speciesism?

As with human slavery, some reasons, presumably beyond ‘might makes right’, must be given that seemingly morally permits exploitative usage. In Marjorie Spiegel’s (1988) comparative analysis of ‘human and animal slavery’, the author defines ‘speciesism’ as ‘a belief that different species of animals are significantly different from one another in their capacities to feel pleasure and pain and live an autonomous existence, usually involving the idea that one’s own species has the right to rule and use others’. Moreover, she claims that, just like domination based on hierarchical constructions of ‘race’, the notion of speciesism involves a ‘policy of enforcing such asserted rights’, and a ‘system of government and society based upon it’.

Animal advocacy asks for an earnest consideration of the ethical relevance of the species barrier: yet advocates tend not to attempt to deny any differences based on species membership. A much reproduced assertion by utilitarian Jeremy Bentham<sup>36</sup> has appeared in a great deal of animal liberation, ‘animal rights’, scientific anti-vivisectionist and animal welfare literature over the last thirty years or so. The quote ends thus: ‘The question

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<sup>36</sup> From chapter 17 of his *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789).

is not, Can they [nonhuman animals] *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but Can they *suffer*?' (quoted in Midgley 1983: 89).<sup>37</sup>

However, in a much less frequently reproduced section of the same work, written in 1789, Bentham states:

The French<sup>38</sup> have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognised that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum* [he means fur or tail] are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line?

(quoted in Midgley 1983: 89, emphasis in original, comment by Midgley).

Contrary to any notion of seeking to deny species differences, Bentham explicitly points them out. But, he asks, are such differences morally relevant? - and if so, why? - and to what degree? Bentham notes the extension of moral concern to coloured human beings and proceeds to speculate about the basis of protection from torment. Evidently, for Bentham, sentience, being a sensitive being, is enough to morally punch holes through the species barrier. If not *this* dividing line, he asks, what other? Much animal protection thinking and debate tends to centre on this type of speculation: and thus, it is essentially an extensionist discourse. For both utilitarian animal liberationists and deontological animal rightists,<sup>39</sup> moral concern can and should

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<sup>37</sup> This places pain, or the capacity to suffer, as the central concern. This is in line with Ryder (1983; 2000) and Singer (1985), but not Regan (1983; 1985; 2001) who uses a formulation of inherent value and being a 'subject-of-a-life' as the basis of rightholding.

<sup>38</sup> The French reference is due to their recent abolition of human slavery in 'their' colonies.

<sup>39</sup> In animal advocacy, Singer's utilitarian animal liberation position can be contrasted with Regan's deontological animal rights perspective. In general, deontological positions regard the fact of duty as fundamental for the understanding of moral thought. Deontology is not involved in a utilitarian calculation of general goodness.



logically expand - or extend - beyond human beings to include at least some other types of nonhumans as well.

Given this extensionist trait in nonhuman rights and animal liberationist thinking and discourse, many animal advocates are extremely critical of suggestions from opponents and commentators that their views amount to some form of 'attack' on, or deliberate 'denigration' of, the whole notion of human rights.<sup>40</sup> Most obviously, supporters of animal rights use extensions of (human) rights thinking in their thoughts about human-nonhuman relations; however, even rhetorical animal rightists appear prepared to declare support for human rights and animal liberation. Rights-based animal ethicists such as Regan (1983; 1988; 2001) tend to begin their case for animal rights by explicitly supporting universal human rights<sup>41</sup> - especially in 'liberal rights' formulations that see rights as a means of giving expression to fundamental interests. The basic rights seen logically to apply to humans, especially those connected to their status as sentient individuals, provide starting points for many animal rights advocates.<sup>42</sup> The argument subsequently turns to questions about the feasibility of applying rights

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<sup>40</sup> On the 7th July, 2001 edition of BBC Radio 4's *The Moral Maze*, Clare Fox of the Marxist-inspired 'Institute of Ideas' attacked the premise of animal rights because she thought it denigrated the idea of hard-fought-for human rights. For Fox, a significant characteristic of rightsholding is that they have to be fought for by those who want them. Since nonhuman animals do not appear to do this, she believes they cannot have them! A few contributors to animal rights email networks have suggested that animals *have* sometimes taken direct action to secure their own rights, for example, when an animal has killed his or her 'keeper' in a zoo, or when farmers have been attacked or crushed by farmed animals.

<sup>41</sup> In a paper entitled, 'The Animal Rights Position' ([www.justiceforanimals.co.za/animalrights\\_position.html](http://www.justiceforanimals.co.za/animalrights_position.html)), Regan writes: 'It is true...that women do not exist to serve men, blacks to serve whites, the poor to serve the rich, or the weak to serve the strong. The philosophy of animal rights not only accepts these truths, it insists upon and justifies them. But this philosophy goes further. By insisting upon and justifying the independent rights of other animals, it gives scientifically informed and morally impartial reasons for denying that these animals exist to serve us'.

<sup>42</sup> Although the assertion is actually incorrect, one of Groves' (1995: 448) animal rights respondents claimed one reason for favouring Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights* was because: 'In some 480 pages [Regan] goes through the arguments of the ethics that deal with some of the rights philosophy. I think in the first 100 pages he doesn't even mention the word animal'.

theory to all relevant and suitable *candidates* until it no longer makes sense to apply it (see Benton 1998 for details and a critique).<sup>43</sup>

This explains the use of language in Francione (1996a, 1996b) when he asserts that many nonhumans seem to be the ‘sorts of beings’ to which rights theory can intelligibly be applied. My own view on rights theory and nonhuman animals would entail acknowledging that many of the rights traditionally claimed as the most basic human rights can, rather, be seen as the *animal* rights of human beings: in other words, the rights relevant to human animals as sentient individuals. It seems that the category of ‘the sentients’ (latterly ‘painients’) (Ryder 2000) makes sense - and has ethical import. Thus, notions of basic rights that address issues such as bodily integrity and physical security are rights expressing important interests (Reeve 1996: 434) that many animals other than human apparently share with human beings. Regan (1983; 2001) argues, moving away from ‘mere sentience’, that nonhuman animals have a life of their own that appear to be important to them, quite apart from their instrumental and/or sentimental utility to humans.

Nonhuman animals are in the world and they are aware of it. What happens to many nonhuman animals evidently *matters* to them, Regan asserts. They seemingly bring a unified psychological presence to the world. Like human beings, then, many nonhuman animals are *somebodies*, not *somethings*. For Regan, then, such factors mean that at least some nonhumans must ethically be treated under similar moral principles as those applied (allegedly) to all humans. The logic must be extended beyond the

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<sup>43</sup> This formulation of ethical concern has drawn criticism from feminist and environmental philosophers who are not particularly disposed to regard (especially male and ‘male-minded’) human beings as some ‘core’ or central concern of moral inquiry (see Jamieson 1990; Donovan 1993; Benton 1998; Regan 2001: chap 3).

species barrier: in important senses, this is *all* the philosophy of animal rights stands for. This is the limited extent of animal rights. That it may concentrate on fundamental *basic rights* appears to be one of the strengths of the animal rights position. Further clarity of the animal rights case, indeed clarity of the extremely limited (if far-reaching) claims-making of animal rights advocates, involves acknowledging the position of theorists such as Francione and Regan who stress the rather obvious point that no rights theorist advocates voting rights for nonhumans; nor their right to state education – or, indeed, their rights to ballet lessons.<sup>44</sup>

In *Defending Animal Rights*, Regan (2001) does correctly acknowledge that ethical theory is often about the moral limits on human freedom. There is no implied misanthropy here, however, and obviously no intended denigration of humanity, since standard explorations of human rights have always been as much about what humans should *not* morally do, as they have been concerned with positive rights and so-called freedoms. As Bauman's work suggests (1990; 1993), 'freedom' is something of a myth, sociologically speaking, in the first place. Therefore, acknowledging how rights (human -v- human rights) can 'clash' - especially in cases where one person's rights are diminished or dramatically constrained in order to uphold another person's rights - is not the same as grounding a theory to intentionally 'do down' any particular group. Usually, of course, moral theory is often concerned with the details of what harms should not be inflicted on one rights bearing human being by another rightholding human. The exten-

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<sup>44</sup> Although I say this emphasis is obvious, it should be noted that countermovement representatives and 'pro-use' spokespersons often try to misrepresent the animal rights case by claiming animal rights advocates want such rights for nonhuman animals. For example, on 12 May 2002, I took part in a BBC Radio 5 Live programme about animal rights and animal welfare in which the spokesperson for 'Seriously Ill for Medical Research', Vicky Cowell, stated that animal rights campaigners wanted nonhuman animals to have the right to vote in elections. (The organisation 'Seriously Ill for Medical Research' has its own

sionist trait in animal rights philosophy simply questions the relevance of 'species limitation' in such ethical formulations, and asks whether the traditional grounds for denying many animals other than human important rights are sufficiently coherent and morally sound.

Francione's position is close to Regan's, although some claim he sets out the case for animal rights more clearly and in a less complicated fashion (for example, Hall 2000 claims this). In fact, Francione argues that the *single* right nonhumans particularly require humans to respect is the right not to be classified and treated as items of human property (1996b). Following philosopher Henry Shue's position set out in the 1980 book *Basic Rights*, Francione encourages his audience to clearly differentiate 'basic' from 'non-basic' rights. In essence, Francione suggests that basic rights are all that are necessary for - *and perhaps all that are due to* - nonhuman animals. At any rate, such rights, the most valuable being the basic right to physical security, were they respected, would prevent the current instrumental and sentimental exploitation of nonhumans.

Perhaps this formulation may be regarded as somewhat analogous to a Marxian 'base-superstructure' model, with basic rights regarded as an initial and essential foundational base that is required to be fixed and solidly protected before other, subsequent and applicable, rights can be fully enjoyed. Once humans have 'their basic animal rights' respected, they therefore have a dependable ethical basis to consider, claim, or *have claimed for them*, further rights. Rights, indeed, such as those to ballet lessons.<sup>45</sup>

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countermovement known as 'Seriously Ill Against Vivisection' who oppose animal experimentation on scientific and moral grounds).

<sup>45</sup> The director of the national animal rights organisation, Animal Aid, implies this formulation by suggesting that, say, horses and dogs have 'the right to be exercised'. Obviously, basic rights that secure bodily integrity precede such notions. I am dubious of this construction, and imagine that Francione would severely criticise it, since its logic seems set in an acceptance of the master status of animals as human property. I foresee that such a topic would prompt much debate on animal rights email networks since

To briefly recap, when animal advocates present their case, they will often inquire as to just *what* special qualities humans have which other sentient animals do not have - and, if nonhumans can be seen to lack some particular human characteristics, what do these differences actually amount to in terms of ethical standing? It would be quite rare to meet or read the animal advocate who will absolutely deny the existence of species differences, having yet to widely discuss Elstein's perspective. Species differences, moreover, which frequently effect the moral treatment of the individual concerned (Regan 1983; Degrazia 1996; Wise 2000). Because rights philosophy tends to acknowledge that various rights can come into conflict with each other, there should also be little fear that human populations may find themselves - utterly without redress - overwhelmed by plagues of damage-wreaking non-human animals. This is a common suggestion and an apparent genuine anxiety among anti-animal rightists. The philosophy of animal rights, and the general grassroots discourse of many animal activists, does not tend to amount to any serious claim that humans are never allowed to defend their interests against the activity of other rightholders. Clearly, since rights can come into conflict with one another, some such conflicts will involve human and nonhuman animals: one need only to think of reports of stray dogs or foxes tipping over rubbish bins or, far more seriously perhaps, elephants entering tribal villages.

However, if such conflicts of interests are strictly seen as conflicts arising *among* at least basic rightholders, and if attempts are made to resolve

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many will argue that the animal rights movement has to be 'realistic' and acknowledge that the human control of nonhuman animals is likely to continue in the immediate future at least and, therefore, animal rights theory needs to be discussed with that reality in mind.

them on that fundamental basis, then this ‘arrangement’ generally seems to suit most animal rights activists and thinkers.<sup>46</sup> The fact that human beings, as moral agents rather than moral patients, are generally understood as the only beings able to understand ethics as socially constructed, and thus humans alone must resolve conflicts arising from rights bearing, does not critically weaken the animal rights position. What modern animal rightists demand to know the most is how defensible is it to maintain a strict moral boundary simply on the basis of species difference.

Moral Theory: Finished Product,  
or Refusal to Jump the Remaining Fence(s)?

Before delving into prehistory to search for the roots of so-called ‘human exceptionality’ claims, a short initial examination of the current moral status of nonhuman animals is in order at this point. Effectively this again means placing the focus of attention on the widespread dominance of animal welfare ideology within orthodox thinking about human-nonhuman relations.

The centrality of animal welfarism in assessments of these relations, and also in philosophical discourse about the moral status of nonhumans, can be seen reflected in Midgley’s remarks about acknowledging discernible species differences. Midgley (1983: 98) claims that one never needs to know what ‘race’ someone belongs to in order to decide ‘good treatment’.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, she asserts that knowledge of ‘species’ is absolutely

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<sup>46</sup> This is one way by which Gary Francione talks about the difficult issue of abortion, seeing that part of the problem may result from the fact that one rights-holder may be thought to be within the body of another. See [www.animal-law.org/commentaries/](http://www.animal-law.org/commentaries/)

<sup>47</sup> Although there are medical conditions that are affected by racial, and biological sex, characteristics.

necessary to decide such treatment. Thus, in the case of species care and well-being, precise *details* are required, because the individual concerned ‘might be a hyena or a hippopotamus, a shark, an eagle, an armadillo, a python or a queen bee’ (ibid.: 99). What seems significant here is that an animal advocate would likely accept Midgley’s initial point; and may imagine circumstances in which attempts are made to provide ‘good treatment’ on the basis of species ‘requirements’ based on needs arising from, for example, an accident or injury to a particular individual. However, when Midgley talks about this treatment of other animals it is in the context of animals held captive in a zoo.

Animal welfare ideology is apparently so paradigmatic that even a philosopher who advocates the betterment of the moral status of animals uses an example that reflects, rather than critically questions, the property status of other animals. Her point is infused with animal welfarism, which might be recognised as something of an ‘ethical half-way house’ in terms of establishing the moral status of nonhuman animals. Clearly, then, any genuine nonhuman rights theory requires something of a ‘moving on’ from animal welfarism: in terms of human attitudes to other animals, rightists such as Francione and Regan may claim that matters have tended to falter or ‘stall’ in the moral orthodoxy of animal welfarism.

However, it may be acknowledged that animal welfarism can represent a substantial advance in terms of the human treatment of nonhuman animals. The many chroniclers of the emergence of animal welfarism testify to its benefits in terms of animal wellbeing (Kean [1998] is a good recent example). Other commentators, such as Scruton (2000), generally accept that welfare measures are necessary to offer some protection to nonhuman animals, while adopting the impassioned view that measures *beyond* trad-

itional welfarism, such as either ‘animal liberation’ or ‘animal rights’ positions, represents dangerous ‘steps too far’. Animal welfarism, ideologically and legislatively, encourages a view, backed up by years of legislation, which stipulates that animals have *some* moral worth and a welfare that requires protection, expressed in numerous pieces of legislation in the name of animal welfare. At the same time, animal welfarism ultimately accepts and expresses the legitimacy of the human use of other animals as food, clothing, and laboratory tools or so-called scientific biomedical ‘models’.

Many nonhuman advocates adopt a cynical posture and assert that those who support the human use of nonhumans, for all their learned discourse on metaphysics, the roots of morality, and the philosophical understanding of ‘moral being’, are largely driven by their taste buds and/or ‘sporting’ preferences.<sup>48</sup> Garner’s (1993) perspective shows how animal welfarism sits, roughly speaking, at the broad central point of the main positions taken with regard to the moral status of other animals. It may be assumed that explaining how societies makes frequent claims to care for nonhumans while simultaneously exploiting them in organised and systematic fashions is not at all straightforward, and Garner’s ‘continuum of recognition’ attempts to assist in this matter.

Garner (ibid.: 9) is quick to note that how most modern humans think about - and the way they treat – nonhuman animals relies a good deal on how moral philosophers and other influential thinkers have talked about

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<sup>48</sup> Perhaps Scruton (2000: xi) reveals as much with this conclusion to the preface in the third edition of his *Animal Rights and Wrongs*: ‘I am indebted... to Puck, who used to guard the gate, to George, Sam and Rollo, who lived in the stables, to the nameless carp in the pond across the field, to the cows next door and to Herbie, who has now been eaten’. [Compare Scruton’s language here (‘Puck, who...’, etc.) with a passage a few pages on about nonhumans he does not know as named individuals: ‘Moreover, the horse’s desire is goal-directed. It will choose different routes and strategies depending on its assessment of where it is, of how determined is its rider to resist it and of what obstacles bar its way’ (ibid.: 14)].



them throughout the ages. As said, some of the details of moral thought about nonhumans will feature in the next chapter (and see Ruesch 1979; Midgley 1983; Clark 1984; Wynne-Tyson 1985; Wieber & Wieber 2000; Regan 2001, for accounts of what Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Voltaire, Descartes, Paine, Bentham, Montaigne, Salt, Tolstoy, Socrates, Seneca, et al, have said about human-nonhuman relations). However, for now, some generalised points continue to be helpful. For example, Garner notes that philosophers in all ages have been ‘burdened’ in their thoughts about other animals because there has rarely been any agreement as to animals’ ‘capacities’,<sup>49</sup> and their capacities and abilities are frequently considered crucial in making informed judgements about moral status. In other words, there would be far less argument about the treatment of other animals if there was an agreement that they actually were Descartes’ ‘mere unconscious machines’ (Garner 1993: 9). While many discernible species differences exist, they fail to successfully place numerous types of nonhumans into totally ‘senseless’ categories. Therefore, since the evidence suggests that many nonhumans are sentient individuals, the ethical picture of them is duly altered.

*If only* these things were easy to decide upon, Garner states. If only ethologists (defined by Garner as students of animal behaviour in the animals’ natural settings) could agree with each other, then it may be possible to establish firm moral grounds regarding the status of nonhuman animals. However, he observes that, in practice, ethological agreement is rarely forthcoming. Therefore, debates about ‘animal capacities’ - and therefore their moral standing - remain inconclusive (ibid.: 10). This frustrating inconclusiveness - among other factors - has resulted in the construction of three

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<sup>49</sup> Steven Wise (2000: 119-21) notes that it has always been a problem judging the ‘capacities’ of others. Likewise, he notes that he cannot even prove to others that he is conscious. If he were to claim that so-and-so lacks consciousness, he says they would not be able to prove him wrong.

distinct moral categories in which animals other than human have been placed over time. These are:

1. No moral status;
2. Some moral status;
3. Equal moral status to human beings.

Garner argues that status 1. and 3. appear to be the least difficult to deal with, in that 'mere machine status' (Position 1.) would suggest that non-human animals could be used in any way and with absolutely no moral qualms, while Position 3. suggests that they should be accorded the 'same moral weight' as humans (ibid).

For Garner, then, the 'extreme' positions 1. and 3., would represent the least moral disturbance, *if* nonhuman animals were actually positioned in one or the other: 'If animals were mere machines, or they have relevant capabilities on par with humans, there does not appear to be any problem' (ibid).

However, since nonhumans are presently placed *between* these two poles, and this is often characterised as largely or wholly unproblematic, they are located in what Garner regards as an ethical 'grey area'. Although he suggests that the central position is the problem area, he goes on to name it 'the moral orthodoxy' in his continuum of recognition. The continuum is itself employed in an assessment of human-nonhuman relations from the perspective of advocates of all three positions. Broadly, the three formulations amount to these claims:

1. Completely lacking moral status.
2. Moral orthodoxy - some moral status but inferior to humans.

- (a) Sentient but lacking significant interests.
- (b) An interest in not suffering but can be overridden to promote the greater good of humans who are autonomous agents (the conventional view held by many philosophers).

### 3. Challenge to the moral orthodoxy.<sup>50</sup>

Position 3. need not be emphasised at this point: animal rights and animal liberation challenges to the moral orthodoxy relevant to human-nonhuman relations is encountered in detail in Part Two, and Position 1., most often associated with Descartes,<sup>51</sup> is now so rarely articulated that Garner feels he 'can dispense with this position fairly quickly' (ibid.: 11).<sup>52</sup> For now, therefore, the present analysis remains in Garner's 'grey area' of Position 2., which, despite its apparent potentiality to create internal problems has developed to become the conventional lens by which societies traditionally

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<sup>50</sup> Degrazia (1995) poses the following questions based on something of a similar formulation:

- 1. Does the treatment of animals raise ethical issues at all?
- 2. If not, why not?
- 3. If so, do animals' interests matter in their own right?
- 4. If not, why not? How should we treat them, and why?
- 5. If so, should the interests of animals be given moral weight equal to that given to relevantly similar human interests?
- 6. If not, why not? How much consideration should animals' interests be given, and why?
- 7. If so, what does such equal consideration amount to?

<sup>51</sup> Regan (2001: 3) notes that Descartes is reported to not be so 'absolute' as he is often painted, in the sense that it is claimed that he reportedly 'treated his dog humanely' - not that this means much anyway, no doubt turkey-king Bernard Matthews, vivisector Colin Blakemore and everyone who reads this thesis 'treats 'their' dogs humanely'. However, it is often claimed that the 'followers' of Descartes were the real believers in the notion that 'animals are machines'. Regan (ibid.: 130) outlines their view: 'Burn, drown, starve, or slice open an animal without the benefit of anaesthetic, and the result is always and everywhere the same: the animal is not aware of anything'.

<sup>52</sup> However, the 'no moral problem' position does still exist. Neurosurgeon Robert J. White is said to hold this view according to medical historian Hans Ruesch (1979), and Tom Regan reports that as late as 1990 White declared that 'animal usage is not a moral or ethical issue and elevating the problem of animal rights to such a plane is a disservice to medical research and the farm and dairy industry' (White, cited in Regan 2001: 1). Regan also notes that in the 1960's opponents of the US Animal Welfare Act sometimes alleged from this position that supporters of the act were suffering from 'zoophil-psychosis' (love-of-animals psychosis).

understand human-nonhuman relations, and is understood by Midgley (1983) in terms of different degrees of 'moral dismissal'.

### Absolute and Relative Dismissers.

Why Garner's Position 2. enjoys its favoured and near-universal status is dramatically illustrated in Midgley's (1983) work. She calls Garner's Position 1., 'absolute dismissal' and his Position 2., 'relative dismissal'. The latter, once again, means that most animals are afforded *some* moral worth but not as much as human beings who may therefore use them as means for their own ends. Midgley sets readers a 'test' by which, she argues, they can decide whether they are absolute or relative dismissers of other animals' interests. This 'test' is based on a consideration of the following passage from a book by 'white hunter', R. Gordon Cummings:

The elephant stood broadside to me, at upwards of one hundred yards, and his attention at the moment was occupied with the dogs... I fired at his shoulder, and secured him with a single shot. The ball caught him high on the shoulder-blade, rendering him instantly dead lame; and before the echo of the bullet could reach my ear, I plainly saw the elephant was mine... I resolved to devote a short time to the contemplation of this noble elephant before laying him low; accordingly, having off-saddled the horses beneath a shady tree, which was to be my quarters for the night and the ensuing day, I quickly kindled a fire and put on the kettle, and in a few minutes my coffee was prepared. There I sat in my forest home, coolly sipping my coffee, with one of the finest elephants in Africa awaiting my pleasure beside a neighbouring tree. It was indeed a striking scene; and as I gazed upon the stupendous veteran of the forest, I thought of the red deer which I loved to follow in my native land, and felt that, though fate had driven me to follow a more daring and arduous avocation in a distant land, it was a good exchange that I had made, for I was now chief over boundless forests, which yielded unspeakably more noble and exciting sport. Having admired the elephant for a considerable time, I resolved to make experiments for vulnerable spots... [He bungles this again

and again; eventually, after even he had become a little worried, he succeeds in wounding the elephant fatally.] Large tears now trickled from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened, his colossal frame quivered convulsively, and, falling on his side, he expired.

(Cummings, quoted in Midgley 183: 14-15, comments by Midgley).

Midgley suggests that an absolute dismitter would feel that there was nothing particularly amiss about Cummings' behaviour toward the elephant in question, 'and could not be whatever further refinements he might have added, so long as they damaged nobody but the elephant' (ibid.: 15).<sup>53</sup>

It is very unlikely that any of the very few people who get to read this thesis will fully approve of Cummings' attitudes or behaviour toward what he clearly regarded as 'his' elephant. However, it is not necessary to adopt anything like an 'animal rights' stance to display this disapproval. The question is, on what - if not rights thinking - would unease, or even down-right unequivocal disapproval, be based? For example, it may be possible to think about the Cummings case in terms of Kantian direct and indirect duty views. Indirect views might posit that Cummings' actions were utterly reprehensible, *not* due to what he did to the elephant victim, but because of what he did, or may have done, to himself, and/or to those around him who witnessed the event. This view would make the most sense if the elephant in question was someone other than Cummings' 'pet elephant' (however unlikely that may be). Such a person would, presumably, be extremely upset by the death of 'their pet' and would, moreover, have an additional 'property reason' to want the elephant's continued existence: this person may be planning on selling this item of disposable legal property, for example. In what

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<sup>53</sup> David Degrazia (1996: 40-1) repeats Midgley's test, calling it instead a 'thought-experiment', and using a passage from Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* in which the character Mikolka, along with a group of

might be seen as a weaker formulation, Kant (and later Rawls 1971; Narveson 1977, also see Regan 2001: 9-13) recognised only humans as moral agents - however, that being the case, moral agents should attempt not to engage in behaviour which might infringe the moral sensibilities of others (Garner 1993: 12). So, whilst it may be held that he had no duties at all to the elephant directly, it may be said that Cummings' actions degraded himself as a human being and, moreover, it might be thought that his arrogant attitude and subsequent boasting may upset someone else:

Taking this sort of view, an absolute dismitter might condemn Cummings for self-deception, damage to his own moral potentialities and perhaps bad taste ['awaiting my pleasure' etc.], but still say that he did so without conceding that it mattered at all what was done to the elephant (Midgley 1983: 16).<sup>54</sup>

If nothing else, indirect duty views serve to emphasise the somewhat 'fuzzy' moral position into which nonhumans are often placed. While most philosophers continue to articulate reasons to suppose a wide moral division between human and other animals, it is hard to imagine that Cummins' actions and attitude would create much, if any, disapprobation were it directed against, say, a chair. This is perhaps another indication as to why animal welfarism is apparently so 'naturally' central to social thoughts about

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young men, beat a mare to death with whips, wooden staves and an iron bar because she was unable to pull an overloaded cart.

<sup>54</sup> 'Do butchers commit more murders? (Than other persons who have knives around?)'. This citation from Robert Nozick's 1974 book, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, is used by Degrazia (1996: 42) to suggest that 'indirect views do not hold up under careful scrutiny'. Indirect duty views effectively represent a contradiction of the 'vast gulf' thesis which, theoretically, prevents the 'moral spillover' implied: 'Why *should* there be such spillover?', asks Nozick (in *ibid.*). 'If it is, in itself, perfectly all right to do anything at all to animals for any reason whatsoever, then provided a person realises the clear line between animals and persons and keeps it in mind as he acts, why should killing animals tend to brutalise him and make him more likely to harm or kill persons?' Degrazia would also pose this question about Cummings' behaviour: What if Cummings were the only one abusing the elephant and were the last person on Earth - or were himself about to die and predictably would not come into contact with other humans - does that make his abuse of the elephant acceptable?

human-nonhuman relations: it seemingly 'caters' for - or is at least directed toward - the welfare of the items of 'sentient property' under its purview.

Midgley (ibid.: 16-18), in agreement with Garner, continues with a suggestion that the absolute dismissal position is now very rarely held and (very much like the concept of absolute or subsistence poverty in early sociological research) she says that the absolute position has been fairly hard to maintain in practice. For present purposes, these matters need not take up a great deal more time. It may be accepted, following both Midgley and Garner, that a strictly-held absolute dismissal position toward other animals is now relatively rare, if not entirely absent from claims-making relevant to human-nonhuman relations. If it is indeed fairly safe to conclude that the absolute position is currently a minority one (just like the animal rights position: Garner's Position 3) then most people can be justifiably situated somewhere between the poles of absolute dismissal and 'animal rights' views. What remains central is a widespread and complex and, in some 'animal rights' discourse, a questionable perspective - Garner's moral orthodoxy; or what would commonly be regarded in ordinary language as 'animal welfare' positions. It is indeed sociologically interesting and worth re-emphasising that this 'fuzzy' and 'half-way house' position nevertheless remains presented and social constructed as the most appropriate way of looking at human-nonhuman relations. Effectively, the widespread moral orthodoxy recognises - and reflects in law - the sentience of nonhuman animals while simultaneously suggesting that nonhuman life can be instrumentally and sentimentally used as human resources.

Michael Leahy (1991) offers a conventional definition of animal welfare when he asserts that welfarism says that animals should be 'treated humanely'. Does this mean that the species barrier does not represent such a

‘vast gulf’ after all? Leahy immediately proceeds to the standard ideological qualification that this injunction toward ‘being humane’ does *not*, in fact, mean that humans are morally prevented from killing nonhumans for their own reasons. Neither does animal welfare buzz-words, ‘humane treatment’, mean that nonhuman animals cannot be experimented on, hunted, raced or ‘petted’. According to Leahy, these are ‘legal’ and ‘defensible’ actions (quoted in Guither 1998: 19). Within the logic of ‘animal welfarism’, and in a sense despite its very name, humans come first and animals come second; even if all have some interests that should be protected. However, due to this fundamental hierarchical structure, animal interests can be ‘sacrificed’<sup>55</sup> for human ones (and Francoine [1998] says they *always will be*) if, by doing so, humans gain something important enough.

Finally, and by way of a summary of the moral orthodoxy, Regan says this:

The welfare of nonhuman animals is important, but that is not the only thing that is important. Human interests and preferences also are important, frequently more important than the interests and preferences of other animals. For example, researchers have serious professional and humanitarian interests in the utilisation of rodents and other animals used in research. These people are and should be supportive of animal welfare. There is no argument here...

There is no question that when animals in laboratories are ‘sacrificed’, we shorten their lives. But ending the lives of animals is not contrary to supporting animal welfare. If animals used in research have fared well, all things considered, up to the point when they are utilised, and if they are killed as humanely as possible, then we do nothing wrong when we kill them.

Moreover, it is important to realise that a commitment to animal welfare is consistent with striving to improve the *overall* condition of those individuals who

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<sup>55</sup> Animal advocates have long been interested in the meanings associated with this word. Although straightforwardly ‘sacrifice’ means ‘the practice or an act of killing an animal or person’ (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th ed., 1999) it also means ‘the act of giving up something of value for the sake of something that is of greater value or importance’. This second meaning implies a voluntary agreement to sacrifice oneself for the good of others and may explain why animal experiment reports speak of ‘sacrificing animals’ rather than ‘killing’ them.



have a welfare, both humans and other animals, even if this means decreasing the welfare of some individuals. Such circumstances often arise, especially in biomedical research. This is regrettable, certainly, and everything should be done to make the lives of these animals as good as practicable. In the end, however, to diminish the welfare of some animals is a price we must be willing to pay for making the world better, for both humans and others (2001: 34).

Human Supremacy:  
Constructing the 'Right' and 'Wrong' Sides of  
The Species Barrier.

A line was arbitrarily drawn between white people and black people, a division which has since been rejected. But what of the line which has been drawn between human and non-human animals? We often behave as if there were a wide and bridgeless chasm, with humans on one side and all the other animals on the other.

Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison*.

No-one is more strongly convinced than I am of the vastness of the gulf between civilised man and brutes... our reverence for the nobility of mankind will not be lessened by the knowledge that man is, in substance and in structure, one of the brutes.

T.H. Huxley, *Man's Place in Nature*.

Humans Atop the *Scala Naturae*.

In issue 25 of *Philosophy Now*, Jane Forsey wonders what it is about human beings that makes us so special and important. 'Can we', she asks, 'continue to rest easy in our claims to, or unspoken assumptions of, a privileged position over the rest of the natural world?' (Forsey 1999: 29). Perhaps the suggestion of *unspoken* assumptions may seem odd and can be challenged, since humans appear hardly ever to remain silent for very long about how their species stands proudly 'atop the *scala naturae*', as Dess & Chapman (1998: 156) put it. Indeed, the socially constructed nature of conventional human attitudes about other animals implies an almost continuous social

discourse on the matter. However, the rest of Forsey's question is clearly central to this three-part section of the thesis concerned with the construction, usage and maintenance of the species barrier, particularly as she makes it clear that she mainly means 'animals' when she says the rest of the natural world.<sup>56</sup> Forsey wants to know about historical orientations to *human exceptionality* claims which speak of human beings being *over* and *above* the other animals. Human exceptionality is claimed on various if fairly familiar grounds, including:

- (a) we have souls and so share in the Divine (and animals do not);
- (b) we have free will and so can make choices (and animals cannot); and
- (c) we are rational (and animals are not) (Forsey 1999: 29).

Such real or assumed factors serve and have served for a long time to morally separate humans and other animals, perhaps enough to create and maintain the 'wide and bridgeless chasm' that Spiegel refers to in the quote at the head of this section: the same 'sharp discontinuity between humans and animals' which Barbara Noske (1989) finds in Western culture and discourse.<sup>57</sup>

Here the paradox is raised again. Although Forsey (1999: 29) regards Cartesian views as those representing what she calls 'deep chasm arguments' concerning the moral status of humans and other animals, it is clear that even the 'softer', apparently more inclusive views embedded within

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<sup>56</sup> According to Mason (1993, chap 3), it is common for nonhuman animals to be given a privileged place in our general thoughts about 'nature' and the natural world.

<sup>57</sup> In animal rights discourse, the pointed observation is made that exceptionality claims are biased toward human beings and against the other animals. Animal activists ask questions such as, what about the

animal welfare ideology allows the greatest interests of nonhumans to be 'sacrificed' for arguably trivial human ones. Therefore, although welfarism can be logically posited as a position that tends toward the bridging of suggestions of a 'deep chasm' between humans and nonhumans, species differences remain sufficiently distinct within the orthodoxy to allow the routine exploitation of other animals. Indeed, given the important nonhuman interests that animal welfarism routinely serves to override, it may be foreseen that many animal rights advocates will seriously question the earlier characterisation of the moral orthodoxy as 'something of an ethical halfway house'.

As discussed a little earlier, Bauman (1990) claims that a certain degree of everyday human social activity involves erecting and maintaining boundaries - human beings do appear to like placing objects in neat, orderly boxes (see Ritvo 1987). According to Dorian Solot (1998), academics especially like to 'erect walls' in order to divide things into tidy and distinct categories. A feature of the social construction of the orthodox moral view of human-nonhuman relations is the stock use and the preferencing of phrases like 'humans and animals' to differentiate groups: all humans linguistically separated from all animals. The following section looks at the particulars of this routine, systematic and incredibly 'useful' differentiation.

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exceptional ability to see in the dark, or the valuable ability to fly, or the invaluable ability to seemingly be able to live in harmony with one's biosphere.

Ryder (2000: 28) argues that early Christian views created a sense of human-nonhuman separation within the assertion that men and women could not be animals since humans were created in the image of 'God' who had given only 'their kind' an immortal soul. Such views explain why a good deal of recent animal rights discourse has sought to challenge this absolute separation and remind human beings that 'we' too *are* animals.<sup>59</sup> However, even long before Darwin, it appears that there was recognition and acknowledgement that humans were indeed 'animals', although 'developed' ones. Ryder (ibid.: 68) states that 'classical literature, Epicureans and writers such as Lucretius, Cicero, Diodorus Siculus and Horace had suggested that humankind had only slowly developed from the animal condition'. Aristotle, despite his insistence that humans, animals and nature were held in a 'natural hierarchy of value', never claimed that a human being should not be regarded as an animal.

Later William Shakespeare's Hamlet would describe humankind as 'the paragon of animals' (ibid). Nevertheless, Ryder notes - using an interesting term - that a full awareness of our kinship with other animals was 'intermittent'. Moreover, acknowledgement of kinship became 'discouraged

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<sup>58</sup> Philosopher Derek Parfit (1984) notes that 'non-religious ethical thinking' is a new phenomenon in the history of humankind. Singer (1993: 18), noting that non-religious thinking was not studied systematically until the 1960s, agrees that we may still be justified in having high hopes in terms of future ethical progress, and therefore 'it is clearly premature to say that history [of thinking] has reached its final destination'.

<sup>59</sup> When I mentioned this potential theme for the thesis to my own sister, Lynne, a chemistry teacher, it reminded her that she had caused uproar in class when explaining the common 'animal, vegetable, mineral' formulation. She had used a picture of a human being as an example of the animal category. This resulted in several objections from angry students who declared flatly that they were not animals, and that they did not want anyone else to have the opportunity to call them one.

by the Church'. Therefore, it was [and remains] common for people to behave as though human beings were *altogether* different from animals: of a *completely different order* to them: indeed, 'made in the image of God' (ibid).

Reacting to this continuing tendency, many modern nonhuman rights advocates began in the 1980s to use the phrase 'nonhuman animals' to make it clear that there are such things as *human animals* (although it is interesting that this term itself is rarely, if ever, heard; and presumably not merely because it would be regarded as a tautology).<sup>60</sup> However, some campaigners have complained that the term 'nonhuman animal' can imply that the standard is the human one, which may further imply that nonhuman individuals may be regarded as much less important in comparison. Such people often favour phrases such as 'animals-other-than-human' or 'humans and other animals'. In what may be regarded as the 'shorthand' of emailed text, the majority of contemporary British animal rights advocates tend to not get themselves embroiled too much in language disputes, therefore most often they tend to simply give nonhumans the label 'animals' in general discourse.

Dess and Chapman (1998) remark that they were struck by jarring taxonomy in a radio broadcast they heard concerning the aftermath of a hurricane: 'Not only were humans affected by the storm, birds and animals were affected too', the report stated. Since birds, humans and other animals *are* all animals, why the malapropism, they ask (ibid.: 156). They state that they realise that such routine differentiation is simply a version of an established linguistic convention. However, it is perhaps safe to say that when

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<sup>60</sup> I suspect that initial reaction to such a phrase would be to regard it as rather odd, rather than the immediate reaction to focus on the tautology. This, I believe, is significant in itself. In terms of the 'truth' of the phrase, many may be quick to reassert 'points of separation'. Take this, the very first words in the

a linguistic construction exists long enough to become a firmly fixed convention, it is because it continues to hold *meaning* and/or *utility* for those (or many of those) who use it. Moreover, it is probably safe to speculate that very few fellow radio listeners would have registered the problematic taxonomy identified by these authors.

Perhaps the central meaning of the common separation of human and animal categories may be correctly identified by Dess and Chapman when they note that, 'In everyday parlance, *animals* means not, and less than, human' (ibid, emphasis in original).<sup>61</sup> Thus, 'The 'animals' in 'animal hospitals' are understood not to be human'; furthermore, the negative usage of 'animal' is never far away: 'the insult is clear in a snarled, 'You're an animal!'" (ibid).<sup>62</sup> On the origins of these long-standing, firmly-sedimented, and socially-transmitted understandings, Peter Singer (1983; 1985) argues that Western intellectual roots lie in Ancient Greece (especially when the school of Aristotle became dominant) and in the Judeo-Christian tradition. 'Neither is kind to those not of our species', he states (1985: 2). Alexander Cockburn's (1996: 16) advice about addressing the issue of the construction of human attitudes toward other animals is impressively clear: 'Start with God', he says.

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first chapter of Michael Haralambos' introductory textbook of sociology (Haralambos & Holborn 1995: 2): 'Human beings learn their behaviour and use their intelligence whereas animals simply act on instinct'.

<sup>61</sup> On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003, *The Sun* tabloid 'newspaper' featured a story (Stars Learn the Art of Survival) about a TV programme called 'I'm a Celebrity..... Get Me Out of Here' in which the contestants must gut fishes and prepare chickens for eating. They may also encounter dangerous wild animals. Lembit Opik says of his 'weathergirl' girlfriend Sian who was taking part in the program: 'If she ends up in a scrap with an orang-utan, it'll be the animal that runs off with a thick ear. She knows how to look after herself'.

<sup>62</sup> The particulars of the use of 'animal' would surely provide an interesting area of research for ethnomethodological conversation analysts. For example, in April 2002 regular TV and hourly radio bulletins featured the comments of a police officer investigating the murder of a pensioner in the north of England. The officer described the killers as 'animals' with such emphasis that the phrase was unusually striking. Enough that the editor of the animal rights magazine *Arcnews* was prompted to write to him with a complaint about the usage.

With a lively and belligerent style, Cockburn declares that, ‘The Bible is a meat-eater’s manifesto’, or at least it is after a mythical event known as ‘the Fall’. Until then, the story goes, hippie prototypes Adam and Eve were vegetarians, eating grains, nuts and fruit. But, as though she ran across a trippy Jack Kerouac novel, Eve could not resist eating from the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ and boy, have we all paid for *that* mistake. Cockburn explains what is said to have happened next:

Hardly were Adam and Eve out of Eden before God was offering ‘respect’ to the flesh sacrifice of Abel the keeper of sheep and withholding ‘respect’ from Cain the tiller of the ground. Next thing we know, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, slew him and we were on our way (ibid.: 16-17).

Thus began ‘Man’s’ ‘dominionism’ over and above creation. Genesis I: 26-28 reports the edict of the Almighty: ‘Man’ was given dominion over the earth and was told to be ‘fruitful and multiply’ in order to ‘subdue’ the planet.

Cockburn is right: we really were ‘on our way’; and it has been largely slash and burn ever since. Some Christian writers, such as Tony Sargent, seek to provide a far more animal-friendly account of common Biblical events (see Sargent 1996: 41-56),<sup>63</sup> and ‘animal rights theologian’ Andrew Linzey (1976; 1987; 1989, edited with Tom Regan; 1994; 1997, edited with Dan Cohn-Sherbok) is unflagging in pointing out that ‘dominion’ really

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<sup>63</sup> also see *Judaism and Vegetarianism* (Schwartz 2001). Singer (1985:3) points out that Christian figures such as Francis of Assisi appears to have based his compassion for animals on notions of indirect duties and animal welfarism. He recounts a story of a disciple who is said to have sliced off a pig’s trotter: Francis rebukes the disciple, not for the cruel act toward the pig, but because he has damaged the pig owner’s ‘property’.



means ‘stewardship’ rather than ‘despotism’.<sup>64</sup> Yet it has to be admitted, Cockburn’s account seems to be the popular version, commonly reproduced in accounts of the development of human attitudes towards the other animals.

Moreover, ‘stewardship’ sounds a great deal like animal welfarism which has rationalised rather than halted the human exploitation of nonhuman animals.<sup>65</sup> Since it tends to organise the exploitation of other animals, Mason (1993: 29-30) speaks of the ‘stewardship apology’ in Christian cosmology. That anyone actually believes in the existence of ‘trees of knowledge’ and ‘gardens of Eden’ is quite bizarre and, of course, sociologically fascinating; but believe it, and live and die by such ‘teachings’, many do. Several modern religious wars seem to testify to the fact that people *earnestly* hold such religious beliefs. Thomas Luckmann (1963) suggests in *The Invisible Religion* that religious belief go beyond church going. He suggests that religious teaching may remain influential in the creation of culturally-transmitted meanings, even in an increasingly secular world. Of course, people also believe in Captain Kirk and the Enterprise, Gandalf and Middle Earth, and Aslan the Lion and the Old Narnians, but less real blood has flowed from these fables. God-stories, on the other hand, have been instrumental in the creation of entire belief systems which people will kill and be killed for.

Apart from a remarkable increase in human-to-human violence, Cockburn states that ‘the Biblical God’ launched humans on the exploitation of

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<sup>64</sup> Journalist Jonathan Dimbleby featured on Radio 4’s farming programme on 22/7/2001. Dimbleby is a part-time farmer and, in relation to farming animals, he described himself in the programme as a ‘steward’.

<sup>65</sup> see Mason (1993: 29-30) for the Presbyterian Animal Welfare Task Force’s position on ‘dominionism’ which is grounded within the animal welfarist paradigm.

the rest of the natural world, a world newly conceptualised as seriously ‘un-Christian’ and ‘theirs for the using’ (1996: 17-18).

### Agri-Culture.<sup>66</sup>

A substantial part of the ideological exploitation, control, management, or ‘stewardship’ of the natural world would find its expression in agricultural practices based on the strict separation of human and animal categories. As Dess and Chapman (1998) comment, any remnants of a feeling of ‘commonality between humans and nonhumans generally has been supplanted by notions of human superiority’.

Thomas (1983) argues that agriculture stands to land as does cooking to raw meat, meaning that ‘wild’ and ‘raw’ nature is made ‘suitable’ for human consumption. Thus, to carry out ‘God’s’ orders, humans are specifically instructed to level the woods, till the soil, drive off the predators, kill the ‘vermin’, plough up the bracken and drain the fens. They must institute a process of ‘ordering’ and ‘taming’ of the plants, animals and natural forces - a transformation, according to Bauman, from pre-modern gamekeeping to modern weed-killing ‘gardening’ practices which will find its most destructive manifestation in recent history in the devastating contrast between the deliberately constructed notions of ‘pleasant harmony’ as opposed to ‘revolting cacophony’ (Bauman 1989: 57).

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<sup>66</sup> Mason’s conceptualisation of ‘agri-culture’ is closely connected with another notion he called ‘misothery’ (see the end of the next section on this).

Mason (1993) also notes the significance of the Biblical stories of Adam and Eve, the Fall, the Flood and the 'gift' of dominionism. He furthermore notes that Genesis tells the creation story, which he calls 'the fundamental myth of Western civilisation' from which human beings 'learn our first and most basic understandings about who we are and how we came to be in the world' (ibid.: 26). However, Mason claims it is an error to locate Genesis as the source of dominionist views which situate humans above 'lowly' and 'savage' nature and 'her' animals. These views of human superiority are a product of what Mason calls our 'agri-culture' which, as a concept of domination, seems to bear a resemblance to how early members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research conceptualised, at least in part, the notion of instrumental rationality (see Craib 1984: 186-90).<sup>67</sup>

Mason suggests that Hebrew Scribes, those who physically wrote the Genesis account, were recounting already existing tales and myths that had been orally transmitted from generation to generation before the advent of writing. Consequently:

Sumeria, Persia, Egypt, and the other great, early cultures were not the starting points of Western civilisation; they were, rather, culminations of millennia of human economic, social, cultural, and ideological growth that occurred around the eastern and of the Mediterranean Sea. Scholars call this region the Near East; laypersons call it the Middle East. It is here, from a great, rich stew of agri-cultural peoples and cultures, that the idea of dominionism emerges... Here, by the time writing had begun, a very old, sedentary agrarian society had already fashioned most of the myths that celebrated humanity's ascent to mastery over nature. Dominionism was alive and well...long before it was codified by the scribes of Genesis (ibid.: 32-33).

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<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, various members of the Frankfurt School, such as Marcuse, Horkheimer and Adorno, became engaged in speculation about the earliest origins - and the 'flowering' - of instrumental reason in the way that Mason and others have thought about the origins of the instrumental use, 'management' and categorisation of other animals.

Mason also emphasises secular influences on the construction of attitudes about humans and other animals. He notes that poets and philosophers from Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, and other ‘settled, wealthy, agricultural civilisations’, generally adopted a world view which regarded nature and all of the living world as existing exclusively *for* humans, who should *rule* and *control* the natural world.

Mason claims that, just like Biblical tales, classical writings hold ‘great authority in Western culture and they are still seen as sources of, and bases for, the rules governing how people should live’ (ibid.: 33). He therefore argues that, like Genesis, classical writers ‘authored’ and ‘authorised’ already existing, firmly established, agri-cultural views. Of course, there have been dissenting voices raised against dominant paradigms in all ages (as Ryder [2000] is keen to stress), but Mason forcefully maintains that dominionist agri-culturalist thought has become *the* established human mind-set, at least in the nations of the Western world. Mason’s characterisation of the agri-cultural mind-set - based on controlling, ordering and managing the natural world - as our socialised ‘second nature’ bears great significance in terms of this thesis.

### Philosophy.

Classical Greek thought itself was not utterly monolithic and can be divided into rival schools such as those based on Platonic and Pythagorean teachings. However, Platonic thought, especially as expressed by Aristotle, became favoured in the West. Mason says that Aristotle’s work provided

‘fuel’ for Christian and Renaissance views that persisted in seeing ‘Man’ at the top of a ‘natural hierarchy’ within a moral theory called *perfectionism* (also see Regan 2001: 5-6). This hierarchy is conveniently ordered by ‘God’ in Christian thought but, for Aristotle, it was simply a product of the laws of nature (Mason 1993: 34).

A similar division of thought emerged in Rome, according to Mason, with largely the same outcome. Thus, as much as some animal advocates make a habit of recounting the views of Ovid, Seneca, Porphyry, and Plutarch (see Wynne-Tyson 1985; 1990; Ryder 2000; Wiebers & Wiebers 2000), it was ‘agrarian Roman culture [which] took human dominionism over nature for granted’ with notions that humans were ‘absolute masters’ of the earth, and its products could be seen as ‘ours’ (Mason 1993: 34). The notion that humankind controlled the natural world is found in Cicero’s comment that ‘We sow the seeds and plant the trees. We fertilise the earth. We stop, direct, and turn the rivers’ (quoted in *ibid.*)

Moving towards what he labels ‘modern Western dominionism’, Mason argues that the same ‘humans-on-top’ messages are found in the works of Thomas Aquinas (see Clark 1984 for a critique of Thomist views), Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes. Mason claims that Aquinas ‘welded’ sacred and secular ideas together to produce a ‘hard’ version of dominionism expressed through Catholicism ever since, and he quotes from a modern North American Catholic text to reveal Aristotelian ideals of rationalism in ‘perfect’ ‘Man’ and irrationalism in ‘imperfect’ animals.

How dominionism is translated into modern or ‘Enlightenment’ thought is by observing that science was characterised as a useful tool of human ‘freedom’, not so much to gain simply an understanding of the world, but to gain a firm *control* of it. Mason says that the so-called ‘fathers of

modern science', Bacon and Descartes, whose lives overlapped around 1600, effectively provided an updated version of dominionism for the modern, and then the industrial age (Mason 1993: 35). Citing William Leiss' 1972 book, *The Domination of Nature*, Mason asserts that Bacon linked the dominionism that was thousands of years old with the modern promise of increased human health - and wealth - through scientific developments. In 'passionate pleas' to use knowledge for the betterment of 'man's earthly estate' (Peters 1991: 38), Bacon suggested that producing 'new inventions' and 'human riches' was the main role for science (Mason 1993: 36).

Bacon was another writer who declared that 'Man' was 'at the centre of the world' and argued that, if it were not for human control of the natural world, all would go 'astray'. There would be no 'purpose'. No 'aim'. It is perhaps not insignificant that Bacon talked about the natural world as 'her' and thought 'she' could be made a 'slave' (Bacon's *Novum Organum*, in *ibid.*) as some Marxians would later view nature as some sort of 'servant'. Religious views, Mason writes, allow humans to dominate nature, whereas Bacon made the whole idea seem *desirable* (*ibid.*: 37, emphasis in original) as he advanced his 'formula' that involved subduing nature 'by submission' (Bauman & May 2001: 174).

At roughly the time of Bacon's death, Descartes was credited with advancing a position that seems to completely separate humans from nature and all other animals. Descartes is said to have frequently articulated the 'absolute gulf' thesis which still resonates today in a more restricted sense, tempered by animal welfarism. The French philosopher-priest-animal experimenter apparently 'detached' humanity from *all else* and characterised humanity as the ultimate ruling class. In Descartes' view, humans could be

‘aloof’ from nature: nature amounted to ‘underlings’ when compared to ‘Man’. Human beings are so superior that it is folly not to conceive of humanity far removed from the natural world. Mason maintains that Descartes ‘cut humanity loose’ from nature in an act of ideological reclassification. Thus, other living beings were simply to be seen as ‘insensible’ and ‘soulless machines’,<sup>68</sup> similar to clocks or automated dolls and toys (Mason 1993: 37-8: and see selections from Descartes’ *Discourse on Method*, and a reproduction of two letters written by Descartes [to the Marquis of Newcastle and Henry More] discussing main points from his ‘animals are machines’ thesis; and a reply by Voltaire, in Regan & Singer 1976: 60-8).

Descartes came up with an apparently neat solution to explain his general position in the light of the vivisection he performed. Apparently, he cut nonhumans open and found similar organs, bones, nerves, muscles, blood vessels, etc., discovered in human bodies. He therefore reasoned that a major, and important, difference between humans and other animals must be the former’s ability to think. Given found physical similarities, animals other than human were not, after all, to be regarded as *absolutely* soulless in Cartesian thought. Thus, Descartes seemingly began to argue that *both* humans and other animals had a ‘corporeal soul’ which is purely mechanical and depends to some extent on ‘animal spirits’ in the human or nonhuman body. However, he stated that thought resides in the ‘incorporeal mind’; another and second ‘soul’, ‘defined as a thinking substance’, which only humans have.

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<sup>68</sup> In July and August 2001 the animal rights e-mail network ‘AR Views’ revisited the ‘animals have no souls’ debate when a new member to the net had been told that by a work colleague who is an active hunter as well as dedicated meat eater.

Descartes also appears to have explained the fact that some animals can move faster than humans by saying that the 'machine of the body' in nonhumans move 'more violently' than the human body which is moved by 'will'. He further reasoned that since 'Man' can create various forms of automata, it is only reasonable to suppose that nature would also produce its own automata. For Descartes, these 'natural automata' are the animals of the world (see Descartes in Regan & Singer 1976: 65-6).

Ryder (2000: 221) argues that Descartes was 'desperate' to conceive of a huge difference between humans and the other animals, despite the contrary evidence produced by his own knife and scalpel. Perhaps this search for separation was important in enabling animal experimenters to perform vivisection on nonhuman animals with a morally clear conscience. If this was the aim, it apparently worked, and scientific anti-vivisectionists and animal advocates such as Hans Ruesch (1979), Richard Ryder (1983; 2000) and Tom Regan (2001) recount in gruesome detail how Cartesian-inspired vivisectors would carry out the most violent experiments, often repeatedly on the same victim, and with no pain relief. Furthermore, they would laugh at anyone who showed concern for the suffering of the experimental 'models'. Descartes is even reputed to have performed experiments on the dog 'belonging' to his wife, much to her disgust and opposition (Ryder 2000: 53).



## Humanity's Renewed Licence to Kill.

Whatever the purpose of Descartes' 'search for difference', Mason (1993: 38) states that he presented humankind with a 'renewed licence to kill' along with a renewed licence to exploit nature and animals more ruthlessly than ever. He successfully 'de-coupled' and 'desensitised' attitudes to nature exploitation and 'blew away' any existing timidity that remained about 'nature conquest'. Anticipating a point Ryder (2000) and Regan (2001) make later, Mason (1993) says that the Cartesian formulation was a great assistance to all animal exploiters: for how could it be ethically wrong or immoral to kill animals if they were just unfeeling machines?

Conceiving of the belief system Bauman (1989; 1993) names societal 'gardening', experimenting *nature controllers* and *nature conquerors* were now able to also declare themselves 'noble improvers' of humanity. By advancing the disciplines of science and reason both Bacon and Descartes fuelled the expansionist aspirations of Europeans who 'discovered' North America, the Pacific and much of the rest of the globe from the sixteenth century onwards (Mason 1993: 38-9). William Leiss (cited in *ibid.*) - and Thomas (1983) - explore strands of seventeenth and eighteenth century attitudes toward nature and animals and identify fairly widespread beliefs, such as the idea that nature possesses 'secrets' that need to be discovered; that 'Man' 'perfects' the work of creation; and that the natural world *needs* human 'superintendence'. Without such human control, things will go wrong and will not 'function' properly. The result of such attitudes, Mason contends (1993: 39), is the development of a creed of 'aggressive, probing, scientific dominionism' in which nature domination and species differentia-

tion were fundamental intellectual bandwagons and dominant paradigms of the modern age.

By the nineteenth century, Saint-Simon (rather optimistically) declared an age in which humans need not exploit other humans: 'Man's' activity would be confined to exploiting the natural world, or 'external nature', as he described it. Marx famously foresaw a future world in which communist humans would control nature for the common good, 'instead of allowing it to rule them'; while Engels suggested that socialism would bring into being a situation where humans could become the 'true masters' of nature.

For Marx and Engels there is no suggestion that other animals would benefit in their radical vision of a brand new abundant socialist world, or that animals other than human might be regarded as members of the exploited proletariat, despite the huge amount of forced labour they provide:

It will be possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind to, without ever becoming a hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic (Marx & Engels 1976, vol. 5: 47).

Mason notes that more recent Marxian views, such as Maurice Cornforth's (written in the 1950's), 'expressed a dominionist, human supremacist outlook at least as absolute as that of Genesis, Aquinas, Bacon and the rest' (1993: 40). For example, Cornforth entitled a section of his work, 'Man's Mastery of Nature', declaring:

Increasing mastery of nature is, indeed, the essential content of material progress. In mastering natural forces men learn their laws of operation and so make use of those laws for human purposes.

By 'mastering' natural forces humans transform them from 'enemies' to 'servants'. In the communist future, Cornforth said:

People now go forward without hindrance to know and control the forces of nature, to use them as servants, to remake nature, co-operating with nature to make the world a human world since humanity is nature's highest product (both quotes cited in *ibid*).

Mason comments that it is clear that even those radicals who allegedly 'would turn the world upside down' would not think as far as the exploitation that exists in human-nonhuman relations. On the contrary, even they would 'keep humanity at the top', they would also control nature 'with an iron hand', and few left-wing radical views, for example on forms of human slavery, extended its imagination beyond the species boundary (*ibid.*: 40-1).

Speciesist sentiments do not appear to recognise political categories of left and right. For example, 1960's philosopher Eric Hoffer dreamed of the day when 'technological man' could wipe out jungles, make arable land from deserts and swamps, make mountains productive with terracing, control the flow and direction of rivers, kill all 'pests', and even control the weather in order that the entire globe could be made 'useful' to humanity. Meanwhile B.F. Skinner, in his 1962 book, *Walden Two*, explained his utopian vision in terms of the 'triumph over nature', the 'conquest of nature' and the 'scientific conquest of the world'. Twenty years later, Ronald Reagan's secretary of the interior, James Watts, favoured plans to expand oil, mining and lumber industries' exploitation of the Earth's wildest regions, as does the current incumbent of the White House, George W. Bush. Such views are extremely dominionist and speciesist since they see nature as 'just a pile of untapped resources' (Mason 1993: 41). According to Mason, simi-

lar views come from a neo-Cartesian, Buckminster Fuller, who regards nature as 'negligible', 'obsolete'; a 'messy', 'disorderly', 'unpredictable' thing - quite 'female' - to be 'avoided', 'controlled' and 'contained' (ibid).

For Mason, nature dominators often focus their exploitative attention on animals because they have been viewed as the most visible, alive and vital part of nature. He cites an unnamed professor of business law and ethics from a newspaper editorial who provides 'a 'freeze-dried' argument packaged long ago by Aristotle, Aquinas, and Descartes':

[P]eople are generally seen as made in the image of God... it is only people who occupy this exalted status. The things of the earth, including animals, are given by God for the benefit of people. So most religions describe a three-tiered hierarchy: God, people and everything else (quoted in *ibid.*: 42).



The aim of this section has been to generally outline some of the significant sources which have contributed to the construction of the prevailing attitudes to humans, animals, and human-nonhuman relations. Following Regan (2001), concentration has been placed on the powerful influence of religious and scientific views on the way we tend to - and are encouraged to - view humans and other animals. Again following Regan, it should be stressed that views about humans and animals are firmly structured by culture, and economic and political factors.<sup>69</sup> These dimensions of the argument follow in a subsequent section, especially with regard to cultural transmission

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<sup>69</sup> Regan has regularly talked about how the animal rights movement must overcome the 'habits and forces' behind the systematic exploitation of animals (quoted in Jannaway 1990: 14).

through socialisation processes. However, the next chapter deals with how the 'vast gulf' thesis between humans and the other animals has been violently applied by humans against the interests of other human beings.

Dehumanisation:  
'Using' The Species Barrier.

He yelled, 'You murdering, Irish SCUM,  
you're an ANIMAL. What did I say?  
A murdering Irish ANIMAL'

Gerry Conlon: *Proved Innocent*, emphasis in the original.

We need to question why we become concerned about the juxtaposition  
between humans and animals. The worry is always that those humans are  
then being relegated to an inferior, and biologically driven, category.

Lynda Birke, *Feminism, Animals and Science*.

Meanings associated with the notion of the 'species barrier' are resources which, historically, have provided an immensely effectual means of oppressing individuals, groups, communities, and entire 'races' of human beings. Taken as a central resource in processes of dehumanisation, the 'vast gulf' thesis - the notion of a 'bridgeless chasm' between human beings and all the other animal categories - can be evidently full of meaning if efficiently and effectively constructed in particular ways. For, as soon as human beings are *successfully* constituted as 'animals', individual persons or entire groups are immediately rendered as 'moral inferiors'; who behave 'just like animals', or behave like 'misfits'; which is the least we expect, for example, of those we regard as 'criminal' and incarcerate in prison cages, where they can remain invisibly hidden in their inhumanity (Gordon 1976).

It perhaps should be stressed again that it appears not to matter that,

biologically,<sup>70</sup> humans *are* animals: we understand, as Dess & Chapman (1998) indicated in the previous chapter, that the label 'animal' is not automatically associated with *homo sapiens* - a genus of primates. Human beings are hominids - along with chimpanzees, gorillas and bonobos. More generally, with orang-utans and gibbons, 'we' all are apes (Hall 2001). Clearly, extra work needs to be done for many people to comfortably recognise and calmly acknowledge their animality or apeness.<sup>71</sup>

Given that human beings in general do not apparently appreciate being called 'animals' (Clark 1990), the undoubted effectiveness of dehumanisation processes, indicated by frequency of usage, should not be underestimated since even genocide can arise as a result of its skilful application (Bauman 1989).<sup>72</sup> The successful conceptualising of other human beings as occupants of the 'other' (read: 'wrong') side of the species barrier is unlikely to be sufficient, *on its own*, to create *all* social conditions necessary for genocide. Other associated notions such as 'distance' and 'indifference', and some sort of possibly lengthy 'process', as implied above, may be required also (Bauman 1989; Reynoldson 1991; Tester 1997). Nevertheless, both Bauman and Tester provide a good deal of evidence which suggests quite convincingly that the employment of attitudes and sentiments associated with the meanings attached to the idea of the species

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<sup>70</sup> As said, of all the 'pro-use industries', the animal experimentation business is the least able to make the 'vast gulf' claim because of the constant need to stress the existence of sufficient similarities between nonhuman animals and humans if the results of animal vivisection are to be characterised as beneficial to humans (see Ruesch 1979: 331-32).

<sup>71</sup> It is difficult to find definitions relating to words about animals that do not contain pejorative meanings. For example, according to the 1999 (tenth edition) *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, one meaning of 'animal' is 'a very cruel, violent or savage person', while 'animality' has the arguably positive definition: 'behaviour or nature characteristic of animals' with the utterly negative addition: 'especially in being physical and instinctive'. As we shall discover, these meanings have particular import when associated with pornographic representations.

<sup>72</sup> 'I am a baby Aryan, not Jewish or sectarian. I have no plans to marry an ape or Rastafarian'. A 'ditty' holocaust denier David Irving taught to his daughter (Anti Nazi League 2000: 11).

barrier can play an important - and perhaps the most important - role in processes of dehumanisation.<sup>73</sup>

In turn, processes of dehumanisation are evidently an important – possibly a vital - dimension in the ‘lead-up’ to genocide. With respect to the dehumanisation of whole populations, such as the dehumanisation of the Jews in the early twentieth century, Bauman (1989) shows how rational, organised, bureaucratic state mechanisms can effectively institute, over months and years if necessary, a dehumanisation process which results in groups of humans being regarded as sub- or semi-human creatures, or perceived as not being human at all. In addition to the common physical separation of the ‘victims’ of dehumanisation from the general population (for example, when the Nazis ghettoised the Jews), a programme of propaganda dissemination *about* and also *against* the victim group in question is essential (Reynoldson 1991; Bourke 1999).

It may be that ‘postmodern’ and poststructural thought is supposed to be posited on challenging oppositional and dualistic constructions - and, according to Steve Baker (1996), recent academic nonhuman advocacy has continued and furthered criticism of Cartesian dualism, especially those of mind *versus* body, human *versus* animal, and reason *versus* emotion. Presently, in the ‘postmodern’ age, rather than *denying* difference, the idea is to *celebrate* it. This is all very well, yet Marti Kheel is among ecofeminist authors to point out the *continuing* dualistic nature of society (quoted in Hall 2001). Analyses such as Bauman’s investigation of the Nazi holocaust – and

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<sup>73</sup> It perhaps should be noted that these authors themselves do not refer to the species barrier as such. Thus, in talk about processes of depersonalisation and dehumanisation, they will not characterise what occurs as human beings being cast towards the ‘other’ or ‘wrong’ side of the species barrier. Since this appears to be the reality of such processes, it may be thought significant that the process is not expressed in this way. Could it be that ‘we’ so firmly ‘know’ that animals other than humans are exploitable that it hardly needs to be said? Equally, could it be that we just ‘know’ the devastating consequences of being thought of as nonhuman?



the more recent experience of Kosovo and Bosnia (see Mestrovic 1994; Robins 1994; Tester 1997) - seems to serve to point out that the use of social power - deliberately based on dualistic thought - is still an important empirical factor which must inform even our 'postmodern' thoughts: given its prevailing utility, there seems little doubt that the human-nonhuman dualism is still alive and kicking as well as largely unquestioned.

Attempts have been made to underscore this idea by the use of words such as 'successful' in relation to dehumanisation processes: indeed, discussing sometimes lengthy social *processes* also implies that the utilisation of social power is an essential ingredient of the overall picture. Thus, although postmodern deconstructionism may be regarded as a valuable analytical tool - and some would argue an element of positive advocacy<sup>74</sup> - it surely needs to be recognised that persons who hold institutionalised power, and have a high status in the hierarchy of credibility, enjoy an increased ability to *construct, use* and *maintain* any successfully constituted oppositional and dualistic attitudes and practices.

With this in mind, this section of the thesis details many of the instances in which a process of dehumanisation has indeed appeared to be 'successful' - and with deadly effect. In other words, these are examples when human individuals or groups have been effectively pitched into nonhuman categories - thus casting them 'over' the species barrier and into risky 'animal' categories. It is suggested that it will be emphatically clear throughout this section that dehumanisation processes could not have their continuing value if sociopolitical, economically-influenced socialised moral attitudes about humans and other animals were generally not so firmly fixed.

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<sup>74</sup> Baker writes (<http://www.psyeta.org/sa4.1/baker.html>) that theorists such as Foucault and Derrida 'would want to insist on the scope for using their work as a basis for *constructing* ethically responsible positions, and not just - more fashionably - for 'deconstructing' them'.

The following also appears to give support to Bauman's (1989) critical assertion (in contrast to, say, Durkheimian notions that human society is a 'morality-producing entity') that modern, rational, and the most bureaucratic social systems, are especially well placed to employ dualistic thought and dehumanisation processes for brutal political and ideological ends.

Missing from the majority of accounts of dehumanisation processes is a recognition that the harm that may be caused to dehumanised humans can logically only come about because nonhumans have already been cast into 'harmable' categories.<sup>75</sup> Nonhuman animals are, *a priori*, 'already in' that necessary category. In other words, these categories have moral and practical importance which powerful social agents - including those who 'exercise political dominion' (Duffy 1984: 14) - can use against their 'enemies' who they wish to dominate, exploit and kill. As mighty as the barrier that separated King Kong from 'human civilisation', modern societies have been led to believe in the moral implications that philosophy, religion and culture has taught about this putative division between all humans and all other animals. As seen above, many influential philosophical, scientific and religious voices have constructed the species barrier as a meaningful representation of 'us' and 'them' categories, with the suggestion, according to feminist biologist Lynda Birke, that (certainly male) human beings belong to 'culture' as other animals belong to 'nature' (see Birke 1994).

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<sup>75</sup> In a lecture in 1985, cited in Serpell (1986: 152), Miriam Rothchild rather put the point the other way around, saying that, 'just as we have to depersonalise human opponents in wartime in order to kill them with indifference, so we have to create a void between ourselves and the animals on which we inflict pain and misery for profit'.

This section, then, is primarily concerned with detailing what powerful social actors have done with these influential constructions of ‘species’ divisions.

### The Universe of Obligation.

As suggested earlier, and as Bauman (1989: 26) has explained, what are under discussion are attitudes and practices associated to the notion of the *universe of obligation*, first conceptualised in 1979 by Helen Fein. Perhaps unsurprisingly, and utterly logically for those who argue that rights and duties cannot but go hand in hand,<sup>76</sup> this universe is usually seen as exclusively comprised of human beings with bonds and obligations to protect one another. Inside this universe, moral questions seem to ‘make sense’, outside of it they are regarded as ‘meaningless’. As suggested before, in one sense this point is put rather too strongly in that animal welfare ideology results in limited moral considerations extending, selectively - and tentacle-like - into ‘outside’ zones - or ‘through’ the species barrier, as it were. In the case of nonhuman animals, to use Thomas’ (1983) term, some get to become morally ‘privileged’: it appears, then, that insiders to the universe of moral obligations have the ability to co-op some categories of outsiders who are thereby afforded some little protection from harm.

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<sup>76</sup> Clark (1984: 15) first cites D.G. Richie’s *Natural Rights* (1916) as an exemplar of this view. Regan (2001: 66-84) states that modern philosopher, Carl Cohen, provides animal rights theorists with important criticisms, incorporating this view, that deserve to be taken seriously rather than summarily dismissed. Scruton (2000) insists that rights must be attached to duties, meaning that animal rights is a non-starter.

In terms of the alleged inevitable connection between rights and duties (or obligations), duties are routinely removed from rights formulation seen applicable to the case of very young human children, or the very elderly (often on the basis that they may be seen as ‘potential’ or ‘past members’ of the moral in-group). Such individuals and the categories they form may not be seen as fully ‘active’ members of the moral universe, yet they remain members of it. In other words, at certain times of their lives, human beings may not necessarily understand requirements for reciprocal duties, yet it is understood that they themselves nevertheless still require others to respect at least some of their basic protective or negative rights. At times, then, full human rights do not always apply to all human beings – nevertheless, their continuing status as sentient beings maintain some of their rights, those, obviously, that are related and relevant to their sentience. However the actual details are worked out, and despite the frequency in which rights-duties obligations are waived, it remains the case that society appears to understand that the benefits of the universe of obligation are applicable to ‘insiders’ alone; and that generally means mostly or only humans. Therefore, as Bauman (1989: 27) explains: ‘To render the humanity of victims invisible, one needs merely to evict them from the universe of obligation’.

Making the humanity of the German Jews ‘invisible’ was something the Nazis excelled at, Bauman claims. Thus, they were evidently extremely skilful, not to mention ruthless, ‘evictors’: but no such eviction from the universe of obligation would make much sense without precise and fixed ethical understandings about what it means to be on this or that side of the species barrier. Not only is it rather useful to be able to limit the ‘social territory’ of this universe to groups of insiders and outsiders, it must be

extremely gratifying for those with the power to have an 'outside' territory into which troublesome insiders may be evicted.

### Process.

When investigating Nazi propaganda in the second 'world war', Reynoldson (1991) suggests that dehumanisation requires the frequent repetition of central ideological themes. Adolf Hitler apparently knew and appreciated this, claiming in *Mein Kampf* that only constant repetition will succeed in 'imprinting' an idea on 'the memory of the crowd' (in *ibid.*: 5). Goebbels had the task of activating Hitler's eventual plan to destroy all Jews. This, according to Reynoldson, involved making German feelings 'run high' against Jews, which was the principal aim of the production of a whole series of anti-Jewish posters and films (*ibid.*: 25). What fun and intrigue Hitler and Goebbels may have had with access to the modern 'world-wide web' can only be imagined. If overtly negative propaganda in posters and films can be thought of as rather obvious strategies in a process of dehumanisation, Bauman (1989) outlines many of the more subtle levels on which the process may rely if it is to ultimately succeed. Physically removing Jewish people into ghettos, as Hitler's followers did, is not subtle at all, of course, but before they brought this about, the Nazis carefully sought to transform the 'decent', 'nice', 'normal', 'Jew next door' into a serious and frightening threat to the then rapidly expanding ideological notion of 'Germanhood'.

In 1933, German civil servants were employed in the task of defining what 'non-Aryan' should be taken to mean: this, argues Bauman, effectively

sealed the fate of European Jewry (ibid.: 27). The Nazis required an 'active hostility' to the Jews - inaction and indifference alone would not do in this case: 'putting Jews in their place' needed the applause of the masses, Bauman states (ibid.: 55). Jews were demonstrably non-Aryan and their 'Germanhood' was questioned again and again. However, with the application of the powerfully suggestive 'Jews = lice' formulation, Bauman claims that 'the Jewish question' was successfully, if slowly, transformed 'from the context of racial self-defence into the linguistic universe of 'self-cleansing' and 'political hygiene''. With typhus-warning posters on the walls of the ghettos (representing one step further in scare propaganda: Jews = lice = typhus), the chemicals for the 'last act' were symbolically commissioned from the 'Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung - the German Fumigation Company' (ibid.: 27).

The process of dehumanising Jews in Germany took many years to fully achieve. Deadly anti-Semitism developed through boundary drawing, and the process needed enough time to meaningfully sediment in society and become institutionally codified (ibid.: 34-5). Bauman remarks that in this modern reincarnation of Jew-hatred - perhaps *only* in this modern, bureaucratic, rein-carnation - the victim population had been 'charged with an ineradicable vice, with an immanent flaw which cannot be separated from its carriers' (ibid.: 72). Among a whole range of their real, created or assumed flaws and vices, the Jews were expressively *charged* with being nonhuman, as though that alone were reason enough - or at least understandable justification - for killing them.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> According to Patterson (2002: 95-6), North American eugenicists 'were the strongest foreign supporters of Nazi race policies'. Some were particularly impressed by the power of film and Patterson notes that many Nazi propaganda films were about 'hereditarily ill' people', who were described on screen as 'creatures', 'beings' 'existences', 'life unworthy of life' and 'travesties of human form and spirit'.

Given what is ostensibly ‘known’ of the plight of Jews conceptualised as nonhuman animals, what hope, then, have ‘real’ nonhumans? - for the genocide perpetrated on the Jews in the Second World War was the mass murder of beings only *claimed* to be, and socially described as, nonhuman or subhuman. They were propagandised as ‘not human’ but were not *actually* nonhuman. One may have thought that the most superficial inquiry would have given the lie to this social construction, this blatant social fiction; but no, filthy verminous ‘animals’ the Jews became, thus ‘killable’ they became, because that is what ‘animals’ were - as they still are. This particular element of influential social constructionism is returned to later in the thesis in a consideration of interaction in the school playground.

There is another strand to Bauman’s ‘holocaust thesis’ which deserves recognition here. Much of what has been examined to this point has rightly emphasised the dehumanisation of German Jewry. However, what of those who had to be *convinced* to directly and indirectly engage in the genocidal processes? Bauman (ibid.: 24) stresses that some form of the dehumanisation of the *perpetrators* of holocaust is just as necessary as the dehumanisation of victims of genocide. Thus, to understand what happened to these people, he suggests, it is essential to uncover and understand the social mechanisms that can overcome humanity’s innate ‘animal pity’, and recognise that conduct contrary to inborn human moral inhibitions can be socially produced.<sup>78</sup> As with the production of what Bauman calls ‘moral sleeping pills’, these social processes must be capable ‘of transforming individuals who are not ‘moral degenerates’ in any of the ‘normal’ senses, into murderers or conscious collaborators in the murdering process’ (ibid). ‘Moral blindness’ was required in equal measure *and* was evidently success-

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<sup>78</sup> The concept of ‘animal pity’ will be explored in Part Two of this thesis.

fully achieved. It may perhaps be understandable that those involved in mass murder benefit from a little 'moral distance' from genocide, just as modern nonhuman enslavers, and butchers and flesh consumers appear to benefit from some such distance from the abattoir.

The Nazis shrewdly achieved the necessary separation within the socially constructed context of 'political hygiene'. Thus, 'the invention of first the mobile, then the stationary gas chambers; the latter...reduced the role of the killer to that of the 'sanitation officer' asked to empty a sackful of 'disinfecting chemicals' through an aperture in the roof of a building the interior of which he was not prompted to visit' (ibid.: 26). Using themes similar to moral blindness, overcoming pity, and desensitisation, medical historian Hans Ruesch (1979) devotes a chapter of his antivivisectionist book, *Slaughter of the Innocent*, to what he called a process of dehumanisation in the case of animal experimenters. In this instance, degrees of dehumanisation are seen chiefly as a product of two factors: laboratory routine and specialist socialisation.

More recently, in 1991, Roger Ulrich, psychologist at Western Michigan University and former animal experimentalist, warned that continued support for animal vivisection procedures may incorporate a refusal to acknowledge the growing number of scientists who criticise animal experimentation on scientific grounds (Ulrich 1991: 198). However, he also cites Michael Giannelli's contribution to a 1985 collection on 'advances in animal welfare science' in which Giannelli claims that the most useful data to emerge from animal experimentation relates to what happens to the humans in the process. For example, Giannelli claims that:

We have learned that otherwise compassionate people can become remarkably desensitised and detached from the suffering they inflict on animals. We have



learned that highly intelligent people can be engaged in the most trivial or eccentric research, yet convince themselves that their work is important (cited in *ibid*).

In the context of this chapter, this apparent human ability to self-convince, or be convinced by others, is more than a little frightening and surely underlines the value of on-going, honest, and thorough commitment to reflexivity.

### Impersonal Killing.

Keith Tester (1997) describes similar processes of dehumanisation that can integrate 'normal' and 'ordinary' people into killing operations. Tester follows Peter Berger's (1979) lead and concentrates on the so-called 'Manson Family's' Tate/LaBianca killings, and the U.S. Army's involvement in Vietnam, in particular the latter's involvement in the infamous My Lai massacre. Tester notes Berger's assertion that, generally, North Americans are statistically most likely to kill members of their close family, or perhaps their friends and neighbours, than they are to kill complete strangers. Generally, it is necessary for people to receive training in order for them to kill people whom they do not personally know.<sup>79</sup>

Tester comments wryly that he is unsure whether he is comforted by such facts or not. Either way, it turns out that the killing of some human beings is harder than the killing of others. Since neither Charles Manson nor

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<sup>79</sup> If one were to take naming nonhuman animals as indicative of 'personally knowing' them, there are some parallels here. For example, when Richard Guy and Gilly Metherell began the 'Real Meat Company', they commonsensically recognised that naming animals they intended to eat may create

the US Army could rely on their charges having convenient 'family rows' with all their future and many victims, detailed and prolonged 'instruction' was essential to transform 'normal' people into the killers of strangers. Dehumanisation is absolutely central to such training.

Berger is absolutely clear that, in this training, *'the victims must be dehumanised and the killers deprived of individuality'* (Berger 1979: 122, emphasis in the original, cited in Tester 1997: 87). Berger was sure, says Tester, that what he termed the 'essential continuity' from My Lai to Manson was that 'both crimes consisted of *impersonal killings*' (Berger, 1979: 118, original emphasis, cited in Tester, 1997: 86). Thus, the alleged foundations of the mechanism for killing human strangers are identified: (1.) deprive victims of their humanity, which (2.) makes it hard for killers to identify with their victims, and (3.) provides killers with a way of proclaiming their own innocence on the basis that they were following orders from some superior authority (such as the charismatic Charles Manson or within the structured disciplined hierarchy of the army).

The dehumanisation of victims, incorporating the strategy of, and tendency toward, their impersonalisation, appears to make it much easier for them to be killed. Thus, William Laws Calley, the lieutenant in charge of the platoon which did the most killing at My Lai, is reported to have not regarded his particular victims as human beings.<sup>80</sup> Instead, they were simply 'the enemy', a construction involving negative racist slurs (Tester 1997: 86) and names such as 'gooks'. A Vietnam veteran, using the pseudonym 'Harry O'Connor', says that the 'gook syndrome', which led to the Viet Cong being

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difficulties. However, rather than not naming them at all, Guy says he deliberately called 'his' first pig Boorman 'so we wouldn't mind eating it' (my emphasis, quoted in the *Independent*, 3 Nov., 1999).

<sup>80</sup> Calley talked about how the military defined and understood 'enemy' (in Tester 1997: 87): 'They didn't give it a race, they didn't give it a sex, they didn't give it an age'. In common with much talk about animals other than 'pets', 'thing-like' status is emphasised with the word 'it' (see footnote 7).

called 'dinks' and 'zipperheads' as well as 'gooks', was prevalent in Vietnam.<sup>81</sup> The result: 'I've seen men bat around people, hit them on the head with rifles, act like gods, do anything they want with human beings' (quoted in Bourke 1999: 232). According to Joanna Bourke, a common military tactic involves encouraging soldiers to believe a fiction that enemies were not *really* human. Instead, they were animals such as baboons or rats; they are vermin or wild beasts.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Manson's 'Family' also said they did not believe they were killing human beings. They apparently believed that they were out to take the lives of 'pigs' (Tester 1997: 86), although it is not made clear whether this meant that they understood these victims as police officers, often labelled 'pigs' in the 1960's and 1970's. However, by 'classification', both sets of victims had their humanity successfully - if only conceptually - taken away from them.

An important central issue may be raised once more, one that Tester fails to address despite previously having written a book about animal protectionism, nonhuman rights advocacy and animal rights philosophy (Tester 1992): why should 'successful' dehumanisation appear to be so effective?

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<sup>81</sup> The assumption of the potency in dehumanising training appears to have registered at least with one North American jury. In 1977, a US veteran was accused of raping and murdering a Vietnamese woman. His counsel told the jury that the ex-Marine was highly trained: trained to kill such women as the victim in the case, thus 'what's so difficult about doing this again...kill one more Vietnamese girl?' The defendant was acquitted because it was judged that he could not sufficiently see the wrongfulness of his act, leading Jacqueline Lawson to write a paper entitled, 'She's a Pretty Woman...For a Gook' (see Bourke 1999: 354-55, 495).

<sup>82</sup> Bourke (1999:456-57) cites the following references here: John T. MacCurdy, *War Neuroses* (Cambridge 1918), p. 35; William A. Bacher (ed.), *The Treasure Star Parade* (New York 1942), p. 359; James J. Fahey, *Pacific War Diary 1942-1945* (Boston 1963), p. 178; John J. Floherty, *The Courage and the Glory* (Philadelphia 1942), p. 94; Henry ('Jo') Gullett, *Not as a Duty Only. An Infantryman's War* (Melbourne 1976), p. 127; John Hersey, *Into the Valley. A Skirmish of the Marines* (London 1943), pp. 39-40; George P. Hunt, *Coral Comes High* (New York 1946), pp. 59 and 82; Neville Jason, 'Letters', letter to his sister Roz from Vietnam, 11 December 1965, AWM; George H. Johnson, *The Toughest Fighting in the World* (New York 1944), p. 207; *Pen Pictures of the war by Men at the Front. Vol. 1. The Campaign in Natal to the Battle of Colenso* (London 1900), p. 60; Colonel R.G. Pollard, '6th. Aust. Div. Training Instruction, No.1. Jungle Warfare', 27 March 1943, p. 1, in Lieutenant-General Sir F.H. Berryman, 'Papers', AWM; Frederick Treves, *The Tale of a Field Hospital* (London 1901), p. 12; Wade Williams, *Infantry Attack* (Sydney 1955), pp. 52 and 93-5.

What is it that makes the deprivation of ‘humanity’ status such a destructively calamitous eventuality? Why is perceiving a human being as nonhuman seemingly ‘enough’ to allow every vile and cruel misfortune to come her or his way, be it discrimination, abuse, torture, and/or elimination and collective eradication? What is so useful about the ability to conceptually cast a human being over the species barrier? What is so wrong; so terribly, terribly unforgiving; so horrendous and incredibly *dangerous* about being on the nonhuman side of it?

### The Dehumanisation Effect in War.

One method of dehumanising enemies is to say that they *behave* ‘like animals’ and therefore this allows that the target person or population can be treated as such. As ever, linguistic classification is crucial here, and language is again revealed as a powerful social institution in the construction of culturally transmitted attitudes. For example, Bourke (1999: 229) relates the story of the 1939-45 radio broadcasts made by Sir Robert Vansittart. Apparently Vansittart suggested to his wartime listeners that the German public were undergoing a dramatic process of ‘reverse evolution’ which emphasised three alleged traits of the German psyche: envy, self-pity and cruelty. German nationals were characterised as ‘butcher birds’ who ‘felt no compunction about committing the most vile atrocities’ (ibid). Oddly, it was also claimed by Vansittart that German soldiers liked to machine-gun children to death and, if they could not find children, they would turn their machine-guns onto cows.

In the Vietnamese war in the 1960's, the alleged war activities of the Viet Cong perhaps appeared even more shocking due to advances in photography and the production of catalogues of 'atrocities' which were distributed to the press by the South Vietnamese Embassy. It was clearly and regularly suggested that the Viet Cong soldiers of North Vietnam behaved 'no better than animals', with pictures of them killing, torturing and mutilating large numbers of South Vietnamese people. Bourke describes photographs that depicted 'beheaded women, men hacked to death with machetes, a baby whose body was 'riddled' with submachine-gunfire; the bodies of priests... breasts sliced off a nurse; the corpse of a tortured teacher; and a dead mother complete with nursing baby' (ibid).

Bourke found that combat soldiers who took part in several different conflicts had their 'eagerness to fight' heightened by such stories and clearly many came to believe that they were dealing with sub or nonhuman enemies. One soldier, appalled by one of the earliest uses of gas on the Western Front, said he grew 'black with a deadlier hate' which made him want to 'kill and kill and kill'. After that, he said, he 'butchered savagely' (ibid.: 230). For another soldier, all Germans became 'monsters' when he learned of the concentration camps. Scott Camil, a soldier in Vietnam, said that a feeling of terror ran through the troops when they were told of the atrocities of their enemy. In these circumstances, he said, 'all laws of civilisation were suspended'. Therefore, because the Vietnamese did not act like human beings, 'then they did not have to be treated as such...And when you shot someone you didn't think you were shooting a human' (quoted in ibid.: 230-31). Another veteran said he told himself he was just killing 'commies'. He goes on: 'Oh, maybe the first time I saw a dead North Vietnamese I flinched a bit but after that they just became dead animals. It was either he'd shoot

me or I'd shoot him and I wasn't shooting at a person' (Simon Cole, in *ibid.*: 232).

Further ways of justifying killing 'the enemy' was to characterise what was happening as socially accepted forms of 'hunting'. This could be 'big game' hunting or foxhunting, or through seeing oneself as 'a poacher', and viewing dead enemy soldiers as part of the sporting 'bag' or the booty. Tank warfare was similarly equated with hunting animals and, ironically, given the size and noise of these machines of war, tracking people in a tank was some-times regarded as a form of 'stalking'. Even warfare at sea was characterised at times as hunting 'prey' and as catching the 'quarry' (*ibid.*: 233-34).

### The Meatgrinder.

Tester (1997: 88) asserts that due to their strategies of war, the North American army in Vietnam became 'little more than a giant killing machine'. If one were to claim that, in many senses, a modern-day slaughterhouse is nothing less than this, a killing machine, critical responses stating that the two cases are 'entirely separate' could well be expected, just as analogies between nonhuman slaughter and genocide are often heavily criticised. Yet, the US army in Vietnam had a specific organised strategy to encourage the killing of more enemy soldiers than could be replaced from North Vietnam. This strategy was known as 'the meatgrinder' and, according to the *Pentagon Papers* of 1971, it was the idea of General Westmoreland. Tester explains that, 'The goal of the meatgrinder was the maximisation of the body

count of the number of Vietcong killed during a mission' (ibid). As a calculated 'index of success', practical rewards and powerful incentives such as increased leave became attached to the increasingly brutal practice of 'meatgrinding', resulting in large numbers of Vietnamese civilians being deliberately counted as enemy soldiers to increase kill statistics. In language reminiscent of that in Gail Eisnitz's (1997) ethnographic investigation of slaughterhouses in the USA, Westmoreland's 'meatgrinder strategy' became involved in calculating its 'kills', 'the production of corpses', 'body counts' and 'kill rates'.

In 1987, Colonel David H. Hackworth co-wrote a book about his wartime experiences. The most decorated officer in the US army at the time of his retirement in 1971, Hackworth candidly described battle as being like 'working in a slaughterhouse'.<sup>83</sup> Again analogous with sections of Eisnitz's account of nonhuman slaughter regimes, Hackworth states: 'At first the blood, the gore, gets to you. But after a while you don't see it, you don't smell it, you don't feel it' (quoted in Bourke 1999: 355). Similarly, in a book written much earlier in 1943, soldier Richard Tregaskis said there is eventually 'no horror' in seeing death. Whereas the first corpse may be shocking, the rest becomes mere 'repetition' (quoted in ibid).

As stated above, an element present even in such repetitious killing is the understanding that it could be 'you' rather than 'them' to be killed. It is perhaps not immediately obvious that an extremely similar cognisance is also present in animal slaughterhouses. For example, according to Eisnitz's (1997) interviewees, processing speed means that many nonhuman animals on slaughter lines are frequently not stunned adequately - or not rendered

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<sup>83</sup> According to Bourke (1999: 153-54), the British Army experimented in 'hate-training' in 1941 and 1942. Apart from having to run while a loudspeaker chanted 'Kill the Hun. Kill the Hun', part of the 'training' involved recruits being sprayed with sheep's blood and being taken to animal slaughterhouses.

unconscious at all due to error or sloppy practice - and this leaves them terrified. Many animals are often in pain from repeated attempts to stun them, they thrash about as they hang by their legs on a moving shackle line as they are propelled toward 'operatives' whose job is to kill them (by 'bleeding them out') with a knife. They then move on to other workers who must cut various body parts off or remove skin.<sup>84</sup> In these often chaotic circumstances injuries to the *human* operatives, some serious and even life-threatening, may occur. Slaughter staff are constantly wary of the dangers around them and often have weapons, such as baseball bats, to hand in case the larger animals fall from the slaughter line. As a consequence of all of this, as with many soldiers, a defensive 'get them before they get us' mentality can emerge.

As Bourke shows in the detail of human warfare, it appears to be the case that, when any form of killing becomes regarded as routine activity, the act itself can become almost forgotten. In such circumstances, other objectives, such as simply 'getting the job done quickly', may emerge as the chief priority. For example, a slaughterer called Tice told Eisnitz that what 'pisses [him] off' were cases in which animals would not 'accept' that they were 'due' to be killed. Tice believes a pig should accept that 'it *is* in the stick pit' and 'you *are* going to kill it' (quoted in Eisnitz 1997: 93, emphasis in original). Without such 'co-operative acceptance' - or in actual nonhuman escape attempts judged to break the routine and thereby threaten throughput and thus wages - individual pigs may be regarded simply as 'troublemakers' (for resisting their own deaths) and may be severely punished for it.

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<sup>84</sup> The British animal rights organisation VIVA! produced a video in 2000 entitled 'Sentenced To Death' which revealed similar stunning failures in British slaughterhouses (Arcnews 2000: 18).



Tice, whose job was to 'stick' pigs says he once was left with a 'live hog' running around his work area because she had fallen off the shackle line. As one of these uncooperative 'troublemakers', thus an 'enemy' of smooth operational efficiency, the unfortunate pig, like all enemies in the battlefield, found herself due no sympathy: 'It would be just looking up at me and I'd be sticking, and I would just take my knife and -errk- cut its eye out while it was just sitting there. And this hog would just scream'. He goes on:

One time I took my knife - it's sharp enough - and sliced off the end of a hog's nose, just like a piece of bologna. The hog went crazy for a few seconds. Then it just sat there looking kind of stupid. So I took a handful of salt brine and ground it into his nose. Now the hog really went nuts, pushing its nose all over the place. I still had a bunch of salt left on my hand - I was wearing rubber gloves - and I stuck the salt right up the hog's ass. The poor hog didn't know whether to shit or go blind (ibid).

Several studies, in disciplines such as sociology, history and psychology, have attempted to make estimations of the 'brutalisation' effect of involvement in harm causing. For example, in the sociology of crime, many studies have investigated whether the experience of military service revealed itself at some later point in, say, crime or suicide statistics (see Bourke 1999: 356-59, 495).<sup>85</sup> Similarly, as noted at the outset, there has been a good deal of recent research conducted to evaluate the assumed causal link between

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<sup>85</sup> Bourke (1999: 356) cites Richard A. Kulka et al., *Trauma and the Vietnam War Generation. Report of Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study* (New York 1990), p. 180-86; David Lester, 'The Association Between Involvement in War and Rates of Suicide and Homicide', *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 131(6) (1991), pp. 893-95; David Lester, 'War and Personal Violence', in G. Ausenda (ed.), *Effects of War on Society* (San Marino 1992), p. 213; Colonel John J. Marren, 'Psychiatric Problems in Troops in Korea During and Following Combat', *U.S. Armed Forces Medical Journal*, vii.5 (May 1956), pp. 725-26; Jeffrey Streimer & Christopher Tennant, 'Psychiatric Aspects of the Vietnam War. The Effect on Combatants', in K. Maddock & B. Wright (eds.), *War. Australia and Vietnam* (Sydney 1987), pp. 230-61; James Webb... quoted in Timothy J. Lomperis, 'Reading the Wind'. *The Literature of the Vietnam War. An Interpretative Critique* (Durham, N. Carolina 1987), p. 17.

nonhuman abuse and the later abuse of human beings (see Arluke et al 1999; Ascione 1993; 1998; 1999; Boat 1995; 1999; Felthous & Kellert 1986; Kellert & Felthous 1985; Lacroix 1999; Lockwood 1999; Nibert 1994; Rigdon & Tapia 1977).

To some extent, these latter endeavours are again based on the Kantian notion of 'indirect duties' already discussed; that is, there should be a prohibition against overt cruelty to animals due to its effect on the people doing it and on human society in general. Thus Kant said: 'He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealing with men'. On the other hand, 'tender feelings towards dumb animals develop humane feelings towards mankind' (Immanuel Kant, quoted in Regan 2001: 12).

Interestingly, it may be argued that one of the main justifications for institutionalised animal welfarism is based on such an idea. After all, animal welfarism does not prevent the human instrumental use of other animals. Neither does it necessarily save nonhuman lives. Yet it does apparently serve to convince whole populations that such exploitation can be seen as entirely justified, largely unproblematic and effectively policed and regulated.

### Pornography.

Several of the contributors to Cathrin Itzin's (1992) collection, *Pornography: Women, Violence and Civil Liberties*, detail the frequent violent dehumanisation of - mainly but not exclusively - women in pornography.

There is evidence that the phenomenon of dehumanisation is common and widespread in the production of some pornography.

It is suggested that many contributions to Itzin's book provides substance to later assertions in this work that socialisation processes are powerful social forces which can lead to fundamental social values which in turn can validate and justify the commissioning of harmful acts. In particular, just as Itzin and her co-writers propose that what pornography 'teaches' people about sex is often sexualised and eroticised violence, portrayed as if 'this is sex', the argument to follow states that early normative lessons in primary socialisation, and the on-going values generated and perpetuated by secondary and adult socialisation, go a long way in explaining human attitudes to nonhuman animals. For many in the animal protection movement, general socialised attitudes 'about' other animals – for example, when socialisation processes assists in the construction of human beliefs about what humans and animals *are*; and even produce societal beliefs about what nonhuman animals 'are for' - can be seen as one of the obstacles that their movement must overcome in trying to explain new ideas about nonhuman-human relations.

In relation to campaigning strategy, Steve Baker (1998) seems entirely correct to suggest that nonhuman advocacy has significantly benefited from feminist writing, particularly in the 1990's. Although 'ecofeminism' has causes some controversy in feminist philosophy,<sup>86</sup> the following perspectives on pornography appear to benefit from being viewed through Karen Warren's (1990; 1994) ecological feminist conception of 'the logic of

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<sup>86</sup> On the one hand, 'mainstream' feminists (and I immediately acknowledge the problematics of using such terms) suggest that ecofeminism 'essentialises' women as 'close to nature' beings, while Carol Adams (1994: 87-88), who has labelled herself a 'feminist-vegetarian critical theorist', criticises ecofeminism for not recognising that animal domination is absolutely central to nature domination. This appears similar to Jim Mason's (1993) 'agri-cultural' perspective.

domination'.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, a general ecofeminist lens is useful it seems, since writers such as Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) see pornography as a form of 'dissection' because, the argument goes, many rational modern machine-men have difficulty dealing with 'real' and/or 'complete' women. Therefore, such men prefer pornography and perhaps sex tourism based on the exploitation, commodification and the reduction to their sexual parts of exceptionally marginalised and generally powerless women.<sup>88</sup>

A strength in the ecological feminist approach, it seems, like the earlier 'humanitarian' stance of animal rightist Henry Salt, is its insistence on seeing various forms of subjugation as firmly linked to and interwoven with other modes of oppression.<sup>89</sup> While it perhaps should be stated that many 'eco-feminists' would likely be reluctant to use a rights formulation (although Regan [2001: 22] cites Josephine Donovan's claim that natural rights theory 'presents impressive and useful arguments for the ethical treatment of animals'), the attraction in the present work to ecofeminist theory is precisely due to this explicit acknowledgement of interlocking oppressions, rather than seeing eco-feminism *per se* as the equivalent of animal rights thought.

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<sup>87</sup> The notion of the 'logic of domination' has proved to be controversial in ecological philosophy, with writers criticising and defending its conceptual validity. See, for example, Dixon's (1996) attack and Crittenden's (1998) defence. The first articulation of a logic of domination I am aware of appears in Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, first published in 1964.

<sup>88</sup> see [http://www.earthisland.org/eijournal/win98/fe\\_win98womentrade.html](http://www.earthisland.org/eijournal/win98/fe_win98womentrade.html) for an account from *Earth Island Journal* of the global trade in women and children. Like nonhuman animals, this article notes, 'Throughout history, patriarchy has valued women not as persons but as things, pieces of property to be bought and sold'.

<sup>89</sup> Some feminist writers do not seem to share this perspective. For example, White (1993: 106) in a chapter entitled, 'Pornography and Pride', apparently does not see women characterised as animals as harmful due to men seeing both as exploitable but because *she* is offended that men make the comparison and 'lower' women to animal status. She writes: '[In the history of slavery, Black women were] at the bottom of the pile, treated like animals instead of human beings. As I listened to these victims of pornography, I heard young people describe how they felt about seeing other women in pornography, how they felt about the way women's genitals and breasts were displayed and women's bodies are shown in compromising positions. I thought about the time of slavery, when Black women had their bodies invaded,

It seems evident from a perspective such as Warren's that an instance of violent pornography (as distinct from 'erotica' involving consenting participants) is an example of a logic of domination, defined as a patriarchal prerequisite that has sustained and justified the twin domination of women and 'nature' (Warren, cited in Crittenden 1998: 249). In a great many examples of pornography, it appears that (at least) sexism, racism and speciesism merge and blend within a single act of ideological domination with often excessive culturally symbolic subordination set and represented within acts of extreme cruelty, persecution and, indeed, rights violations. For example, Forna (1992: 105) alludes to interlocking strands when she states that pornography sustains an entrenched belief that sex with a black women or a black man is 'different' - and certainly more 'savage' - than sex with a white person. More particularly, while sex with black people is seen as 'more physical' than sex with white people, it is at the same time less emotional, less spiritual and, of course, ultimately *less human*:

Black women are represented in porn as synonymous with deep carnality, animal desires and uncontrolled lust... 'Naturally' less civilised than her white counterpart, she exists solely for sex... The words and adjectives which caption pictures of naked black women are the same words used over and over again. The black woman is described as being 'panther-like', possessing 'animal grace'. She is photographed caged, chained and naked. Hers is a savage, wild and primitive, exotic sexuality: a less than human sexuality (ibid.: 104).

In relation to black men:

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their teeth and limbs examined, their bodies checked out for breeding, checked out as you would an animal, and I said to myself, *We've come a long way, haven't we?* (bold type added).

They are super-sexualised studs, members of a lower caste without the natural inhibitions of civilised whites. Sex between two blacks is a steamy, savage affair (ibid).

Citing research conducted in 1980 and 1981 by Teish and Leidholdt, Mayall and Russell (1993: 167) also make the claim that black women are regularly associated with nonhuman animals in pornography.<sup>90</sup> Teish notes that the lucrative pornography industry exploits black and white women in different ways: she argues that white women are often portrayed as 'soft', while black women are frequently shown as 'ugly, sadistic, and animalistic, undeserving of human affection'. Similarly, Leidholdt reports that while Asian women are often portrayed as 'dolls', Latin women are depicted as sexually submissive but voracious and, in arguably the most negative portrayal, Black women are shown as 'dangerous and contemptible sexual animals'.<sup>91</sup>

Recalling the point about dissection, Itzin herself (1992: 43) says that pornographic accounts often *reduce* women to 'just' their genital organs, while their assumed animality is never very far away. Thus women are sometimes regarded as:

holes, slots, sluts, pieces of meat. Men can walk the streets looking for 'slots', look at their wives as 'slots'. And indeed letters from male readers [to porn-

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<sup>90</sup> Porn titles comprising racism or speciesism, or racism *and* speciesism: 'Animal Sex Among Black Women,' 'Black Bitch,' 'Black Girl's Animal Love,' 'Bitch's Black Stud,' 'Gang Banged by Blacks,' 'Geisha Girls,' 'Oriental Sadist's Pet,' 'Raped by Arab Terrorists,' 'Bound Harem Girl.'

<sup>91</sup> Collins, P. H. (1993: 101), in 'Pornography and Black Women's Bodies', note that, 'Certain 'races' of people have been defined as being more body-like, more animal-like, and less godlike than others'. Biological notions of race and gender prevalent in the early nineteenth century which fostered the animalistic icon of Black female sexuality were joined by the appearance of a racist biology incorporating the concept of degeneracy (Foucault, 1980). While the sexual and racial dimensions of being treated like an animal are important, the economic foundation underlying this treatment is critical. Animals can be economically exploited, worked, sold, killed, and consumed. As "mules", African-American women become susceptible to such treatment. [these views reinforced by pornographic images of Black women]. Publicly exhibiting Black women may have been central to objectifying Black women as animals and to creating the icon of Black women as animals (Collins 1993: 101-02)

ographic publications] describe their wives in such dehumanised and derogatory terms: as 'groaning and moaning like a stuck pig', with 'gushing fannies' and 'sopping cunts'.

Itzin notes that much pornography shows women 'enjoying' being 'used as animals' (seemingly assuming that animals like to be 'used as animals') (ibid.: 49). It is also remarkable the number of times hunting associations and butchers' knives find their way into pornographic narratives (as they find their way into narratives of warfare). For example, Itzin describes scenes from a 'snuff movie' thus:

[A]fter a rather brutal rape, a young woman was tied to a table, and a hand was amputated with a Black-and-Decker type saw. Then she was raped again, and in the course of it her guts were spilled out by the rapist using a great butcher's knife (ibid.: 49-50).

After viewing this particular video (obtained in Dublin), Clodagh Corcoran of the Irish Campaign Against Pornography said, 'I have lived in fear ever since, knowing that while the rape, degradation and dehumanisation of women is filmed and sold as entertainment, women's status in society is worthless, and our lives within and outside our homes are also without value' (in ibid.: 50). Itzin, along with Labour MP Clare Short, went to the Obscene Publications Branch at Scotland Yard and found several examples of adult and child pornography involving stories such as a pornographic cartoon about Little Red Riding Hood who is gang-raped by several hunters and shown to 'enjoy' it; women being penetrated by a dog, a donkey and a pig (while one kisses the pig's snout); women hung by their breasts from meat hooks and a woman being eviscerated, as if in a slaughterhouse, and sexually murdered (ibid.: 51).

Peter Barker (1992: 134) understands common pornographic themes of representing woman as animals or engaged in sexual acts with animals as a clear expression of utter contempt for women. Contempt, moreover, that 'has to be continually reinforced in order for men to believe that their domination of women is justified'. After all, he says, echoing dimensions of the logic of domination thesis, and the suggestion in the present thesis that non-human animals are socially understood to occupy categories of beings who can legitimately be harmed, it is 'weaker', 'lesser-than' groups who are candidates for exploitation: 'there would be no justification for abusing and subordinating a group of people who were seen as being equal and worthy of respect' (ibid). 'Porn' also makes men feel good, because men in pornography are virtually always 'sexual athletes' and 'studs' whose 'performance' is never less than sufficient to satisfy all the needs and more of their sexual partners. Barker also claims that pornography teaches men that sex is something men 'do' to women. In porn 'all men have the means of feeling sexually desirable, sexually proficient, and completely strong and powerful, even if it is just for a few minutes' (ibid.: 136).

There is often a fairly conventional division of labour in pornography, even if the sex itself is often unrealistic. While porn says men 'do sex' to women - they also apparently 'do' the DIY too!, while women (naturally) do cooking and housework.<sup>92</sup> Thus, pornographic magazines have advice on how to enlarge penises and how to delay ejaculation; cookery books have advice on how to make the 'perfect meal'; women's magazines show women how to 'keep their men', how to look 'sexy' and how to 'perform' in bed and in kitchen. This is the social construction of what she/he/'we' 'want'.

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<sup>92</sup> A recent advertisement for lager was constructed in this fashion: the potential (and in pornography inevitable) sexual couplet involved a 'housewife' and an electrician who ostensibly arrives to 'service' her refrigerator.



As men 'want' the 'manly' meat dish on their plates - a meal, after all, is 'no good' without it, many also seemingly 'want', expect and demand some culturally constructed 'meat' in their bedrooms as well.

Barker is another writer who notes that a great deal of pornography shows women enjoying being abused (ibid.: 140). This factor seems to warrant some comparison with John Robbin's (1987: 131) claims (as seen in greater detail in Part Two) that modern culture provides a 'cotton candy' version of the lives of animals who are depicted as being delighted 'offering themselves to children as friendly things to eat'.<sup>93</sup> No doubt some individual women do obtain some sort of masochistic satisfaction by placing themselves in the position of the abused, yet pornography appears to suggest that this is a common attitude for women to hold or - as in the rape scene in the controversial 1970s film *Straw Dogs* - something they will eventually appear to accept. However, it is a fair bet that no nonhuman animal has actually delightedly offered herself up to the slaughterer's knife or the experimenter's scalpel. Therefore, such depiction, in either case, are perhaps best regarded as essentially ideological in nature.

Do these constructions of women in pornography have an empirical effect? Again, as stated in relation to the 'link' between animal harm and subsequent human harm, strict causality is *not* claimed here - especially any that could be identified by positivistic methodology. However, it is far easier to be content with a position like Ted Benton's (1998) who suggests that cultural influences can shape the human individual. If a societal 'ambience' exists, different people will react to it in different ways, but the

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<sup>93</sup> We may recall reactions to the scene in Douglas Adams' *Restaurant At the End of the Galaxy* when a pig enthusiastically offers himself up as food, even suggesting the body parts he felt to be the most tender.

general point that societies can effectively 'set the tone' for the adoption of beliefs and attitudes appears to be a defensible position.

Some feminist-inspired research does suggest that male attitudes to real women are often influenced by pornographic characterisations, produced and distributed within patriarchal culture. However, is there also any evidence to support the ecofeminist perspective that men may see both women and animals/nature as objects for exploitation? The same research does seem to offer evidence in support of that assertion as well.

For example, Russell cites Shere Hite's research in the 1980's which was based on asking male respondents to account for their declared wish to rape women. One interviewee said this:

Why do I want to rape women? Because I am basically, as a male, a predator and all women look to men like prey. I fantasise about the expression on a woman's face when I 'capture' her and she realises she cannot escape. It's like I won, I own her (quoted in Russell 1993: 120).

Here 'man-the-hunter' is revealed, the 'predator' after his 'prey' - or perhaps 'man-the-pet-owner', who 'wins' his women like one may win goldfishes at travelling fairgrounds. Russell was also soon to find further evidence of 'man-the-dissector', as it appears that some rapists may not see their victims as whole human beings, rather they see them simply as a collection of body parts. Russell says that to many men, women 'are tits, cunts, and asses. This makes it easier to rape them. 'It was difficult for me to admit that I was dealing with a human being when I was talking to a women,' one rapist reported' (ibid.: 135). And, look out, here comes a-hunting the butcher man once more (reported to Zillmann and Bryant in 1984): 'A man should find

them, fool them, fuck them, and forget them'; with, 'If they are old enough to bleed, they are old enough to butcher' (cited in *ibid.*: 139).

MacKinnon (1992: 503) also notes that in Merced, California, a man named Victor Burnham was convicted of spousal rape for forcing his wife to have sex with 68 neighbours and/or strangers while he took photographs, no doubt for later pornographic use. His wife says she was also forced by him to have sex with a dog. Finally, and quite shockingly in terms of the logic of domination thesis, she further testified to 'episodes of torture with a battery-charged cattle prod'.

### In the Sexist Playground.

Feminist writers have understandably been interested in children's' sex role socialisation and the effects of pornographic representations. Research with school students suggests that, on a personal and peer group interactive level, naming young women as certain types of animal can serve to restrict, alter and constrain their social behaviour. For example, in the early 1980's, Sue Lees and Sue Sharpe interviewed around 100 15- and 16-year old females about a variety of their views and interests. It soon emerged that one of their foremost concerns involved the social construction of their sexual reputation and the steps they took to avoid being called hurtful names (Lees & Sharpe 1984).

It became evident that many of the respondents believed that they were being forced to tread a fine line between acting in ways that may result in their teenage boyfriends, male acquaintances and female friends calling them names such as 'tight bitch' (because they resisted sexual advances) on

the one hand, and 'slag' or 'easy lay' (because they too readily gave in to sexual advances) on the other.<sup>94</sup> Lees and Sharpe also found a range of animalistic labels such as 'old dog', 'cow', and 'blind dog' used in a derogatory manner.

Recalling a point made above in the section on dehumanisation, one interviewee said she would rather be called a cow or a dog than a 'slag' on the basis that others can clearly *see* that she is not an actual four-legged bovine or canine creature. Both the authors of this piece and this particular respondent think that the animalistic slurs mentioned lie somewhere between the terms 'tight bitch' and 'slag'. Lees and Sharpe say of the women, 'they mustn't end up being called a slag' (ibid.: 18). 'Slag' appears to rank with names such as 'slut', 'tart' and 'scrubber'. In this sense, still engaged in the business of dehumanisation, there seems to be some labels *even worse* than being named as a type of nonhuman animal. In fact, this latter point appears to be true in some pornography as well. For example there is a particularly disgusting anti-Semitic book entitled *Sluts of the S.S.* (cited in Mayall & Russell 1993: 175) in which Jewish women are described with 'standard' derogatory insults such as 'whore', 'slut', 'dog' and 'swine'.<sup>95</sup> In one violent encounter a woman is called a 'filthy Jewish slut'. However, as a final insult - the move to absolute 'thing-like' categories with no possibility of moral status - she is called a 'human toilet' in scenes of oral rape.

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<sup>94</sup> Lees and Sharpe (1984: 19) recognise that there are derogatory names for young men too, such as 'wanker' and 'prick' - interestingly, no animal names are used to depict men, at least in this study, while the authors claim that there is a far bigger choice of hurtful names to aim at females rather than males.

<sup>95</sup> The Anti Nazi League (2000: 11) cites Holocaust denier David Irvin who says of Hungarian Jews being shipped to Auschwitz in 1944: 'You are talking about 45,000 tonnes of meat'.

## The Species Barrier - 'Maintenance'.

'Where do sausages come from?' asked my five-year-old son, recently. 'Pigs', I replied. 'Yes', he said, a little impatiently, 'but where do the pigs get them from?'

Judy Rumbold, *The Guardian*, 28.2.2001.

How do we justify our treatment of nonhumans? We lie - to ourselves and to each other, about our species and about others. Deceptive language perpetuates speciesism... Like sexism or racism... speciesism can't survive without lies.

Joan Dunayer, *Animal Equality: language and liberation*.

This thesis has thus far suggested that many individuals hold fundamentally important socially-produced notions about meaning(s) associated with the idea of the 'species barrier'; and precise meanings about human beings and about 'animals' which have found expression in long-standing philosophical thought, religious belief and many traditional and modern social practices and rituals. It has been noted that 'species differences' are not claimed by many animal rightists to be an ontological mistake (see Hayward 1997), or that all animal species could be treated in exactly the same way (Midgley 1983; chap 9) physically and perhaps even ethically. However, the animal rights case rests on the argument that species membership alone should not be sufficient to exclude many nonhuman individuals from basic moral consideration beyond that provided by traditional animal welfarism.

Whilst no animal rights philosopher expects exactly equal *treatment* between 'species', advocates tend to argue strongly that the preferences or

interests of nonhumans should not be systematically and arbitrarily denied simply because they are not human beings (Regan 1985, 2000; Francione 1996a, 1996b, 1998). It has been seen that animals other than human are routinely, and by law, afforded *some* moral status. It is true that nonhuman animals may be ‘things’ in law (Midgley 1985; Francione 1996a, 1996b; Wise 2000), but they are at least recognised as *sentient things* who can be harmed both physically and psychologically and thus, humans widely accept a ‘duty of care’ toward nonhuman welfare (Scruton 2000). As a consequence of this societal orientation, human beings are prevented from doing to animals absolutely *anything* that they might want to do to them. However, this does not prevent human beings from annually breeding billions of other animals in artificially-high numbers, rearing and confining them in intensive ‘factory’ conditions, transporting them long distances to places of execution, and serving up their dead bodies as food. This ‘duty of care’ does not prevent human beings from breeding other animals in remarkably controlled conditions to create, for example, ‘pathogen-free’ nonhuman ‘models’ for use in vivisection experiments. Further, it does not prevent humans from hunting them down in acts of ‘pest control’, or simply in ‘sporting’ rituals, or in both at the same time; and it does not prevent many people regarding certain types of nonhuman animals as disposable toys, as presents, as part of collections, or for petting.

Animal rights scholar advocates such as Tom Regan and Gary Francione argue that the ‘duty of care’ - bound up as it is in animal welfare ideology - means that humans feel they are morally justified in routinely *overriding* the greatest interests of other animals in order to satisfy relatively trivial human desires (Francione 1998; Regan 2001). From his non-rights utilitarian stance, Peter Singer (1983: 232) notes that, when ‘interests’ clash

- 'even a clash between the life of a nonhuman and the gastronomic preferences of a human being' - then it is usual for the human's interest to win out.

It is surely a stark reflection of the low moral status of nonhumans that their very existence as individuals can be placed against human gastronomic choices. Furthermore, it is worth noting that few humans living outside ice-flows and particular desert environments *need* to treat other animals *as if* they were food; neither, given the existence, and the further potential development, of 'non-animal methodology', would all medical or toxicological research end without the use of nonhuman animals; indeed, some argue that human health would likely benefit without animal testing (Ruesch 1979; Sharpe 1988; Page 1997). Human beings are presumably imaginative enough to find other sporting endeavours with which to replace hunting nonhuman animals to their deaths; and they can also find alternative toys, presents and even pets.

It could be admitted that so-called 'pest control' represents something of a dilemma for animal rights advocates when compared with other forms of direct nonhuman harm at the hands (or knives and forks) of human beings. Former environmental journalist, Richard North, claimed recently<sup>96</sup> that a widespread adoption of animal rights principles would result in entire cities being overrun by 'sewer rats', a situation which humans would simply be 'forced to accept' because they believe 'animals have rights'. Similarly, a member of the audience during a televised animal rights debate asked

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<sup>96</sup> in the BBC2 television documentary, *Beastly Business*, transmitted in Britain in 2000.

panellists whether animal rights beliefs would prevent them striking a mosquito sucking blood from their arms.<sup>97</sup>

However, as said, animal rightist have always accepted that some rights are likely to conflict with others of fellow rights bearers. Few animal rights advocates would therefore deny that individuals, groups and communities are justified in defending themselves from attack, including defending their food (or blood!) supplies. However, animal rights philosophy would rule out the *automatic privileging* of all human interests and rights above all nonhuman ones. For all the arguments and assertions about the ‘fanatical radicalism’ of animal rights views, many campaigners merely advocate placing some nonhumans ‘in the moral mix’ with other rightholders.

As indicated, current human-nonhuman relations, notwithstanding an orientation towards a duty of care for animals and an acceptance of animal welfare ideology, results in serious nonhuman interests being negated for the flimsiest of human ones. As suggested also, this may be seen, in part, as a ‘product’ of phenomenological understandings of ‘species membership’ and an acceptance that human beings unerringly sit at the top of a conceptual ‘natural order’ or ‘ladder’. Like Rousseau,<sup>98</sup> all human beings are habitually encouraged to look *downwards* from a lofty ‘next to God’ vantage position on a ‘ladder of being’, and regularly defiantly declare: ‘What...shall I compare myself to the brutes?’ (quoted in Rosenberg 1955).

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<sup>97</sup> In the BBC2 ‘Animal Night’ sequence: ‘The Animal Rights Debate’, transmitted in the 1980s. A female animal advocate of my acquaintance responded to this point by saying that even if it were a black, lesbian, single-mother settling on her arm, sucking blood, she would indeed get ‘swatted’

<sup>98</sup> Rousseau’s attitudes towards women left as much to be desired as his attitudes towards ‘beasts’ - and he saw both ‘in a state of nature’, according to Midgley (1983: 74). Similarly, other ‘admirable theorists’, such as Aristotle, Hume and Kant cause embarrassment to some contemporary philosophers due to their sexist and speciesist positions (see Midgley’s chapter, ‘Women, Animals and Other Awkward Cases’, 1983: 74-88, and Clark (1984) for further embarrassment for similar reasons).



Having considered the construction of social beliefs with regard to human-nonhuman relationships and, in the last section, detailed how the perception of a barrier between human and other animals can be used to dehumanise human victims of oppression, the following section will focus on what might be regarded as some of the most influential social practices and social forces that maintain the ideology of the species barrier. This section not only focuses on the importance of human socialisation processes but on what Jim Mason (1993) terms ‘rituals of dominionism’ which occur daily in Western cultures within the precepts of an ‘agri-culturalist’ orientation towards nature. However, before consideration of these concepts, and prior to detailing animal rights thought in general, it will be beneficial to review perspectives on what it means to be born into modern societies that systematically exploit other animals for a variety of human ends.

### Growing Up as Animal-Harming Animal Lovers.

Professor of psycholinguistics, Stanley Sapon (1998), investigates the culture of North America. He is interested in the cultural transmission of social values in general and, in particular, what humans tell each other and their children about the moral status of the nonhuman animals. Sapon outlines how and why cultural norms and values are transmitted within and throughout human societies, focusing on processes of socialisation or acculturation processes. He compiled a description of ‘American culture’ derived from travel agent guide books and brochures, school textbooks and publications from organisations such as Chambers of Commerce. From this

variety of sources, Sapon finds that the culture of North America is generally characterised as being 'loving, caring and nurturing of its children, protective of its disabled citizens and its fragile seniors, generous to its needy members, and holds high moral standards' (ibid).

What is more: 'Although America has been a 'melting pot' of many different cultures, its people are united by their commitment to peace, gentleness, and the rejection of violence. Its educational system is concerned with more than just academics, it places great stress on teaching and modelling moral values'. Furthermore, 'Although there is no 'state religion', most of its citizens consider themselves to have in common a deep respect for the ethical principles embodied in the Ten Commandments'.

Finally: 'American children are taught - in the home, in school and from the pulpit - to be kind to one another, to be kind to animals, to abhor cruelty of any sort, that violence is not the way to resolve conflicts, and that taking of life is wrong' (ibid). In this 'wonderful' and 'glowing' self-appreciation of the culture of the United States of America, Sapon states that it is possible to clearly identify an 'acculturation syllabus' which the majority of North American children are exposed to. He sees a neatly packaged syllabus of general norms and values destined to 'be passed on to the next generation'. However, he goes on to explore the 'psychological consequences' for people whose eventual empirical reality bears little resemblance to this normative syllabus. In his studies he finds a social reality 'glaringly different' from the cultural stereotype. He discovers social behaviour that denies, contradicts and 'mindlessly violates' the claimed ethical principles. Indeed, he argues that it the *violations* of the syllabus that are frequently relished and admired. This 'profound discordance' cannot be psychologic-

ally beneficial, Sapon suggests. How potentially confusing, he asks, is such a 'two-tier value system'?

Sapon argues that dealing with these contradictions requires living in an 'atmosphere of scrupulously maintained denial and deception', in which adults deceive themselves, each other, and their children. 'American culture', he insists, is based on an 'internally contradictory system for acculturating the children in our society'. Turning to how humans and other animals are presented to the young, Sapon says that adults, 'typically raise children from birth to five or six years in a kind of fantasy-land of ideal behaviour on the part of the world's inhabitants'. In this 'land of goodness and mercy', other animals are humanity's friends, and 'humans are friends to the other animals'. There are no scenes of bloodshed or any depiction of physical violence in children's picture or storybooks. Instead, 'children talk to cows and the cows talk back' (ibid).

For 'models of right conduct' parents and children can look toward a range of talking animals - mice, ducks and hens, or 'wise old bears and the like'. In scenes that reinforce the 'safety' of family life, animal characters are regularly used, typically depicted in scenes of nonhuman mothers looking after their 'babies'. There is, of course, no divorce here, no child abuse, no neglect and no violent conflict between parents. Sapon moves on to develop a point that could perhaps be presumed; the point that, in these early publications, nonhuman animals are never seen being slaughtered for food, hanging upside down on 'kill lines', nor often shown in pieces on the dinner plate. When Paul (1996) considers the representation of other animals in children's television programmes, a similar pattern emerges. Two major themes emerge. First, a 'hierarchy of suffering' in any depiction of animals in which cruelty to mammals was explicitly seen as morally wrong, while

fishes and invertebrates ‘were largely excluded from moral concern’.

Second, the tendency to avoid discussion - or depiction - of human beings using other animals as meat. According to Paul, ‘mammal meat’ was rarely consumed on television shows and when it was, its ‘origins were either heavily disguised or exaggerated into a joke’.

If these storybooks and TV programmes have an impact on children’s attitudes toward other animals, helping to shape what children believe animals are, and furthermore helping to set the moral climate when they are very young then, Sapon asks, ‘What happens when they get older?’ He argues that many older children are subjected to ‘a behavioural reconditioning programme’ in order that their perceptions move toward the reality of participation in the ‘denials’ and ‘delusions’ of the adult world (Sapon 1998).

With a nod toward the ethnomethodological concept of ‘indexicality’, which involves understanding based on individuals’ abilities to interpret events and utterances by employing their contextual knowledge (see Heritage 1984: 142-44), Sapon notes that psychologists use the term ‘cognitive map’ in relation to the links between the many things that people learn. The cognitive map:

suggests an image of a map that shows what fits with what, what ideas, what labels, what responses are appropriate in what settings, what contexts call for a special set of rules (Sapon 1998).

Furthermore, the cognitive map also indicates ‘appropriate attitudes and feelings that are linked to other items on the map’. After initiation into ‘the Garden of Eden map’, Sapon suggests that children hold an ‘utterly

beautiful' picture of the relationship between humans and nonhumans. Sapon seems to make this claim in relation to all North American children, although many children of 'livestock farmers', hunters and even 'travellers' would perhaps not be brought up wholly ignorant of the plight of nonhuman animals used instrumentally by humans. Nevertheless, he argues that around the time of primary school some aspects of 'the real world' are brought into all children's consciousness. This change is obviously significant, since the 'real world' into which children are subsequently thrust is 'a world where there are people who are mean, hurtful, cruel, deceitful, hostile, violent and murderous'. Sapon suggests that this is a time when children typically experience some form of 'serious disillusionment', when 'animal friends' are destroyed by 'a culturally sanctioned programme of systematic desensitisation'.<sup>99</sup> Other animals are transformed, he says, from fantasy figures and playmates who behave just like people and have feelings to 'objects of utility'. Thus, in the 'end of innocence' in relation to the plight of some types of animals at least, children's cognitive maps are socially rewritten or are at least subject to a process of refinement. At this point, *certain* nonhuman animals are 'sheltered' by 'socially acceptable human compassion'. Those species, those Thomas (1983) calls the 'privileged' ones, are now cognitively and ethically separated into those *within* and those *without* the 'circle of our compassion' (Sapon 1998). Sapon states that there is an unwritten textbook entitled, 'The Manual for Desensitising Children to

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<sup>99</sup> Although Sapon suggests the necessity of teaching older children about the 'real world', it seems that 'timing' and 'method' are both important factors. For example, when American animal activist Laura Moretti noticed a display including live 'farm' animals had been set up in her local shopping centre, she said in the hearing of a 4-year-old fascinated by a piglet that it is '[w]eird to think someday that pig'll be somebody's bacon, eh?' Whether upset by timing or method, the child's father angrily said: 'You had to say that in front of the kid, didn't ya?' Morelli says she knows this enlightenment is a 'dirty job', but 'someone's gotta do it'. (Morelli, 2000).

Cruelty and Adapting Them to Live in the Real World' which perhaps can be regarded as an introduction to the inconsistencies in the 'adult way' of regarding other animals.

Sapon also suggests the social construction of 'the good list' for other animals. Notwithstanding that only a limited range of nonhumans (say, those often classified as 'vermin') are entirely placed almost completely outside of the general welfarist principle of 'be kind to animals', inclusion on the 'good list' is absolutely necessary to avoid the slaughterhouse, the dinner table, the laboratory or the 'sporting arena'. Unsurprisingly, first on the list are 'pet' animals, 'whom our culture describes as cute, loveable, cuddly, loyal, affectionate or noble'. These are not only dogs, cats and horses, but 'gerbils, guinea pigs, ferrets, iguanas, parrots or other exotic animals'. Sapon also includes what he calls 'performance animals' on the 'good list', meaning animals such as race horses, homing pigeons, circus elephants and various others found in travelling circuses and zoos (ibid).

One of Sapon's central points appears to mean attempting to understand how other animals are useful resources in the general cultural definition of acceptable and unacceptable compassionate behaviour. Even though there is a stark 'rowing back' from the 'Garden of Eden map', the treatment of certain types of nonhuman animals may still tell human beings many things about who and what *they* are. According to Sapon, this 'retreat from Eden' involves a 'cognitive map adjustment' - a child's 'ethical map' is re-ordered: where once she was 'rigorously and insistently taught - as a rule' - that killing is wrong, she later finds that *real life* is not that simple, nor is it so pure or ethically consistent.

The construction of some animals as 'pets' - the elevated 'select club of animal species' (Cazaux, 1999: 105) - assists in showing that other

species can be 'sifted', 'sorted' and 'graded' from once universal 'friends' into variously valued and useful categories; and sometimes into 'useless' and even 'evil' types. On the privileged 'good list' an animal is afforded the benefit of individuality, frequently given a name and commonly regarded, socially if not legally, as a 'someone' or a 'somebody' rather than a 'something'.

As a psycholinguist, Sapon is interested in how language can be utilised in what he says is the necessary ending of children's innocence about the world in general and human-nonhuman relationships in particular. On a general level, as children grow up in a culture 'grossly conflicted about *all* forms of violence' (1998, emphasis in the original), they realise and are told that the universal script based on 'nobody gets killed' is actually an illusion. Thus, the adult world has a 'cultural formula' to deal with this shift in perception and cognisance. Typically, the formula begins with human animals being placed at some centre or 'core', while other people are judged by their apparent moral distance from 'humans like us'. Thus, killing 'humans like us' is called 'murder', whereas some human beings in some places may be killed if they are 'criminals'. This killing is not 'murder', it is 'execution'. Dread 'enemies of the nation' – (collateral) citizens as well as soldiers - may be killed in times of war.

Now that there has been a perceptual shift far away from the 'nobody gets killed' mythology, this type of killing is actively applauded and is labelled 'heroic'; a good and vital 'service' to one's country, or even the wider world; and, of course, an essential 'service' to some putative (and inevitably 'decent') value system. Aware of the connection between language and power (see Fairclough, 1989), Sapon states that words are not just words, they represent *susceptibilities*. The names we use - and, ideologic-

ally, the uses to which words are directed (Squires, 1990) - show the extent of our susceptibility, even as adults, to 'the constraints on our ethical perceptions, and on our behaviour'.

When it comes to what adults 'do' to their children in socialisation, Sapon (1998) states that they are consciously aware - *awfully* aware he says - of the requirement to 'reshape children's perspectives' in order that they can become 'guilt-free carnivores'. Francione (1996a) suggests that our present attitudes to other animals are 'hopelessly confused' and Sapon seems to give some indication why this is the case. When it comes to acculturation about other animals, it appears that the typical process contains the strands of its own internal conflicts. For cultural, certainly economic, and for 'indirect' moral reasons, human societies do not teach utter ruthlessness toward other animals. For whatever reason society seem reluctant to teach its children that they need have absolutely no regard for nonhuman animals at all. But more than that, using other animals as cultural resources to teach children moral values appears to make it more difficult to subsequently justify exploiting them in the many and varied ways in which they are exploited. How modern human societies deal with issues such as killing other animals in order to eat them is to ultimately fudge the issue.

Liable to rely on the ability of animal welfare legislation to get them off some 'moral hook', humans build a 'wall of carefully maintained ignorance' to block any substantial return to what Sapon terms 'old chords of compassion' based on early socialisation. Building such a wall involves the avoidance of Freud's 'unpleasure' (explored a little more fully in Part Two of the thesis), commonly requiring an increase in moral distance and a denial of ethically-relevant proximity. For example, total empathy for 'meat animals' must be suppressed and the empirical realities of the processes in



‘animal farming’ - artificial insemination, mutilations, fattening, transportation, slaughter - must be resisted, obscured and disguised.

In the end, Sapon states, human beings deliberately mislead each other about ‘how meat, fish, poultry, eggs and milk are actually produced for the market’. From a psychoanalytical standpoint, lying to oneself is as understandable as it is common. And why not? After all, the question has some value. While Foucault enlarged on Nietzsche’s knowledge = power thesis, the types of knowledge dealt with here represent power, certainly, but also *pain*. Sapon shows that the *realities* about what happens - the ‘what we do’ - to other animals are painful realities - as Adams frequently states,<sup>100</sup> who wants to *really* know that what they are eating is a dead body? Thus, what makes more sense than to block out and deny such knowledge?<sup>101</sup>

The illogicalities and inconsistencies which result from apparently contradictory socialisation processes have been a source of comment by many of the philosophers and campaigners involved in animal advocacy. Sapon does not doubt that, when the grown-up children of meat eaters adopt a vegetarian diet, this may be seen as representing the ‘ironic triumph’ of primary socialisation which inculcates empathetic respect for other animals in children. He emphatically states that, ‘It can be taken to mean to the parents that their children have ultimately accepted the validity of those early lessons’. Similarly, as emphasised earlier, in line with Wrong’s (1961) warning not to overemphasise value internalisation, and recognise that many taught values can be resisted and rejected, Sapon states that, ‘It also means that subsequent parental and societal efforts to re-educate this child, to re-write his or her ethical map, have failed’ (Sapon 1998). It is interesting to

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<sup>100</sup> In the video, *Cow At My Table*, Flying Eye Productions.

<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, it does explain why those intent on disseminating this knowledge are not necessarily thanked for their efforts.

speculate, in the light of this, whether vegetarian and vegan adults have ‘reasserted’ primary socialisation values over secondary ones, or have negated the latter values based on the re-mapping Sapon discusses without ‘returning’ to primary values. Indeed, such points may go some way to understand the many animal rights advocates who cling to some degree or other to sentimental views of animals rather than – or, often confusingly, in *addition* to - developing their opposition to animal abuse purely as a matter of justice or, say, the logic of rights theory.

Paul (1996) concludes that ‘adult society’ suffers a painful discomfiture surrounding the ‘paradox’ of advocating kindness to other animals generally (and especially to other mammals), while excusing and justifying killing animals - or placing them harmful situations - for human use. It seems that the experience of author Maureen Duffy bears some resemblance to Sapon’s and Paul’s perspectives in that she struggled with paradoxes about attitudes to other animals and also found it possible to reject ideological socialisation about meat eating, a first step in her ‘journey’ towards animal advocacy.

The first section of the introduction to Duffy’s book, *Men and Beasts* (1984: 3) expresses the experiential reality of most modern British people when she says: ‘I grew up in a meat-eating world’. As social anthropologist Nick Fiddes (1991) has shown, there have been several ‘meatologies’ about the assumed goodness and even the biological ‘necessity’ of meat-eating. However, meat-eating is often regarded as much more than an assumed human requirement. Duffy says she was brought up to believe that meat was ‘goodness itself’ and consequently a meal without meat did not have ‘a bit of *goodness* in it’ (1984: 3, emphasis in original). For the young Maureen Duffy, meat was something everyone she knew wanted to eat, although some

could not afford it. If people sometimes chose not to eat meat, she could only imagine that they were of a different social class, whose 'elegant restraint' from meat was to give them, apparently through a form of inverted logic, some additional social standing or, more practically, a variation from the large amount of roast game they usually consumed.

Whereas some staples such as white bread were understood as bulky stomach-filling foods, it was *known* that 'flesh foods' were absolutely necessary for growth and health 'as if by eating a dead animal its strength and powers were transferred to you' (ibid). This latter point is something of a remarkable throwback to accounts of cannibalistic thought (see Leakey & Lewin 1979).<sup>102</sup> Once Duffy experienced overseas travel and observed the gradual availability in England of what she had been brought up to regard as 'messed-up foreign food', she increasingly found that she needed 'some explanation of the world which included meat eating' (1984: 4) - clearly, any ethical 're-writing' she experienced did not quite have its intended effect.

Yet, she quite readily found several conventional animal-harming explanations open to her, including most of the religious and philosophical views that have been encountered earlier in this thesis and, she notes, she probably adopted all of them one after the other. Such accounts as Duffy's seems to provide some evidence of the importance of the processes Sapon describes, as well as reaffirming the error of overly generalising sociological data and the determining effect of social processes. On the other hand, the effects of social processes such as primary and secondary socialisation are not to be ignored if one wishes to get some valid understanding of socio-

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<sup>102</sup> In the sociology of food, a good deal of domestic violence appears to be based on the 'necessity' of working men to eat meat for strength. However, meat is not seen as so 'necessary' for children or women (see Blaxter and Paterson 1983; Ellis 1983)

logical patterns of behaviour and the grounding of long-influential social views and widely-held attitudes and orientations.

The following parts of this chapter of the thesis attempts to underscore some of the social/social psychological consequences of this growing up in Duffy's 'meat-eating world' - or more generally, of growing up in a world in which people harm and kill animals, or have animals harmed or killed on their behalf for a variety of reasons. Subsequent chapters investigate how important and complex 'social lessons' may fundamentally colour societal views, and be a rich and valuable resource when evaluating the messages emanating from the relatively new animal advocacy movement.

Sociologists and others appreciate that processes of socialisation never end: that it starts virtually the moment humans are born<sup>103</sup> and goes on until the day they die. The assumed social influence of these processes can be gleaned from other terms which have been used interchangeably with 'socialisation', such as 'acculturation', meaning the process 'by which persons acquire knowledge of the culture in which they live'<sup>104</sup> and the anthropological concept of cultural transmission employed by Sapon: 'enculturation'. In sociology, students learn that primary socialisation is extremely important as it represents *foundational* social knowledge which human beings draw upon to navigate their way in the social world.

Building on - and attempting to develop - the fairly general outline presented earlier, it seems clear that individuals' long and intense experience of processes of socialisation are tremendously important in understanding how human beings relate to other animals in the ways that they do. Des-

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<sup>103</sup> Since some people play classical music 'into' the womb to 'calm the foetus', perhaps even earlier.

<sup>104</sup> Acculturation is also often used to mean 'borrowing between cultures.'

cribed below is some of the content of the social knowledge offered to children (and parents) about nonhuman animals via early-reading books, magazines, games and through television programmes. It seems almost certainly true to claim that people's early and continuing cultural views and general social attitudes - for example, used when individuals play their part in the construction of 'nature' and other animals - are greatly dependant on the knowledge they gained through complex processes such as those detailed by theorists like Sapon.

Many social scientists will emphatically suggest that early socialisation is extremely important in a person's 'life career' in society, and Bauman (1990: 24) noted and underlined that 'the group' helps to make the person. Concentrating on language and social interaction as Sapon does, Habermas (1976: 43) states that 'the process of socialisation takes place within structures of linguistic intersubjectivity'. In early primary socialisation, a child's group consists primarily of his or her parents. Parents represent a baby's earliest 'linguistic interactionists' and the first influential 'tutors' in the generational transmission of social norms and values. While regularly giving recognition to views that some accounts may suggest the 'oversocialised' view of 'passive humanity', the claim that the socialisation process has a powerful impact on individuals nevertheless appears justified. Earlier, Bauman's claim that the 'utmost exertion' is required of those wanting to change what they have been 'made' into was cited. Therefore, a wish to change and resist involves effort, self-sacrifice, determination and endurance: it is far easier to live 'placidly and obediently in conformity' (ibid.: 24-5).

Given this apparent all-encompassing - but not all-determining - influence claimed for socialisation, it is of little surprise that resistance to it

may be regarded as rather difficult. On the other hand, it seems sensible to assume that some elements of social knowledge and learning will be far easier to deny than others. It may be that the 'depth' of Bauman's notion of sedimentation may be of great importance here. Moreover, individuals may well differ in terms of accepting or actively resisting their 'lessons of socialisation', a point emphasised in the previous section on dehumanisation in relation to reactions to pornography. This subject is re-examined a little later in this section.

It appears necessary and entirely appropriate to adopt a social psychological approach to the issue of socialisation in order to appreciate both its institutionalised and internalised dimensions. For example, while Piaget notes the important part socialisation plays in cognitive development, and Freud claims that a family setting leads to the acquisition of a solid moral and personal identity, sociologist Mead suggests the simultaneous acquisition of the concept of self and of social identity. Similarly, Durkheim suggests that socialisation processes involve the internalisation of general group values and moral categories, and the anomic results of not doing so. Bernstein, like Habermas, concentrates on social skill development through interaction and linguistic communication (see Jary and Jary 1995: 613). Given such standard social scientific claims, Bauman's statement that individuals are greatly dependent on the group which 'holds' them appears entirely plausible. Furthermore, recall that David DeGrazia (1996: 44), speaking about human attitudes to other animals, also argues that resisting dominant values and ideas takes a great effort and an extraordinary independence of mind. Bauman's (1990) perspective suggests we should not underestimate this point.

Since part of the ‘power of common sense over the way we understand the world and ourselves (the immunity of common sense to questioning, its capacity for self-confirmation) depends on the apparently self-evident character of its precepts’ (1990: 14), the reaction to new knowledge that succeeds in supplanting existing attitudes may lead to a feeling of humiliation. For ‘what is known’, often ‘known’ with an element of pride, ‘has now been devalued, perhaps even shown worthless and ridiculed’ (ibid). Thus, the suggested influence of socialisation processes in the construction of human culture means that it represents an important factor in explaining how people may approach, understand and react individually and/or collectively to pro-animal claims making.

Furthermore, given the relative lack of controversy in traditional welfarist-inspired views of human-nonhuman relationships, the general response to recent animal rights views are inevitably informed by such long-held attitudes that are consciously and unconsciously sedimented by processes of socialisation, themselves apparently fundamentally informed by the long-standing, influential and pervasive ideology of animal welfarism. Moreover, since welfarist attitudes about human-nonhuman relationships tend to be largely regarded as both ‘mainstream’ and ‘reasonable’, these are the views on the human treatment of other animals most easily seen as relatively unproblematic, historical and normative (Singer 1985; Garner 1993; Gold 1998; Kean 1998; Regan 2001). Therefore, any ‘systemic problems’ which may arise every now and then in relation to the human use of animals as resources are generally seen as, and loudly proclaimed to be, resolvable through existing (or still required) animal welfare regulatory mechanisms by means of additions to the numerous acts of legislation which have derived

from widespread societal commitments to the ideology of animal welfarism.<sup>105</sup>

The apparent social loyalty to animal welfarism means that if ‘problems’ are perceived in existing practice and/or legislation (and Wise [2000: 181] states that every jurisdiction he is aware of has enacted ‘anticruelty’ legislation), then it is assumed that the remedy lies in simply ‘strengthening’ existing legal measures, or closing perceived loop holes, rather than ‘unnecessarily’ engaging in fundamental reviews of the ethics of using other animals for human ends in the first place. For example, the officially declared rationale put forward by the British government for the introduction of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act in 1986 (legislation on the licensing and regulation of animal experiments) was predicated on the notion that it would up-date and thus significantly ‘improve’ the provisions of its predecessor, the antiquated and outmoded 1886 Cruelty to Animals Act.<sup>106</sup> Thus, legislation was allegedly introduced to further ‘protect’ experimental animals through stricter licensing procedures, a factor trumpeted ever since by animal experimenters and British Home Office officials in response to anti-vivisectionist and animal rights claims. Likewise, members of parliament in the 1990’s who were sympathetic to the aspirations of the single-issue pressure group the League Against Cruel Sports, attempted to introduce what they regarded as progressive legislation (for example, the 1992 Wild Animals (Protection) Bill and the 1995 Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill) to protect a number of wild animal species as

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<sup>105</sup> Singer (1983: 240) argues that this understanding is so embedded in social thought that people simply vaguely assume that ‘conditions [of animals used on farms or in laboratories] cannot be too bad, or else the government or the animal welfare societies would have done something about it’.

<sup>106</sup> The name of this legislation betrays its age, since modern sentiments, and reactions from a well-established anti-vivisection movement would render a title unwise if it were seen to purposely allow cruelty rather than sanction ‘mere’ scientific procedures.



various welfare concerns arose about the absence or inadequacy of existing protection (on such incremental animal legislation see Gold 1995: 4-7).

Animal welfarism - and the legal provision inspired by it - seductively suggests that no root and branch changes are necessary or desirable in human-nonhuman relations, society merely needs to observe a certain extra vigilance to ensure that regulatory and control mechanisms are sufficient to meet all the requirements embedded in the notion of 'non-cruel' animal exploitation. It is not difficult to imagine why this orientation can appear seductive to so many, since, echoing similar pressures on once radical sociologists to become 'realist' in attitude, animal welfarism seems so reasonable and even pluralistically responsive to the interests of all parties involved, apart, quite naturally, from those who make 'unrealistic' demands. By the same token, Hans Ruesch (1979: 333-35) notes that many in the modern anti-vivisection movement have tend to adopt 'controllists' and 'abolitionists' orientations, with the former being defined as inclined toward welfarism in the belief that animal experiments can be sufficiently regulated to the extent that ethical concerns are largely ameliorated. Of course - and as discussed in Part Two - such orientations become the stuff of much inter- and intra-movement strategising in often intense and potentially devisive tactical debates which social movement theorists Kuechler and Dalton (1990) see as common tensions that arise among considerations of long term social movement fundamentals versus daily campaigning pragmatics.

Socialised Lessons About Other Animals:  
Welfarism all the Way.

Building on Sapon's (1998) points above, what kinds of attitudes are likely to influence young children in terms of their social learning about human-nonhuman relations? As part of their normal, everyday, social interaction, in what forms are children presented with information about such relations? Moreover, what are children customarily told about the *meanings* applied to 'human' and 'animal' categories? Accepting that the vast majority of socialised attitudes about the human treatment of animals are infused with animal welfare ideology, the treatment of animals seen as 'below' the standards demanded by animal welfarism are regularly criticised in books and other 'educational' publications (in the latter case, in publications often funded and/or published by 'pro-use' industries and often available from veterinarian surgeries) about the care of 'pet' animals (see, as an example, Watson 1994).

Hilda Kean (1998: 44-7) notes that throughout the 1800's in Britain, a great deal of printed information about the 'proper treatment of animals' became increasingly available for both adults and children. While adults were informed by the Zoological Society's gazetteer, the formation of the London Mechanics' Institution, and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge's weekly *Penny Magazine*, a growing number of publications became intentionally aimed at pet-keeping children. By the 1970's, there were hundreds of titles such as *Domestic Pets: Their Habits and Management* (ibid.: 47).

Along with the predictable stress on the welfarist doctrine of 'caring' for animals, many writers reinforce a 'humans on top' dominionist message.

For example, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories* (full of advice for children *and servants*) contained the following: 'Let your superior endowments ward off the evils they [animals] cannot foresee' (quoted in *ibid.*: 46). An investigation of current messages about humans and nonhumans in cultural products aimed at children reveals that little has changed.

### Baa Baa Lambs, Talking Cows and Wise Old Bears.

Apart from having pet animals around the house, much of children's early information about nonhuman animals derives from the representations of them in books designed to be read by - or with - parents. Of course, it might be expected that an increasing amount of even very young children's access to information in the West takes other forms, such as via the TV and now perhaps more and more, the internet. In terms of the actual face-to-face interaction between parents and children, the latter are effectively subjected to parental interpretations during explanations of topics they read about or see together. Therefore, in the light of Sapon's thesis, if parents do interact with children using books about other animals, and if they explain to their children events in television programmes, they may inevitably become the influential primary definers of the situations in question. Perhaps anticipated from the preceding discussion, it might be expected that the early experience of knowledge about animals is regularly populated by cute 'baa-baa lambs', and often by Sapon's 'talking cows' and 'wise old bears' (Sapon 1998).

Singer (1983: 239) has complained that youngsters often learn more factual knowledge of the lives of the wild animals in far away lands, such as cheetahs and sharks, than of the 'farm animals' who may exist just around the corner or in the very next town or village.<sup>107</sup> One response to Singer's point may be to note how modern children can often get direct experience of farmed animals in so-called 'city farms', 'show farms' or the children's corners of zoos and some public parks. However, such places are relatively few in number and, perhaps of greater importance, are extraordinarily unrepresentative of the average 'working' farm. For example, often due to public safety considerations, city farms contain a large number of small and young farm animals for children to stroke and touch. Thus, piglets rather than adult pigs may be present, many more small lambs than full-grown sheep, and so on. More unrealistically, such animals are often mixed in these settings with other types of nonhuman animal, such as various 'breeds' of rabbits, who would hardly be the most welcome visitors on 'real' or 'working' farms.

A recent consequence of continuing rural economic decline has been the establishment of so-called 'farm parks' or 'genuine working farms' open to the public where, typically, children are invited to 'meet the animals'. This commonly involves the thrill of bottle feeding goats, calves and lambs. Featuring a cartoon of a smiling pig called 'Boris', one advertising leaflet for a 'working farm' declares that it has 'loads of animals, both big and small to see, touch, feed, stroke, cuddle, hear, smell - and even ride!' Being a 'genuine working farm', there is likely to be far more of the larger animals absent from smaller city farms, and thus, 'you may be able to watch the

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<sup>107</sup> Singer may have in mind the content of publications such as 'Finding Out About Animals' (Purnell 1966) in which there is a great deal of discussion about wild animals' lives. In contrast, there are just one or two references to the lives of farmed animals.

farmer shear the sheep and plough and harvest, and help him collect the eggs and round up the sheep'. Rather unsurprisingly, other 'routine animal farming practices', such as removing piglets' teeth and tails with pliers, the so-called 'de-beaking' of chickens<sup>108</sup> and sending animals to the slaughterhouse are not advertised on the leaflet as of potential interest of children - or indeed, their parents or guardians either. However, it is possible to eat at the farm picnic area, 'whilst watching the animals in the surrounding paddocks'.

### Television, Books & Games.

If one never visited a 'genuine working farm' and therefore relied solely on television programmes for information about the lives of 'farm animals', then Singer's complaint appears to be fairly well founded. For example, 'animal documentaries' on television are overwhelmingly concerned with wild and undomesticated animals, or with pet animals in shows such as Rolf Harris' welfarist-orientated, RSPCA-advertising, *Animal Hospital*. The lives and deaths of many hundreds of millions of farmed animals are apparently largely unseen by television audiences who physically digest their body parts, which may go some way to explain the horrified public reaction to the unusually extensive daily news coverage of visible animal deaths in the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak in Britain.

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<sup>108</sup> This phrase causes controversy among farm animal welfare groups, 'animal rights' organisations and 'pro-use' countermovement. I have used the term 'de-beaking' which is favoured by rights and some welfare groups. However, 'pro-use' mobilisations prefer the term 'beak trimming' and liken the experience to having toenails clipped. According to an expert featured on the video, *A Cow At My Table*, neither description is accurate because the procedure is painful for the birds (whereas trimming nails is not) while not all of the birds' beaks are removed (as implied by 'de-beaking').

Singer's point is perhaps underlined by looking at a randomly-chosen week of programmes on the cable TV channel, *Animal Planet* (June 2-8, 2001). The channel featured in seven days more than 200 showings of programmes entitled 'Monkey Business', 'Croc Files', 'Pet Rescue', 'Zoo Chronicles', 'Wild Treasures of Europe', 'Emergency Vets', 'Crocodile Hunter', 'Postcards From the Wild', 'Animal Emergency', 'Hyena: Savannah Superhunter' and so on. Only one programme in the entire week, called 'Country Vets', appeared to have any potential to feature farmed animals as its substantive subject matter.

If 'farm animals' are largely absent from television coverage of animals in general, the same general comment certainly cannot be said of children's 'early-reading books'. Here, it is quite conventional to find the depiction of farms with typical 'stock' animals such as cows, sheep, pigs, cart horses and chickens, as well as sheepdogs and the farm 'mouser'. In many books the entire narrative concerns events on farms apparently containing nonhuman animals but no humans at all. Quite often, such stories seem to lack any direct evidence of human habitation, or their interest in the farm business, or in any of the events and adventures that take place. Often, entire societies of various nonhuman animals populate these places, with an apparent emphasis on the decision-making autonomy of the animals concerned and little suggestion, especially in books designed for the younger child, that any current or future human utilisation of animal 'resources' takes place. For example, if cows are to be milked in stories which actually feature human 'farmers', it is implied or openly stated that the milk is for the benefit of all the other animals on the farm.

Quite obviously, and in line with Sapon's thesis, any suggestion of animal harm in such publications is generally out of the question until the

near-teen market is taken into consideration. The remarkable aspect about books featuring nonhumans, then, is not the absence of farmed animals but the virtual absence of reality about their lives.<sup>109</sup> Of course, as said, there are publications showing farms 'complete' with (male) animal enslavers (and their smiling wives!). These present a slightly more realistic view of 'farm life'. From an animal welfare point of view, these particular children's stories rarely show anything other than an ideal-typical depiction of non-human animals and the peaceful and joyful relationships that they have with kindly humans. While television documentaries about wild animals - and to a much lesser extent, the pet shows - attempt to portray the 'nature red in tooth and claw' experience of some animals (with an apparent on-going fascination with nonhumans' sex lives), the depiction of the genuine life experiences of farmed animals is systematically sanitised (Robbins 1987) in many children's books.

For example, the picture book, *Stories from Mudpuddle Farm* (Morpurgo and Rayner 1994), written for children 'who are just beginning to enjoy reading', introduces readers to Jigger, the 'almost-always-sensible' sheepdog, Mossop the cat, Captain the horse, Frederick the cockerel, Farmer Rafferty, Penelope the hen, Upside and Down the ducks, and Auntie Grace and Primrose the dairy cows. Farmer Rafferty himself is described as

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<sup>109</sup> Butterworth *et al*'s (1990) book *Animal Friends* contains four pages that deal with 'farm animals'. Among pictures of smiling children at the breakfast table, a smiling farmer in a milking parlour and an apparently smiling cow, the text on page 28 asks children if they know where meat and milk come from. We are then informed that these products come from 'different kinds of cows' with the immediate emphasis on dairy farming and no mention of animal deaths in providing meat. A picture of the farm is also present (*ibid.*: 30-1), with smiling pigs in a sty and free-range hens being fed by two children. The text says: 'The chickens are kept outside in the daytime, and allowed to peck around the farmyard for food'. For 80% of chickens kept for egg laying in Britain, this information is false, according to the founder of an international pro-vegetarian organisation (Gellatley 2000: 134). In Sally Grindley's (1992) book there are just two pages featuring animals 'down on the farm'. While children are told that the smiling pig likes to roll around in the mud, there is no mention of pork or sausages. The text also says that the cows eat grass in the fields for most of the year and eat hay in barns during the winter. Milk, cheese and butter are mentioned as products of cows' milk: there is no word on cows being killed for meat.

‘usually a kind man with smiling eyes’ (ibid.: 11) who evidently enjoys a friendly social contract and a constructive working relationship with all the other animals. In *Mudpuddle Farm*, each and everyone has a job to do and old-smiley Rafferty tells the various animals: ‘You look after me, and I’ll look after you’ (ibid.). Many of the nonhumans are shown living happily in their family groups, looking after their offspring, another common theme in such publications.

The cosy consensus is maintained as the entirely free-range hens agree to lay eggs for the farmer, while the ever-smiling cows ‘let down their milk for him’ (ibid.: 13).<sup>110</sup> However, if readers were in any doubt, a few pages on they learn that the human animal is actually a little more equal than the others when Farmer Rafferty loses his temper after finding mice on the farm. He asks after the whereabouts of the cat in ‘a nasty raspy voice’ he kept for ‘special occasions’ (ibid.: 20).

The simplest books about animals, such as the Ladybird ‘toddler talk-about’ series, often appear designed to encourage children to count and make approximate noises of different types of nonhuman animal. In *I Like Farm Animals* (Ladybird 1998) a farm is depicted complete with the seemingly obligatory smiling animal enslaver and the happily grinning animals. All the various animals are pictured together, often with their young; with not a single cage in sight.<sup>111</sup> In fact, readers are told that the different animals have their own ‘homes’ in which they live. Of course, few

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<sup>110</sup> Presumably, children get to thinking that cows can keep their milk ‘up’ if they decide to. In April 2002, BBC Radio 4 interviewed 11-year olds about their knowledge of food sources. One girl stated that she believed potatoes ‘come from cows’, and when asked to guess the frequency of milking, replied ‘every spring’.

<sup>111</sup> Peter Singer (1983: 237) makes this point about an undated book, *Farm Animals*, published by Hallmark. This book also includes the line, ‘Cows don’t have a thing to do, but switch their tails, eat grass and moo’. Also, citing a similar Ladybird book, *The Farm*, Singer states that it is no surprise ‘that children grow up believing that even if animals ‘must’ die to provide human beings with food, they live happily until that time comes’.



would ever expect to see a single battery hen cage, or a veal crate for calves, or a pig farrowing crate in these publications for the very young, yet to talk of such animals having 'homes' is nothing less than highly misleading.

Books for slightly older children predictably have more complicated narratives. For example, in *Nubbins and the Tractor* (Sinnickson 1980), the horse in the story is presented as human property, which corresponds with the actual status of most horses. Indeed, when the animal is threatened with being replaced by a newly-purchased tractor, his salvation is based on the possible transfer of his 'ownership' from farmer to son. The boy learns that his father is intent on selling the newly-redundant horse and appeals to him: 'Don't sell Old Nubbins!' Although the boy declares that he and Nubbins are 'friends', he demands ownership of the horse: 'Give him to me, and he and I will help you with the work'. When the new tractor breaks down, Nubbins is shown to be quite over the moon at the prospect of being strapped back into his old harness and he blissfully sets off for a day of 'hard work'. Eventually the boy gets the official ownership of the horse and the book ends with both owner and owned pictured apparently deliriously happy about their master-slave relationship.<sup>112</sup>

If parents want a break from book reading, they can purchase children's videos such as 'Fourways Farm', made in 1997 for Channel 4 Tele-

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<sup>112</sup> In recent years, in an attempt to slightly alter the present situation concerning nonhuman animal representation in children's books, animal rights mobilisations such as VIVA! have promoted many new pro-animal/vegetarian books. For example, their 2000 catalogue *Books for Life* have the following on sale: *Victor the Vegetarian* by Radha Vignola (for 2-7 year olds) about a young boy who runs off with two lambs to save them from slaughter, turning his parents vegetarian in the process; *Victor's Picnic* by Radha Vignola (for 2-7 year olds) about a vegetarian picnic; *The Chicken Gave It To Me* by Anne Fine (for 9 year olds +) about a rescued battery hen; *The Stone Menagerie* by Anne Fine (for 12 year olds +) about issues such as mental health, circuses, childbirth and vegetarianism; *Countdown* by Anne Fine (for 5 year olds) about animals kept in cages; *Talking Turkey* by Benjamin Zephaniah (poems for ages 8-80); *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White about a pig and a spider; *Snow Kittens, Foxglove & Huney Bun* by Jean Ure (for 10 year olds). A series of books raising issues such as meat eating, fox hunting, abandoned pets and fur wearing; *Nature's Chicken* by Dr. Nigel Burroughs (for 8 year olds) about modern chicken production;

vision and narrated by popular actor and radio personality Martin Jarvis. Here, in several stories written for children up to seven years of age, another community of co-operative animals are to be found. All co-operative with the exception of three 'bad rats' who are stereotypically depicted as scheming 'gangsters' who ideologically declare: 'We don't do nice things, we're rats'. However, all the other residents are demonstrably 'nice'; the cow, the horse, the duck, the dog, the cat and (another stereotype and slightly less than nice) the typically 'greedy pig'. All the animals, the title song tells viewers, 'say hello to the morning sun', and they all have 'food to eat'. In Fourways Farm, there is no human cruelty to nonhuman animals and no actual 'farming' seems to take place at all: in fact, no humans are ever seen in the video or interfere in the happy-ending adventures of the nonhuman characters.

Once children have digested the message that farms are idyllic places for nonhumans and, although animals are legal property who may be bought, sold or passed from one generation to another, they understand that this status tends to somehow benefit the nonhuman individuals in question. They are perhaps now ready and prepared to play the 1984 Fisher-Price distributed board game for 5-10 year olds, *Market Day*, which (according to the box) is 'a fun-filled game for young children, collecting horses, cows, pigs and sheep from the market':

Each farmer races around the board collecting voucher cards for the animals he needs to complete his farm. When he has enough for a horse, a cow, a pig or a sheep he can buy that animal next time he goes to the market.

However, and with a little justification, the game is described to be just like 'real farming' and therefore 'things can go wrong' for the market-bound farmers. However, there is unsurprisingly no mention of BSE, nor swine fever, nor foot and mouth disease in the context of the players' potential animal farming 'problems'. Rather, the difficulties encountered are somewhat less serious: tractors fail to work, pigs sometimes escape and naughty sheep jump over farm fences. What might be the 'end product' of such animal farms, or the 'final destination' (final solution?) of the animals collected by each 'farmer' is not explained or explored. Animal welfarism hardly ceases in proclaiming, as it was daily reaffirmed in the 2001 foot and mouth 'tragedy', that farming nonhuman animals is ultimately about 'caring' for them on farms.

When animal enslavers cannot carry out their 'caring' vocation and, even worse, when they see 'their' animals killed and burnt, they weep buckets full of tears (when television cameras are recording), presumably never ever having bothered to take a look inside any abattoir they deliver to or even an oven containing their Sunday roast. If *Market Day* holds to any remnant of reality, it too downplays the fact that nonhumans end up dead at the hands of human beings.

For pre- and just-teen girls, a brightly-coloured monthly magazine, *Animals and You*, is available from D.C. Thomson publishers. In the manner of a bright and bubbly 'pop' music publication, the December 2000 edition of *Animals and You* (No. 75) features cute 'pet pin-ups', games and puzzles, and articles about television programmes such as *Animal Hospital* and organisations such as the National Canine Defence League. Apart from the emphasis on pet animals such as domesticated cats and dogs, wild animals

such as polar bears, snow monkeys and Arctic foxes are featured in the magazine. In the 38 pages of *Animals and You*, only one oblique reference appeared in relation to farmed animals in a quiz article entitled, 'How much do you love Christmas?' (p. 24). However, the feature cannot be described as concerning farm animal care, let alone any notion of animal rights: in a multi-choice question about 'your perfect Christmas dinner', readers are asked to tick one of the following boxes:

- a). Chocolate, sweeties and more chocolate!;
- b). It's got to be turkey and stuffing, and a cosy snuggle with your pet for afters!;
- or
- c). Party food - mini-sausage rolls, pizza - yum!

For reasons discussed above, the ideology of animal welfarism suggests that there is no fundamental contradiction in a publication about 'caring' for domesticated animals, while being 'interested' in wild ones, and assuming that pigs and turkeys are 'for' eating (this is the December issue after all, what greater justification could be required?) In relation to the human treatment of pigs, the hit Hollywood feature film 'Babe', based on the children's story by Dick King-Smith (King-Smith 1985), is often credited with causing quite a stir from an 'animal rights' point of view. For example, there was much discussion of its actual and potential impact on email networks referred to in the methodology section above, with reports of activist groups organising leafleting outside cinemas (also see discussions of animals on film, especially Disney's representation of animals, in Baker 1993).

*Babe* tells the tale of the pig who grew up to behave and think like a sheep dog. Although absent from King-Smith's original book, the film and video versions include a scene in which the talented 'sheep-pig' is told in no

uncertain terms about what happens to pigs ordinarily (as *Animals and You* might have it, they could end their days as party food - 'yum!'), and consequently Babe learns of the plight of his close, dead - and probably eaten - relatives. The ideological message of the Hollywood rewrite is bluntly revealed when the nonhuman star of the movie, initially extremely so upset that he runs away from the farmer, eventually returns 'home' since his loyalty to 'The Boss' (i.e. the male nonhuman enslaver) is ultimately seen to outweigh the deadly deed the latter had done to Babe's entire family. Since there appears to be no firm evidence that sales in 'pig meat' suffered to any serious extent due to the film's release, perhaps the most enduring legacy of the movie, on an ideological level at the least, will be to reinforce the prevailing human 'masters on top' social understanding of human-nonhuman relations.

Keeping the "moo" or "cluck" or "baa" away from the meat.<sup>113</sup>

John Robbins (1987: 125) would recognise that part of what is going on in the types of publications and children's products under review is not about providing realistic material for children as much as *protecting* children from hurtful knowledge about what really happens to some nonhuman animals.<sup>114</sup> He argues that large and powerful commercial concerns that use animals as

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<sup>113</sup> From the preface of the tenth anniversary edition of Carol Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (Adams 2000: 14).

<sup>114</sup> When I visited relatives in 1999 I took an interest in children's early-learning books that were about the house. When asked, I explained that I was investigating how society effectively 'protects' its children by systematically misleading them about how animals are treated by humans. I was told quite emphatically - and quite logically - that 'it would be cruel' not to tell these untruths: cruel to the children that is!

resources are particularly involved in this ‘protection’ provision.<sup>115</sup> In fact, Robbins claims that the animal farming industry deliberately engages in what he calls a ‘web of repression’ about modern farming practices (ibid).

Moreover, he suggests that children are the least repressed of the human population with regard to expressing feelings about other animals, but recognises that they are also perhaps the most impressionable members of society. There-fore, it is important for commercial interests instrumentally using nonhuman animals to attempt to present to children a ‘sugar-coated picture’ of animal farming as early in their lives as possible. Thus, in the USA in particular, industry-based ‘information packs’ and ‘educational colouring books’ are sent to schools complete with pencils and books to colour in. Such publications are thoroughly welfarist in outlook, and none would suggest there is the least problem about human beings breeding other animals in order that they can subsequently eat them.

Gary Francione (1996: 79) cites the example of the American Animal Welfare Federation which claims that its aim is to promote the ‘humane use’ and the ‘general welfare’ of nonhuman animals. This campaigning organisation is openly funded by the fur, meat and ‘pet’ industries, hunting interests, and other ‘pro-animal-use individuals and organisations’, and explains that part of its brief to is ‘educate’ the public about the ‘vital difference between animal welfare and animal rights’. Robbins (1987: 125) cites US National Livestock and Meat Board publications which state that they recognise the need to ‘reach the children of the land at an early age’ in order to ‘prepare them for a lifetime of meat-eating’. By labelling high school children ‘a special Meat Board audience’, they appear to be hopeful

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<sup>115</sup> Journalist Danny Penman (1996: 155-56) states that the British Meat and Livestock Commission ‘currently spends about £10 million per year persuading people to continue to buy meat while others with vested interests in selling meat and dairy products spend tens of millions more’.

of building on already firmly-held views about other animals accrued from primary socialisation. Robbins is particularly animated by 'The Story of Beef' and 'The Story of Pork', distributed as children's 'educational material' by the American Meat Institute. Calling it 'a fairy tale', Robbins says that something fundamentally important is missing from a page entitled the 'The Story of a Steak', taken from 'The Story of Beef':

there is no trace of the animal suffering in any way at any time. At first the calf is shown romping innocently alongside his happy mother; next we see him looking like the very picture of sunshine and cheer in a feedlot; then we see him being happily shipped to the stockyards; and finally we see him evidently delighted as can be as different companies bid for the right to kill him. The lucky creature, it would seem, is tickled pink at every stage of the path to the meat counter (ibid.: 126).

In every picture, on every page, the animals are seen to be smiling, even, as Robbins points out, when pictured sat on a train on the way to the 'stockyards'. This particular story does not totally ignore the deaths of the animals used for meat, something entirely absent from many narratives, especially those designed for a very young audience. However, there is just one fairly unrevealing scene at the slaughterhouse which is described as a 'packing plant' where 'beef crews' turn 'beef on the hoof into meat for the store'. This scene shows 'dressed' carcasses hanging on hooks, the previous picture shows a (yes, smiling) cow being bought for slaughter. There is absolutely no sign of the killing process itself. This 'educational' material entirely neglects the details of what occurs between animals being on trains destined for the slaughterhouse and the period when their dead bodies hang from meat hooks in chill rooms.

If 'The Story of a Steak' shows living animals being turned into 'meat for the store' - however brief and sketchy the actual details are - Robbins is extremely critical of the promotional approach of the fast food corporation McDonald's whose advertisements have told their 'impressionable young audience that hamburgers grow in hamburger patches' (ibid.: 129).<sup>116</sup> Indeed, Jeff Juliano, the actor who originally played the promotional clown character 'Ronald McDonald', eventually became unwilling to tell such blatant untruths to children. He ended up openly apologising to the youngsters he had misled and adopted a vegetarian diet (ibid).

Although no-one could claim the few examples described here are representative of all children's books, TV programmes, games, magazines and advertisements which feature particular orientations and attitudes about other animals, this sample appears to underline how such products could be seen as formative, supportive and influential in the social construction of such attitudes about nonhuman animals farmed for food. Even this small sample offers some empirical evidence of the normative reality of the experience of being 'born in a meat-eating world'. Moreover, although it is clear that a limited number of recent publications for children have begun to reflect animal rights (or at least 'pro-animal') thought to some degree, there is no substantial evidence to suggest that the majority are in the process of rejecting traditionally dominant social messages about animals. As ever, the overwhelming orientation is inevitably directed toward a welfarist 'duty of care' view rather than anything like an animal rights approach. In effect, and this may be regarded in a sense as a 'finding' of this thesis: these long-

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<sup>116</sup> The 1982 documentary, *The Animals Film*, shows the filming of a McDonald's 'hamburger patch' advertisement. 'Ronald McDonald' is seen leading children over a bridge onto a piece of land in which hamburger 'grow' like toadstools.



standing social constructions stand between the animal rights movement and its aspirations.

When members of an animal rights email networks were requested to contribute their experiences of public attitudes to animals, a reply was received in August 1999 from a member of the local animal rights campaign group, London Animal Action (see appendix 1). This correspondent recounted a time when her information stall was visited by four teenagers. During the subsequent discussion about the information leaflets on offer, one of the teenagers said she did not eat animals although she was *not* a vegetarian. After an investigation of this rather confusing and contradictory statement, it transpired that she did not consider farmed animals to be ‘proper animals’ at all; rather they were ‘just things’, whereas the species of animals she regarded as ‘real animals’ were those such as cats and dogs that people kept as companions.

Although these views seem distinctly odd, especially articulated in this fashion, they may be more widespread than one may think. For example, writing in the *Guardian* (21.8.99), journalist Julie Burchill talks about herself being ‘mad about animals’. However, to clarify, she adds the following caveat: ‘When I say ‘animals’, I don’t mean the poor brutes bred for food and I don’t mean the wild animals you see on TV... No, what I mean, of course, is pets - dogs and cats, but cats in particular’. It seems likely that the types of representations of animals discussed here could be regarded as explanatory factors of common social attitudes towards animals and human-nonhuman relations which Francione (2000: xxi) has described as a general ‘moral schizophrenia’ about animal issues.

## Getting 'em While They're Young.

The central truth that the hunting industry and the wildlife agencies have run up against in their struggle to recruit new hunters: *Men and women who do not become hunters by the time they graduate from high school are unlikely ever to become hunters.*

Fund for Animals (1997: 8), emphasis in original.

As shown above, the North American National Livestock and Meat Board recognise the importance of introducing their pro-meat eating 'educational' material to young audiences. Philosophers and activists who campaign on behalf of animals believe this recognition is extremely important in relation to fully understanding the often firmly held and strongly articulated commitment to flesh foods.

In *Animal Liberation*, for example, utilitarian Peter Singer (1983: 236) argues that 'our attitudes to animals begin to form when we are very young, and they are dominated by the fact that we begin to eat meat at an early age'. The social psychology here is likely to be very influential, because before members of society really 'know' it, they are often deeply 'involved' on some level in animal harm, and generally on a daily basis. Milgram's (1965; 1974) well known - indeed, infamous - 'electric shock' experiments may help in a fuller understanding of this fairly subtle point. Milgram was interested in the acceptance of authority in experiments in which subjects believed they were increasingly involved in causing more and more harm to another person (who, in reality, was an actor pretending, screaming in pain and complaining about the experimental procedure). Even though many subjects would express discomfort and even opposition to administering shocks, they continued to press electric shock buttons when ordered to do so

by an authority figure. Part of the analysis of the experiments suggested that many subjects found it difficult to arrive at a point to sensibly stop their involvement.

In these experiments subjects had to justify to themselves why they could not administer another harmful punishment when the previous one(s) they gave only seconds earlier were almost as harmful as the one they were being authorised to administer. Thinking about this in terms of Singer's point means recognising that before most humans are capable of making autonomous ethical judgements, they, as children, learn the norms and values - and the justifications and excuses - of an overwhelmingly speciesist, nonhuman-harming, world. Early in their lives they regularly and unwittingly participate in animal harming activities just by sharing a meal with their families. Moreover, they are likely to be unaware that they use 'animal-tested' products, such as shampoos and toothpastes. Given such factors, it may be necessary for those who eventually learn a fuller - or perhaps a 'truer' - picture about the lives and deaths of animals used for human benefit to gather the wherewithal to reject common and widely approved-of social practices in which they are *still* actively participating in - possibly several times every single day. Thus, if one learns the 'animal rights news' at mid-day, it is likely that food choices of *that* morning - and the choice *about to be made* - immediately become factors in what now is an intensely personal moral issue.

The animal rights case, in line with this reasoning, effectively results in people being accused of making, albeit unwittingly, cumulative moral errors every time they participate in an activity which harms another animal. The 'directness' of personal involvement may initially seem to assist animal advocates in promoting change in the individual - it may initially appear

much harder, for example, for environmental campaigners to establish such obvious causal links between personal consumerist activity and undesirable environmental effects. It may seem relatively straightforward that people are to be expected to make the necessary connections between the meals or beauty products that sit before them and suffering or harm done to non-human animals in their production. In short, if someone becomes concerned about animal suffering, they can take immediate steps to drastically reduce their own direct involvement in it. Yet, on the other hand, the very immediacy of many issues involving human-nonhuman relations – and especially the case of the sometimes troublesome matter of eating other sentient animals – is ultimately likely to constrain people from critically examining their personal activities in any great detail.

If a person decides to attempt to cease making the claimed moral errors highlighted and identified by animal rights perspectives, they have to almost publicly - certainly within their family - accept the moral 'wrongness' of practices they have actively participated in - and perhaps even stridently defended - thousands of times. An awareness of the details of animal suffering means being careful about what one puts on (and puts inside) one's skin!

The importance of these points underlines the significance of assessing the likely outcome of early socialisation processes. Most people, after all, do end up 'innocently' eating the dead and rotting<sup>117</sup> bodies of other animals – and do so *before they know that this is what they are doing*. Before gaining the ability to decide for themselves on issues connected to the treatment of other animals - indeed any ethical issue - the vast majority

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<sup>117</sup> Robbins (1987: 132) tells of when he saw chickens in a market described as 'fresh'. He suggested to a stallholder that since he was actually selling dead chickens, the accurate description for them might be 'freshly killed chickens'. He notes that his suggestion did not meet with gratitude.

of children unknowingly take part in routine and widespread exploitation, not only as consumers of various foodstuffs, but also as consumers of products which have been tested in vivisection laboratories; or by wearing parts of dead animals as clothing and by being taken to see animal 'performers' in entertainment spectacles such as the circus. Focusing solely on meat eating, Singer argues that, as youngsters, people are often not able to make:

a conscious, informed decision, free from the bias that accompanies any long-established habit, reinforced by all the pressures of social conformity, to eat animal flesh (1983: 236).

Influential processes of socialisation are obviously implicated in creating the habits Singer speaks of, and matters are unlikely to change much while they function to reinforce conventional norms and values relating to human-nonhuman relations. Even acknowledging that societies that instrumentally exploit other animals simultaneously encourage its children to be 'kind' to (selected) nonhuman animals, for Singer, as for Sapon, it is important to be aware that individuals are able to accommodate – and quite easily it seems – ostensibly contradictory views about how sentient nonhumans should be treated morally.

Singer suggests (1983: 236) that it might be necessary for members of society to carefully 'segregate' such contradictions. Such segregation is suggested in the concepts of instrumental exploitation and sentimental exploitation of nonhuman animals. Certainly the teenagers who visited the information stall in London could segregate with apparent ease – by simply separating animals into different categories such as (sentimentally) 'pets' and (instrumentally) 'just food'. Singer goes on to relate (ibid.: 237) the

fairly familiar tale that a child's affection for animals will be *directed* toward animals not usually eaten, especially cats, dogs and horses. Indeed, it is perhaps noteworthy that some racist caricatures of human beings can be partly constructed by emphasising the fact that some societies use 'our' favourite or favoured animals as sources of meat or fur.<sup>118</sup>

Singer also argues that urban and suburban children are rarely likely to meet any other kind of animal *apart* from cats, dogs and horses. Once they are dismembered and shrink-wrapped on a supermarket shelf, perhaps it is relatively easy to disregard the fact that packaged food products are parts of dead bodies: people certainly do not seem to be encouraged to see 'sides of beef' or pieces of 'pork' in such a way (also see Broom *et al* 1981: 401-06 for evidence that dismemberment can eventually overcome the usually strict social taboo of eating human flesh in extreme circumstances).

Much of this theorising serves to avoid viewing 'animal loving' and 'animal eating' as apparently contradictory activities. Instead, in relation to 'using' animals, it is conceivable that phenomena often characterised as examples of attitudinal contradiction are simply two separate forms of animal exploitation: as Jasper implies, humans *eat* some of them; humans *pet* some of them; but we exploit *all* of them for our own reasons. In other words, humans have two exploitative orientations in relation to other animals (Jasper 1999: 77).

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<sup>118</sup> Journalist Kevin Toolis (in 'Eat It or Save It?', *Guardian Weekend*, 27. 10. 2001: 58-67) makes the claim that Western sentimentalism about selected species of animals has led to the demonisation of whale hunters and eaters of whale meat from Japan and from Norway's Lofoten Islands.

## Keeping 'em When They're Older.

Deceptive language helps us deny both the suffering and the cause. Once those who suffer and those who cause the suffering are rendered absent, there is no act of violence, just business as usual. Speciesist language enables us to disregard the suffering and abuse of nonhuman animals.

Carol J. Adams, in the forward of *Animal Equality* by Joan Dunayer.

It was suggested earlier in the thesis that the emergence of, and thus the challenge embedded in, animal rights thinking and activism can be held responsible for creating some 'disturbance' to conventional, welfarist, views concerning human-nonhuman relations.

As social movement theorists investigate movement-counter-movement dialectics (Lilliston & Cummings 1997), often seeing counter-movements as so-called 'wise-use backlash' mobilisations replying to social movement activity (Tokar 1995),<sup>119</sup> so Guither (1998) notes a growing organised counter-movement to the emergence of animal rights. Dunayer's (2001) extensive research indicates that much of the 'backlash' against animal rights claims-making has taken the form of advocating language use alterations and, of course, ideologically privileging the legitimacy of animal welfarism over animal rights.

The latter aim is exemplified by Steve Bjerklie (writing on 'Rights and Welfare' in the trade journal *Meat & Poultry* in May 1990, cited in Dunayer 2001: 134) who argues that a continuum can be identified with 'animal exploitation on one far side, animal welfare in the middle, and

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<sup>119</sup> There is now a mobilisation in the USA called 'Wise Use' (founded in 1988) representing anglers, off-road enthusiasts, real estate developers, hunters & trappers, chemical and pesticide manufacturers, and the timber industry. Wise Use have an 'educational foundation' at the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise.

animal rights on the other far side'. This middle ground position (how fond are we of 'the middle way'?) ideologically places the extremism of animal rights and the illegitimacy of animal exploitation at the margins, whereas welfarism stands as always as the traditional representative of moderation, reasonableness and restraint. However, partly in response to animal rights claims, contemporary animal enslavers who claim the welfarist designation were quick to realise the utility of some of the existing language they routinely employ and, at the same time, recognised the necessity for change.

Dunayer outlines in detail what she calls 'the language of vivisection' (2001: 103-23) which includes a preference for words in scientific papers and reports describing animal 'discomfort' rather than 'pain' or 'suffering' (ibid.: 106-07) and the 'verbal dishonesty' in the use of terms such as 'sacrifice' rather than 'kill'. However, it is to the instrumental and speciesist language of producers of 'food animals' that attention is here turned. Much of the language of 'animal agriculture' is economic and has summoned up the rather negative image of *intensive factory production*. While much of the former remains, although in recent years most overtly expressed in 'how to be a pig farmer' types of publications rather than media for the general public, in the latter case the 'food animal' industry has recently taken steps to moderate and change its language.

When Dunayer (ibid.: 125-47) reviews the pages of publications such as *Meat & Poultry*, *Animal Production*, *Feedstuffs*, *Poultry Digest*, *Commercial Chicken Production Manual*, *Meat Trades Journal*, *Pork Industry Handbook*, *Raising Pigs Successfully*, *Successful Farming* and *Sheep Farmer* the primary economic status of sentient beings is made perfectly clear. For example, the owner of a 'livestock' auction who states that 'hogs are just a commodity' also declares, 'Our job is to sell merchandise at a



profit. It's no different from selling paper-clips, or refrigerators' (cited in *ibid.*: 143), while a publication aimed at turkey 'growers' advises that using certain chemicals can 'protect poultry profits' (*ibid.*). Other animal enslavers and killers speak of regarding nonhumans as 'crops' little different to carrots, corn, cabbages and wheat. Ethically, one slaughterer states, there is as much 'sin' in killing animals as in picking apples (*ibid.*). While the use of ideological notions of nonhuman animals 'giving themselves' as human food; or 'supplying' items such as pork and ham; and 'contributing' items of their bodies to humans may well qualify as examples of 'verbal dishonesty', industry insiders make clear in trade publications the dire consequences for nonhumans of the 'non-production' of profit. For example 'inadequate production' will and should be punished by death, as is 'poor performance' of 'stock' resulting in 'poor specimens' who are classified as 'inferior' and even 'junk' (*ibid.*: 144).

Terms that the nonhuman enslavement industry has especially attempted to eliminate from its lexicon recently are 'factory farm' and 'livestock industry'. Dunayer (*ibid.*: 125) states that the US National Cattlemen's Association (not seemingly concerned about the sexist nature of their title) have strenuously advocated the use of 'animal agriculture' over 'livestock industry'. Similarly, in 1992, the same body urged the replacement of the term 'factory farm' with 'family farm' (the change apparently accruing tax as well as ideological benefits) (*ibid.*). Dunayer accuses the 'cow-flesh industry' and others of deliberately utilising 'deceptive language... Understatement, euphemism, positive description of negative realities, and outright lying' (*ibid.*: 126). However, it seems that the animal use industries have responded enthusiastically to appeals to alter language use. Dunayer reports that terms like 'stall' have been replaced by

‘individual accommodation’, ‘crate’ becomes ‘modern maternity unit’ with a ‘nursery’, ‘concrete pens’ are ‘hog parlours’, ‘killing’ becomes ‘euthanasia’, and the British *Meat Trades Journal* advocated in the 1980s the labels ‘meat plant’ or ‘meat factory’ to replace ‘slaughterhouse’. Inside the new ‘meat plants’, ‘slaughterers’ become ‘food technologists’, ‘to kill’ becomes ‘process’ and ‘dispatch’ because, as *Meat Processing* told its audience in 1990, ‘People react negatively to the word slaughtering’, so best to avoid terms that hurt ‘the industry’s image’ (cited in *ibid.*: 137). Dunayer argues that there has been a general ‘purging’ of the ‘slaughter’ word, with the industry favouring in recent years ‘process’, ‘harvest’ and ‘going to market’. In 1992, the journal of the British campaigning organisation Compassion In World Farming, *Agscene*, reported that a spokesperson for the industry that ‘farms’ trouts states that, “‘harvesting’ keeps the public ‘happy’” (cited in *ibid.*).

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Concluding this section, it may be understood, certainly in the case of children experiencing early or primary socialisation, that the social lessons they learn - or the stories they hear - are usually provided by persons they initially *depend on the most* (Bauman 1990): immediate parents, grandparents and other close members of their family, who are not likely to say anything entirely contrary to the general institutionalised messages children get from most other sources. Although wary throughout this thesis about regarding socialisation too deterministically (Wrong, 1961; Garfinkel 1967; Giddens

1976), it does not appear to overstate the case to any great degree to view socialisation processes as powerful and on-going social experiences; and as wide-ranging processes of social learning which is 'more than just formal education, for it includes the acquisition of attitudes and values, behaviours habits and skills transmitted not only in school, but through the family, the peer group and the mass media' (White 1977: 1).

Such wary reactions with regard to overplaying the power of socialisation processes seems entirely understandable - and in sociology there has been a good deal of unease about the way, for example, Parsons (generally) and Bowles and Gintis (in relation to the education system), virtually suggest that socialisation is such an all-embracing and all-powerful social phenomenon that it can hardly be resisted in any meaningful sense. Others, such as Sewell (1970: 566), accept the powerful potential of the process, but suggest - correctly allowing more human agency and the ability of resistance - that socialisation is, in fact, 'selectively acquired'.

Birenbaum & Sagarin (1973: 68) suggest that human beings are indeed 'actors', but note that actors only make limited choices *within* set parameters. Most often, dramaturgically, they are expected to 'follow the script' - and Bauman (1990) persuasively indicates that this is by far the easiest thing to 'choose' to do. Adding a further dimension, although personally unwilling to evaluate the 'strength' of the socialisation process, Barker (1992: 126) makes the important point that socialisation is gendered. Gendered socialisation processes contribute to the patriarchal values enshrined and expressed in, say, Jim Mason's (1993) concept of 'dominionism', and in some articulations of 'ecofeminist' thought (see Warren 1994).

Discussing the acknowledgement of the interrelationships between the individual and society in the majority of sociological thought, what Derek Layder says appears important in relation to this part of the thesis. Layder argues that ‘all people must to some degree be affected by the social contexts in which they are raised’ but goes on to say that ‘this does not and cannot mean they are simply reflections of these circumstances’ (1994: 209). Uncomfortable with what he calls ‘attempts to banish the individual subject as a focus of social analysis’ in, say, Althusser’s and Poulantzas’ structural and Foucault’s poststructural thought, Layder argues that humans display a ‘variety of conformity’ to social norms. Moreover, individuals ‘are capable of both resisting and embracing the cultural and structural guidelines that surround them’ (ibid), and it seems likely that gender issues will play an important role here too. Although people possess a unique ‘psycho-biography’ which acts as a ‘storehouse’ and a generator of behaviour, itself constrained by its social context, it acts as an ‘underlying mechanism’ that ‘prompts lines of action, response and reaction to our social circumstances which are not simply reflections of the social conditions themselves’ (ibid). Layder suggests that a person’s social behaviour is ‘filtered’ through an amalgam of several influences which will ‘intersect with the dynamics of particular situations and the influence of wider social contexts’ (ibid.: 209-10).

This perspective appears to allow the necessary human agency required within a truly adequate sociological account of social activity, whilst making it plain that the type of socialising factors discussed above will almost inevitably be influential in forming many central social norms and values about common practices in general terms, and about views and attitudes about human-nonhuman relations.

Finally, in terms of this thesis, there are a number of further brief points to be made and underlined in the light of the discussion above. First, given the ‘challenge’ animal rights appears to represent in relation to conventional social attitudes about other animals, exploring in detail on-going socialisation processes effectively throws important emphasis on the general development and social transmission of *core* values and beliefs which this thesis seeks to investigate and explain. Second, given that the relatively radical concerns of animal rights are a recent historical development, the long-standing influence of animal welfarism essentially means that the ‘stories’ which members of society have hitherto told each other and their children about the human use of animals have, in the main, been fairly non-controversial and largely unquestioned.

In other words, until very recently, remarkably few people have been seriously invited to ethically review their own or their society’s relationships with other animals from anything like an animal rights philosophical standpoint. *If* considered at all, ethical questions posed hitherto about these relations have always been overwhelmingly dominated by conventional, non-radical, welfarist orthodoxy.

Regan (2001: 35) argues that, although welfare positions ‘are committed to the view that we are sometimes justified in causing nonhuman animals significant pain in the institutionalised pursuit of valued human interests, animal rightists deny that we are ever justified in doing this’ (ibid). The true objective for animal rights advocates, Regan suggests, is:

not to provide nonhuman animals with larger cages but to empty them. People who describe themselves as advocates of animal rights are therefore expressing a position importantly different from that of people who base their activism on anticruelty or pro-welfare stances (ibid.: 35-6).

Discussion of precise differences claimed to exist between animal welfare and animal rights positions feature in detail later in the thesis. Third, in concurrence with DeGrazia's point (1996: 44), already outlined, that participating in the exploitation of other animals is so deeply entrenched culturally that it would require a certain strength of mind to move to a lifestyle which involves no or little animal harm, it seems very likely that many of the messages of the new animal protection movement will be initially or utterly resisted by those who have spent all their lives adhering, consciously or not, to conventional views about nonhumans. The ability to successfully evade such messages will also be discussed in Part Two of the thesis. Fourthly, both the proponents of animal rights and the defenders of the current exploitation of 'animals as resources' provide evidence in their propaganda materials that *they* assume and believe that early socialisation is a crucial time in human mental, social and ethical development.

Thus, organisations on every sides of the 'animal debate' (exemplified in the Fund for Animals quote above) claim that they need to 'get children' while they are young (usually meaning during early secondary schooling) if they are to gain advantage in the 'battle of ideas' about animal issues and animal rights. In this sense, to the extent that animal rights philosophy has affected traditional attitudes about human-nonhuman relations, early and secondary socialisation is to all intents and purposes set up as a future battleground for hearts and minds concerning claims about the human treatment of other animals.

This notion of the potential 'controversialising' effect of animal rights thought can be sociologically analysed in the light of Parsons' 'systems' model (Parsons 1951). For example, if we assume that animal welfarism

does enjoy the social and political position in society which has been claimed for it through this thesis; i.e., it is the dominant way by which people address and consider human-nonhuman relations, then its influence will be seen throughout the 'systems' model. In Derek Layder's (1994) discussion of Parsons' ideas, he notes how the 'systems' or 'levels' model is usually broken into four analytical categories: the physiological system, the personality system, the social system, and the cultural system. However, it is important to acknowledge that these systems are separated only for analytical purposes; to really 'make sense' and represent an adequate operationalisation of society's systems, it should be recognised that the levels actually intertwine in manifold ways.

Thus, aspects of overwhelming dominant thought can effectively pervade all 'levels' of the social system in ways which are resistant to challenge. In Parsons' model, both primary and secondary socialisation processes are extremely important elements of the social world. Especially important, claims Parsons, is the fact that social rules are internalised and institutionalised. This model of the mechanism of the transmission of dominant values, if adequate, suggests one way of explaining why the ideology of animal welfarism has been able to dominate the way most of society sees human-nonhuman relations. In addition, it also points toward understanding why some modern animal rights advocates are beginning to identify animal welfarism as a major 'complicating factor' as far as their aspirations go in, say, their claims-making about human-nonhuman relations. Further sections of the thesis attempts to specifically investigate this notion; along with the aim of identifying exactly what 'animal rights' means and how it may be differentiated from traditional welfarist views. Before that, however, the thesis turns toward a focus on the socialisation effects of what

Mason (1993) calls 'rituals of dominionism'; that is, common and frequent social rituals, often involving or including children, that affirm and reaffirm human supremacy and control over nature in general and other animals in particular.

### Rituals of Dominionism.

In his book, *An Unnatural Order*, Mason states that he is dedicated to 'uncovering the roots of our domination of nature and each other'. To this end, he describes (1993: 242) a bull run, such as those that take place in Pamplona, Spain, and made famous in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. Mason suggests that social rituals, such as annual bull running, teaches humanity to dominate nature.

These are some of the details. The bulls have been starved for days. They are therefore in a 'frenzy of hunger'. Then they are driven onto the streets by men wielding whips, knives and clubs. The bulls are chased through the streets, townsfolk slashing at them, attempting to club them. Fireballs are thrown; people attack their eyes and try to cut off their tails. The bulls meet their ends eventually, but the experience has not been quick nor humane: 'Wounded and exhausted after three days of torment, the bulls are finally killed and eaten' (ibid).

Meanwhile, in another town, men fasten wax and resin balls to the horns of three bulls who are released into the streets once the wax and resin has been lit. The bulls are nearly blinded by the dripping wax as they run through the crowd-lined streets. The bulls are now pelted with stones and



spiked with sharpened poles. After four hours of this, these bulls are also taken away to be slaughtered and eaten. Similar events are being repeated in towns nearby, while 'in one town, a live female goat is thrown from the church bell tower. She falls to the plaza below and struggles to get up on her broken legs' (ibid).

In yet another town, children are socialised into callous attitudes towards other animals as men dressed as clowns 'entertain' them by slowly killing some young calves. Chickens may also be hung by their feet across a street. The 'sport' here takes place on horseback as competitors gallop by attempting to grab the chickens by their necks.

Mason asks us to consider in what century such things took place: '3000 B.C.?' 'A.D. 500?' Maybe 1300? (ibid.: 243). In fact, these are descriptions of Spanish festivals ('popular fiestas with acts of blood') which occur in the present day.<sup>120</sup> According to Mason, more of these festivals happen now than they did thirty years ago. Similar festivals take place in Brazil, celebrating Easter Week, New Year's Day, and even weddings. According to *The Times* of July 8th, 1999, hundreds of young Hemingway-inspired American men travel to the annual Spanish bull-runs which they apparently regard as a 'rite of passage into manhood' (quoted in Arcnews, 1999: 20).

When it comes to explaining such festivals, Mason rejects biological or psychological theories advanced, for example, by the philosopher Roger Scruton. Scruton<sup>121</sup> argues that, as a so-called 'hunter-gatherer species', humans have hunting as part of our 'natural proclivities'. He states that, if

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<sup>120</sup> A recent bull run in Pamplona, Spain ended on the 27th of July, 2001. See appendices for a press report on the event from the *Times* in 1999.

<sup>121</sup> In an undated edition of the BBC Radio 4 *Moral Maze* program (in the possession of the author). Scruton argues that humans have a 'natural hunting instinct', found in the activities of hunt saboteurs, which enables human beings to better appreciate and understand the works of William Shakespeare.

we become separated from this nature, we may become damaged, for example, by thinking 'distorted' thoughts. It is vital, Scruton says, that humans should do the things they were 'built by nature' to do. Mason also rejects other theories such as those that advance notions of biological determinism in explanations of human aggression - the Lorenzian version of 'aggression-in-our-genes'. Instead, he talks about the cultural and socio-logical roots of male aggression in 'rituals of dominionism.'<sup>122</sup>

### Dominionism and Agri-Culture.

Such rituals, Mason holds, explaining his definition of 'dominionism', should be regarded as part of the dominant agrarian Western world-view: the socially-constructed hierarchy of living beings or the 'ladder of being' in which humans (*mainly male humans*) are at the top (1993: 243). These 'acts-of-blood' rituals, incorporated in the practice and ideology of male-supremacy, does for women as it does for animals, 'nature' and everything that becomes labelled within the dominant patriarchal *agri-culture* as 'other.' The point of these rituals is to demonstrate and practice (usually male) power and domination: 'We have built such festivals...into our culture over the centuries in much the same way that we have built religious rituals: to

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<sup>122</sup> Historically, bull-runs have performed far-reaching societal functions, which seem linked to Mason's main theme of the social construction of worldviews: 'In the 16th century, shortly after the fall of the Aztec State which was founded on sacrificial ideology, bull races were organised and presented as a type of sacrifice. This contributed to both the material conquest by the Spanish and the spread of new spiritual norms. Serving to reinterpret the fundamental divinities of the conquered in the figure of the devil, the bull was used to edify a mixed-blood society. Soon claimed as a major element in native culture, this...animal made the coexistence of various logics possible: that of the Crown, of the Indians and other ethnic groups, of colonists and of the clergy.' (Fournier, 1995).

remind us that we are on top and in command of the world' (ibid).

Furthermore:-

Rituals, as anthropologists know, serve to express, remind, reaffirm, and perpetuate a society's worldview and ways of life (ibid).

Mason argues that in dominionist rituals, which amount to ironic displays of spectacular brutality to demonstrate and celebrate human 'civilisation', nonhuman animals perform two 'chores' for human beings. The first consists of the material benefits gained from exploiting animals: the meat, the leather, the muscle-power and so on. The second is *symbolic* and *ideological* and part of on-going socialisation about what the terms 'human', 'animal', 'nature' and 'other' may be taken to mean. Thus, other animals are material *and* ritual resources, the latter 'to reaffirm the body of assumptions and myths that make up dominionism' (ibid.: 244). A quick tour of several regions of the modern world dramatically illustrates Mason's point.

### Bullfighting.

Mason concentrates on the Spanish corrida and claims that once the bullfight has been stripped of the pretensions of cultural tradition and art form – notions of the 'sacred sport', the 'stylised ballet', the 'religious ceremony'.<sup>123</sup> - what remains is a ritual contest demonstrating human (again, predominantly male) dominance over 'bestly nature'. Mason contends that,

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<sup>123</sup> These are advertising slogans used by an American Bullfight promoter. (Mason, 1993: 244).

in bullfighting, 'the deck is stacked' in favour of the bullfighters to make sure the ritual 'comes out right in public' (ibid). Bullfighting is men, first dominating then, as the ritual 'comes out right', vanquishing 'dark' and 'savage' nature. Thus, the bull - however meek and mild the actual living individual may be - must categorically be seen as 'wild' and 'dangerous': thus, all the more heroic is his beating. In contrast to such 'wild savagery' stands the representative of human society: the matador: cool - cold even - but tough and hard and, most importantly, *fearless*. The 'complete macho man' who looks at death and pain with disdain: 'his performance defines civilisation as a patriarchal accomplishment - one produced by the male heroics of warriors and strong men' (ibid.: 245). So comforting for 'the ladies'.

In the bullfight, this is the 'set-up': the human master versus animal savagery. But, precisely because it is important that the spectacle 'comes out right in public', little in practice appears to be left to chance. The bull himself is 'primed' for performance; his 'savagery' is *man-u*-factured, if necessary. Until the actual fight, the bulls are often all kept together in a dark pen beneath the grandstand. Suddenly an individual animal is thrust forcibly into a bright and noisy arena; isolated from the herd, he is blinded by sunlight, deafened by trumpets and the roar of the crowd. In this strange and frightening situation, Mason says a bull tends to 'rant' about the arena in confused terror, looking every inch like a 'brave bull', thus fulfilling all of human expectations (ibid.: 246).

However, as said, the odds here are rather stacked. For behind every fearless matador is a whole team of other people<sup>124</sup> known as his *cuadrilla*.

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<sup>124</sup> And, surprise, surprise, the ideological construction known as 'God': Recent plans to build a bullring complex in the Bronx area of New York included the provision of a chapel 'where the bullfighter prays before he goes out and faces the bull.' (Arcnews, 1998: 15).

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

Trumpets sound again as the matador enters to tease the bull with a *muleta* - the world famous small red cloth mounted on a short stick. Skill with the muleta means bringing the bull in close, dangerously close; bringing all that savage nature into striking distance. Yet, despite such dangerous proximity, the matador stands firm - *proud and aloof* - in his tight-fitting ‘suit of lights’. According to Mason, each matador is ‘a picture of male condescension and narcissism’ (ibid). The matador’s display is designed to be a show of pure (but brave and risky) domination: he is there to personify humanity - or about half of it - in an act of pure dominionism. As a final touch, some matadors conclude with the *displante*. In this act, human mastery and control over nature is theatrically proclaimed, while the nohuman’s utter degradation is emphasised and amplified:

With pure macho bravado, the matador shows contempt for beasts by stroking the bull’s horns or nose, usually with an arrogant gesture to the audience that shows his disdain and fearlessness (ibid).

The actual kill follows in which the matador attempts to thrust his three-foot-long sword into the bull's heart.<sup>125</sup> With further gestures of arrogance, 'the matador may clean his bloody sword by wiping it across the animal's body' (ibid). Mason sums up the bullfight experience with these words:-

The entire corrida, then, is a ceremony for the exercise of agrarian society's values on subduing wild, dangerous nature. It parades its fine, brave men with their horses and weapons before the entire community. It displays the fearsome, dangerous bull - the beast of nature. It enrages the bull to emphasise his wild, evil nature, which symbolises the wildness and evil of the rest of nature. And into this arena steps the matador, the elaborately dressed, rationally controlled representative of human civilisation. Coolly, fearlessly, he faces the beast (and beastly nature), subdues it, and degrades, dominates, and humiliates it in co-operation with the entire community (ibid.: 247).

### Rodeos.

Many of the ritual elements of the bullfight are found in the dominionistic spectacle of the North American rodeo, Mason argues. Another social spectacle with yet more brave men and their weapons. Thus, while the rodeo, first and foremost, 'replays the cowboy's work out on the range', it also displays the cowboy's skills and power over other animals, and his society's 'values on fearlessness, violence, strength, domination, and obliviousness to pain' (ibid.: 248).

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<sup>125</sup> This is what the matador hopes to achieve as an ideal type kill. In practice, things are often messier: 'Ordinarily, the sword misses, hits a bone or slices into the lungs instead. Then the bull staggers around the arena, blood pouring from his mouth and nose until he can be put out of his misery' (Mason, 1993: 246-47).

Mason cites *Rodeo*, a publication of anthropologist Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, who asserts that the modern rodeo is the result of a long history of 'herder values and culture' (in *ibid.*: 249). Like the matador, the rodeo cowboy is often viewed as a patriarchal, macho, figure of male sexuality, self-control and bravery in the face of danger. Rodeo riders display a certain stoicism as part of North American competitive and rugged individualism: these guys do not complain when things gets rough. Indeed, they personify the slogan, 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going'. For example, rodeo performers regularly continue to ride even with broken limbs and strapped-up chests. And, as part of the image, these guys try to look like they would out-cool Cool Hand Luke every time.<sup>126</sup>

What the rodeo is all about, however, is a socially-constructed dominionist representation of human mastery over nature in general and animals in particular, which emphasises the 'pioneer' within the cowboy. The cowboy must *conquer*, *subdue* and *vanquish* the moral vacuum that is wild nature (Spiegel, 1988: 14-15). The rodeo's major theme is the human herder's literal 'conquest of nature' as men actually, physically, wrestle large animals to the ground.<sup>127</sup> However, as with the case of the bullfight, the decks are loaded in favour of the humans. For example, several cowboys may work together in teams; they are often on horseback, and have ropes, whips and other weapons. Furthermore, some of the animals used in rodeos are little more than frightened babies, used, for example, in 'calf-roping'.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> There is one bizarre feature in some rodeo shows where cowboys sit playing a game of cards as if they were in a saloon. A charging bull is entered into the arena in which they continue to coolly play. The cowboy who is the last to lose his nerve and dive for cover wins.

<sup>127</sup> According to the animal rights magazine *Arcnews* (*Arcnews* 1995/96), a 'steer's' back was broken at a four day rodeo in Salinas, California in 1996. This was one of five deaths during the four-day event. One victim in a 'calf-roping' contest also had his back broken. *Arcnews* reports that he was refused medication on the grounds that he was to be taken to a slaughterhouse and the meat may 'spoil'.

<sup>128</sup> Calf-roping often results in neck and back injuries in these young animals. The British animal rights magazine, *Arcnews* (1996: 17), reported that when calf-roping was covered regularly by US cable news

In addition, again just like in the situation of the bullfight, it is sometimes necessary to employ artificial means to provoke naturally docile individuals into the 'wild broncos' the public are led to expect to see being 'tamed' before their very eyes. According to investigators from animal protection organisations, electric prods are sometimes used to produce the necessary wild and savage representatives of nature for these shows, along with the employment of caustic ointments and 'bucking straps' which are fixed to pinch the animals' genitals (Arcnews, 1996: 17).

### Hunting.

When hunters from different countries talk about 'hunting', they are often describing quite separate activities. The main form of 'hunting' which takes place in the USA are those which many European hunters, certainly British ones, would call 'shooting'. Therefore, in North America, hunting often means tracking and shooting species such as deer, bears, turkeys and moose with bows and rifles. According to Spiegel (1988: 57), citing information from the US Committee for Humane Legislation, 81% of North American hunters target deer in what Mason (1993: 251) calls 'the great seasonal ritual of autumn'.

In Europe, the term 'hunting' is most likely used to refer to fox and deer (or stag) hunting on horseback, and perhaps boar hunting also - in mainland Europe. Therefore, 'hunting' for Europeans tends to mean hunting

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service ESPN, the camera would deliberately pan back to horse and rider so viewers were spared seeing the calf 'hitting the end of the rope and being slammed down to the ground'.



with hounds (or, in the language of recent attempts to ban the practice in Britain, 'with dogs'). 'Hunting', furthermore, also describes hare hunting, hare coursing, minkhunting and the minority pursuit of draghunting in which there is no live prey.<sup>129</sup> For many Europeans, shooting animals and birds is regarded as an activity separate from hunting: thus, British 'field sports' supporters will talk of 'hunting and shooting,' the latter also referred to as 'stalking' in Scotland.

Mason (1993: 250) describes (North American) hunting as 'the quintessential man-beast contest'. It is the enactment, he argues, of a ritual which clearly states that humans have supremacy over all the other animals and, importantly, enjoy the right to kill and eat many of them. Indeed, hunting ideology is intrinsically bound up with philosopher Spinoza's notion that human 'civilisation' itself would be put at risk if it were to attempt to 'act justly' towards nature, or the idea that humanity would be somehow weakened if society were to succumb to the superstitious 'womanish tenderness' in the objection to killing animals (Spinoza, quoted in Thomas, 1983: 298).

The hunting ritual, therefore, invokes the notion of 'Man-the-Predator', who stands 'at the top of the food chain.'<sup>130</sup> Marjorie Spiegel argues that the term hunting can connote often contradictory images: perhaps 'a carefree day in the woods with 'the boys'. Or perhaps 'a show of skill' (1988: 55). However, hunting for her is ultimately a demonstration of absolute power over someone else: a demonstration of the 'ability to *end* someone's life'. By deliberately using the pronoun 'someone' to define

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<sup>129</sup> There is also the Irish practice of hunting 'carted' deer, in which the aim is not to kill the prey animal.

<sup>130</sup> When hunter Sandi Johnson addresses opponents of hunting, meat eating appears to be presented as the only dietary option open to humans: 'I'd rather go out and get my own meat. You may get yours at the supermarket... Somebody has killed that animal too'. <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~powlesla/personal/hunting/text/women.txt>

other animals, Spiegel emphasises that hunting transforms a life into a *thing*; it turns ‘a vital, living being with a past and potential future into a corpse’ (ibid). Indeed, it is noteworthy that wild animals become property once - but not until - they are killed. A living sentient being transformed to an owned *object* and *thing*. What hunters do, Spiegel suggests, is provide visible proof that they have the power to bring about this transformation. Hunting, therefore, is an overtly masculine<sup>131</sup> demonstration that ultimate power over life and death can be exerted over someone else (ibid). All of these strands of thought about hunting, Mason suggests (1993: 251-53), are fundamental ideological constructs based around humanity’s agri-culture. He argues that the development of agriculture has led to two basic beliefs about the nonhuman world which he describes under the headings, ‘Necessity’ and ‘Nature’.

All rituals and practices of dominionism, and perhaps especially hunting, are ideologically connected with these two interlinked concepts. Mason claims that ‘the hunt’ is portrayed as an absolute necessity which therefore acts to eliminate questions of choice and morality.<sup>132</sup> ‘Necessity beliefs’ are based on notions that hunting performs the vital dual role of *people-feeder* and *nature-controller*. In this view, hunting prevents starvation and, by managing nature, it necessarily helps to keep potentially ‘unruly’ animal populations in check. Mason asserts that agri-cultural thought means that controlling nature has become second nature for us, resulting in a popular myth that the natural world - and animal populations in particular - can become *ungovernable* to the extent that human existence

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<sup>131</sup> Since the mid-1990s, women-only ‘Bows and Does’ hunting excursions have been organised in the USA to encourage more women to hunt. [http://www.buckmasters.com/features/bmmag\\_oct99/bows.html](http://www.buckmasters.com/features/bmmag_oct99/bows.html)

<sup>132</sup> The same logic was used by a respondent to a survey on meat eating (see elsewhere) who claimed that the ‘necessity to survive’ rendered meat eating a non-ethical issue.

may be threatened. Without the essential order imposed by human control, animal numbers may ‘explode’, with disease and starvation - of both humans and other animals - a likely consequence.

Ideologically, the hunter is seemingly constructed as humanity’s ‘protector’ and ‘hero’: in this scenario, humans are pitted ‘against teeming elements of vicious nature’ and must rescue us all from ‘a fate worse than death’ (ibid.: 252). Western nature beliefs incorporate those basic man-the-predator and ‘survival of the fittest’ ideas mentioned above. Hobbesian struggle and Herbert Spencer’s evolutionary hierarchy are prominent in this mode of thought in which humans are constantly described as occupying ‘the top’ of a ‘ladder of being’, or simply being the ‘highest level’ of being. As part of his general views on the importance of *man’s* domination of nature, Spinoza declared in the seventeenth century that ‘man cannot survive without being a predator’ (Quoted in Thomas, 1983: 298), while a modern deer hunter states: ‘I know these animals well. I have spent much time with them in seasons past. I decide on my target. I am the predator’.<sup>133</sup>

Mason says these views see the living world as a competitive ‘meat-hungry, snarling mass of predators’ in which ‘everybody is eating everybody’ to survive in ‘Mother Nature’s basic life plan’ (1993: 252). These views, therefore, put human beings above all and everyone else, yet abiding by a general myth of some sort of structured ‘grand design’ in which killing is somehow essential for survival. Thus, the model of ‘humanity-doing-what’s-natural’ within ‘red in tooth and claw’ nature is a fundamental male value, says Mason. Hunting, along with other rituals of dominionism, becomes symbolically significant as a rite of passage, initiating the young into

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<sup>133</sup> <http://www.pbpub.com/hunting/index.html?hunt>. As we have seen elsewhere, rapists have also described themselves as predators chasing ‘prey’.

‘the patriarchal model of manhood’ (ibid). The powerful US National Rifle Association, along with hunting clubs and magazines, suggest to parents that hunting is an extremely positive socialisation tool, based on encouraging virtuous notions such as being a strong and healthy ‘outdoorsman’ and ‘sportsman’.

With the use of search engines and links on the internet to locate accounts and depictions of various forms of hunting by hunters themselves, several expressions of cultural values were found, most extremely similar to those conceptualised as ‘dominionistic’ by Mason. Modern North American whitetail deer hunters, for example, subscribe to a specialist magazine called ‘Buckmasters’, its name alone being an example under Mason’s rubric of dominionist values, based on ‘mastering’ parts of the nonhuman world. The main content of this magazine are hunters’ personal accounts of shooting and killing deer with guns and bows; technical information about hunting weapons; and advertisements for hunting gear, books and videos. In the latter case, both ‘ACTION BUCKS OF ’99, VOLUME I’ and ‘BIG GAME II, VOLUME II’ were available for sale in 1999.<sup>134</sup> The first offers an hour of ‘hunting action’, specifically ‘bowhunts in Pennsylvania and Montana’, and shotgun and rifle hunting scenes ‘with some incredible bucks harvested in Kansas, Texas and Alberta, Canada’. The advertising literature on the second video invites the ‘masters of bucks’ to:

Enjoy the action-packed big game adventures on 10 exciting hunts from high in the Colorado Rockies to the vast tundra of Alaska; from the heartland of America on the Oklahoma prairie to the Pacific coast of California. Be a part of the action as the world’s record Tule elk is taken with a muzzleloader.

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<sup>134</sup> [http://www.buckmasters.com/online\\_store/index.html](http://www.buckmasters.com/online_store/index.html)

When people go hunting, apparently they ‘take’ and they ‘harvest’. Unsurprisingly, dominionist views are embedded in the normal language of hunters. For example, James Ehlers (1998), a professional fishing and hunting guide, invokes all the manifestations of the caring but rugged patriarch in his account of killing deer. He ‘loves’, ‘cherishes’ and ‘takes care’ of the countryside and feels ‘connected’ to the earth, often by killing its [Ehlers writes, ‘her’] occupants. He believes that:

a closeness to earth, the bond between true hunters and their game has existed since man has walked the earth, and it is no less stronger today. It is truly timeless (ibid).

He apparently delights at the ‘antics’ of the various wild creatures he sees, including his ‘ghost-like’ prey, which he feels he ‘must’ kill in his capacity of ‘predator’. With conservationist themes he can conceive of killing as *caring*; his heavy dominionistic responsibility ‘feels as real as the arrow shaft sliding back across the rest as my fingers draw back the string’ (ibid). He remains motionless and unobserved, carrying out society’s sometimes distasteful (but exciting) task of controlling the nonhuman world; taming the wild; caring while killing:

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

...

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

Here in just a few lines are revealed many strands of Mason's notion of dominionism. For example, the hunter's proclamation that the role of human predator *means* something fundamentally important; in a Durkheimian sense the hunter's role is seen as essentially functional, almost separate and apart from the actual individual who performs it. Furthermore, the notion of nature controlled, and absolutely *requiring* direct human orderly intervention is clearly identified. Also seen are ideas that paternalist humanity must sometimes (perhaps like a caring but firm father figure) be 'cruel to be kind' in its objective dealings with 'in-need-of-taming' nature. With a potentially painful mixture of sorrow and joy, humanity gallantly takes on board the onerous responsibility of managing and tending - as in Bauman's 'gardening' - the savage earth. Even when some necessary tasks are bloody and repugnant, *humanity* does not let 'Mother Earth' down because 'she' desperately needs his kindly and connected control. What kind of mad bitch would she be if Mother Earth were not subject to this benevolent 'ordering'?

It perhaps should be reasserted that the majority of legislation relating to nonhuman animals contains the central concept of not causing *unnecessary* suffering (Radford 1999). The flip side to this conceptualisation appears the notion that human beings also must have within them the strength of character to carry out those *necessary* tasks which may nevertheless cause harm or suffering. Therefore, although perhaps utterly distasteful at times, 'Man' must rule over nature with what Lasch (1991) has named *an easy-*

*going oppression* because it is wholly necessary that he does so. Men demonstrate their caring patriarchal control by 'taking responsibility for the blood'. Yes it is true: a man's really gotta do what a man's gotta do. According to the ecofeminist perspective of Maria Mies (in Mies and Shiva, 1993: 156), the Enlightenment thought of men of the industrialised North resulted in a *going away* from nature, seen as an emancipation *from* nature. However, despite this 'rupture' from the natural world, modern men return to nature in order to commodify it in a purely consumptionist manner (ibid.: 134). Within this form of instrumentalism, they act in nature as *voyeurs* rather than actors, like visitors to cinemas or art galleries. In the case of hunting, hunters act in nature as 'sportsmen' with a romanticised, nostalgic connection to what they see 'as nature'.

From this perspective, those who live full-time in the countryside are engaged in *creating* nature as a 'sports arena' or 'visitor centre' for urban consumers, be they the North American deer hunters or the members of the 'field'<sup>135</sup> on a British fox hunt. Naturally, the patriarch calls humanity 'Man' and insists that his own caring-by-killing relationship with others has existed throughout the history of *Homo sapiens*. How much harm has been predicated on 'tradition'? Mason notes (1993: 251) that modern hunting acts as a symbolic reassurance that modern human beings are 'merely' and 'naturally' following the same patterns of behaviour towards other animals which, they tell themselves and their children, humans have followed since 'the beginning of time'. However, Mason also contends that archaeological evidence (that is, the interpretation of archaeological findings) supports the view that organised hunting was not common in humans until around 20,000

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<sup>135</sup> The group of riders who follow the red-coated hunters but who take little part in the actual hunt in terms of directing hounds or deciding where to hunt.

years ago, and debate continues about how important hunting (for food) has been in human history. Until this time, the vast majority of the human diet was plant-based, with the small amount of meat coming from scavenging rather than what might be called ‘proper hunting’ (also see Diamond 1991: 163-72 for an interesting account of ‘agriculture’s two-edged sword’ which shows the health and leisure benefits of ‘forager’ lifestyles over modern sedentary agricultural ones).<sup>136</sup>

It is also perhaps ideologically significant that the lifestyle Mason calls ‘foraging’, most others tend to call ‘hunter-gathering’. It’s ideological significance is surely further underlined, given the quantitative evidence of such people’s dietary practices, that they are *not* generally known as ‘gatherer-hunters’ (although to her credit, the evolutionary anthropologist and ex-animal laboratory assistant Susan Sperling [1988: x] does use this term in her book *Animal Liberators*. Similarly, Erich Fromm [1963: 353] writes ‘For many thousands of generations man lived by food gathering and hunting’).

Of course, many hunting accounts are far more straightforward and less romantic than the account offered above by Ehlers. Yet, they still tend to reveal examples of dominionist thought. For example, the anonymous author of *Vermont’s Annual Deer Hunt*,<sup>137</sup> relates how the ‘shoot-em-up crowd’ just want to have themselves ‘a good time’. As this yearly hunt gets underway, the trade in ‘American-made beer in throw-away cans’ is brisk, while ‘the normally serene countryside echoes to the sound of gunfire’. Sometimes, the disturbance is so great that it sounds as if ‘there is a small

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<sup>136</sup> Also, a great many theologians have held that human beings were not originally carnivorous: ‘Many biblical commentators maintained that it was only after the Flood that humans became meat-eaters.’ (Mason, 1983: 289).

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.pbpub.com/hunting/index.html?hunt>



war on in ‘them tha hills!’” In fact, the danger from stray bullets is very real, it is stated. Another account from the same web site talks about people waiting for that ‘supreme moment’ when prey falls within the sights of their high-powered rifles. There is talk about the power and deadliness of weapons and ammunition, and also the satisfaction of seeing a magnificent bull stagger to the ground, writhing in a moment of death.

After such brutal honesty, one author feels obliged to offer more *considered* justifications for the hunt. ‘It’s part of life and death’, he suggests. ‘It’s sportsmanship and it’s killing for food which anyone who eats meat must accept’, he tries. Finally, he settles on: ‘Why should Vermonters have to buy their food (usually riddled with pesticide) from Florida or California when the local environment can supply something less tainted?’ Interestingly, Ehlers (1998) offers a similar justification for shooting a deer: ‘Fast food provides no meaning in my life and I am sceptical that it does for anyone’.

Someone else being ‘brutally frank’ is Steve Timm, a contributing editor to the *Varmint Hunter Magazine*. In 1999, Timm had been assigned to visit a gun manufacturer in somewhere called Nesika Bay but he’s less than pleased that writing the piece may interfere with his regular hunting routine:

To be brutally frank, the assignment couldn’t have come at a worse time. I had just finished meeting my last deadline and I was set to kill my fall’s ration of big game. After that, my wife Karen...was scheduled for very major spinal surgery. I was going to be out of commission making meat and tending my bride for about two months... Hunting and family comes first. And that’s the way it’s supposed to be. After I killed my yearly allotment of critters and got Karen relatively stabilised, I made arrangements for the visit to Nesika Bay (Timm 1999).

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

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

The fact is that today’s bows set at a modest 60 pounds are fully capable of delivering enough kinetic energy to drive an arrow through the chest of any white-tailed buck (Murray 1998).

## Talking Turkey.

Turkey hunters tend to talk about their activities in a particularly macho way, perhaps ostensibly to compensate for the type of prey they seek to kill. As an initial thought, perhaps turkey as prey sounds hardly like a wild and potentially dangerous 'animal opponent' like a bear, a moose, or even a fully-grown stag does? Indeed, possibly for similar reasons, the size of the North American turkey is often carefully emphasised in hunters' photographs of themselves and 'their' bird. Common iconoclastic poses tend to feature dead turkeys thrown nonchalantly over hunters' shoulders, the birds' lifeless heads hanging down limply with large wing feathers cascading below the conquerors' waists.

In turkey-hunter talk, male turkeys are 'gobblers,' 'tom turkeys' and 'longbeards', and are the more prized prey, while the smaller females are simply called 'hens'.<sup>138</sup> With some unacknowledged irony, turkey hunters speak of the male turkeys being rather macho, almost arrogant; strutting around, scratching at the earth, 'parading' around to attract mates (Trout 1999). Male turkeys 'gobble' at other birds; and they walk-the-walk, checking out the competition and the availability of females. Turkey hunters say they use their considerable knowledge of turkey behaviour *against* the birds, evolving clever hunting 'strategies' to 'outwit' the gobblers. Hunters also often like to emphasise the necessary expertise and skill required to successfully kill wild turkeys, who seem to the hunters capable of forever keeping themselves (the little teasers) just outside 'killing distance'. Furthermore,

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<sup>138</sup> See Van de Pitt, 'The female is somewhat duller' (1998) for an interesting discussion of the 'construction of the sexes' in ornithological literature.

dedication and perseverance are essential qualities for successful turkey killing, for any false move on a hunter's part will be inevitably seen by the birds' putative 'supernatural vision' (ibid).

When hunter, John Trout, Jr., describes his own turkey hunts, he portrays a mental and physical struggle between 'man' and 'bird'. He keenly passes on his long experience of 'bumping heads' with 'afternoon gobblers'; and says that by following his hunting strategies you may 'double your fun' in the wild turkey kill. After establishing the difficulties of battling the allegedly 'supernatural' gobblers, the skills of the dominionist hunter are amply demonstrated with accounts of the frequency of their successful kills. Thus, when a gobbler appears behind Trout Jr., it soon 'falls victim' to his 'trusty Winchester'. When two turkeys appear out of a huge valley, he wastes no time in 'taking' what he expertly identifies as the 'best' bird. By skillfully 'calling' to a gobbler in the manner of a female turkey:

Almost instantly, three hens and a strutting gobbler appeared on the opposite side of the field, just out of shooting range. Patiently, I raised the gun while Joe [note: two against one<sup>139</sup>] took over the calling and offered the strutting bird a sweet string of clucks and purrs. The hens paid little attention, but the gobbler found the calls irresistible. Slowly he approached, and when he reached the point of no return I squeezed the trigger. The gun roared and the 4-year-old gobbler toppled (ibid).

Another strategy of human skill over animality involves targeting the guy-without-a-gal: or the 'lonesome turkey'. After all, according to Gary Sefton, experienced wildlife shooter, and honoured as 'turkey calling champion', any male turkey is more likely to respond to your calls if he has 'no hens alongside'. An extra skillful strategy, which to the uninitiated may appear

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<sup>139</sup> Not to mention that the human team have their Winchesters, while the turkeys have but their supernatural eyes and their 'gobble.'

more than a little weird, means being able to ‘scream like a peacock’, apparently designed to cause ‘shock-gobble’. It seems that there is nothing like a peacock’s call to intrigue even a weary ‘afternoon turkey’ who is ‘desensitised after gobbling at crows and other turkeys all morning’:

The peacock call is like an extra stimulant that can force a turkey to talk when he has stopped answering the crows and other sounds that made him gobble earlier in the day (ibid).

Focusing his analysis specifically on North America, Mason argues (1993: 251) that hunting keeps dominionist values ‘alive’ and ‘handy for all of society’. He notes that a hunter regards himself as the ‘leading’ and also the *controlling* species on the planet, encroaching on wildlife every day, deciding where and where not wildlife can live,<sup>140</sup> and which to domesticate in order to eat. Finally, talking specifically about nonhuman animals rather than nature in general, the hunter is aware of the weighty responsibilities of having ‘total power over them’ (quote from a hunter in *Greenwich News* [Connecticut], in Mason, 1993: 250).

Mason calls hunting ‘human society’s oldest man-over-beast ritual’, further noting that, although only a small percentage of Americans hunt themselves, society in general tacitly supports it, especially the hunting of deer. For example, the opening day of the deer hunt is described in *An Unnatural Order* as ‘a secular day of obligation’ (ibid.: 251). It appears that this North American ritual has a powerful sociological influence in terms of the maintenance of a ‘misotherous’ culture (meaning hatred and/or contempt for animals - explored below in greater detail). For Mason, misotherous

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<sup>140</sup> A common strategy of every ‘conservationist.’

culture is transmitted and maintained through peer group and secondary socialisation processes. For example, on this significant first day of hunting, 'schools and factories close, restaurants offer 'sportsman's plates', local media sponsor Big Buck contests, and a standard greeting is, 'Get your deer yet?'" (ibid.: 251-52). Mason further reports that the *New York Times* has poetically described the annual opening day deer-killing phenomenon 'the song of the rifle' in the 'rite of autumn' (ibid.: 252).

### Hunting in Britain.

If Mason argues that only a few North Americans hunt themselves, it is also the case that only a minority of the British population take an active role in hunting (there are about 350 fox hunts in Britain [Gellatley 2000: 27]). If one were to include in the term 'hunting' fox, deer and harehunting, shooting pheasants, partridges and grouse, shooting deer, hare coursing *and* angling, the total number of participants would probably number less than four million people (for example, Gellatley [2000: 173] estimates that there are about three million British anglers: angling being by far the most popular form of bloodsport in Britain).

When thinking about British society's general attitudes to hunting (hunting and shooting), it may be thought that the British situation differs dramatically to the North American situation just outlined. In Britain, particularly in England, hunting and shooting have persistently been regarded as traditional 'upper class' activities, somewhat distant and alien to 'the masses', despite the enthusiastic efforts of pro-hunting organisations such as the

British Field Sports Society (BFSS) to suggest otherwise.<sup>141</sup> However, it is also true that certain hunting rituals have attracted substantial public and media attention and some tacit and overt support at least until very recently. For example, some particularly 'traditional' fox hunt gatherings, such as 'pony meets',<sup>142</sup> and especially Boxing Day meetings, have often been supported by large numbers of the general public way beyond the number who physically take part in the hunt or spend the day as 'followers' in vehicles or on foot.

Typically, the public on such occasions would attend in the late morning when hunters drink the ritual 'stirrup cup' and when the hounds and horses were paraded on village greens or in small rural town centres. In fact, the presence of demonstrators belonging to the League Against Cruel Sports and the disruptive activists of the Hunt Saboteurs Association may explain part of the recent drop in public participation at such events as much as any growth in opposition to bloodsports generally. Although perhaps of little significance in itself, one can still frequently find hunting scenes in public houses; in pictures on walls and on the beer pumps at the bar. Furthermore, many British pubs are still called such names as 'Horse and Hound,' or 'The Sportsman', suggesting that the assumed widespread opposition to most bloodsports does not extend to serious objections to seeing its cultural representation.

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<sup>141</sup> The BFSS (and now the Countryside Alliance) strategy has been to point out that many types of people, not just the rich, go hunting, shooting and particularly hare coursing. They made much of the existence of a hunt which had a large percentage of miners in its ranks, while they have also attempted to entice anglers to join their organisation. While fox hunters and shooters have made allegiances with the hare coursing fraternity due to its working class base, this may be regarded as a serious tactical mistaken, since public opinion polls (even given their suspect validity) have consistently suggested that hare coursing has been the most hated of all bloodsports for many years.

<sup>142</sup> These are special hunts in which the majority of the 'field,' the riders who follow the actual red-coated hunters, are children.

It is also the case that it is only in very recent years that the media have not given generally favourable and widespread coverage to the opening day of grouse shooting (the so-called ‘glorious’ 12th of August). The media tended to give particular attention given to the annual competition between hotels to be the first to serve grouse on their menu. The flying by plane of freshly-killed birds (much to the disgust of culinary traditionalists who argue that ‘game’ needs to be hung and be semi-decomposed before it is cooked) to London direct from the grouse moors, and seeing them parachuted in by the ‘Red Devils’ stunt team, used to feature every year in August 12<sup>th</sup> news bulletins until the 1990s.

With regard to fishing, many more than the estimated three million British anglers appear to be catered for in media programmes and popular publications about this ‘pastime’. Angling, even with its ritualistic displays of dead fish trophies (see virtually any cover of *Angling Times*), and possibly due to the relatively large number of active participants, has yet to be considered as controversial as other bloodsport pursuits and still features prominently in local newspapers and other media. The very same media which would quite likely think twice about covering fox or deer hunting, and perhaps especially hare coursing, to the same degree and in such a positive or unproblematic light.

The contributions to animal rights email networks suggest that, politically and tactically, angling remains in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a difficult campaigning issue for the modern anti-bloodsports movement, creating tensions, for example, between mobilisations such as the Hunt Saboteurs Association (which opposes fishing as well as ‘hunting with hounds’) and organisations such as the League Against Cruel Sports (which prefers to



differentiate hound sports from other forms of hunting) (for greater detail on this issue, see Yates 1998).<sup>143</sup>

When it comes to traditional dominionistic rituals in actual hunting practices in Britain, fox hunting is perhaps the most obvious case. However, modern foxhunters<sup>144</sup> (predominantly male) have in recent years taken fastidious steps to attempt to alter the public perception of their activities. For example, a contemporary debate concerns the issue of whether hunters' traditional scarlet red coats damage the public image of the hunt. The Master of Fox Hounds Association (made up mostly of men) have eagerly promoted their 'rules' which restrict or ban what many opponents have regularly latched on to as worst aspects of the hunt, such as the practice of 'digging the fox out'. Therefore, 'terrier men' (there are few 'terrier women'<sup>145</sup>), who are often local 'farm hands' attached to hunts and used to dig out foxes who 'go to ground', have been far more strictly regulated in modern times to reduce the number of incidents when live foxes have been dug out of the ground and thrown directly into the pack of foxhounds, or thrown just in front of the dogs which allows virtually no chance of escape. A celebrated recent incident (enjoyed most particularly by hunt saboteurs) involved a rescued fox which has come to be known as 'Copper' because a police officer covered an earth (fox hole) with his helmet to prevent the fox being dug out.

The once fairly common practice of releasing 'bagged' foxes in front of the hound pack is also now officially frowned upon, as is the historically

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<sup>143</sup> In August 2001, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) launched an anti-angling campaign featuring posters of a dog with a hook in her top lip with the slogan 'if you wouldn't do this to a dog, why do it to a fish?' This has led to email debates among animal advocates about whether the campaign will jeopardise the moves towards a prohibition on 'hunting with dogs'.

<sup>144</sup> Meaning the 'huntsman' with his 'whippers-in' and other 'hunt servants'.

popular tradition of 'bleeding' young novice riders. This latter practice, a prime display of dominionism, which the author witnessed as a hunt saboteur in the 1980's, involves cutting the tail (known as the 'brush') from a dead fox, dipping the brush in the fox's own blood and smearing the blood on the faces of young newcomers to the hunt. This practice is particularly thought controversial by the mass media, especially the tabloid press, when it occurs to a young member of the British 'royal' family. Other ritualistic practices in British foxhunting include removing the fox's face (the 'mask') from the dead animal, cutting off feet for 'souvenirs' and cutting out the heart (it is the heart of a deer that is the particularly favoured trophy in British deer hunting). Once these rituals are over, the huntsman, often now covered in mud and blood, may hold the carcass aloft, shaking it to agitate the pack of hounds held at his feet, before giving an extended note on his hunting horn to finally denote 'the kill'.

The arguments - or justifications and excuses - British hunters have rehearsed over the years are also well within Mason's concept of dominionism. For example, foxhunters have typically portrayed foxes as a vicious and verminous predator who prey on innocent lambs and chickens. Controlling foxes, therefore, falls within the dominionist rubric of controlling nature in general in an attempt to maintain a 'proper' balance of creatures in the countryside. Roger Scruton, known as the 'fox hunting philosopher' when he appears on BBC Radio 4's debating forum on ethical issues, *The Moral Maze*, complained recently (Scruton and Tyler 2001: 20) that human beings would lose the ability to *vitaly* intervene in the environment if animal rights views ever became widely accepted. If some hunters

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<sup>145</sup> This information comes from responses to a question I asked on an animal rights email net. One hunt saboteur stated, however, that one 'terrier woman' called Rose was just as frightening as her male counterparts who have the general reputation of being the most violent of hunt followers.

see themselves as 'fox control agents', they conversely also often regard themselves as 'guardians' of the allegedly treasured agricultural and 'sporting' lands, being mindful of nature and 'her' ways, contrary to their countryside-ignorant urban-based 'townie' opponents.

Therefore, British foxhunters know that when 'Mother Nature' louses up<sup>146</sup> and reduces the fox population to a greater degree than is 'proper' and 'balanced', then her guardians must be ready to immediately and conscientiously step in, now in the role of 'fox conservationists' rather than 'pest controllers', restoring their version of 'natural equilibrium' based on long-standing agri-culturalist values. British foxhunters, like their North American deer hunting counterparts, argue that they 'cherish' and 'respect' their prey, provided that fox numbers are carefully monitored and ordered. Without the foxhunter's essential caring-through-killing, we risk becoming over-run by pesky verminous foxes. On the other hand, without this indispensable human 'intervention', 'order' and 'care', we may tragically never see one again. As one who will repeatedly invoke dominionistic traditionalism in defence of his activities, the apparent ability of the fox population to pretty much regulate itself seems of no import to the fox hunter (see Gellatley 2000: 28-33).

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<sup>146</sup> North America has one remaining 'freak show' which includes one picture, captioned, 'Nature's Mistakes' (Sweet, 1999).

### Gibbet lines.

Gamekeepers employed by British shooting estates, until barred by the 1992 Animal By-Products Order, would commonly display all the animals which they regard and killed as ‘vermin’ on gibbet lines. This practice, which can clearly be seen as a dominionist although not so public practice based on the human control and manipulation of nature, involved hanging polecats, mink, blackbirds, thrushes, rabbits, hares, and others, from long strings of rope or wire set in woods and hunt coverts (small woods frequently visited by hunts). The result is a line of decomposed and decomposing individuals acting as a rather grotesque scarecrow, almost as some kind of signpost or warning signal to animals not wanted for the actual practice of shooting.

The Hunt Saboteurs Association once produced a post card which depicted a gamekeeper explaining to a ‘sab’ that he shot numerous species of wild birds and other small animals such as stoats and weasels to protect his master’s pheasants and partridges. So, what happens to the apparently favoured pheasants and the partridges, the saboteur asks. ‘Ah, the master, *he* shoots them’, the gamekeeper declares.

### So... ‘Hunter-Gatherer’ or ‘Forager’?

Mason (1993: 252) argues that hunting is often and falsely depicted as a ‘primal necessity’ of early humanity. This historical exaggeration of hunting’s role in providing *essential* human food, he suggests, should be

seen as a powerful ideological response to modern guilt and unease about meat eating. If we actually believe the notion that humans ‘must’ kill and eat animals, that we were indeed ‘meant’ to eat and kill them because humans are ‘natural carnivores’,<sup>147</sup> then animal deaths can be more easily rationalised as absolutely necessary and utterly unavoidable.

Furthermore, if we agree with Erasmus Darwin’s reported assertion, that the whole of nature is ‘one great slaughterhouse’ (quoted in Thomas, 1983: 299), then we, like other predators, having *no other choice* but to take the lives of other animals in order to survive, may as well simply get on with the regrettable, messy and often violent business.<sup>148</sup> When investigating slaughterhouse practices in North America, Gail Esnitz (1997) found such sentiments when she was bluntly told by an animal slaughterer, ‘someone’s got to do it’.<sup>149</sup>

For Mason (1993) early forms of hunting commonly took place as a part of rituals marking a time when fundamental relationships between men and women, and men and ‘nature’ were changing. These changes, and their repercussions, form the substantive part of Mason’s (and Karen Warren’s ecofeminist) thesis about human relations with the earth - or ‘nature’ - or

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<sup>147</sup> However, Thomas notes that seventeenth-century scientists such as Walter Charleton, John Ray and John Wallis ‘were much impressed by the suggestion that human anatomy, particularly the teeth and the intestines, showed that man had not originally been intended to be carnivorous’ (1983: 292). Similarly, Franklin (1999: 178) notes that Rousseau used the scientific and anthropological knowledge of his day to claim that humans were not natural meat eaters but were rather a ‘frugivorous species’.

<sup>148</sup> This rationalisation for killing and eating animals is, historically speaking, separate from the most commonly used Old Testament mandate argument; that is, ‘God permits, allows or even commands it’: ‘BE KIND TO ANIMALS BY USING THEM AS INTENDED! Raise them as stock, love them as pets, learn from them through science, wear their skins to comfort us in the cold, eat their dead flesh to nourish the glorious bodies that God gave to us. ANIMALS ARE BEAUTIFUL, EAT THEM!’ (<http://www.mtd.com/tasty/-comments3.html>). Or other arguments such as ‘uneaten’ animals would overrun the world or, conversely, would not exist if they were not eaten by humans (see Thomas, 1983: 287-303).

<sup>149</sup> When ITV News interviewed slaughterers involved in the British foot and mouth outbreak in 2001, they were met by this same ‘someone’s got to do it’ response to the mass slaughter of sheep.

everything that we now regularly regard as ‘other’.<sup>150</sup> Mason suggests that humankind took a giant leap backwards when significant sections of its early population took to sedentary agriculture rather than continuing to forage. This development which has resulted, for example, in the deliberate planting of crops and the domestication of some types of animals, has been disastrous for the nonhuman world, he claims. It did not do a great deal of good for a great number of humans either, he maintains, since with agriculture came a whole new competitive worldview based on property, wealth and violent exploitation. This worldview changed the whole perception of the role of human beings in nature. Instead of simply being *in* nature, a part of some notion of ‘the natural rhythm of things’, humankind began to attempt to control nature, to effectively ‘tame’ and order it. However, ‘humankind’ is a rather misleading term, Mason insists, because the movers and shakers in this transformation of practices, perceptions and attitudes were men. Men, with their growing and ultimately destructive agri-culturalist mindset, were the principle drivers of this important and far-reaching change, Mason maintains. Once human beings stopped foraging for food and began to fence in and otherwise control the lives of other animals, men learnt basic reproductive knowledge such as their own role in procreation. Childbirth had hitherto been regarded as a somewhat *incredible*, even a *magical*, event. Miraculously, it seemed, women autonomously would bring forth new life from out of their own bodies. Moreover, women’s bodies could feed these

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<sup>150</sup> These themes find surprising echoes in Friedrich Engels’ *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1972, London: Lawrence & Wishart, originally published in 1884). Engels argues that the advent of agriculture altered social relationships in what he characterised as ‘primitive communism’. Indeed, he argues that animal agriculture effectively created private property and patriarchal relations to the extent that women suffered ‘a world historic defeat’. It should perhaps be acknowledged that Engels’ anthropological data has been severely criticised, as no doubt, Mason’s citations could be.

children. In addition, women could apparently do other ostensibly magical feats, like bleeding heavily but not dying.<sup>151</sup>

However, through watching and then carefully and systematically controlling animal procreation, men learnt the vital male role in the creation of their own offspring. And now men had fixed 'property' in the shape of fenced-off land to pass on to their progeny.<sup>152</sup> Thus, for the first time in human history, it became important to know who one's children were. The resulting male control of women's lives continues today, guided by a violent patriarchal, or a male-supremacist, cultural mindset. Mason believes that this process has created major problems for human beings, nonhuman animals and 'nature' in general. He claims that male supremacy has resulted in institutional misogyny, racism and a misotherous speciesism: the male hatred and urge to control anything and *everything* which is 'other'. It would perhaps be an error not to point out that we need to recognise that social power, status and class were bound to be a significant factors in this process. Some individual men, no doubt, gained little benefit from the development that Mason is claiming occurred, just as individual women are claimed as beneficiaries even within patriarchal and misogynous relations.

It is clear that Mason is seeking to situate human activities such as hunting into his general and much larger schema of things. Mason is claiming that the history and modern practice of hunting are ideological and

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<sup>151</sup> Or, perhaps, not feats of 'magic' as such, but rather 'witchcraft'. In the 1999 Hollywood film *South Park*, a schoolteacher character tells his class that he is wary of women because he does not trust anything that can bleed for five days without dying.

<sup>152</sup> Dahrendorf (1969: 22-3) notes that Rousseau claimed a version of 'original sin' based on the transition from foraging to sedentary agriculture. Rousseau is quoted from 1754 (*The Origin of Inequality Among Men and Whether it is Legitimated by Natural Laws*) saying: 'The first man who fenced in an area and said, "This is mine", was the real founder of civil society'. Dahrendorf, on social inequality generally, quotes John Millar from 1771 (*Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*) who states: 'The invention of taming and pasturing cattle gives rise to a more remarkable and permanent distinction of ranks. Some persons, by being more industrious or more fortunate than others, are led in a short time to acquire more numerous herds and flocks'.

ritualistic dimensions of male-dominated, dominionistic, thought. He states that, if his interpretation of the anthropological, historical and archaeological evidence is correct, hunting is indeed human society's 'oldest man-over-beast ritual' (1993: 251).

### Circus, Circus: Mastery Over the Wild World.

Mason traces the beginnings of the modern animal circus to pre-Christian times when the ancient Egyptians kept trained animals in parks. The Greeks also trained animals such as bears, lions and horses to perform tricks and dances, and were the first to develop the idea of travelling circuses. However, he suggests that the Romans, whose circus events could last a hundred days and involve the deaths of thousands of animals, were mostly responsible for putting the notion of animal circuses on the 'West's cultural map' (1993: 254).

Mason notes that man-beast contests in modern circuses do not have to feature violence on a spectacular level which results in animal deaths. Instead, dominionist rituals in today's travelling menageries involve the deliberate degradation and humiliation of the nonhuman world (ibid.: 253) dressed up as entertainment and education. While violent rituals involving killing animals reinforce the idea that humans are required to physically manage, conserve and control their populations, Mason suggests that rituals of humiliation 'tend to reinforce myths of animal stupidity, inferiority, and the willingness to submit to human dominion' (ibid). This perspective suggests that events such as the circus which feature performing animals



contain powerful foundational messages about the 'place' of human beings and other animals in the world. When children are taken to the circus, they see the hierarchical ladder of being with a human being - a ringmaster, in charge; when adults go, they are reminded that they stand masterfully on the top rung. Therefore, 'going to the animal circus' may still have a strong effect on children in particular in terms of their socialisation. As said above, a great many socialised lessons-of-life take place long before children are in the position to hold firm moral positions about what they are being taught and, despite the general decline in circus-going in recent years, it is still not unusual to see even babes-in-arms being taken to 'the Big Top' along with their older brothers and sisters.

One striking image of nonhuman animals painted by the circus - that they are playthings, clowns, objects of human whimsy - may be internalised by audience members<sup>153</sup> before they can make up their minds about the rights and wrongs of the spectacle displayed before them. When the British tabloid the *Sunday People* investigated Circo Atlas, 'in the popular British holiday resort of Albufeira on Portugal's Algarve' in 1999, they found lame horses and sick lions being forced to perform (Garston, 1999). Garston notes how audiences clapped and cheered despite the obvious animal suffering before them. For example, the audience applauded when three Shetland ponies appeared in the circus ring with apparently frightened baboons chained to the saddles on their backs. While families, including children aged as young as two continued to clap and cheer, the baboons became more and more terrified, writes Garston, eventually screaming in panic as the horses were induced to canter faster and faster. From Mason's

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<sup>153</sup> Although modern circuses with performing animals may be increasingly seen as relics from an unenlightened past, it is noteworthy that until the 1970s animal circuses featured on primetime British TV schedules, especially at Easter and Christmas (information from the Captive Animals' Protection Society).

perspective, circus shows such as Circo Atlas are exemplars of dominionist misothery, encouraging people to turn a blind eye to the suffering of other animals and socialising the young to regard animals as human playthings and property whose suffering is of relatively little consequence compared to their own enjoyment.

Performing animals are often forced to act out highly controlled but unnatural<sup>154</sup> behaviours in the circus ring. Mason suggests that in our laughter in these circumstances, we appear to accept the ‘buffoon status’ of these animals. Dressed up in showy trappings, we affirm their simplicity, and their instrumental utility, with a dual socialising effect: ‘Their contrived performances *teaches* children and *reminds* adults that human beings are masters over the living world’ (ibid., emphasis added). Of course, part of the attraction of attending circuses, for adults as much as children, is to see at first hand the ‘clever tricks’ of the ‘animal performers’. When a family ‘goes to the circus’, the experience reinforces the belief in adults that other animals are ‘lesser-than’ humans in a moral value construction, while it introduced children to accept or affirm this dominant ideology.

Circuses, then, in Mason’s view, are like the zoos which developed in the nineteenth century, acting as reinforcement rituals of dominionist values, by recycling ideas of humanity’s ‘mastery’ and ‘victory’ over animals and nature. They act as another cornerstone of misotherous dominionism (ibid.: 255).

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<sup>154</sup> For example, in ‘the wild’ elephants do not stand on their front feet and raise their back legs to perform a forward ‘handstand’. However, this is a common part of circus elephants’ routines. Physiologically, this ‘trick’ places undue stress on the skeleton of an elephant.

Who was told what to do by the man.  
Who was broken by trained personnel.  
Who was fitted with collar and chain.

*Dogs.*  
The Pink Floyd.  
*Animals*, Harvest, 1977.

How often is it asserted that ‘Britain is a nation of animal lovers’? However, it is not remarkable that so many million nonhumans can meet their end in a nation of lovers of animals. Jasper (1999) has explained why ‘loving’ nonhumans fails to exclude their exploitation. Perhaps this explains why many genuine animal rights advocates despise the ‘animal lover’ label.<sup>156</sup> Often the phrase ‘animal lover’ is understood to mean that the British in particular maintain a large population of pet animals which are *not* intended for eating. It also means that several profitable industries have developed to service ‘pet owners’, although this economic thought may not spring immediately to mind when thinking of ‘animal-loving Britain’. The term may also invoke thinking about the many modern television shows now dedicated to the care and ownership of nonhuman animals, or perhaps the

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<sup>155</sup> Recently, sections of the the animal protection movement have used the term ‘companion animals’ in preference to pets. Traditional animal welfarists are, generally speaking, happiest to continue using the label ‘pet’ (Singer 1983; Regan 2001).

<sup>156</sup> Groves (1995: 448) reports that an activist at a North American anti-vivisection rally declared: ‘I’m not an animal lover. Some animals I like, others I don’t like. To say I’m an animal lover is the same as saying I’m a nigger lover’. This consciousness is not universal in the animal protection movement, of course. In 2003, a spokesperson for an ‘animal rights’ group in Britain campaigning against a pigeon ‘cull’ was reported in the press that he regarded himself ‘as a tax payer and bird lover...’ If asked, some activists will suggest they are merely employing terms of reference familiar to the public, while others are emotionally committed to relationships with nonhuman ‘companions’, sometimes suggesting – ironically like supporters of animal circuses and zoos - that direct contact between human beings and other animals is beneficial in engendering concern in humans for nonhuman beings. For his part, Regan acknowledges that

dotty old man down the road seen each evening struggling with three large dogs while not preventing them fouling the local children's playing fields.

When Mason discusses the topic of pet animals he begins with the changing values about the nonhuman world beginning in Britain and North America in Victorian times. He notes (1993: 255) that this period saw a significant shift in human attitudes to animals and nature in general (also see Thomas 1983; and Kean 1998 on this theme). Thus, Mason claims, as 'nature' was beginning to be seen as an object of beauty and serenity rather than something to be utterly feared for its 'evil dangerousness', there was an attendant moderation in dominionist thought. However, whatever this shift meant (and contrary to the 'massive transformation' in human-nonhuman relations thesis in Franklin 1999), it did relatively little to shake the basic foundations of dominionist ideology. If anything, by way of Jasper's (1999) perspective, the development of pet ownership provided yet another strand to the central ideas of dominionism, entirely consistent with agri-culturalist thought based on instrumentally 'shaping', 'controlling' and 'ordering', most obviously seen (and celebrated on national TV) in the manufactured lives of 'pedigree' nonhumans.

This development effectively resulted in even more ways in which human beings could demonstrate and practice their 'loving' daily control over the lives of other animals. As Mason writes (1993: 256) following environmental studies Professor Andrew Rowan, the pet is seen as something 'safe', 'captive', 'loyal', and 'obedient'. A 'subservient' symbol for the 'appropriate relationship between humankind and the natural world'.

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the pet issue is a problem in terms of the logic of animal rights thought since nonhumans such as many types of dogs and cats are hardly suitable candidates for liberation into the 'wild'.

Not only do human beings control virtually every aspect of the lives of the nonhuman animals they keep, including having the legal right to chop bits off them, surgically alter them for cosmetic and 'show' purposes, and dictate their movements and motions (literally, their *motions*), the pet breeding industry even attempts to dictate their exact physical shape through selective genetic breeding programmes, even sometimes to the clear detriment of welfare considerations. Thus, humans control both the *form* and *behaviour* of their nonhuman property (ibid). When author Yi-Fu Tuan wrote his book about the relationship between human and nonhuman animals in 1984 (cited by Mason, ibid.), he entitled it *Dominance and Affection: the making of pets*. Since some humans are involved in 'ordering' the physical shape of many other animals, dominionist thinking identified by Mason has simply put fresh emphasis on the notion that humans can and should control nature, here viewed as *improving* beings of nature as well as 'ordering' them. Furthermore, if the display of exotic animals in circuses and zoos has a powerful socialising potential on the young and the old alike, so does the direct ownership of various nonhumans as so-called companion animals. While such contact is often assumed to be positive, pets nevertheless have the legal status of property, which owners can dispose of largely as they wish. For example, the RSPCA state that it is perfectly legal for British animal owners to kill their animal property,<sup>157</sup> so long as they do not cause 'unnecessary suffering' in the process. Therefore, 'a pet is a diminished being', figuratively and literally, says Yi-Fu Tuan (quoted in

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<sup>157</sup> This information came from the RSPCA, replying to an emailed question by the author. Of course, companion animal keepers often say they have animals 'put down', or 'put them to sleep' rather than killed. What sounds more innocent - and caring - than putting someone to sleep?

ibid.: 257). A pet is *possessed* by a *possessor* whose vanity and pleasure his or her existence serves.<sup>158</sup>

If pets are ‘doted on’ and given ‘lavish treatment’ - and perhaps even viewed as ‘valued members of a family’, that in itself may be seen as a display of generous privilege and wealth on the part of the owner. Owners can order and control the lives of their playthings, acquiring and disposing of them rather like compact discs and shoes; they can *collect* them like stamps, *trading* and *swapping* them with other ‘collectors’ if they wish, force them to ‘mate’ and arrange for them to be surgically interfered with so they cannot ‘mate’.

With this much instrumental control over another being, one can certainly privilege and indulge - or humiliate and tease: either way, Mason asserts, ‘you can feel pretty sure of your superiority’ (ibid). Is it any wonder that Marjorie Spiegel (1998) dares to make the ‘dreaded comparison’ between human and nonhuman *slavery*? (see also Alice Walker’s suggestion in the preface to Spiegel that this comparison is difficult, and perhaps distasteful, to face).

### Misothery, Pornography and Making a Few Links.

Who takes the heart from a stag?  
Who gets a hard-on with blood on their hands?  
Who strips the wonder of life - though they don’t have the right?

*Blood Sports.*  
Paul Weller,  
*Abuse, Artists for Animals.*

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<sup>158</sup> Emailers often suggest that the relationship is exactly the opposite and effectively they must serve the interests of nonhumans. This may be regarded as an ideological device that obscures the real status of those who own and those who are owned.

In the previous chapter on dehumanisation processes, evidence was presented that suggests that racism, sexism and speciesism are often demonstrably present in a single item of pornography. Given the theme of this section, particularly in the latter part, perhaps a brief attempt to pull a few strands of thought together is in order, especially in the general light of Mason's provocative concept of 'misothery' (see 1993: 158-85) and a male perspective on the cultural effects of pornography (Stoltenberg 1992).

Mason deliberately coined the term 'misothery' (1993: 163) from two Greek words meaning 'hatred' or 'contempt', and 'animal'.<sup>159</sup> Thus, misothery is a hatred or contempt of animals and, since Mason argues that animals are, generally speaking, the active 'representatives of nature', misothery can also be used to highlight a hatred of nature as a general category. When 'nature' is described as 'red in tooth and claw', through the lens of misotherous thought, it is seen as being characterised negatively for its animal-like predatory bloodthirstiness. Likewise, assumed competitive natural forces may be said to be based on so-called 'dog-eat-dog' principles. That both nature and animal nature are often seen as 'vicious, cruel, base, and contemptible', is a clear reflection of influential misotherous ideas, Mason states.

In these terms, as seen above, Mason also recognises that misotherous thought can sometimes be applied to human beings in certain situations, specific contexts and particular constructions. Any British tabloid headline may imply that an 'inhuman person', a 'brute', or a 'beast-like person' is one

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<sup>159</sup> Mason (1993: 167) argues that misothery leads to the contempt of those animals we control and a hatred of animals we cannot control for that very reason.

who 'lets' his or (more rarely) her animality surface. An emphasis is on the rise of the 'physical' and the 'carnal' aspects of humanity rather than a stress on a spiritual or intellectual side (ibid). Mason notes with irony, following John Rodman, that the characteristics which are suggested to be constituent of 'animal' - egoism, insatiable greed and sexuality, cruelty, senseless slaughter - are 'more frequently observed on the part of man than of beasts' (Rodman, in Mason 1993: 164).

Mason, with a nod toward ecofeminism, says he coined the word 'misothery' intentionally to bear some direct similarity to the concept of misogyny. In a similar view to the ecofeminist concept of the 'logic of domination', Mason claims that misotherous and misogynous values are based on similar attitudes, ideas and power relations which address the categories 'nature', 'animal' and 'woman' in overtly reductionist ways. These power structures often elevate the power, status and dignity of human beings generally, but the supremacy ultimately lies in expressions of male power. The links Mason seeks to establish here appear to be in line with similar theoretical constructions of interwoven oppressions captured and expressed in phrases such as 'patriarchal capitalism' or 'capitalist patriarchy' (see examples in Scruton 1987).

In Mason's thesis, alongside its effects on the natural world, the emergence of human 'agri-culture' invented ideas that dramatically 'reduced' the standing of women in the world. The result of the rise of agrarianism was to demolish the alleged early awe that humans had for other animals, as it gave rise to the male hatred and loathing of women in the birth of patriarchal relations. This is the very emergence of attitudes (humans/men 'belong to' culture; women 'belong to' nature) that contemporary feminist scholars such as Lynda Birke (1994) still seek to address.



The destructive effects of dehumanisation processes have been discussed in some detail above. All such processes, to some extent, rely on *detachment, concealment, misrepresentation* and *shifting the blame* (Serpell 1986: 151). Serpell, following an account of human sacrifice by Hyam Maccoby, notes that these are all ‘distancing devices’ or techniques (see *ibid.*: 150-70 and Mason 1993: 172-77). Such devices are employed, Mason argues, to achieve the misotherous reduction of those who are ‘marked for oppression’. For Mason (*ibid.*: 179-85) as well as other theorists cited in this thesis, ideological misothery and misogyny are often seen to come together in forms of pornography. If the rituals of dominionism described above are the product of misotherous values and practice, some dimensions of pornography can be regarded as a misogynous ritualising of dominating practices and representations (also see Daly 1986: 143 on ‘rituals of patriarchy’).

Mason, citing Susan Griffin’s book from 1981, *Pornography and Silence*, notes that she claims that (Western) human culture, including religious constructions, displays a ‘profound distrust’ of the animal or natural world: that is, a distrust of the so-called ‘sensual’, ‘emotional’, ‘irrational’ and ‘physical’ realms. Not failing to recognise that pornography is presented as ‘playful entertainment’, it is, nevertheless, a patriarchal demonstration of power sometimes involving an attitudinal construction of wild and thus uncontrolled animality. John Stoltenberg (1992) argues that straight, gay and homophobic pornography *institutionalises* the sexuality that both expressively embodies and enacts male supremacy. He says, ‘Pornography says about that sexuality, ‘Here’s how’’ (*ibid.*: 150). This is how men are encouraged to ‘act out’ male supremacy in sex; male supremacy *as* sex. This is ‘how the action should go’. These acts impose power *over* and

*against* another body, often suggested as an 'animalistic body'. Pornography also says this: 'Here's who'. 'Here's who you should do it to and here's who she is: your whore, your piece of ass' (ibid). As a piece of meat, she is 'yours'. Your property, just as many other animals are regarded as property.

Men are encouraged to view their penis as a weapon, Stoltenberg argues, and *her* body is the target. Therefore, pornography also says: 'Here's why': 'Because men are masters, women are slaves; men are superior, women are subordinate; men are real; women are objects; men are sex machines, women are sluts' (ibid). Thus, Stoltenberg maintains that pornography institutionalises male supremacy in the way segregation institutionalises white supremacy. It is a means of keeping certain people powerful by keeping certain others *down*.

Stoltenberg proposes that 'male supremacy' is a more honest term than 'patriarchy'. Male supremacy:

is a social system of rigid dichotomisation by gender through which people born with penises maintain power in the culture over and against the sex caste of people who were born without penises. Male supremacy is not rooted in any natural order; rather, it has been socially constructed, socially created, especially through a socially constructed belief in what sex is, how many there are, and who belongs to which (ibid.: 151).

Part of the construction of male supremacy involves recognising a distance between male and female: the former must feel a 'disidentity' with the latter. Therefore, men learn<sup>160</sup> to locate themselves in their superior peer group, or 'sex caste'; that is, in relation to the supremacist position he perceives in

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<sup>160</sup> Stoltenberg describes the process of social learning within a framework which appears to lean heavily on Freudian concepts.

other men and in himself. Part of knowing himself is in knowing himself 'apart from' the inferior status of females (ibid.: 152). Men who commit forced sex acts or assaults often dehumanise their victims in an act of objectification. He may do this by thinking of the other as 'a thing' and 'less' than himself, 'a thing with a sex; he regards that object as sexual prey, a sexual target, a sexual alien, in order that he can fully feel his own reality as a man' (ibid.: 154). However:

Not all sexual objectifying necessarily precedes sexual violence, and not all men are yet satiated by their sexual objectifying; but there is a perceptible sense in which every act of sexual objectifying occurs on a continuum of dehumanisation that promises male sexual violence at its far end (ibid.).

Again, just as in the process of 'being marked' for genocide, sexual objectification begins in depersonalisation. This is what 'makes violence possible', for, as we have seen, once you have made a person out to be a thing, 'you can do anything to *it* you want' (ibid, my emphasis).

It was suggested earlier that the notion of 'thingness' is something to be avoided. From an ecofeminist position (see Salleh 1997), women's 'thingness' is emphasised and doubly objectified by male relations to both women and the natural world. With a clear notion such as 'the logic of domination' in mind, Salleh argues that men are often orientated to a 'M / W=N lore' (male / women: women equal nature) which is built on gender differentiation, and then places women and nature into the same category.<sup>161</sup> In this so-called lore, women, just like nature, 'are readily available and disposable; and like nature they have no subjectivity to speak of' (ibid.: 94).

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<sup>161</sup> Ynestra King speaks of a 'woman = nature connection' that is 'made up by men' and which sentimentalises and devalues both women and nature (quoted in Buege 1994: 45).

Therefore, objectified in a division of labour, women (a little like some animals who are taken to the 'cattle' market) 'have customarily been exchanged between men, father to husband, pimp to client, from one entrepreneur to another' (ibid).

When asked to place these relations into a socio-political context activists, whether animal rights or environmental, will often begin to talk about the globalised values of patriarchal capitalism (see Plows 1995; Doherty, Plows & Wall 2001). Ecofeminists Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva do the same thing. Talking about connections between male views about women and nature, Mies and Shiva state that, 'In analysing the causes which have led to the destructive tendencies that threaten life on earth we became aware - quite independently - of what we call the capitalist patriarchal world system' (1993: 2). As 'feminists actively seeking women's liberation from male domination', they feel they cannot, however, 'ignore the fact that 'modernisation' and 'development' processes and 'progress' were responsible for the degradation of the natural world' (ibid). As activist-scholars, they are particularly interested in investigating and explaining why some women apparently fail to see the exploitative connections so evident to themselves. They opt for a version of socially-constructed false consciousness, saying 'Some women... particularly urban middle-class women, find it difficult to perceive commonality both between their own liberation and the liberation of nature, and between themselves and 'different' women in the world' (ibid.: 5). Why?, 'because capitalist patriarchy or 'modern' civilisation is based on a cosmology and anthropology that structurally dichotomises reality, and hierarchically opposes the two parts to each other: the one always considered superior, always thriving, and progressing at the expense of the other' (ibid). Thus, 'nature is subordinated to man; woman to

man; consumption to production; and the local to the global', and so on. Mies and Shiva (ibid.: 8) decry the notion that good will come of so-called 'catching up strategies' advanced by some liberal feminists. Such strategies amount to 'catch-up development' for Third World countries, and policies of 'equalisation' and 'positive discrimination' for women. Such policies, they argue with irony, 'leads to women's involvement in the armed forces as being something we are supposed to welcome as women's emancipation'. Rather, they go on, 'the individuals pursuing such strategies are simply demonstrating the depth of their internalisation of capitalist-patriarchal norms and values'. Little wonder, then, if some women attempt to be like men on the hunting field, or by their participation in other harm-causing activities (ibid).

Modern humans have the eyes, ears, hearts and minds of agri-culturalists, whether having ever worked on a farm or ever visited one or not. This agri-culturalist's mindset means that 'virgin' land *needs* to be cultivated: made productive. In the agri-culturalist's view, virgin land means *empty* land, even though that notion is clearly an illusion. Just as the Spanish and the English did when they 'discovered' new worlds, it remains possible to regard land which can be *seen* occupied by people as 'empty'.<sup>162</sup> Agri-culturalists cannot, therefore, help but regard regions or spaces without human inhabitants as anything other than void. Western agri-culture states that to leave such places untouched (that is, leave *unimproved*) is somehow

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<sup>162</sup> Part of the mindset of occupiers is to disregard the notion that people 'already there' can have rights, because they themselves are deemed to have forfeited protective rights because *they had failed* to subdue the earth around them. (Mason 1993: 23).

immoral. Of course, there may be some perceived value – if limited – in ‘wilderness’ areas, if only for the sake of ‘contrast’; yet even such ‘uncivilised’ areas will be deemed to belong to ‘us’ as well, perhaps as ‘our’ retreats, places where we are able to ‘get away from it all’.

The modern agri-culturist mindset also holds the paradoxical view that even ‘wild’ regions require some form of human management and control. For example, British fox hunters and grouse shooters are particularly keen to remind people that the ‘treasured’ (generally meaning ‘present’) countryside looks as it does only through the human manipulation of ostensibly ‘wild’ areas. Vast grouse moors would alter dramatically were it not for caring human intervention in the form of annual burning to maintain heather and moorland growth. Bloodsports supporters invite the British public to view any change in patterns of human ‘nature management’ negatively and so give our support to the activities which maintain the moors in their present condition.

# Developing the sociology of animal abuse



## Part Two

The Social Construction of  
Human Beings and Other Animals in Human-Nonhuman Relations.  
Welfarism and Rights.  
A Contemporary Sociological Analysis.

Part Two.

The Emergence of ‘Animal Rights’ into ‘the Social’.

The aims of Part Two of the thesis are fourfold. First, in making the case that ‘animal rights’ campaigning is a visible, acknowledged and sometimes actively debated social phenomenon, it is important to define and investigate exactly what the term ‘animal rights’ means to its various proponents, its detractors, media representatives and its opponents. Often placing the term in parenthesis throughout this section, and in previous sections of the thesis, is meant to indicate that explaining the ‘rights’ component in animal advocacy is far from a straightforward matter. Indeed, often a great deal of ‘animal rights’ campaigning has little direct connection to moral or legal rights formulations and, instead, ‘rights’ are employed rhetorically<sup>1</sup> by animal advocates in many instances. Secondly, as another aim in this second section of the thesis, more will be said about the distinction between traditional animal welfarism and forms of animal advocacy, including those based on genuine rights positions, that emerged since the 1970s.

Indeed, for many writers concerned with human-nonhuman relations and associated social movement activity, explaining the meaning(s) of animal rights



involves, in the first instance, demonstrating differences and distinctions that set genuine animal rights thought apart from forms of animal welfare. However, it is suggested that the failure to fully differentiate rights and welfare approaches has resulted in a failure to secure rights as the principal basis of making human-nonhuman relation claims within the animal protection movement.

Institutionalised animal welfarism, whether expressed by animal welfare advocates located in social movement organisations, or animal welfare as interpreted by ‘pro-use’ mobilisations, is the basis of an impending chapter concentrated chiefly on the social and political *resilience* of this orthodox orientation to human-nonhuman relations. This is to say that, not only does animal welfarism provide the established dominant paradigm by which any and all ‘animal issues’ are routinely evaluated, it is also the apparent ‘master-frame’ from which any genuine animal rights thinking must, in a sense, ‘depart from’ in order for its own distinctive perspectives to be publicly aired and thereby tested. It is further suggested that the resistance to rights even in ‘animal rights’ advocacy may be a product of social movement strategic thinking as much as a reflection of the complexities of rights theory. Despite widespread endorsement of the idea of moral and legal rights, many animal advocates seem not to accept that rights formulations are a good basis for arguing for the protection of non-human individuals. Often, they claim that ‘the public’ is not quite ready for animal rights, but can and do respond to claims about animal cruelty and excessive levels of animal suffering.

Having looked in Part One of the thesis at the social construction and maintenance of a general moral orthodoxy relating to human and nonhuman beings, the further analysis of animal welfarism in this part of the work places greater concentration on its apparent ability to effectively *dominate* all levels of

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as ‘the persuasive use of language’ by Jones (1996: 432).

societal discourse concerning human-nonhuman relations. Common in discourse about human-nonhuman relations are declarations that while ‘animal rights’ makes no sense, it is possible to be oriented and committed to the notion of a duty of care toward other animals, and supportive of the principle of not causing ‘unnecessary’ suffering during legitimate forms of animal exploitation.

Animal welfarism, especially pro-use versions aimed at maintaining and explaining the legitimacy of the human exploitation of nonhuman resources, suggests that perspectives not based on traditional animal welfare are simply ‘not needed’ and are rather ‘unwelcome’ in any assessment of contemporary human-nonhuman relations: to borrow from modern subcultural terminology, animal welfarism essentially asserts that major aspects of the ‘animal question’ are ‘sorted’.

The third section of this part of the study provides some empirical evidence of the continuing dominance of animal welfarism in the face of the emergence of ‘second-wave’ animal advocacy. Therefore, it contemplates some aspects of what might be termed ‘the social reception’ to the emergence of animal rights and/or animal liberation thought and campaigns in the last few decades. Although recent rights advocates assert that, for example, Peter Singer’s utilitarian ‘animal liberation’ perspective is a form of modern-day animal welfarism, the animal liberation position is nevertheless regarded by most as more radical and far-reaching than traditional welfarism and is the perspective usually adopted by advocates who dislike using rights as the basis of their claims on behalf on nonhuman animals.<sup>2</sup> This particular section

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<sup>2</sup> Francione (1996) states that Singer’s work is important for two reasons. One, his description of the institutionalised exploitations of other animals and two, ‘Singer presents a *theory* that would provide greater protection for animals than has classical animal welfare’ (1996: 12). Joan Dunayer ([www.upc-online.org/thinking/animal\\_equality.html](http://www.upc-online.org/thinking/animal_equality.html)) follows Francione’s line that sentience alone is enough to warrant that nonhuman rights are respected. She claims Singer’s position is ‘muddled’ and states that, ‘Actually, Singer doesn’t believe that *any* animals, including humans, should have inviolable rights. He believes that an individual’s well-being or life can be sacrificed to the “greater good.”’

concentrates mainly on what pro-use countermovements and mass media commentators have made of the claims (and the related activities) of modern animal advocates, whether correctly labelled animal rightists or not. Again, and predictably, orthodox welfarist understandings concerning human-nonhuman relations are almost universally used as resources to severely criticise contemporary 'rights' thinking. The orthodoxy is seen to provide an established position of 'care' about animals from which the 'extremism' of the 'animal rights' case can be highlighted, or 'de-bunked', as one pro-use internet site would have it.

Finally, the thesis endeavours to ask a rather blunt question that should interest any claims-making animal advocate: that question is, 'who is listening?' Put differently, why *should* anyone actively engage with or be concerned about animal advocacy messages? Why should any self-protecting audience face in any depth the often gory details of what humans routinely do to other animals: or with *any* information which may cause them discomfort and pain? This final section, therefore, will outline some general strands of the complex social psychology of being the recipient of potentially distressing information. It highlights how activities and campaigns seen by social movement activists as 'public education initiatives' may be received by many as a form of pain that they may wish to - and will take steps to - avoid.

Notions such as so-called 'compassion fatigue' may explain why some individuals will go to considerable lengths to *avoid*, *resist* and even actively *evade* the information that many social movements attempt to place before them. However, there are 'deeper' levels to forms of denial or 'information resistance'. In fact, Cohen (2001: 187) states that the basic notion of compassion fatigue is itself built upon three overlapping concepts: *information overload*, *normalisation* and *desensitisation*. Moreover, other influential elements of 'denial' or 'blocking' may be acknowledged, recognising that such

impulses are ostensibly based on *entirely reasonable* desires, oriented toward eliminating or reducing 'unpleasure', and directed at deliberately 'putting to one side', if not absolutely evading in every case, knowledge that may be intensely painful to know. An important question seems to be raised again: why should anyone deliberately become embroiled with information that may - and most likely will - make them uncomfortable, cheerless, depressed, distressed, and will very probably put them off their dinner?

Singer's Utilitarianism or 'New Welfarism',  
Regan's and Francione's Animal Rights Theories,  
and Philosophical Inconsistencies in the Contemporary 'Animal  
Rights Movement'.

As mentioned in Part One of the thesis, animal rights philosopher Tom Regan recognises that, in thinking about the human treatment of other animals, people's social attitudes are influenced not only by dominant forms of thinking, but also by 'established cultural practices' (Regan 1984: 399). Indeed, he states that 'the rights view' concerning human-nonhuman relations involves 'issuing condemnations' of such practices. However, Regan maintains that animal rights, properly conceived, is, contrary to pro-use claims, 'not anti-business, not anti-freedom of the individual, not anti-science, not anti-human' (ibid.) For Regan, the rights view is simply 'pro-justice', seeking as it does to alter the 'scope of justice' to include many animals other than human.

Regan further recognises that the case for animal rights will be heavily contested, not least because 'prejudices die hard'; and he argues that conventionally seeking to establish that justice applies to moral agents only, or to assert that humans have some right to regard other animals as 'resources' and 'things', is prejudicial to many animals' inherent value as individuals. In addition to the issue of prejudice, Regan is keen to underline the influence of the 'insulating' function of 'widespread secular customs' and religious belief, while he likewise acknowledges the 'sustaining authority' of 'large and powerful economic interests'. Finally, in this diverse matrix of social constructionism, he appreciates the protection afforded to the whole system by the common law (ibid.) Regan also warns his readers that animal rights proper is not for the faint

hearted because, for nonhumans to have their rights respected, nothing less than a cultural revolution is required.

Ultimately a political battleground is sketched out in which any philosophy of animal rights is bound to be substantially criticised and contested; by philosophers who just do not agree that 'the case' has been adequately made – but also by many who have personal or vested interests in the continuation of the human exploitation of other animals. It is tempting, furthermore, also to suspect that many objections to 'animal rights', whether from trained philosophers such as Frey (1980; 1983) and Cohen (1986), or media journalists, or various other commentators, arise in the first instance at least from efforts to find the justification for a bacon and egg breakfast already eaten, and the steak dinner planned for later on.

Regan insists that moral philosophy can and will play a role in political action associated with the notion of animal rights because 'history shows that ideas do make a difference' (1984: 400). What he is implying – indeed, why he wrote *The Case for Animal Rights* – is that the animal protection movement would benefit by being well versed about the foundations on which much of their claims-making rests, the hoped-for result being precisely the substantial cultural change that Regan regards as a prerequisite for a widespread adoption of genuine animal rights thinking over traditional animal welfarism. While this point may appear so obvious that it need not be made, the evidence does suggest that Regan is more than justified in making it. Regan also articulates his firm belief that 'moral philosophy is no substitute for political action', but insists, 'still, it can make a contribution. Its currency is ideas' (ibid.: 399-400). This assertion was made almost twenty years ago. However, it appears that large

sections of the animal advocacy movement was not (and *is* not) listening to this important message.<sup>3</sup>

Many factions of the entity that Garner (1993) calls the modern ‘animal protection movement’ seem not to fully agree that a well worked out philosophical position may greatly assist in the furtherance of altering the moral standing of nonhumans. Moreover, many of those that do seem to agree with the general point that social movements require a solid basis for claims-making, appear not to accept the case for ‘animal rights’ in the first place. Commentary on the recent development of the animal movement tends to confirm such a view. For example, Francione (1996: 3) states that ‘the modern animal “rights” movement has explicitly rejected the doctrine of animal rights’. In fact, it might be tempting to claim that, analogous to Gilroy’s (1987) declaration that ‘there ain’t no black in the Union Jack’, the suggestion here is that, often, there ain’t much ‘rights’ in ‘animal rights’ either. This tends to beg the question, if not rights violations, what do modern animal advocates substantially rely upon in order to make claims on behalf of nonhuman animals?

### The Controversial Claim of ‘New Welfarism’.<sup>4</sup>

Francione (1996) says that the contemporary animal movement appears content to rely on a new formulation of traditional ideas, which he provocatively labels ‘new welfarism’. He describes this conception of new welfarism as a ‘hybrid

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<sup>3</sup> This view is often contested in animal advocacy discourse. Many animal advocates argue that it is not necessary that the animal movement has a fully elaborated or internally logical set of ideas to justify their claims. For many, just ‘doing something’ for nonhumans – for whatever reason – is the most important thing.

<sup>4</sup> “New Welfarism” has more recently been joined by “New Speciesism” (Dunayer 2004) as terms to describe second wave “animal rights” advocacy.

position' which may be understood to be a more radical (or a 'modified' [ibid.: 47]) welfare position compared with traditional animal welfarism, especially in the sense that this 'version of animal welfare...accepts animal rights as an ideal state of affairs that can be achieved only through continued adherence to animal welfare measures' (ibid.: 3). This appears to be a crucial defining issue of so-called new welfarism: that its adherents are content talking about the eventual ending of animal exploitation, rather than expecting that the best the animal movement can or should do is tightly regulate nonhuman exploitation to such an extent that 'cruelty' and 'suffering' is greatly reduced or, ideally, eliminated altogether. However, for Francione, even new welfarists – despite what sets them apart from traditionalists of the genre – should be regarded as committed to the endorsement of measures 'indistinguishable' from policies put forward by those 'who accept the legitimacy of animal exploitation'. Unsurprisingly, such statements have angered many animal advocates. Francione puts forward two reasons to help explain apparent disparity between theory and practice:

First, many animal advocates believe that, as an empirical matter, welfarist reform has helped to ameliorate the plight of nonhumans and that these reforms can gradually lead to abolition of all animal exploitation. Second, although animal advocates embrace as a long-term goal the abolition of animal exploitation, they regard rights theory as "utopian" and as incapable of providing concrete normative guidance to day-to-day movement strategy and practice (ibid.)

When animal advocates discuss Francione's position on email lists,<sup>5</sup> they often appear to object bitterly to the assumption that supporting a number, many, or all animal welfare measures does indeed 'accept the legitimacy of animal

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<sup>5</sup> Such discourse tends to take place on North American listings. British lists, apart from hardly ever – or only briefly and often grudgingly – addressing philosophical issues, rarely mention either Francione or Regan. Peter Singer's name (if not his philosophical approach) is much more likely to be cited.



exploitation' – they claim the opposite, that accepting welfare improvements does not diminish their commitment to abolitionism.

Contributors have difficulty accepting Francione's claim that new welfarism necessarily accepts, on some level, the legitimacy of the animal exploitation issue in question. On the contrary, many argue that any 'welcoming' of a welfare measure, or even sets of them, and over an extended period of time, can be done within an acknowledgement that their position is ultimately abolitionist in intent. Debate such as this amounts to beliefs about whether forms of animal welfarism are able to provide 'stepping stones' toward the ending of the human exploitation of other animals or not.<sup>6</sup>

On the level of inter-movement dynamics, Francione appears to have assumed that perhaps the majority of campaigners for nonhuman animals will be concerned about his claim that traditional and new welfarist strategies have failed – and will continue to fail – to advance the cause of animal rights, and that a perspective based on genuine rights formulation can likely bring greater advances for nonhuman animals. He acknowledges that 'rights talk' is a rhetorical matter in the modern animal protection movement which has led to non-rightist Peter Singer being regarded as *the* foremost 'animal rights philosopher' ever since the mid-1970s publication of *Animal Liberation*.

For Francione, therefore, the contemporary animal movement continues to commit cardinal philosophical *and* tactical errors:

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<sup>6</sup> Among other arguments, Francione responds to such points by saying that, 'as a practical matter, [animal welfarism] does not work. We have had animal welfare laws in most western countries for well over a hundred years now, and they have done little to reduce animal suffering and they have certainly not resulted in the gradual abolition of any practices... As to why welfarism fails...the reason has to do with the property status of animals. If animals are property, then they have no value beyond that which is accorded to them by their owners. Reform does not work because it seeks to force owners to value their property differently and to incur costs in order to respect animal interests'. [www.vegdot.org/special/Gary%20Francione](http://www.vegdot.org/special/Gary%20Francione)

These modern advocates, whom I have called new welfarists, defend the use of nonrights means to achieve a rights end, on the grounds that ideological distinctions are meaningless or, alternatively, that welfarist reforms will somehow lead someday to the abolition of animal exploitation (ibid.: 220.)

Future historians of the animal protection movement may well take an interest in such questions. Anecdotal evidence and contributions to email listings suggest that Francione's view expressed in the quote above may well be vindicated: many activists suggest that the *welfare + welfare + welfare = rights* equation may bear fruit for the animal movement, and anyway, they frequently suggest, the achievement of 'utopian animal rights' will take hundreds of years, *if* it is to be considered possible at all.

Perhaps Francione was ultimately mistaken in believing ordinary movement members and animal activists would take the time to explore the 'problem' he raises, despite the fact that his position is directly related to day-to-day campaigning strategy and movement claims-making. Ostensibly, this issue might be expected to greatly interest social movement participants. In recent interviews, Francione does seem to have reluctantly accepted that the animal protection movement is resistant to any 'audit' of its philosophical foundations.

In effect, some sort of impasse exists about this point. On the one hand, Francione believes the animal protection movement makes ethical and tactical errors by not sorting out its philosophical position that directs its action. Because it cannot provide what is required, animal welfarism ought to be rejected by a movement that seeks to radically alter human-nonhuman relations. On the other hand, however, many activists and careerists in established organisation care less about philosophical purity as long as *something* is being done on behalf of nonhuman animals.

Francione seems to have accepted the view that activists who wish to pursue a position on human-nonhuman relations based on genuine rights thinking are very few in number and, furthermore, do not often feature in 'leadership' positions within the current animal protection movement. Talking in 2002, in Friends of Animals' publication *Action Line*,<sup>7</sup> he claims that, in the United States at least, 'there is no animal *rights* movement'. In terms of Francione's argument, it seems there is reason to think that this is also the case in British animal advocacy at the present time.

Francione appears to have had the frustrating experience of seeing his own - and indeed Regan's to a lesser extent - animal rights formulations largely marginalised within the animal movement over the years; his attempt to bring bona fide rights thinking into the heart of a social movement has been largely rejected. Moreover, he has seen his own work not so much regarded as a source of philosophical clarity, nor particularly thought to be helpful in terms of strategic thinking within a campaigning movement, but rather labelled 'disruptive', 'divisive' and 'elitist'. In retrospect, it may well have been somewhat unwise to call activists who see themselves as radical, 'full-on', cutting-edge campaigners for the rights of nonhuman animals 'new welfarists' and expect them to welcome or tolerate the criticism. Nevertheless, the evidence points to the fact that the modern animal movement remains content with the philosophical leadership provided by Singer (to the extent that philosophy is thought important in the first place), and financially supports organisational leaderships including many who may be welfarist in orientation, even in the traditional sense of the word, or else essentially use the term rights as a rhetorical device only.

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<sup>7</sup> Reproduced by Bill Huston in [www.vegdot.org/special/Gary%20Francione](http://www.vegdot.org/special/Gary%20Francione)

Francione complains that Singer's consequentialist utilitarian approach, based on *reducing* animal suffering<sup>8</sup> and *balancing* interests, has marginalised the abolitionist approach to the extent that when the giant McDonald's hamburger corporation announced in 2002 a welfare initiative to increase battery cage space and phase out 'beak trimming' practices by its suppliers, the move was greeted by many, including Singer himself, as the most important 'advance' for nonhuman animals since the publication of *Animal Liberation* in the 1970s.

Social movement theorists report that strategic and tactical dispute is, as might be expected, common in active social movements, and the animal movement is clearly no exception (Yates 1997). Often, animal advocates discuss what, for them and their movement, is 'practically achievable'. The recent McDonald's initiative is one of those cases in which something 'winnable' was seen to be won. For understandable psychological reasons, 'victories' on any scale tend to be loudly trumpeted within social movements. In terms of campaigning for nonhuman animals, supporters argue that the animal movement is inevitably constrained in terms of the immediate benefits it may bring for sentient nonhuman beings: this regardless of their heartfelt abolitionist aspirations. While this could be characterised as a movement getting what little it can when it can, supporters of such moves merely state that they are being 'practical' and, in any event, how can animal advocacy mobilisations be seen to reject measures that seems to ease the plight of many suffering nonhumans? For such advocates the McDonald's case may be seen as a further indication, since larger cage space and specific alterations in production procedures were the only proposals 'on offer', that campaigning on an 'extreme' or a

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<sup>8</sup> Benton and Redfearn (1996: 50) write: 'Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* is...within the utilitarian tradition, and it may be that the animal welfare movement's concern with animal suffering is a measure of the pervasiveness of utilitarianism as the 'common sense' of secular morality'.

‘fundamentalist’ platform, and seeking the rapid abolition of major aspects of commercial animal exploitation, is totally unrealistic – utopian indeed.

Such a position begs questions. Why, since the modern animal protection movement has rarely pursued an abolitionist agenda for any prolonged period, are many advocates apparently and unequivocally so *sure* that it is doomed to failure? Why are they so *convinced* that it will take hundreds of years? Why, moreover, that a philosophical grounding in widely-accepted ideas of rights undoubtedly represent demands that unrealistically call for ‘too much’?

The following section outlines Regan’s and Francione’s rights approaches to human-nonhuman relations: approaches that are often regarded as ‘utopian’ and ‘extreme’ both within and without the ‘animal rights’ movement. These are approaches not adopted or widely followed within the present animal movement.<sup>9</sup> Francione agrees with Regan that philosophy and political action go together. Indeed, he claims the latter *require* the former to inform action:

A social movement must have a theory if it is to have action at all... I suggest that we need a new theory to replace the one that we have. I am not unrealistic. I recognise that even if we adopt an abolitionist theory, abolition will not occur immediately. Change will necessarily be incremental. But it is my view that the *explicit* goal must be abolition and that abolition must shape incremental change ([www.vegdot.org/-special/Gary%20Francione](http://www.vegdot.org/-special/Gary%20Francione), emphasis added)

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<sup>9</sup> When asked, most British animal advocates state that they are not familiar with either Regan’s or Francione’s work. Many, however, have read (or at least heard of) Singer’s *Animal Liberation*. For others, say anti-bloodsports campaigners and scientific anti-vivisectionists, they tend to be most familiar with publications about their principal interest.

### 'Rights' and 'Animal Rights'.

Regan and Francione are acknowledged as the major theoreticians of perspectives that seek to build on established rights formulations, and apply - or extent - to them to nonhuman animals. Regan is a Kantian deontologist who argues that many nonhumans are 'subjects-of-a-life', a factor demanding that humans respect their inherent rights. Francione is a law professor particularly critical of the property status of other animals. His rights-based formulation is thought less complicated than Regan's; he claims *basic* rights for all sentient beings.

Reganite and Francionian positions on nonhuman-human relations can be regarded as attempts to bring genuine rights views to bear on the issue of the human treatment of other animals. Such approaches are different in nature to traditional or classical welfarist stances; and different also from Peter Singer's version of utilitarianism which, as said, Francione claims as the philosophical grounding of modern day 'new welfarism'. Neither Regan nor Francione use rights concepts, or the language of rights, in a rhetorical manner as many other animal activists do, and both believe that protective rights formulations can be plausibly extended to prevent current large-scale institutionalised human exploitation of certain species of other animals. As stated, Regan's and particularly Francione's works are effectively marginalised even within the movement that calls itself a 'rights' mobilisation. This section, therefore, acknowledges and highlights a paradoxical situation in which the so-called 'animal rights movement' virtually rejects genuine rights theories while embracing a non-rights animal liberation position as its main philosophical stance.

As implied above, however, it may be recognised that even the phrase ‘philosophical stance’ can be quite misleading in relation to the majority of current animal advocacy in which ‘philosophising’ *per se* is actively frowned upon, and/or seen as a very poor second to ‘doing things’ (doing *any* thing) ‘for animals’. The modern animal protection movement, as well as its counter-movement mobilisations, frequently (and correctly) presents the book *Animal Liberation* as the origins of second wave animal advocacy, along with an implicit and often explicit (and incorrect) claim that the book, and therefore the movement, is based on Peter Singer’s (nonexistent) ‘animal rights perspective’.

The frequent characterisation of his utilitarian perspective as an animal rights position, and presumably the number of times *Animal Liberation* has been described as ‘the animal rights bible’,<sup>10</sup> has seemingly led its author to regret ever having used rights language, even rhetorically and, according to Regan (2001: 83-4), Singer remains committed to his claim that attributing rights to nonhumans is not possible.<sup>11</sup> As seen in sections to follow, some of the misrepresentation of Singer’s work as rights-based theorising, especially by pro-use countermovements, appears on the face of it to be deliberately ideological in intent. However, in relation to what Singer says about his own position, Francione fully accepts that Singer is entirely consistent to the extent that he rejects the notion of moral right holding in the case of human *and* nonhuman animals. Moreover, his consistent utilitarian principles have led Singer to accept that ‘there might be circumstances’ in which human and animal exploitation...could be justified in light of consequences (Francione 1995: 259).

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<sup>10</sup> Adam Kydd’s recent on-line review (<http://www.animalaid.org.uk/>) of Francione’s *Introduction to Animal Rights* argues that *this* book should be seen ‘as the true bible of the Animal Rights Movement’.

<sup>11</sup> Throughout *Animal Liberation* Singer is careful to talk about the ‘Animal Liberation movement’ and never speaks of a clash between human and nonhuman rights, rather human and animal *interests*. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Animal Liberation*, Singer was motivated to say something about rights formulations: ‘The language of rights is a convenient political shorthand. It is even more valuable in the era of thirty-second TVA news clips’ (Singer 1990, cited by Francione 1996: 49, 240).

Francione suggests, however, that rights concepts are always likely to be important and invoked as resources in human affairs and therefore utilitarian ‘balancing’ of human and nonhuman interests are extremely dangerous in terms of nonhuman interests. Dangerous precisely because protective rights considerations are not conceptually available ‘to limit the results of the balancing process’ (ibid.) Francione attempts to clarify the point by putting it in a different way, while at the same time revealing how authentic animal rights theorists attempt to build on already established ways of thinking about the protection afforded by bearing rights:

the utilitarian notion of “consequences” cannot be interpreted in a way that does not prejudice the issue of animal protection. Even if we do accept that animals have interests, it is simply difficult to make determinations of those interests from a humanocentric perspective; it is because we systematically devalue and underestimate the interests of disempowered populations that rights concepts are necessary in the first place. Although rights theory rests ultimately upon a consideration of animal interests, rights theory does not permit the sacrifice of animal interests simply because human interests would be served. Rather, rights theory assumes that at least some animal interests are entitled to *prima facie* protection and that the sacrifice of those interests require a justification not dissimilar to that required when we seek to override human interests protected by rights (ibid.)

The questions, ‘where do rights come from?’ and ‘how are ‘rights’ used in animal rights thinking?’ are, of course, pertinent to this particular section of the thesis. Perhaps the first thing to be said about matters concerning any formulation of rights, following Steve Kangas ([www.huppi.com/kangaroo/L-rights.htm](http://www.huppi.com/kangaroo/L-rights.htm)), is that ‘the origin of rights is a messy and complex debate’. Kangas suggests that the understanding of the first question of where rights ‘come from’ can be aided by separating out three types of thinking about rights: conservative, liberal and libertarian; and also by thinking about four initial bases put forward for the



creation of rights: that rights are ‘natural’ (following Locke), ‘inalienable’, ‘God-given’ and ‘self-evident’. Kangas states that until a few hundred years ago, most philosophers believed that rights could be defined in these four ways. However, ‘today, most philosophers agree that rights are social constructs, open to change’. He says that this view accords well with the ‘liberal’ stance, since, ‘Liberals believe that rights are social constructions, defended by force and open to change and improvement’.

Kangas is almost certainly correct to state that rights cannot be regarded as self-evident because, as he notes, ‘philosophers have been vigorously arguing about them for thousands of years’ (ibid.) Kangas also finds support in his assertion that debates about rights can be messy and complex. For example, Carl Cohen, in his 1986 article, ‘Why Animals Have No Rights’,<sup>12</sup> states that ‘The differing targets, contents, and sources of rights, and their inevitable conflict, together weave a tangled web’. Cohen’s title itself indicates philosophical controversy over recent rights claims. He has published a number of works addressing human rights concepts and the whole idea of nonhumans being right holders. Whereas theorists such as Cohen argue that nonhuman animals, as a matter of logic, cannot ever be said to bear rights, Regan and Francione disagree and have put forward differing ways by which they argue that rights formulations can and should protect sentient nonhuman interests. While Regan’s position has been described as a liberal rights perspective (Fiddes 1991: 196), Regan characterise Cohen, like Singer, as a utilitarian theorist, at least ‘when reasoning in support of continued widespread and

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<sup>12</sup> Originally printed in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol 315(14) (October 2, 1986): 865-69, this citation is taken from [wysiwyg://19/http://www.responsiblewildlifemanagement.org/carl\\_cohen.htm](http://www.responsiblewildlifemanagement.org/carl_cohen.htm) (visited 20/08/03). Critics of Cohen (including Regan 2001 and Nathan Nobis [<http://courses.ats.rochester.edu/nobis/papers.cohen-kind.html>]) have noted how rare it is for a philosophical work to feature as the lead article in a medical journal. Regan (2001: 70), for example, states that, ‘the pride of place accorded the essay reflects both the high regard in which Cohen is held by members of the biomedical community and the perceived importance of the issues he examines’.

possible expanded reliance on nonhuman animals in biomedical research' (Regan 2001: 70).<sup>13</sup> The difference between Cohen and Singer is that Singer argues that no animal, human or nonhuman, can hold rights, while Cohen argues that *all* humans do and nonhumans do not.

Regan claims to adhere seriously to a commitment to develop an 'informed, thoughtful moral outlook' (2001: 101). According to Benton & Redfearn, strength within Regan's strategy accrues from the 'benefit of latching on to the currently near-universal moral priority attached to *human* rights' (1996: 51, emphasis in original). Although it may be rather unkind of them to label Regan's approach 'a strategy', as if his commitment to human rights was only for the following reason, Benton & Redfearn acknowledge that, 'Regan was the first theorist to 'get 'rights' across the species barrier' (ibid.: 50). Therefore, Regan can be credited with breaching that hitherto solid defensive ethical barrier based exclusively on species membership, of which the construction, maintenance, and usage of featured prominently in Part One of the current work.

Benton & Redfearn state that, as a matter of historical record, 'the ethics of the 'rights' tradition has been markedly anthropocentric. To 'qualify' as an inherently valuable being one had to possess 'reason', 'autonomy', 'moral agency' or some other capacity generally restricted to humans' (ibid.) Regan, they go on, gets morality over the species barrier by concentrating on the criteria of right holding, a familiar notion in rights discourse addressing the question of the expansion of rights bearing. Clearly, many human beings do not have the characteristics listed by Benton & Redfearn above, neither do many

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<sup>13</sup> If Kangas is correct that talking about the origins of rights is messy, the same may be said of the claimed position adopted by this or that theorist. For example, while Regan suggests that Cohen takes a utilitarian line,

have language use, another favoured way of deciding who holds rights. There is therefore a philosophical puzzle to be solved here. Either human beings without the above capacities are themselves not right holders or, if they remain so, on what basis are nonhumans, with similar capacities, to be denied at least basic or negative rights?

In general rights discourse, the notion that rights have been converted from *shields* to *swords* is seriously contested by various theorists:<sup>14</sup> however, in this formulation, the idea of animal rights is clearly about rights as protective shields for individuals. Regan's 'subjects-of-a-life' are not necessarily moral agents; and logically nonhuman animals are placed into the category of right holding *moral patients* along with certain 'marginal' humans (as they have become known in rights discourse) (DeGrazia 1996). Using a post-Darwinian understanding of the psychological complexity of many nonhumans, Benton & Redfearn claim that Regan shows that, 'though animals are not moral agents in the full sense, they have enough sense of self as persisting through time, ability to express preferences and so on to be said to have 'interests', which may be harmed or favoured by human agents' (1996: 50) Benton & Redfearn investigate the 'lesser-than' aspect of 'moral marginals' and conclude that not only are they *not* denied protective rights, 'On the contrary, it might well be argued that it is just *because* of their lack of these attributes that they are in special need of the protection offered by the attribution of rights' (ibid.: 50-1).

For these commentators, Regan's concentration on the rights of the individual strengthen the rights approach over what they describe as the more moderate 'linkage of utilitarianism and animal welfare reform' (ibid.: 51). The one advantage of utilitarianism, they claim, is its reliance on 'mere sentience' as

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Nathan Nobis (2002, in a review of Cohen and Regan) states that, 'Cohen and Regan give high regard to moral rights... Both are decidedly anti-utilitarian'.

<sup>14</sup> see <http://val.dorta.com/archives/000316.html>

the ethically relevant criteria. The strength of that, they say, is due to the fact that hardly anyone in the modern world would dispute that many nonhumans are sentient beings. A further ‘strategic limitation’ of Regan’s position, Benton & Redfearn argue, stems from the huge social and personal changes implied by respect for the rights of many nonhuman animals.<sup>15</sup> This would require ‘both social transformation and lifestyle changes of very fundamental kinds’. How many, they ask, will be prepared to adopt a vegan diet and avoid all animal products? Surely, only those who could adhere to veganism can remain consistent with the logic of animal rights? This question greatly interests animal advocates, many of whom suggest that a strict advocacy of the vegan diet can be ‘divisive’ and ‘elitist’, whereas others simply see it as a logical consequence of accepting the rights view about human-nonhuman relations (Francione 1996b: 43-44, 239).

Francione’s position is free of the first ‘limitation’ in Regan – but clearly not of the second. In other words, Francione’s basic right theory argues that a being’s sentience *alone* is enough to demand that humans respect their rights. Francione also firmly declares that respect for nonhuman rights does indeed require the personal adoption of veganism as a lifestyle choice. Francione begins his outline of animal rights with a familiar warning common in accounts of rights discourse: ‘There is a great deal of confusion surrounding the concept of rights’ (2000: xxvi). His focus is on one aspect of rights, the protection they may offer, and argues that this is common feature of virtually every theory about rights: in other words, ‘a right is a particular way of protecting interests’:

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<sup>15</sup> Benton & Redfearn (1996) also note that Regan’s rights approach will find opposition in some perspectives based on ‘ecological morality’. For example, the rights view implies that only animals that resemble humans in relevant ways ‘qualify’ as right bearers. Animal rights theory, they note, ‘offers nothing at all to animals not conforming to the ‘subject of a life’ criterion’ (1996: 51).

To say that an interest is protected by a right is to say that the interest is protected against being ignored or violated simply because this will benefit someone else. We can think of a right of any sort as a fence or a wall that surrounds an interest and upon which hangs a “no trespass” sign that forbids entry, even if it would be beneficial to the person seeking that entry (ibid.)

A feature of rights formulation associated with other animals often clash with the views of environmental ethicists such as ‘deep ecologists’ (see Regan 2001: 19-21 and David Orton’s discussion paper about Deep Ecology and Animal Rights<sup>16</sup>). Dispute may arise due to the concentration in rights thinking of protecting individuals rather than emphasising, say, ‘species conservation’. However, citing Rollin’s ‘The Legal and Moral Bases of Animal Rights’, Francione (2000: xxvii) notes that rights were deliberately constructed as ethical ideas about respecting individuals.<sup>17</sup> Rights protect individuals even in cases in which the general welfare of society would be improved by the right being ignored or not respected. Francione provides a detailed account of the concept of rights and rights theory in the context of animal law in *Animals, Property, and the Law* (Francione 1995) in which he distinguishes respect-based rights from policy-based rights. He argues for a *basic right* for sentient nonhuman animals: the right not to be treated as a ‘thing’. For Francione, this basic right is not only a respect-based right but it is a special respect-based right ‘in that it is necessary in order to have any rights or moral significance at all, irrespective of the political system and whatever other respect-based rights are protected. The

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<sup>16</sup> <http://home.ca.inter.net/~greenweb/DE-AR.html> (visited 20/06/2003).

<sup>17</sup> One interesting aspect of Carl Cohen’s attack on the whole notion of animal rights (Cohen 1986) is his use of groups or ‘kind’ to claim that all humans have rights and nonhumans do not. In other words, Cohen argues that all humans regarded as ‘moral patients’ [including ‘infants, young children, the anencephalic (who suffer from the congenital absence of major portions of the skull, scalp, and brain, never attain consciousness, can never feel nor suffer, and usually die within a few months of birth), the severely mentally retarded and those in a persistent vegetative state (Wise 2000: 255)] should be afforded rights because they belong to a group whose ‘normal’ characteristics can be described as constituting full moral agency.

basic right not to be treated as a thing recognises that the right holder is a *person*' (2000: 191, emphasis in original).

Moving toward his conception of animal rights, while accepting that no rights are absolute 'in the sense that their protection has no exception' (ibid.: xxvii), Francione builds on the notion that all humans 'who are not brain dead or otherwise nonsentient' (and presumably who are not masochistic) have an interest in avoiding suffering and pain (ibid.) This interest is tied to the importance of being a legal person:

Although we do not protect humans from all suffering, and although we may not even agree about which human interests should be protected by rights, we generally agree that all humans should be protected from suffering that results from being used as the property or commodity of another human...in a world deeply divided on many moral issues, one of the few norms endorsed by the international community is the prohibition of human slavery. Nor is it a matter of whether the particular form of slavery is "humane" or not; we condemn all human slavery (ibid.)

Resisting a critical critique of this statement, if only by regarding it as an ideal type formulation, Francione's point is fairly straightforward. In fact, he does himself acknowledge that human slavery still persists in the modern world, even though 'the institution is universally regarded as morally odious and is legally prohibited' (ibid.) Returning to his theme about basic rights, Francione argues that all and any 'further' rights are dependent on basic ones, in particular 'they must have the basic right not to be treated as a thing' (ibid.) By examining the principle of 'equal consideration' which says that *similar interests should be treated in a similar way*, Francione makes the case for animal rights, at least the case for the basic right that concerns him the most:

If we apply the principle of equal consideration to animals, then we must extend to animals the one basic right that we extend to all human beings: the basic right not to be treated as things (ibid.: xxix).

As a matter of logic, then, Francione claims that 'if we mean what we say' about nonhumans being morally significant, as even traditional animal welfare does, 'then we really have no choice': if social attitudes to human slavery desire its abolition rather than its regulation, 'we are similarly committed to the abolition of animal exploitation, and not merely to its regulation' (ibid.)

As for what 'sort' of right is being claimed within his formulation of basic animal rights, Francione continues to rely on notions of basic or 'innate' rights, distinctions about ideas of 'natural rights', and the thoughts of, among others, Kant, Locke, and modern political theorist Henry Shue. Francione continues to attempt to build on the widely accepted 'value' of basic *human* rights. He argues that 'there is certainly a great deal of disagreement about precisely what rights human beings have', however it is clear that all humans are seen as right holders which prevents them being 'treated exclusively as a means to the end of another' (ibid.: 93). In pointing out that this basic right is different from 'all other rights', Francione claims it as a pre-legal right; and a necessary prerequisite for other important rights. What is the use, Francione asks, of thinking about rights appropriate to human beings, such as the right to free speech, voting rights, etc., if their basic right not to be a thing is not respected? This sense of 'basic right', he argues, is different from what many claim to be 'natural rights' (although the discourse about 'natural' - or any - rights is complex and often contradictory).

## Explaining Genuine Animal Rights is Not Animal Welfare.

Francione claims that his position on human-nonhuman relations is both far-reaching and non-radical at the same time:

The position that I am proposing...is radical in the sense that it would force us to stop using animals in many of the ways that we now take for granted. In another sense, however, my argument is quite conservative in that it follows from a moral principle that we already claim to accept – that it is wrong to impose unnecessary suffering on animals (ibid.)

Further to the moral principle identified here, which has been written into animal welfarism, animal rights thinking also follows established, if still controversial, thinking about human rights. What Francione (and Regan) have claimed all along is that claims-making about human-nonhuman relations can be – and require to be – based on extended ideals compared with traditional or modern animal welfarism. Given the rhetorical use of ‘rights’ in second wave animal advocacy, and the prominence of Singer’s views, ‘animal rights discourse’, rather than being primarily about which rights views are appropriate to extend to – and claim for – nonhumans (see Francione 1995, particularly section 5 of Part I), has become rather ‘bogged down’ in efforts to disassociate itself from utilitarian animal welfarism. It is recognised that both Regan and Francione have set about substantiating their claim that rights theory is the most useful basis of asserting pro-animal claims but their views have failed to persuade the British and North American animal protection movements of their case on that issue. Rather, as noted above, authentic rights views appear to have been received within ‘the movement’ with a degree of irritation due in part to its



perception as a 'fundamental', 'impractical', 'unrealistic', 'extremist' or abolitionist position compared to versions of animal welfarism. Rather than being reviewed as a matter of attempts to clarify claims-making about human-nonhuman relations, and thereby 'improve' animal advocacy, a strict adherence to strictly animal rights views (meaning views articulated by rights philosophers such as Francione, Dunayer and Regan) is seen by many, certainly by some movement 'leaders', as a potential or actual divisive element in any strategic debate about *practical* campaigning for nonhuman animals. A close examination of this particular point is beyond the scope of this section, indeed the whole thesis in some senses, but, organisationally at least, the reluctance to adopt the 'full' animal rights agenda is almost certainly to do with thoughts about membership numbers, not wanting to be publicly labelled as 'extremist', and other tactical concerns that engage social movement activists, staff and tacticians.

It is also quite plausible that reluctance to use 'rights' in animal rights simply reflects the controversial and complex nature of rights discourse in general, and perhaps especially when making welfare claims means making claims that are the easiest to understand. On the one hand, such factors make animal advocates wonder if rights theory is the best way by which they formulate claims about human-nonhuman relations and, on the other hand, the most 'active activists' tend to feel they have little time to explore such – to them, largely irrelevant and abstract - complexities when there is 'stuff' to be done 'for animals' (Yates 1998). Whatever the precise particulars of this aspect of machinations within the nonhuman protection movement, it is clearly far too much to claim that genuine rights views have been able to successfully break free - on any level - from the 'clutches' of animal welfarism.

Part One of the current work saw Garner's (1993) assertion that animal rights views (rhetorical or not) are challenging perspectives in relation to the traditional moral orthodoxy concerning human-nonhuman relations. The following section places further emphasis on how genuine rights positions tend regularly to be drawn into some level of conflict with a good deal of the traditional articulation of the moral orthodoxy with regard to such relations. Of course, this conflict may be expected with regard to pro-use 'animal welfarists'. However, clearly genuine rights views appear to sit uneasily alongside any form of animal welfarism, perhaps especially when rights advocates doubt that welfarism can bring sufficient change required to end the instrumental and sentimental exploitation of other animals. It may be stated that such conflict has increased, at least theoretically, since Francione entered the debate with his particular formulation of animal rights and, more to the point, that rather tactless dismissal of other non-traditional welfare positions as 'new welfarism' already mentioned (Francione 1996a). This section of the thesis, then, almost bizarrely continues to consider the meaning of animal rights while taking seriously Francione's claim that there may be no current social movement of note that deserves the name.

Much of the apparent confusion, often seen on a 'grass-roots' campaigning level, about personally 'being into 'animal rights'' and also 'being into animal welfare' (Yates 1998), appears to stem from the fact that, sociologically, the former emerged (or has attempted to) from the latter. The former may even be characterised as something of an 'outgrowth' of animal welfarism. This has resulted, on a common sense level, in notions of animal rights and welfare being widely regarded as roughly 'the same thing', or based on similar concerns about the human treatment of other animals, a claim, indeed, made by Francione above.

All the while it must also be appreciated, as stated before, that relatively few individuals are likely see the value of taking the time and making the effort to differentiate rights and welfare views on human-nonhuman issues. However, emergent rights views from the 1980s onwards, expressed in the main by North American theorists, subsequently developed beyond the bounds of welfarism, both in terms of its philosophical standpoint and campaigning objectives. Most clearly, such rights views are seen to provide an alternative to Peter Singer's utilitarian approach that has shaped the majority of second wave animal advocacy. Apart from the ideological benefit that pro-use countermovements may derive by misrepresenting the rights view (Guither 1998, chap. 11), the fact that Singer's position emerged first, as it were, explains its prominence in the modern movement for nonhuman protection. In other words, *Animal Liberation* was published during the rise in the late 1960s and 1970s of the so-called 'new social movements'. Thus, during a period when human-nonhuman relations were assessed anew, Singer's perspective was the most radical view available to inform and inspire new advocates seeking to move beyond the limitations of traditional pro-use animal welfarism. That said, genuine rights theorists must explain with some conviction why their claims about human-nonhuman relations are superior or just different to the welfarist approach, and especially Singer's radical version of welfarism which is both dominant and popular in nonhuman advocacy circles.

Academic observers such as Guither, Benton, Redfearn and Garner have often shown a greater interest in exploring the philosophical stances - and their inconsistencies - adopted within the movement than nonhuman advocates have themselves. For example, Professor of agricultural policy Harold Guither (1998: ix), who characterises his own position as 'middle-of-the-road' when it comes to animal welfare and animal rights, says, 'The animal rights movement

has emerged from old ideas but with a new philosophy emphasising moral and ethical standards for how humans should treat animals'. Journalist Danny Penman (1996: 156) argues that, as 'animal rights' activism is now an established social fact, animal rights philosophy is increasingly seen as a legitimate area of thought.<sup>18</sup> However, despite this, and despite the frequency that an apparent 'animal rights' issue is reported in the mass media, the answer to the question, 'what is animal rights?' remains far from certain at this present time, including *within* the 'animal rights movement'.

Furthermore, although animal rights philosophers and some grassroots activists continue to articulate their substantive aspirations in terms of the abolition of the major forms of animal exploitation, the precise contours of a post-animal rights, or 'non- (or less-) speciesist', society are remarkably unclear, perhaps especially with regard to various contentious areas of the animal rights agenda such as the morality of pet ownership and what to do about so-called 'vermin control'. Moreover, as Benton & Redfearn (1996) suggest, just *which* nonhumans would be protected by animal rights – or 'qualify' for them – is unsure. Given the common rhetorical use of 'rights', it may be argued that a good deal of 'animal rights' coverage and its associated discourse is not actually grounded in rights thought at all, which does not assist much in resolving such questions.

Furthermore, there is another pertinent and far from simple question to be asked: *who* says what 'animal rights' is – philosophers? - animal activists? - pro-use animal welfarists!? This is an intriguing and very real question for those interested in the evolution of the animal protection movement. Sociologically, influential definers have tended to be the dominant social agents and

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<sup>18</sup> in 1986 Jolyon Jenkins remarked in the *New Statesman* (21 February) that "animal rights' have probably entered the popular consciousness' and 'animal liberation is arguably the youth movement of the 80's'.

agencies of the time, and usually they are male and white. The hierarchy of credibility relating to this definitional matter appears still to be sorting itself out.

Perhaps it is precisely because animal rightism - despite distinctions that may be claimed for it - attempted to emerge within a paradigmatic field already 'full' of animal welfarism, that prompted Guither to comment that 'confusion', 'suspicion', 'misunderstanding', and 'mistrust' exists about the true character of the objectives and the beliefs of animal rightists (1998: ix). Quite clearly, it is understood that foremost among the 'old ideas' Guither refers to is traditional animal welfarism, 'established on the principle that while humans are free to subjugate animals, it is wrong for people to cause them to suffer unnecessarily' (ibid.: 2). If this suggests nothing else, it does point to the fact that animal rights and animal welfarism are linked to the extent that it is, in practice, difficult to talk of the former without some reference to the latter. However, Regan's (1985: 13) initial description of the generalised goals of an animal rights movement serves to clearly reveal just how far a genuine rights position goes *beyond* the aspirations of conventional animal welfarists. For example, Regan states that animal rights, as he sees it, stands for:

- \* the total abolition of the use of animals in science;
- \* the total dissolution of commercial animal agriculture;
- \* the total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping.

The goals here are quite clear, unambiguous and relatively bold: the *abolition*, *dissolution*, and *elimination* of the major forms of exploitation and potential abuse of other animals by human beings. These are very forms of animal exploitation which animal welfarism seeks to carefully regulate and sometimes reform rather than end altogether, although more radical welfarists who adhere

to a welfare + welfare + welfare = rights equation<sup>19</sup> claim that such processes of gradual change may eventually end the human exploitation of other animals. Such welfarists in this latter vein are essentially not pro-use welfarists, at least not in the sense of those in pro-use mobilisations set up to defend the institution of animal exploitation and try to discredit the whole idea of 'animal rights' (see below), which explains why they often characterise their own orientation toward human-nonhuman relations as abolitionist in intent. The paradigmatic case concerning the notion that a succession of welfare measures can eventually end with respect for animals' rights involves speculation about, say, whether support for 'bigger cages' is consistent with abolitionist thinking.

Although Regan's animal rightism is not particularly radical in the sense that he simply argues for a (limited) extension of deontological moral rights theory to cover (some) animals other than human (Lee 1997: 344-47), nevertheless it is immediately clear that his 'goals' go far beyond the generalised desire of a non-cruel utilisation of nonhuman animals for human ends. Underlining the intrinsic nature of the welfare-rights divide, it may be noted that philosophers such as Regan and Francione find themselves explaining 'animal rights' by outlining *what it is not*. They will specifically argue that any animal rights movement - if it is to remain consistent with its name - must certainly go beyond the scope of orthodox welfarism, or the 'anti-cruelty' movement, or (in the USA) the so-called 'humane movement'. In essence, then, these advocates and others regularly get involved in debates about what 'animal rights' does *not* stand for, and what type of pragmatic campaign a rightist *might* support, again indicating that there are complicated and perhaps still poorly-understood

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<sup>19</sup> see Stephen Clark on this from the Animal Rights Resource Site website: [www.animalconcerns.org/ar-voices/three\\_aw.html](http://www.animalconcerns.org/ar-voices/three_aw.html) (visited in 2001). Clark writes, for example: 'Brutally: we are not going to get Abolition either locally, or globally, unless the Galactic Empire arrives and orders us at laser-point to change. What we are going to get, and are getting, is a gradual change of consciousness, issuing in many little improvements that

relationships between traditional animal welfarism, radical animal welfarism and emergent animal rights advocacy.

In Britain, animal welfarism was codified within early legislation such as the 1911 Protection of Animals Act<sup>20</sup> (which is still in force, although the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is presently urging its modernisation). The view that 'something should be done for animals' found organisational expression with the initial formation of the Society for the Protection of Animals (SPCA) in 1824 and then the RSPCA itself, the name changing in 1840 when Queen Victoria lent her support. The suggestion made above that 'animal rights talk' is often difficult without reference to animal welfarism cannot be said with great confidence in reverse. Therefore, although animal welfare groups and organisations such as the RSPCA may sometimes talk in abolitionist terms about, for example, (some specific forms, or a subset, of) hunting - such as 'hunting with dogs' - welfarism in general is more commonly concerned with *regulating* on-going animal exploitation rather than even aiming toward bringing a complete end to it. This orientation appears in the welfarist tendency (in both traditional and radical forms) to concentrate on issues such as 'cruelty' (especially excessive cruelty cases involving privileged species like cats, horses and dogs) rather than base claims-making on rights violations regardless of 'conditions'. This seems especially to be true in relation to the

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may eventually approximate to abolition (or at least as close to abolition as human slavery now is, i.e., there are undoubtedly still slaves, but not as many as there were)'.

<sup>20</sup> According to Robert Garner (1993: 74), there were some limited anti-cruelty measures in Ireland and North America in the seventeenth century [e.g., the 'West's first animal protection laws' in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1641 - Wise 2000: 43]. However, 'the first sustained attempt to legislate for animal welfare occurred almost two centuries later in Britain'. In 1800 William Pulteney proposed a Bill to outlaw bull baiting which was narrowly defeated, as it was twice more, in 1802 and 1809. In 1822, Richard ('Humanity Bill') Martin's Bill was passed by parliament. This legislation made it an offence to wantonly and cruelly 'beat, abuse or ill-treat' a wide range of domestic animals including horses and cattle (ibid.: 75). Significantly, Singer (1983: 223) writes: 'Martin had had to frame his bill so that it resembled a measure to protect items of property, for the benefit of the owner, rather than for the sake of the animals themselves'.

greatest use and abuse (numerically) of animals; in factory farming practices<sup>21</sup> and in far less numerous vivisection experiments. Activists who are critical of rights formulations as the initial basis of claims about human-nonhuman relations often implicitly suggest that their position is essentially based on issues of *framing*. In other words, they often feel faced by a broadly sympathetic public but one that largely accepts welfarist propositions of worry-free non-cruel exploitation of nonhuman resources. Thus, as Francione suggests, audiences receptive to their messages may share a commitment to viewing nonhumans as sentient beings with important interests of their own, yet whether nonhuman 'rights' make sense to them or not is another matter, and rather more difficult to grasp or articulate.

Animal welfare thinking is based on the idea that it *must* be possible to devise precise and carefully controlled ways to exploit nonhuman animals as resources in systems that are demonstrably 'not cruel'. Welfarist advocacy, furthermore, is often predicated on a claimed practical understanding that it is very unlikely to reach a situation of the abolition of many forms of animal 'use', even if this aim is realistic or desirable, especially in the case of the eating of nonhuman animals. Therefore, for many orthodox and non-traditional animal welfarists, 'animal rights talk' is actually superfluous to the more realistic programmes of reducing levels of cruelty and increasing the 'humane' treatment of nonhumans. Radical welfare's 'getting hands dirty' efforts amount to pragmatically and gradually *reducing* animal suffering in selected campaigning areas where public and/or political support can be gained. As seen below, the vast majority of the acrimonious debates that have raged for decades over several different bloodsports such as foxhunting and hare coursing have proceeded

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<sup>21</sup> The world-wide figures of annual deaths of 'farm' animals are huge, estimated to 'account' for 43.2 billion individuals per year (Gellatley 2000: 125). This figure includes 'cattle', pigs and 'poultry', but excludes fishes and shellfishes.



almost entirely without recourse to bona fide animal rights perspectives.

Indeed, current proposed legislation to outlaw ‘hunting with dogs’ appears not to have been informed by genuine animal rights thought at any stage for either pro- or anti-hunt proponents.

In the case of nonhuman experimentation, often covered by the general term ‘vivisection’, whether the cutting into a live animal is involved or not, animal welfarists have sometimes attempted to regulate the infliction of pain in such procedures (Hollands 1985: 168-78). This strategy often avoids a principled engagement of fundamental arguments about the legitimacy of performing experiments on non-consenting rights-bearing sentient beings. Note that this welfarist strategy is not necessarily based on the same claims as scientific anti-vivisectionists who argue that animal experimentation is an invalid methodology that endangers human lives as much as it takes millions of nonhuman ones. With regards to ‘animal farming’, traditional welfarism often involves the advocacy of so-called ‘welfare friendly’ agricultural systems which in practice usually means ‘de-intensifying’ farming practices, such as transferring egg production from ‘battery cage’ to ‘deep-litter’ or (better still) ‘free-range’ systems.<sup>22</sup> The post-war development in Britain of more intensive (‘battery’) systems provoked a marked welfarist response; academically in the shape of Ruth Harrison’s influential book, *Animal Machines* (Harrison 1964); and organisationally in the shape of the campaigning group Compassion In World Farming (CIWF), formed in 1967 by dairy farmer Peter Roberts. To this day, CIWF campaign for ‘farm animal welfare’ and oppose intensive ‘livestock’ systems.

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<sup>22</sup> Clearly, it can be very difficult to unpack issues such as this considering the welfarists involved may be pro-use, traditional, or ‘new’ ones, not to mention ‘animal rights’ campaigners of the rhetorical kind.

Regardless of the claimed legitimacy of on-going welfarist initiatives - which may ostensibly result in a 'more humane' situation for the nonhumans directly concerned in given circumstances – (few would argue that smaller cages are '*better*' than larger ones) – they nevertheless still fall short of animal rights demands, as philosopher Steve Sapontzis noted in 1987:

Perhaps what most sharply separates the new animal rights movement from the traditional welfare movement is the new movement's insistence that no matter how humanely we do it, our continuing routinely to sacrifice animals' interests for our benefit is unfair (quoted in Wynne-Tyson 1990: 446).

One of the most obvious distinctions between genuine animal rights and animal welfarism stems from the rights attack on the *property status* of other animals (Francione 1995; 1996b). Welfare organisations, including major ones such as the RSPCA, the Cats' Protection League, the International League for the Protection of Horses and the Canine Defence League, actively promote the 'responsible ownership' of pet animals or domesticates (described more politically correctly within some sections of the animal protection movement as 'companion animals').<sup>23</sup> The owning of other animals as human property is also enshrined in welfarist-inspired animal protection law which recognises those two Kantian categories - 'persons' and 'things'. In legal proceedings, animals other than human are viewed as 'legal things' (Wise 2000). The legislation concerned with many categories of nonhumans acts to provide certain 'safeguards' in relation to their interests because they are recognised to occupy a status once held also by human slaves: sentient property. In *Animals*,

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<sup>23</sup> For example, in 2000 Tesco's tinned dog food had this message printed on the label: 'Tesco and the RSPCA working together for responsible pet ownership'. More generally, there is an assumption, even in 'animal rights' discourse, that personal relationships with individual animals, for example 'pets', may increase universal concern for animals (see Ryder 2000: 9).

*Property, and the Law*, Francione (1995) claims that any legal balancing of interests of owner versus owned is pre-determined in favour of the former. Elsewhere, Francione points out that human slavery was based on a legal position that allowed the 'sacrifice' of slaves' interests to the interests of slavekeepers. Effectively, the 'ending' of slavery in North America depended on reclassifying slaves as *persons* in law. This means protection was afforded due to an extension of respect for rights: 'Rights notions are intended to place limits on the instrumental treatment of persons, and to ensure that certain fundamental interests cannot be sacrificed for the general welfare' (Francione 1996b). The fact that animal rightists demand another such ethical extension - seeing 'the liberating of animals from human exploitation [as] the next logical step in the progress of our everyday, Western moral precepts' (Sapontzis, quoted in Wynne-Tyson 1990: 447) - places real animal rights thinking some way beyond many day-to-day welfarist concerns.

Perhaps more apparently mundane, yet also far-reaching, the differences between traditional welfarist views and a relatively radical view of human-nonhuman relations (described as an 'enlightened utilitarian theory' [Francione 1995: 105]) can be identified in the preface of Peter Singer's influential *Animal Liberation*, when the author describes researching (in the early-1970s) his then new book 'about animals':

Soon after I began work on this book my wife and I were invited to tea - we were living in England at the time - by a lady who had heard that I was planning to write a book about animals. She herself was very interested in animals, she said, and she had a friend who had already written a book about animals and would be *so* keen to meet us. When we arrived our hostess's friend was already there, and she certainly was keen to talk about animals. 'I do love animals', she began, 'I have a dog and two cats, and do you know they get on together wonderfully well. Do you know Mrs. Scott? She runs a little hospital for sick pets...' and she was off.

She paused while refreshments were served, took a ham sandwich, and asked us what pets we had. We told her we didn't own any pets. She looked a little surprised, and took a bite of her sandwich. Our hostess, who had now finished

serving the sandwiches, joined us and took up the conversation: 'But you *are* interested in animals, aren't you, Mr. Singer?'

We tried to explain that we were interested in the prevention of suffering and misery; that we were opposed to arbitrary discrimination; that we thought it wrong to inflict needless suffering on another being, even if that being were not a member of our own species; and that we believed animals were ruthlessly and cruelly exploited by humans, and we wanted this changed. Otherwise, we said, we were not especially 'interested in' animals. Neither of us had ever been inordinately fond of dogs, cats, or horses in the way that many people are. We didn't 'love' animals. We simply wanted them treated as the independent sentient beings that they are, and not as a means to human ends - as the pig whose flesh was now in our hostess's sandwich had been treated.

In this passage of the book so often credited with providing the philosophical foundation and campaigning inspiration for the modern animal protection movement in Britain, Australia and elsewhere, Singer grounds his perspective in notions such as opposition to arbitrary discrimination and ruthless exploitation rather than on concepts such as simply 'loving' animals or 'taking care' of them.

Of course, reference to *Animal Liberation* is made at this juncture, not because it is an animal rights book - it isn't, but because it serves to demonstrate the width of the gulf between traditional animal welfarism and the position of one of the first academics in the 1970's who would help to prompt a fresh re-thinking of human-nonhuman relations which, in turn, quickly gave rise to the emergence of second-wave animal rights thought in the writings of Tom Regan in the 1980s.

*Animal Liberation* has a further importance that deserves note. For it could be argued that Peter Singer's groundbreaking book, and many of his subsequent publications, were instrumental in fuelling the rhetorical use of the term 'animal rights' already mentioned. Singer is by far the most widely-read - and quoted - philosopher of the animal protection movement. Indeed, according to

one cheeky<sup>24</sup> *New Statesman* sub-editor, Singer is ‘perhaps the most famous philosopher in the world’. However, it may be asserted with confidence that few animal advocates could explain what makes Singer’s position a non-rights one, or could explain why Francione characterises Singer as a ‘new welfarist’ philosopher advocate. Explaining the meaning of ‘animal rights’ involves recognising that the majority of those who may describe themselves as rightists do not consistently articulate their perspectives on human-nonhuman relations with rights-informed language, and neither do they seem to accept the reasons for why they might do so.

Returning to the traditional animal welfare advocates in Singer’s citation, for these more old school animal welfarists, apparently ‘loving’ animals, or at least loving ‘their’ companion animals, is their starting point for their concern about nonhuman animals. Such kindly and ostensibly caring views are based on entrenched welfarist notions such as ‘being kind to animals’, certainly not causing them ‘unnecessary suffering’,<sup>25</sup> and always promoting ‘humane treatment’. Singer’s pig-eating entertainer, and her friend, probably and quite sincerely adhered to the conventional welfarist doctrine that the animals they were eating *could* – indeed *should* - have been bred, fattened, transported and killed in an entirely non-cruel way. However, they are equally unlikely to have pondered much on whether supporting the multimillion pound meat (or pet) industry is a gross violation of many hundreds of millions of sentient animals’ most fundamental rights.

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<sup>24</sup> Cheeky because the by-line also suggests that another philosopher, Roger Scruton, ‘demolishes’ the logic of the world’s ‘most famous philosopher’ with regard to human-nonhuman relations. [www.newstatesman.co.uk...%3A+Front+Page&newDisplayURN=200101220048](http://www.newstatesman.co.uk...%3A+Front+Page&newDisplayURN=200101220048) (visited 08/05/2002).

<sup>25</sup> The concept of ‘unnecessary suffering’ is regarded as the ‘cornerstone’ of UK and US animal welfare legislation (Radford 1999). It implicitly accepts that some animal suffering is ‘necessary’. Moreover, what may be considered as ‘unnecessary’ is determined by industry norms. For example, if a pig farmer is accused of

## Two Recent Campaigns.

Some of the characteristics of two contemporary and on-going examples of British 'animal campaigning' may help to emphasise the marked distinctions among animal welfare and animal rights approaches to given issues. The first example comes from the relatively popular and heavily media reported campaign against the live export of animals which began in earnest in the 1990s (for an interesting account of these lively events, and links to thoughts about the growing *apolitical* nature of British society generally, see Benton & Redfearn 1996).

The second example comes from the as-yet-unresolved campaign (it began in the 1920s) to outlaw 'hunting with dogs' in England and Wales (Scotland passed a similar law prohibiting hound 'sports' on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002).

## Live exports.

Both animal welfarists (but, note, not all, if any, of Guither's pro-use animal welfarists) and animal rightists are opposed to transporting animals over large distances to be slaughtered abroad. The standard, and apparently logical, welfare 'solution' to this problem is essentially contained in the campaign slogan: 'On the Hook, Not On the Hoof'.

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causing 'unnecessary suffering', courts inquire into what are the 'normal' practices of pig farmers generally. Once the norm is established, the case for or against the allegation of 'unnecessary suffering' is judged.

Welfarist arguments are therefore sometimes based on the pragmatic proposition that, since ‘food animals’ *will* be killed - and therefore the question is *how* - it would be ‘less cruel’ to slaughter them in Britain and then transport their frozen bodies overseas. A second strand of this argument is the potentially racist notion that ‘our’ British slaughterhouses are ‘better’ (meaning more *regulated* and therefore more *humane*) than dirty, foreign, abattoirs.

Empirical evidence gained over several years by organisations such as the RSPCA and Compassion In World Farming, and consumer programmes such as BBC Radio 4’s *Food Programme*, appears to generally support both of these claims. As a consequence, many ‘animal rights’ campaigners have often supported campaigns which are based on such views (meaning campaign spokespersons and activists would be prepared to articulate their claims and aspirations in the light of such points).

However, as a general rule, this animal welfarist aim to kill nonhumans before transportation overseas clearly stops far short of genuine animal rights claims and objectives since it does not adequately address the rights view that it is illegitimate to kill other sentient right holding animals (anywhere) in the first place, or enslave them, or deliberately bring them into being for human use and exploitation. That said, movement discourse over such matters, once again, will often be based on assessments of what is ‘practically possible’ in terms of benefits for animals as compared to ‘utopian wishes’ that cannot be met - especially in the short term.<sup>26</sup>

Francione, quite surprisingly perhaps in the first instance, argues that genuine rightists *may* justifiably support individual reforms on the basis of

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<sup>26</sup> As indicated in Part One, Dalton & Kuechler (1990) discuss how ‘tactical’ problems concerning fundamentals and pragmatics effect many social movement mobilisations. One interesting aspect of this concerns those who join a campaign on the basis of its pragmatic claims rather than fundamental beliefs. To take bloodsports as an example, and the League Against Cruel Sports as an organisation, in this single

cumulative incrementalism - and also within a practical recognition that the immediate abolition of major forms of animal abuse is extremely unlikely. However, Francione disputes the validity of many step-by-step approaches, arguing that rights advocates cannot, if they want to remain consistent with rights theory, support many such reforms.

Francione contentiously maintains that reformism that is based on animal welfarism necessarily assumes the legitimacy of the property status of other animals, and therefore reinforces the property characterisation of nonhuman animals (Francione 1996a). However, he is prepared to modify this apparently strict position slightly, but only if each measure, even if claimed in the name of animal welfare, at every and all stage, amounts to the *total abolition of a discreet abusive practice*, and can be presented within an openly-stated animal rights framework that articulates abolitionist aims with the employment of abolitionist and rights language use. Thus, Francione argues, perfectly demonstrating a genuine animal rights orientation toward welfarist measures, 'any incremental approach must be both abolitionist in itself and accompanied by a continued and aggressive critique of the remaining parts of the system'.<sup>27</sup> In a Weberian ideal type formulation, Francione cites a five criteria model for guidance, and to promote inter-movement discourse about this matter:

- Criterion #1: An Incremental Change Must Constitute a Prohibition;
- Criterion #2: There Must Be a Prohibition of an Identifiable Activity  
That is Constitutive of the Exploitative Institution;
- Criterion #3: The Prohibition of a Constitutive Activity Must Recognise  
and Respect a Non-Institutional Animal Interest;
- Criterion #4: Animal Interests Cannot Be "Tradable";
- Criterion #5: The Prohibition Should Not Substitute an Alternative, and  
Supposedly More "Humane" Form of Exploitation.<sup>28</sup>

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mobilisation members may range from vegan activists opposed to all forms of nonhuman exploitation to campaigners specifically focused on their opposition to some forms of hunting.

<sup>27</sup> see [www.animalconcerns.org/ar-voices/three\\_aw.html](http://www.animalconcerns.org/ar-voices/three_aw.html)

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.animal-law.org/library/araw\\_v.htm](http://www.animal-law.org/library/araw_v.htm) (these formulations also appear in a chapter entitled: 'Animal Rights: An Incremental Approach in Francione 1996b).



In 2001, consternation was registered by many contributors to 'animal rights' email networks regarding competitive animal welfare moves by Burger King (known as 'Murder King' in activists' discourse), the McDonald's ('murder burgers') franchise, and 'Wendy's' fast-food chain.<sup>29</sup> These commercial businesses are currently attempting to produce better 'methods of regulating' animal produce suppliers, enabling the active 'monitoring' of the welfare standards of meat and especially eggs as they seek to promise customers that they will enforce strict welfare 'improvements'. These include such measures as the phasing out of the industry practice of 'debeaking/beak-trimming' and reducing the numbers of individual birds per battery cage. How should genuine animal rightists respond to such initiatives and 'remain consistent with rights theory'? Join in welcoming the moves, as utilitarian Peter Singer has? Or reject - or at least criticise - them because these businesses will subsequently heavily self-promote themselves as 'animal welfare friendly' enterprises? As said earlier, the finer points of 'animal rights' are still being worked through, and instances such as this one provokes a great deal of campaigning claims-making as a modern social movement attempts to develop its ethical and strategic positions.

### Foxhunting.

It was suggested above that 'animal rights' thought has not featured a great deal in discourse about hunting in Britain. A great deal of the continuing foxhunting

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<sup>29</sup> These concerns have remained and heightened into 2002, especially since organisations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA) are encouraging members to take part in a competition to design a

debate involves fierce arguments about which ‘vermin control’ methodology should be employed to ‘cull’ fox populations: foxes themselves often characterised in the foxhunting debate as a potential or actual pest species. Recalling Jim Mason’s proclamation that controlling nature is now ‘second nature’ for modern agri-culturists, the debate has not often critically embraced the notion of whether there is a *need* to control foxes - in this discourse foxes are nearly always regarded as agricultural ‘pests’. *How* foxes may be ‘controlled’ has featured time and time again in the great foxhunting debate. After all, pro-hunt apologists will state, and anti-hunting supporters have often accepted, that high fox numbers result in large-scale chicken and lamb ‘losses’.

However, it is nevertheless true that the blanket assertion that foxes kill many healthy lambs is a controversial statement, and political action groups such as the League Against Cruel Sports have published research which has challenged the contention that foxes are the ‘pests’ that the fox hunters say they are.<sup>30</sup> That said, the majority of organisation spokespersons and politicians involved in the hunting debate seem to invariably become embroiled in a dominant ‘how best to kill foxes’ argument. By suggesting that fox numbers ‘need’ controlling, again built on views about controlling nature in the human ‘stewardship’ model, pro-hunt advocates such as Scruton (2000), are able to characterise the arguments against abolishing hunting as a ‘civil liberties’ and ‘minority rights’ issue.

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poster for Burger King’s new vegetable-based (but not 100% vegan) burger (Francione’s response to this initiative is contained in [www.vegdot.org/special/Gary%20Francione](http://www.vegdot.org/special/Gary%20Francione)).

<sup>30</sup> see [www.lacs.org](http://www.lacs.org) - In relation to claimed fox predation of lambs, Gellatley (2000: 31-2) writes: ‘[T]here have been three studies into fox predation on lambs in Britain - by the Government, Bristol University and the hunters’ magazine *The Field*. The Government said that the problem was ‘insignificant’. Bristol University said that far from being a problem, the effect of the fox on the countryside was beneficial. Even the hunters’ favourite publication could only come up with a figure of one lamb per hundred being taken by foxes. It compares with 20 lambs per hundred that die because of cold, hunger and neglect by the farmer. The chances are that the lambs taken by foxes were likely to be those that were sickly and dying’. In relation to the claim that the fox population would explode if it were not controlled, Gold (1998: 86, 212) cites a 1979 Ministry of

In other words, if a foxhunting ban would not increase animal welfare (because farmers will continue to kill foxes because they 'require' to be controlled), then the motivations for a ban must be to do with something else other than animal welfare. It must be said that many anti-hunting positions have not served to clarify the pro-animal perspective. For example, it has often been suggested from the anti-bloodsports position that there is something ethically problematic about killing nonhuman animals if such killing is '*for fun*'. However, this perspective suggests that hunting for the dinner plate, for example in the case of fishing, is a different matter, morally speaking.

From an absolutist animal rights position, as opposed to anti-bloodsports and welfarist approaches, detailed points about 'guns versus dogs' in fox control methodology are fairly irrelevant: for those adopting an animal rights position, *animal enslavement in agriculture* is the central issue here. Since the genuine rights view sees the routine human exploitation of chickens and lambs as utterly illegitimate, and since foxes appear not to prey on carrots or cabbages, they are hardly ever likely to be regarded as a 'pest' by vegan animal rights campaigners (see Gold 1988; Garner 1993; Moran 1997; Guither 1998; Kean 1998 for discussions of vegetarianism and veganism in relation to animal advocacy).<sup>31</sup>

In relation to predatory foxes, as far as many animal rights campaigners can see, when farmers and hunters complain about chicken and lamb 'losses', they simply complain on the basis that a fox may have killed before *they themselves* had the opportunity to do exactly the same thing. Essentially they moan simply because *the fox got there first*. Ironically, in the veganic world of non-violent humans which many campaigners advocate as an ideal, foxes would

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Agriculture, Food and Fisheries report that suggests that foxes self-limit their numbers based on the availability of food and safe territories.

<sup>31</sup> in August 2000, contributors to a North American email network were discussing how people react to their vegetarianism, knowing that they are animal protection supporters. On the 8th of August 'Rich' came up with

become agricultural friends rather than foes because they limit the numbers of the animals, such as rabbits, which compete with human beings for vegetable foods.

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[When she visited her brother, Alexandra Tolstoy's aunt] was offered only a vegetarian diet [and] was indignant, said she could not eat any old filth and demanded that they give her meat, chicken. The next time she came to dinner she was astonished to find a live chicken tied to her chair and a large knife at her plate.

‘What’s this?’ asked Auntie.

‘You wanted chicken’, Tolstoy replied... ‘Not one of us is willing to kill it. Therefore we prepared everything so that you could do it yourself’.

Alexandra Tolstoy, *Tolstoy: A Life of My Father*.

As noted elsewhere, in the 1998 Flying Eye video, *A Cow at My Table*, Carol Adams states that people often do not want the awareness that, when they eat meat, they are eating somebody else’s dead body. Who wants to know *that*, she asks. Just as Henry Salt, the founder of the Humanitarian League (1891-1919), came to the realisation that he was eating ‘dead flesh’ - the actual flesh and blood of cows, sheep, pigs and other animals, John Robbins (1987: 133) tells of another person who says she was ‘shocked speechless’ when she *really looked* at what was on her plate: ‘It was a God Damned Turkey I was eating! I couldn’t believe it! Those were its legs, right there in front of me, disguised by all the cranberries and sauce!’

Similarly, musicians Paul and Linda McCartney reportedly had identical thoughts when looking out of their Scottish farmhouse window. They were

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this neat ‘theory’: ‘I have a theory that meat-eaters do not like to try vegetarian food for two reasons: 1) It might taste bad and 2) It might taste good’.

eating 'lamb' at the time, and were delighting in watching live lambs gambol outside and they simply put two and two together. Paddy Broughton, who in the 1980's was the local group contact for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, once wrote in the organisation's magazine, *Liberator*, that she had something of a 'road to Damascus' experience simply by being given an 'animal rights' leaflet about animal suffering. Apart from Salt - who is credited for forming the first ever (if short lived) animal rights movement - all of these people just cited, if they were aware of them, could relate their personal experiences and feelings about other animals with the messages emanating from the new radicalised animal movement and its philosophies of the 1970's and onwards.

This new movement, albeit that its use of rights formulations should often be regarded as rhetorical in nature, constantly attempts to articulate its principled opposition to instrumentally (less so sentimentally) using nonhuman animals for human ends; and thus this relatively recent mobilisation provides alternatives to the message(s) of traditional animal welfarism. On the other hand, dispute within the new movement frequently remains predicated on tensions created by considerations of fundamentals-versus-pragmatics in animal advocacy. As ever, animal welfarism features as a central resource in such discourse about human-nonhuman relations (Francione 1996a). Although no-one can presently claim that there is agreement about what 'animal rights' means, its basic philosophical foundations, based on established 'human rights' thought, appear to be more or less solidly grounded, and yet they are sedimented in a generally messy and by no means universal consensus among 'rights' advocates.

It is perhaps a little ironic that the subject that seems to have forged the most agreement in recent years is the growing recognition that animal rights and

animal welfare are not the same thing, although it is also clear that confusion about these philosophical and campaigning positions still exists. Of course, as seen presently, there is absolutely no reason why anyone must comprehend - or try to assess - what modern animal advocates stand for; but the point is, in the last twenty five years at least they have, with a little effort, been able to do so, perhaps moreso in Regan's North America than in Singer-influenced Britain and Australia.

Even given a growing acknowledgement that animal rights is not the same as welfare within the animal protection movement, the very solidity and resilience of institutionalised animal welfarism is likely to remain a serious problem for genuine rights-based claims-makers, especially in the light of the popularity of animal liberationism. One major problem which rightists have yet to overcome is the almost automatic orientation toward some form of welfarism in addressing issues of human-nonhuman relations. The apparent strength and resilience of the orthodoxy, along with the prevailing reliance on the welfarist lens by which to view animal issues and review and criticise 'rights' arguments, provides the next topic of investigation.

## The Strength and Resilience of the Orthodox.

‘They pity and they eat the objects of their compassion’.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774).

*The Citizen of the World.*

In a discussion about forms of social knowledge, sociologists David Lee and Howard Newby (1983: 18) make the claim that both common sense knowledge and ideological beliefs suffer from certain limitations (which, they go on to argue, sociological knowledge can go some way to overcome). Lee and Newby elaborate on the point, suggesting that these forms of knowledge are *self-centred, incomplete* and likely *intolerant*. This latter suggestion is of particular interest, especially since these authors add that ideological belief can, ‘foster a dogmatic style of thought that insists on being right regardless’ (ibid.) It may be immediately acknowledged that all ideologies may have these characteristics, including those based on ideas and beliefs favoured and personally held, as much as those based on beliefs one opposes or is generally ‘neutral’ about. Constant vigilance and a commitment to critical reflexivity are thus required to ameliorate these tendencies to dogmatism.

With regard to traditional animal welfare ideology, this thesis suggests and attempts to make plain its dogmatic characteristics; built as they are on an apparently society-wide belief that *this* is undoubtedly, self-evidently, and almost ‘naturally’ the *right* and *proper* way to assess any assertion made about human treatment of other animals. Animal welfarism seems to remain largely accepted, largely uncritically, as *the* demonstrably ‘reasonable’ paradigm for looking at human-nonhuman relations; this alone being seen as an attractive attribute in liberal Western nations.

Certainly throughout the Western world, the ideology of animal welfarism seems to have become firmly institutionalised, with its central ideological tenets widely adopted, culturally internalised, and incorporating the all-important notion that every human-nonhuman relationship issues can be adequately addressed without questioning the central claims of the welfarist approach to the human treatment of other animals. Claims are made on a regular basis, often by British animal farming interests and politicians of all stripes, that the 'United Kingdom' in particular has the strictest animal welfare standards in the world. Thus, it is suggested that 'welfare costs' are already substantial to the commercial industries which use animals for human ends and animal welfare legislation should not readily be further strengthened. However, there appears to be a general acceptance - or at least the articulation of a formal recognition - of the welfarist stance that says the 'price' paid for maintaining high welfare standards is harsh yet justifiable. However, that said, the notion of going *beyond* what is evidently necessary to achieve 'humane treatment' is clearly regarded as largely uncalled for since it may dramatically endanger commercial competitiveness.

In this sense, and rather like formal supportive claims towards health and safety provisions, animal welfare practices and legislation are presented as essential, adequate, strong but fair, notwithstanding that its provisions come at a considerable cost which, nevertheless, should be paid for reasons of morally good behaviour. This is essentially the presentation of a pluralist political model allegedly based on seeking a satisfactory balance of various and often contradictory interests, even including some of the interests of the 'lower animals' humans use for their own purposes (or those that seek to represent them).



In practice, organisationally and politically, animal welfarism is a constituent part of the various battle grounds and compromises between and among mobilisations such as the National Farmers Union, Friends of the Earth, the RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming and the British government's Farm Animal Welfare Council and the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

This means that the 'reasonable, reasoned and proper debate' over the human use of other animals is seen as rightly the province of legitimate mainstream organisations committed, on some level or other, to conventional animal welfare tenets; that is, committed to the 'non-cruel' exploitation of other animals for human ends. Thus, on the animals' side as it were (although all participants would loudly claim this particular image-friendly status), groups such as Compassion in World Farming stand for a move toward (or a return to) extensive, and probably necessarily small-scale, systems of 'animal husbandry', while the more politically powerful National Farmers Union would more likely support the status quo of substantial intensive (yet still 'non-cruel') production.<sup>32</sup> The most dogmatic elements of traditional animal welfarism are readily evident when they are challenged by 'animal rights' thought, on the one hand, and (now rare) Cartesian-inspired claims that there are no ethical issues involved in the human utilisation of other animals. Clearly, animal welfarism's institutionalised and internalised centrality as the firmly-fixed orthodoxy is suggested as perhaps its greatest strength: from this assured position other perspectives can be authoritatively characterised as extreme and unnecessary.

The widespread social orientation to animal welfarism means that any thinking about human-nonhuman relations is almost mechanically assessed

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<sup>32</sup> Compassion In World Farming caused apprehension among campaigners in July 2001 when they proposed a joint initiative with farming representatives to try to get supermarkets to buy the normally rejected 'light lambs' on welfare grounds. In the same press release, farmers called for the reopening of small local abattoirs.

within this long-established and entrenched paradigm. As suggested throughout, orthodox animal welfarism is virtually all-pervasive in discourse about nonhuman animals; it is by far the commonest way by which children are encouraged to view human relationships with other animals. Furthermore, by its own standards, it can claim to 'work' or 'function', in the sense of reducing 'unnecessary suffering' caused to nonhuman animals. This apparent functionality leads, as seen, to the suggestion that alternative views (either way, left or right, as it were, from this *dominant centre*) represent unnecessarily radical views (see Henshaw 1989; Tester 1992; Franklin 1999 for accounts of 'animal rights' as 'extremism' and 'fanaticism'). Once again, a fundamental element in animal welfarism essentially says that animal rights views are simply *unnneeded*.

As common sense knowledge is putatively *enough* to understand social phenomena, animal welfare is *enough* to understand the needs and requirements of animals other than human. Garner (1993), in Part One, reviews several philosophical positions and situates traditional animal welfarism in a broad centre ground position by characterising it as the established 'moral orthodoxy' in terms of ethical views about other animals. Garner also identified two comparative extremes to the welfarist centre: the presently rare 'no moral status' position, and the growing 'challenge to the moral orthodoxy', which Garner claims is represented by philosophers such as Andrew Linzey, Mary Midgley, Stephen Clark, James Rachels, Bernard Rollins, Steven Sapontzis, Rosemary Rodd and especially Singer and Regan (*ibid.*: 10).

In her 'dismissals model' (absolute and relative), Midgley (1983: 12-18) underscores the centrality of animal welfarist understandings while noting that a certain degree of 'mental vertigo' results from confusion about these positions, and this was before Gary Francione came up with the added complication of the notion of 'new welfarism'. While this may be true of professional philosophers,

it is probably more correct to state that in general discourse, reliant of mass media transmission, animal welfarism holds centre stage to the *exclusion* of other views. It is important to note in this respect that, despite regularly being labelled as concerning 'animal rights', the vast majority of media coverage of issues concerning the treatment of nonhumans is unconditionally welfarist in content. An investigation of the British animal protection movement (Yates 1998) strongly suggests that many animal activists and advocates are themselves often propelled by their concerns for nonhuman animals into a confused position involving often contradictory welfare and 'rights' orientations. Midgley does say that disentanglement represents something of a 'path to relief' although, in practice, lines of thought may commonly converge (Midgley 1983: 13).

Writing in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Aubrey Townsend attempts to further define the conventional welfarist view of other animals. He argues that the ethical orthodoxy allows a distinction between two sorts of moral considerations. The first applies to human and nonhuman animals and is based on a welfarist commitment to do what promotes the 'living of a pain-free happy life' (Townsend, in Garner 1993: 17). The second consideration is reserved for humans only and is based on a respect for personal autonomy - 'for what an individual wants or values'. Therefore, since animals are regarded as 'only sentient', they can only be accorded an inferior moral status compared to human beings:

Thus, we are entitled to sacrifice the interests of animals to further human interests, whereas we are not entitled to treat humans in the same way - as part of a cost-benefit analysis (ibid.)

Garner (ibid.: 17-18) ultimately offers animal rights supporters little comfort, declaring that the position outlined here by Townsend, 'amounts to what is the conventional view about animals at least in Britain'. He also agrees that this position corresponds to the perspective of many traditional animal welfare organisations. In effect, then, welfarism accords to nonhuman animals the 'intermediate status' discussed in the present study: while they may be more than 'things', they are nevertheless very much less than 'persons' (ibid.: 18).

### Media Coverage.

Apart from the philosophers and other academics who take an interest in the subject on some level or other, it is remarkably common to find that journalistic treatment of 'the animal issue' display a strong orientation to non-radical welfarist norms. As suggested above, there appears to be a further acceptance - indeed, sometimes an open ideological advocacy - of the assumed *correctness* of animal welfare's central location between extreme and groundless positions. For example, when in 1998 the British rights campaigner Barry Horne<sup>33</sup> went on hunger strike in protest at the government refusal to establish a Royal Commission on animal experimentation, the *Independent* newspaper ran an editorial (14/12/98) entitled 'Remember the Real Animal Welfare Issues'. To some extent this piece appears to be a genuine attempt to give serious attention to the issues raised by the fact that someone was willing to risk their life for 'animal causes'. However, the title itself is obviously firmly located within the purview of the moral orthodoxy, and its censorious note is common of such articles,

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<sup>33</sup> Barry Horne died on 5th November, 2001, during his fourth hunger strike about 'animal rights' issues.

many of which tend to at least imply that some 'bigger picture' has been overlooked. Although it may be suggested that the headline merely reflects the hyperbole of sub-editorship, it is also fairly clear from the substantive text that the writer was either unable or unwilling (or both) to assess the situation from the type of animal rights approach often adopted and expressed by Barry Horne himself.

Not only is the lens through which the writer sees issues raised by Horne's actions clearly welfarist in the main, she also descends (if the point may be put this way) into animal conservationist themes at times, for example, in the claim that perhaps the activist was correct to draw attention to the 'unnecessary suffering' (the central welfarist tenet) in 'some animal testing', but that other animal issues are as, or are more, worthy of consideration. Raising a conservation theme, the author notes that the short-haired bumblebee is reportedly recently extinct in Britain, and implies that Barry Horne should give cognisance to this - and to the plight of other threatened species such as the skylark and the water vole. Arguing that the size of the human population represents a threat to animals in general, the author also complains that humans have over-fished the waters around Britain. She again implies - as with the issue of the skylark - that this is the 'the important animal issue' that should perhaps be a more proper and worthy concern to the hunger striker. Such points, of course, are framed within welfarist/conservationist understandings of human-nonhuman relations. For example, the author declares that the fishing issue is not really an 'anti-European issue', as some may suspect or claim, rather, 'we have over-fished *our own* fish' (my emphasis), a factor that requires a degree of political intervention.

While a commitment to a genuine animal rights position obviously does not preclude an active interest in the plight of animal 'species' taken as a whole group or as a population, it is true to say that the essential focus of rights

thought is based on the individual and his or her protection: even against group welfare (see Regan 2001; Francione 1996a; 1996b). Therefore, given his animal rights declarations, it is extremely unlikely that Barry Horne would approach the issue of humans eating fishes in terms of assessing - let alone 'managing' - 'fish stocks'. Neither would he likely accept that, somehow, fishes *belong* to human beings simply because they are found in 'their' waters. A rightist's response may be to wonder whether it might be more correct to claim the marine environment for the *fishes* rather than for humans.

Despite the fact that the *Independent* newspaper had followed the 'progress' of the hunger strikes over many weeks, had reported on the basic reasons for the action, and had often spoken to Horne's representatives outside prison or hospital, this piece is a representative example of a writer ultimately finding it very difficult to assess an issue about the treatment of nonhumans as animal rightists would be inclined to. Such an inclination would, for example, challenge outright the human exploitation of other animals as resources and object to the property status of animals; but not on the basis of the rarity of any particular 'species'.

On a more subtle level, allowing for the fact that the *Independent* had regularly covered the hunger strike stories, the writer of this piece failed to recognise that, effectively, Barry Horne had been 'reduced' to essentially making animal welfare demands of the 'New' Labour government. While he began by demanding the complete and immediate abolition of animal experimentation; campaigning for the 'total end of vivisection', a rightist's aspiration outlined by Regan (1985), Horne eventually ended up advocating that the government merely set up a formal inquiry into the subject of animal experiments that would test vivisection as a valid scientific methodology. Had such an inquiry been established, a Royal Commission on animal experimentation

would have undoubtedly rejected any tabled option of total abolition as unrealistic and uneconomic, as well as extremely difficult to do unilaterally. Therefore, any movement at all toward Barry Horne's demands would have been in the nature of traditional welfarist measures: proposals such as 'tightening' existing regulations and legislation. If anything, the *Independent's* story of the 'animal rights hunger striker' is a dazzling reaffirmation of the centrality of orthodox animal welfarist ideology when it comes to discourse about, and responses to, animal rights claims. Even when a rights advocate shifted from a strictly rights position the journalist apparently had little hope to be aware of it. Had she ever examined the issue of human-nonhuman relations from *any* position other than that of the moral orthodoxy?

The *Guardian* journalist Polly Toynbee considered the hunger strike when Horne had refused food for sixty-two consecutive days. In an article entitled, 'Sorry, But I Think Dying People are More Important than Dumb Animals', Toynbee says she finds it 'perverse' that animal rights activists should 'pick first on science', since she believes animal experimentation amounts to the 'most morally justifiable reason for the destruction of animals'.<sup>34</sup> However, she goes on, these 'barmy' and 'dotty' animal rights extremists, with their 'selective cause', may be contrasted with other 'sensible animal campaigners' who do not take the 'nutty' rights view. 'Sensible' campaigners 'simply want animals to be treated more kindly, farmed less cruelly' and, where used in experiments, 'scrupulously cared for'. Of course, these 'sensible' advocates are not 'dotty' animal rightists but, yes, 'realistic' and 'reasonable' animal welfarists who - with another enunciation of the kindly stewardship model - apparently appreciate, in Toynbee's own words, that 'humans do have

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<sup>34</sup> This type of position prompted Francione to include a chapter in his latest book (Francione 2000: 31-49) entitled: 'Vivisection: A Trickier Question'.

dominion over the birds and the beasts, but that with dominion comes responsibility to treat them well’.

Toynbee’s strident pronouncement of the putative *correctness* of animal welfarism and her theological justification of the human domination of other animals is immediately followed by a declaration straight from the mouths of some of those who believe that the so-called ‘postmodern condition’ is a reality (see Best and Kellner 1991 for the debate between critical and postmodern theorists about the ‘break’ from modernism to ‘postmodernism’). ‘We’ humans, Toynbee confidently claims, currently live in a ‘causeless era’. In this condition, she continues, many might perhaps look longingly on someone who appears to have found something to passionately believe in, even something as barmy as animal rights. Few people now have a belief in religion, or in socialism, or have numerous ‘ologies’ and ‘isms’ to inform them, she goes on, so perhaps the absurdity of animal rights can fill the void for some. For her, however, ‘animal rights’ is evidently a decadent and a ‘murderous cause’ of ‘crazy’, ‘dangerous’ and above all ‘unreasonable’ passions; unlike the sensible, judicious, commonplace and non-dotty cause of animal welfarism.

#### Pro-use countermovements.

Views such as Toynbee’s are eagerly reproduced by those who support the instrumental and sentimental use of other animals for human ends; those some animal rights advocates call members of the ‘animal use industries’, ‘animal exploiters’ or, in the blunt current parlance of young activists, ‘scum’ (see Guither 1998: chap 11 and, for more details, the following chapter of this



thesis). There are a number of organisations, most apparently having originated in North America in the last decade or so, which expressly warn visitors of the ‘nuttiness’ of ‘animal rights’ thought. These groups tend to publish articles such as ‘Eating Meat is Natural’, ‘Why Animals Have No Rights’, and ‘Human Superiority’.<sup>35</sup> One such group calls itself ‘People Eating Tasty Animals (PETA)’ to mock the acronym of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA), who claim to be the largest ‘animal rights organisation’ in the United States; the ‘rights’ assertion seemingly getting more and more dubious as time passes.

These pro-use organisations<sup>36</sup> are careful to avoid Midgley’s (1983) absolute dismissal position: their stance is strictly based on contrasting the *reasonable, normal, conventional* relative dismissal (traditional welfarist) position with ‘irrational’ and ‘fanatical’ ‘animal rights’ views. For example, in a piece entitled ‘Reply to Singer’,<sup>37</sup> the author approvingly quotes Robert Nozick of the Department of Philosophy at Harvard University who asserts that, ‘animal rights seems a topic for cranks... The mark of cranks is disproportionateness’. For these groups, and this philosopher, the proof of a ‘disproportionate’ approach simply means going beyond the *self-evident correctness* of orthodox animal welfarism.

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<sup>35</sup> see <http://www.acs.ualgarny>

<sup>36</sup> The generic name of choice for such organisations, according to Tokar (1995), is ‘Wise Use’.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.acs.ualgarny...nting/rights/singer.txt> Perhaps it is notable, at least it appears to have some utility for them, that critics of ‘animal rights’ thought keep suggesting that Singer is an ‘animal rights’ philosopher. They seem content to attack his non-rights approach (while at the same time characterising it as animal rights) rather than engaging genuine rights thinkers such as Francione and Regan. Scruton tends to focus on Singer, criticising every book the latter writes. A recent example comes from the *New Statesman* ([www.newstatesman.co.uk...%3A+Front+Page&newDisplayURN=-200101220048](http://www.newstatesman.co.uk...%3A+Front+Page&newDisplayURN=-200101220048)) which declares that ‘Roger Scruton demolishes Peter Singer, perhaps the most famous philosopher in the world and a passionate founder of the modern ‘animal rights’ movement’. It should be noted that Scruton does not call Singer a rights theorist in the main text. That said, his book *Animal Rights and Wrongs* (Scruton 2000) contains seven citations of ‘Peter Singer’ or ‘Animal Liberation’, three citations of ‘Tom Regan’ and none of ‘The Case for Animal Rights’, and not a single mention of Gary Francione or any of his writings on human and animal rights.

In his 'Eating Meat is Natural' article from 1996, the author Jim Powesland suggests that 'animal rights' denies 'our evolutionary and dietary heritage'. Therefore:

it would make more sense to adopt an animal welfare approach that advocates the humane use of our animal food sources rather than an animal "rights" position which ultimately seeks no use of and no contact with animals (including pets).<sup>38</sup>

This 'threat to pets' line is repeatedly used in these internet postings (and public 'animal rights' debating forums) as unequivocal - and presumably frightening - evidence of 'animal rights extremism' and, again, to suggest the utter 'craziness' of the rights position that would prevent people owning and keeping pet animals as well as curtailing meat eating and ending absolutely 'vital' biomedical (animal) experimentation.<sup>39</sup> The remedy to such fanaticism, the *reasonable* alternative to such views - precisely because nonhumans *should* be treated with some kindness and care - is conventional animal welfarism.

Marjorie Spiegel (1988) demonstrates that such pro-use groups are essentially repeating the same justifications and excuses for using nonhuman animals as US slave-keepers used to justify owning human slaves. In a chapter about the defence of slavery from Aristotle onwards, she reproduces arguments of slave-owners who assert that the slaves themselves benefit from their status as property. The very same arguments, she finds, are currently in service in sug-

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.acs.ualgary...hunting/rights/meat.txt>

<sup>39</sup> A further strategy of pro-use organisations such as the (US) National Animal Interest Alliance is to claim that the fulfilment of the animal rights agenda would represent a situation of absolute 'no contact' between humans and nonhumans. Similarly, Dr. David Starkey suggested on the BBC's *Moral Maze* radio programme (07/07/2001) that animal rights meant a form of 'animal apartheid'.

gestions that animals benefit from the use humans make of them.<sup>40</sup>

From the point of view of the animal rights challenge to the moral orthodoxy, a great obstacle to it, and the greatest benefit for the orthodox who defend 'normal' and 'reasonable' duty-of-care welfare approaches, is the already-identified fact that the latter perspective represents the long-standing and traditional socially-constructed view of human-nonhuman relations. Like many widespread and firmly sedimented social views - daily reinforced by numerous macro- and microsociological agencies of socialisation - animal welfarism seems extraordinarily resistant to change and critical evaluation. On one level, how can any position be seriously questioned when questioning immediately places those who ask in 'barmy', 'lunatic', or even 'terrorist' categories?<sup>41</sup>

With an allegiance to traditional animal welfarist views, humans can safely remain users of other animals in the incredibly comforting knowledge - frequently reinforced - that the animals used do not (should not) suffer. Furthermore, in this view the very lives of many animals depend on their continued exploitation: for what would 'meat animals' and domesticates do without meat eaters and pet owners?

### Foot and Mouth Disease.

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<sup>40</sup> For example (Spiegel 1998: 65), the author quotes James Boswell who said: '[The abolition of the slave trade] would be extremely cruel to the African savage, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerant bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life', and the Reverend William Jones who said: '[It was] best for the beasts that they should be under man'. Jones' position is summed up by Keith Thomas (1983) who states that 'in the 18th century it was widely urged that domestication was good for animals; it civilised them and increased their numbers: 'we multiply life, sensation and enjoyment''.

<sup>41</sup> Similar points have been repeatedly made in public debates since 'September 11th' because George W. Bush effectively silenced debate about the retaliatory attacks on New York and Washington by declaring, 'You are with us, or you are with the terrorists'.

During the writing of this thesis, Britain witnessed a serious and widespread outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Like influenza in humans, foot and mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease which spreads very rapidly through herds of hoofed animals such as cows, pigs and deer. Although the aphthovirus that causes FMD is transmitted quickly from animal to animal, the symptoms it causes are generally - but not always - nonfatal. Lameness caused by foot blisters is a common and very painful symptom, as is the common blistering of the lips, nose and tongue. Some animals' tongues fall out and most experience some degree of pain, which can be severe.

However, about 95% of diseased animals apparently recover after a period of around one to two weeks (Gellatley 2001). The British government's official policy to 'contain' FMD is a slaughter policy, based on the intention of 'killing-out' the disease. This strategy was used in this latest outbreak. Thus, all animals found with the disease are immediately killed along with the contiguous killing of the animals on neighbouring farms, small holdings (sometimes rather disparagingly labelled as 'hobby farms' by 'real' farmers) and animal sanctuaries. As if to entirely contradict and refute Adrian Franklin's (1999) thesis that there has been a 'dramatic transformation' in human-non-human relations within the shift from modernity to 'postmodernity', the FMD experience in Britain appeared to violently slam the door shut on the notion that the human subject has been 'decentred' in present times, or that the 'postmodern condition' has somehow resulted in a 'celebration' of the differences between humans and other animals. Franklin even talks of what he calls 'the demise of meat' in postmodernism, despite numbers of animals killed for food increasing.

The fact is, from the beginning of the foot and mouth disease outbreak, in numerous newspaper articles and countless radio and television programmes, 'farmers' leaders' from the National Farmers Union and politicians of all

colours let it be known that the FMD crisis was overwhelmingly ‘a human issue’ - indeed, they claimed that it may be regarded as a very severe ‘human tragedy’. Of course, nonhumans were involved as well, but in true welfarist fashion, their most important interests (their very lives) were systematically ‘sacrificed’ due to the economic imperatives of human beings, and political expediency related to ‘export market considerations’. Even so, for several weeks, and for several times every day, the British public were unusually exposed to a brutal reality for ‘farming animals’ used *as if* they were food: *they are killed and they get burnt*.

On the surface at least, these facts were evidently a shocking, horrific, and something of a complete surprise to the public. Moreover, just as shocked were a large number of weeping ‘livestock’ farmers (who might be expected to know the basic realities of ‘animal agriculture’) who appeared in the media during the outbreak. However, rather than being a product of ignorance of ‘farming outcomes’, food animal enslavers’ apparently genuine distress came largely to be understood as a result of uncommonly witnessing their animal property being killed; a rare event for many farmers used to routinely leaving nonhumans virtually at the gates of abattoirs. Nonhuman animal deaths at such execution centres are not often seen by many ‘outsiders’, and especially not the public, as active steps are made to keep this unpleasant reality well beyond view (see Thomas [1983] for a historical account of ‘hiding’ slaughterhouses).

More instrumentally, talking about their losses due to FMD, many enslavers noted the upsetting loss of ‘bloodlines’ and valuable ‘breeding stock’ as the cause of many of their tears. As said, the whole issue - and particularly this part of it - was largely characterised as an event effecting the lives and economic viability of human beings, rather than being principally about the deaths of (eventually) millions of nonhuman animals. However, perhaps due to the very

visibility of the slaughter, outraged public voices were raised about the treatment of the animals being killed. On April 13, 2001, the *Welsh Mirror* carried a detailed report (all of p. 1; pp. 4-5; and editorial on p. 6) of a white-suited council slaughterer in an open field taking what were described as 'pot-shots' at sheep with a rifle. The accompanying front-page picture features a reproduced still from a video recording of the 'sickening scene' made by a 'shocked' member of the public.

The inside pages contain further images from the same video, complete with a dramatic narrative explaining the sequence of events. 'Doomed', says the first caption as the sheep 'mingle in fear'; followed by 'Taking Aim'; 'Target'; 'Cornered'; 'Last Breath'; and finally, 'It's Over'. A Ms. Irene Smith, who took the video with her husband from a window in their house, explained her outrage: 'We could hear the gun going off and the sheep crying out. I can't get the haunting noise and the awful picture out of my mind. Three of our grandchildren arrived minutes after it ended. I'm just so relieved they missed it' (p. 5).

Concern for the welfare of the sheep and the potential distress of human witnesses informs this piece throughout. For example, another observer of the killing said it was 'pure horror', presumably for the sheep themselves, but for herself also in having seen it; while she also expressed her sympathy for the 'poor people' who have to carry out the 'cull'. The editorial comment, 'The voice of the *Mirror*' (p. 6), spoke of the newspaper's support for the government's slaughter policy, again exclusively expressed within an orthodox animal welfarist framework, while the earlier piece acknowledges the endorsement for the killing of Britain's largest animal welfare organisation, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The sheep 'have to die', the leader com-

ment states, adding a standard welfarist rejoinder 'but not to die in such an appalling way'.

The outrage expressed in all of these pages appears to be firmly predicated on the palpable contravention of the fundamental welfarist assumption and indeed *promise* that animal exploitation can usually be carried out in ways that cause no 'unnecessary' animal suffering.<sup>42</sup> It is only too clear that this phrase, 'unnecessary suffering', is welfarist through and through, since it unconditionally accepts the notion that humans are morally permitted to 'sacrifice' the greatest interests of other animals if theirs are deemed important enough, therefore allowing for *some* suffering – but only the 'necessary' sort - to be legally sanctioned. The ideological welfarist message comes over loud and clear in this press report: even at the height of the extraordinary circumstances of a serious nationwide foot and mouth epidemic, there is nevertheless no excuse for 'unnecessary' cruelty.

When in June 2001 (reported in BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme) further members of the public witnessed part of the FMD 'cull' in Skipton, Yorkshire, the pattern of response repeated itself. In this case, slaughterers chased cows, shooting them with rifles from 'quad bikes'. One cow was apparently left partially paralysed. Another was still alive after three attempts to kill her. She eventually died but only after being throttled by being hung from a JCB tractor by a neck chain.<sup>43</sup> According to the radio report, members of the public were again said to be very upset and once more a great deal of that can be explained by the highly unusual *visibility* of the killing. One eye-witness noted, as in the Welsh case, that children were playing close to the spot only minutes before the

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<sup>42</sup> Radford claims (1999: 702, 703) that the concept of 'unnecessary suffering' is not entirely universal in animal protection law but it is a 'recurring theme'. He says that the term was first used in statute in 1849 and in major pieces of legislation since. A Judge Shearman, in a leading case Radford cites, also declared that the phrase 'causing unnecessary suffering' was the best definition of the word 'cruelty'.

killing commenced (slaughtering lasted for nine hours in the Skipton incident) and they may have seen what was happening. Others observers noted that they understood that the “cull” had to continue’ to maintain the decrease in FMD incidence but, again, there was simply no excuse for causing *this amount* of cruelty to these animals.

The FMD outbreak of 2001 in Britain may be characterised as an out-of-the-ordinary *public* event - and therefore particularly distressing for that reason alone. Members of the public as well as journalists sought to make sense of events which, many concluded, must have involved the regrettable but, presumably, ‘necessary’ deaths of animals. The dominant interpretative framework through which the majority of people attempted to come to understandings of the ‘cull’ was unmistakably welfarist in origin. That said, a limited number of people, journalist and former Member of Parliament Matthew Parris being one, suggested that maybe this outbreak, following as it did cases of BSE/CJD and swine fever, placed a serious question mark on the whole idea of using non-human animals as food. However, these were minority voices, and most discourse on the FMD crisis failed to get beyond its characterisation as a *human* tragedy; moreover, British nonhuman advocacy groups such as Animal Aid and Viva! claim that they were regularly refused access to media coverage throughout the outbreak.<sup>44</sup>

Of significance are the suggestions that the events witnessed by the public amounted to incidents which ‘failed to live up’ to the usual high standards of animal slaughter thought to be routinely practised in Britain. In relation to the FMD ‘cull’, much was made of the fact that the requirements of

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<sup>43</sup> Some of these details come from an account of the Skipton incident on an animal email list (25/6/2001). The author also reports that the police were called to the scene but left because they found it too distressing to watch.

<sup>44</sup> Juliet Gellatley, the founder of the organisation VIVA!, did manage to get on a BBC TV programme about FMD which was transmitted a week or two after the outbreak began. From memory (the show was seen but not



speed of slaughter, and slaughtering on farms, resulted in 'the usually high animal welfare standards' being compromised. However, although this is perfectly likely to have been the case, the point tends to obscure standard slaughtering practices in 'normal' British abattoirs in 'normal' times. Animal advocates claim that the notion of 'humane slaughter' a virtual impossibility in standard procedures as much as those put in place to deal with an industry crisis<sup>45</sup> (Singer 1983: 161; Penman 1996: 53; Gellatley 2000: 156).

In terms of the 'normal' practice of animal slaughter, perhaps an attitude that 'ignorance is bliss' is quite understandable. As Juliet Gellatley (2000: 155) puts it: 'Most people don't work in a slaughterhouse, have never set foot in one and refuse to listen when you try to tell them about it'. All of which makes the unusual visibility of slaughter during the FMD outbreak especially distressing to a public generally shielded from such scenes. Animal welfare ideology states that, by and large, British slaughter standards are relatively high and largely unproblematic. However, journalist Jan Walsh, whose book about 'the meat machine' (Walsh 1986) is especially designed *not* to put people off eating meat, and is not an animal advocate, states that:

Most people are probably aware that there are problems with the way we slaughter our food animals. Undoubtedly some arrive at the slaughterhouse bruised and suffering from a long journey; some are fearful when they approach their end; and some fail to be knocked unconscious before the slaughterman's knife does its job (ibid.: 43-44).

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recorded), the programme concentrated on the 'human tragedy' slant. So much so, in fact, that events became remarkably heated when Gellatley attempted to shift the emphasis to the plight of those actually being killed.

<sup>45</sup> Gold (1995: 77) notes that not only slaughterers have to be quick. He recounts a time when he helped edit a film about farming and remembers a Chief Environmental Health Officer arguing 'that it was perfectly feasible for meat inspectors to spot nearly all diseased chicken even though the conveyor belt whizzes along at 3000-4000 birds per hour'. This means that individual chickens were 'inspected' for less than one second each.

Welfarist ideology says that these problems are relatively small. They are far from the norm and a whole raft of legislation exists to ‘ensure’ non-cruel slaughter. Walsh goes on:

If the slaughterhouse staff mistreat an animal when it is unloaded, or *waiting its turn*, they are committing an offence. If they allow a creature to see one of its fellows being killed, that again is an offence. And if the system is not good enough to make sure that every animal is either killed instantaneously, or stunned into unconscious oblivion before its life is ended, then again the slaughterhouse can be prosecuted. It is the duty of the local authority inspectors, and the vets in attendance, to make sure that these laws are kept (ibid.: 44, emphasis added).

### “Horse Ripping”.

The traditional animal welfarist view is the orthodox and central cultural resource for ‘thinking about animals’. It remains the dominant paradigm even in attempts to make sense of incidence of animal harm which appear to be utterly senseless, very frightening and *absolutely* ‘unnecessary’. A recent sociological investigation of a series of attacks on horses in the South of England in the early 1990’s (Yates, Powell & Beirne 2001) provides an interesting example of interactive sense-making among humans about a set of events involving serious injuries to nonhuman animals.

In terms of an animal welfarist orientation, cases of ‘horse maiming’ or ‘horse ripping’ (as the attacks on the horses quickly came to be labelled in press reports) do not immediately render themselves as especially suitable candidates for the usual cost-benefit analysis based on the idea of ‘necessary’ and ‘unnecessary’ suffering assessments. In other words, all those who took an interest

in the plight of the various horses involved; that is, police officers, newspaper journalists, animal welfare organisation employees and the legal owners of the horses, appeared to have initial and sustained difficulty in understanding the situation through any standard welfarist criteria: in these cases, animal welfarism simply did not appear to ‘fit’, or explain much.

Usual terms of reference just did not meet *these* particular circumstances of animal harm. For example, absolutely no-one could be found to state that someone’s apparent wish – or even ‘need’ - to maim horses was *sufficient* reason to hurt or kill these particular horses. Even for traditional animal welfarists, the notion of ‘sacrificing’ animal interests for *these* particular human ones could not be sanctioned in any of the horse maiming cases. In fact, the very idea that human pleasure could be included within a utilitarian calculus of these events was universally ruled out and viewed with disgust and bewilderment. In any event, the property status of the horses concerned would prevent such a calculation in the first place. It is understood that notions of ‘legitimacy’ and ‘in place’ and ‘out of place’ feature in animal welfare ideology. In other words, in such a view, there are particular and highly ‘controlled’ locations in which animal exploitation and ‘necessary’ nonhuman harm can *legitimately* take place. Since animal welfare is a regulatory mechanism, it can be sensibly applied to places such as abattoirs, circuses rings and ‘winter quarters’, pet shops and vivisection laboratories. Places where people are often officially licensed to exploit animals in a structured, effectively monitored and tightly controlled manner. The controlling element of animal welfarism exists to ensure compliance with, by enforcement if necessary, its ‘non-cruel’ promise. Clearly, then, attacks on nonhuman property in *open fields*, at *night*, by *non-owners*, or any other ‘*non-authorised*’ persons, are to be deemed *utterly illegitimate*.

In the case of ‘horse-ripping’, as said, no-one could countenance or apply the usual welfarist balancing act. It was left to the authors of the paper analysing the incidences of horse harm to acknowledge and point out that ‘humans sometimes are allowed to assault, injure and kill horses’ (ibid.: 16). They make the observation that the general discourse surrounding the events in question passionately asserted that *these* horse, in *these* places, were unequivocally *not* of that order. Only one commentator in all the fairly extensive (national and local) press coverage, the Christian theologian Andrew Linzey, hinted otherwise. Linzey suggested that horse assaults like these could be seen within the wider perspective that acknowledges that animals are simply ‘regarded as things’ in Christian thought.

Because standard welfare criteria apparently dictated to those who tried to make sense of the horse attacks that they viewed the attacks as overwhelmingly ‘unnecessary’ in any conceivable sense, it soon became clear that the emergent (and apparently rapidly-formed) consensus was that the explanation of the maimings would be most likely found in the pathological state of the person or persons who had perpetrated the unwarranted attacks. Unable to place these specific events of animal harm into the conventional welfarist framework of ‘justified and justifiable exploitation’, the assumed ‘irrationality’ of the perpetrator became stronger and ever more stridently asserted as announcements of horse maiming were made in the media and public meetings.<sup>46</sup>

The attacks came to be - in fact, *could only be* - universally regarded as utterly reprehensible, totally unwarranted, ‘sick’, ‘perverted’, and just downright *wrong*! Those whose beliefs about human-nonhuman relations are imbued

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<sup>46</sup> Clinical psychologists did advance suggestions that there may be rationality within these apparently irrational acts. For example, retired psychologist Tony Black suggested that the horse attacker may believe that horses were ‘devil-carriers’. Given such a view, destroying horses could be conceived as a fairly sensible - even responsible - thing to do (Yates, Powell & Beirne 2001: 11).

with the norms and values of animal welfare ideology could only interpret attacks on (mainly pet as opposed to 'working') horses as an unjustified betrayal of important welfarist principles based on an agreed 'necessity of such use' with the assumed concomitant infliction of 'no cruelty'.

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Garner (1993: 101) may be quite correct to claim that most people appear to accept the validity of the moral orthodoxy that says that nonhuman animals are inferior to human beings. For such people, this means it is ethically excusable to override their most precious interests for human ones, even when the latter may be regarded as much less important. However, one of the lessons from the understandings which emerge from 'horse maiming' cases is that they seriously break the unwritten (not to mention one-sided) welfarist 'contract' between humans and other animals which obliges humans not to harm animals unless the cause is clearly 'important' enough.

After all, just as Farmer Rafferty from *Mudpuddle Farm* (Morpurgo & Rayner 1994) is fully aware, the deal is that 'they look after us' and 'we look after them'. The assumed pathology ascribed to the perpetrator(s) of the horse attacks stands as an example of attempts to explain the extraordinary. In this rare case, the normal, reasonable and realistic lens by which human-nonhuman relations are viewed fails. Such assumptions also express the widely felt opinion that any (warped) 'pleasure' which the (assumed pathological) person may have experienced (commonly thought, according to the press, to be sexual or 'Satanic' in nature) is entirely unacceptable and illegitimate.

## Reaction to 'Animal Rights' Advocacy.

Since the animal rights and even 'new welfarist' critique of human attitudes and behaviour in relation to other animals goes a good deal beyond the traditional welfarist advocacy of 'kindness to animals' which, as discussed earlier, is postulated on the acceptance of the practical *feasibility* of their non-cruel exploitation, 'animal rights' messages are often taken to represent new and somewhat controversial ideas. Although the economic advantages of nonhuman exploitation has been more implicit than explicit in the current work, it has been a feature throughout; and it may be re-emphasised at this point in that, perhaps the most strident voices raised against the 'animal rights' approach, are those raised by individuals and industries with the greatest financial incentive to see the maintenance of the status quo (see Guither 1998).

It is clear that many long-standing and indeed routine cultural and normative activities and attitudes concerning other animals are currently being presented as ethically problematic by the perspectives more radical than conventional animal welfarism. As stated, this effectively makes 'animal rights' the same type of potential 'problem-making stranger' that Bauman (1990) claims for sociology in relation to forms of common sense knowledge. In essence, then, 'animal rights' thought, even of the rhetorical kind, 'de-familiarises' existing social attitudes toward human-nonhuman relations.

Noting this 'controversialising' of what human societies systematically do to other animals has been a central theme throughout this thesis, especially in the second part. From a sociological standpoint, it seems interesting to note that long-standing and generally 'non-controversial' aspects of human behaviour are now being questioned in ways rarely experienced before. At least it may be said

with some confidence that this recent 'questioning' comes from numbers of people in organised social movement mobilisations, and this itself is a fairly novel social phenomenon. It seems quite evident, also, that until the emergence of 'second-wave' animal advocacy, the 'animal question' had been adequately 'answered', for most of those who ever bothered to consider it, from within the precepts of traditional animal welfarism. Although it is asserted in this thesis that the orthodox welfarist position shows every sign of continuing strength and resilience; and so animal welfarism still provides the basis for answers to the 'animal question', present debate inspired by animal rights or non-traditional welfarist views effectively hinge on the extent to which mainstream animal welfarism will bear up to new claims about human-nonhuman relations.

Will conventional animal welfarism ever be fundamentally threatened by 'animal rights' principles; or will such views be 'contained'; perhaps 'softened'; and effectively 'integrated' within the moral orthodoxy? To date, animal welfarism has shown itself as a formidable socio-economic and political force, while a genuine rights-based approach has struggled to emerge even within the non-orthodox animal protection movement. Nonhuman rights have failed to gain thoughtful recognition in society, except in the rhetorical sense discussed.

While Howard Becker's (1963) term 'moral entrepreneur' appears to contain a rather distasteful and negative connotation in its construction, it is nevertheless true to say that many activists who claim membership of the 'animal rights movement' are engaged in a moral enterprise which, its campaigners and philosophers will assert, involves a number of crucial, far-reaching and vital ramifications. As Peter Singer notes in the title of one of his books, the

questions being asked by the animal movement are often as fundamental as, 'How Are We to Live?' (Singer 1993).

In a similar way that Pierre Bourdieu (1973) argues that individuals have the ability to accrue and utilise 'cultural capital', social movements can collectively accumulate 'moral capital' or 'moral resources' (Goode, quoted in Munro 1999). This *moral capital* can be used in movement-counter-movement debates and combative encounters in what Klandermans (1990) calls the 'multi-organisational field' of social movement contestation. Clearly, an animal rights mobilisation is a claims-making enterprise about a moral issue. To ask animal rights and animal liberation questions is to ask ethical questions about *human* behaviour, and many members of the animal protection movement urge a reflexive reassessment of human attitudes and practice. To this extent, Tester (1992) is correct to claim that animal rights is actually about human beings, especially about some of their firmly embedded social attitudes and behaviours (for a critique of Tester's 'distinctive and contentious' perspective on animal advocacy, see Baker 1993).

This view of radical animal advocacy is not a surprise, however, since rights messages are constructed to appeal to moral agents. Lyle Munro (1999), citing Douglas' book from 1970 on 'deviance' and 'respectability' within 'the social construction of moral meanings', states that much animal activism involves stigmatising and marking out as deviant many activities that mainstream views may see as entirely legitimate. In doing so, nonhuman advocates put themselves up against two forms of resistance: the 'vested interests' of the scientific and medical fraternity, agribusiness, hunting and gun lobbies, and 'the individual who sees nothing wrong with using nonhuman animals to provide for human needs and wants' (ibid.)



Notwithstanding some persistent suggestions in animal movement discourse (and particularly during demonstrations) that this or that 'animal abuser' is 'born evil', on reflection the majority of animal campaigners seem to accept that acts of human violence toward other animals are on the whole culturally and socially produced. Therefore, since innate biological 'instinctual drives' are generally regarded as secondary factors in the formulation of social actors' attitudes and behaviour, many animal advocates believe it is therefore possible to devise social systems in which exploitation of, and deliberate violence toward, all other sentients plays little or no part. Moreover, while 'peace on earth' is without doubt a rather grand, subjective, and probably an utterly unobtainable utopian objective, it seems evident from thousands of contributions to 'animal rights' and environmental email networks that many animal advocates will nevertheless consistently construct their motivational explanations for campaigning with such idealistic notions as their eventual goal (see Jasper & Nelkin 1992 for an account of 'animal rights' as a 'moral crusade'). In other words, if one asks animal movement activists to recount their aspirations, many will talk quite seriously about 'ending all forms of exploitation', 'living in peace' and 'struggling against violence to any living or sentient being' (for North American examples of such expressions, see 'Animal Rights Activists', in Sperling 1988: 105-32; for British examples, see Windeatt 1985; Gold 1998).

What reactions might one expect to the arguments put forward by such people who apparently aspire to a non- or less violent future? Perhaps vociferous accusations that they are obviously 'insane', 'emotional', 'irrational', 'confused' and, 'violent'; or just plain 'wrong', anti-'freedom', 'backward looking', 'stupid', 'anti-human' and 'dangerous'?

The animal movement must be shown to be not only anti-science but also...responsible for violent and illegal acts that endanger life and property (American Medical Association 1982: 2).

The animal rights movement is, in large part, a young person's movement, and is made up of young people who tend to substitute sentiment for reason (Frederick K. Goodwin, M.D., formerly of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Association (USA), quoted in Regan 2001: 157).

Animal liberation, as a revolutionary philosophy, has generated something of an eccentric and peculiarly British hybrid, lurching uncomfortably between low farce and pure terrorism (David Henshaw 1989: preface).

"Lobster Boiling Is Murder!" might seem an insane remark, but the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) is the most successful terrorist movement Britain has ever seen (Kevin Toolis 1998: 8).

The tactics employed by the animal rights movement are nothing short of terrorism...Calling animal rights activists' destructive methods argument is giving them too much credit (Congressman Weber, quoted in Regan 2001: 158).

I have been called a dangerous zealot, a firebrand, and a rabble-rousing demagogue. I have been likened to Hermann Goring and to monomaniacal mental patients who think they are Jesus Christ or Napoleon (Tom Regan 2001: 157).

As seen in the following chapter, there are a number of 'defence mechanisms' that human beings are able to deploy in order to deal with potentially painful (or just plain unwanted) 'knowledge'. This includes the ability to *deflect* or simply ignore messages altogether while dismissing concerns as utterly unimportant or trivial. Bauman (1990) reveals that there is nothing so utterly disturbing to sedimented knowledge than *actually having to think about it*. This outlook is not necessarily based on notions that 'ignorance is bliss'; rather, common sense knowledge is often based on the notion that a given issue has been 'dealt with'; or that understandings surrounding that issue are largely 'settled'. Plainly, 'animal rights' arguments may have at least the potential to disturb largely settled and long-held understandings of human-nonhuman relations, and evidence already presented suggests that it does just that, even given that the welfarist

orthodoxy remains central to the issue. Therefore, many responses to 'animal rights' messages are likely to be based on irritation that some issues 'already largely resolved' are unnecessarily being 'stirred up' again.

The next chapter explores 'non-responses' or 'evasions' of knowledge or information. However, evident in the quotes reproduced above, and the journalism already cited, the arguments of the modern animal movement have not always been universally ignored. While Regan (2001) is clearly disappointed by some of the philosophical reactions to his and others' animal rights advocacy, pro-use organisations may be expected to *actively* respond to all non-traditional welfare claims in a predictably negative manner. Such a response may be expected if only due to assumed unfavourable economic consequences of adherence to 'animal rights' views: many commercial 'animal users' have huge monetary interests to protect. In a detailed analysis, Guither (1998: 132-43) names pro-use organisations as 'the emerging counterforce' to contemporary animal advocacy. He further notes that 'those who produce, use, and *enjoy* animals have awakened to the potential consequences of a successful animal rights crusade' (ibid.: 132, emphasis added). Of course, Guither acknowledges that pro-use groups - is it possible any longer to be surprised by this? - 'often emphasise their strong support for humane treatment of animals, lending credibility to the animal welfare advocates, but, at the same time, make every effort to discredit the animal rights activists' (ibid.) One interesting aspect of the pro-use stance suggests that the 'anti-intellectual force' of animal rights has been 'accepted by the public' (ibid.) which appears to be an extraordinarily exaggerated claim.

Guither describes how the North American 'Farm Animal Welfare Coalition (FAWC)' was formed in 1981 to 'promote education against animal

rights activism'. This organisation is made up of 45 'major farm animal associations'<sup>47</sup> whose stated mission is to:-

- \* unite all farm organisations into a coalition committed to continued well-being and safe treatment of farm animals;
- \* study public opinion, attitudes, and knowledge about farm practices and modern farm technology; and
- \* educate the consumer, public officials, media, and other audiences about the farmers' essential concern for the well-being of their animals and the production of safe, low-cost food (quoted in *ibid.*: 133).

This umbrella organisation appears to be agitated and apparently gravely concerned by the effects, potential or real, of present-day 'animal rights' campaigning. It identifies 'six basic issues' within 'animal rights' advocacy, including the promotion of vegetarianism, arguments about food shortages in 'developing' nations and the 'humane treatment' of animals. The FAWC responds to such issues with a campaigning programme that include commitments to:-

- \* continuing to monitor the direction of the animal rights movement, its attempts at coalition building, and themes used to alter public perceptions;
- \* establishing an effective system of monitoring state legislative and legal action;
- \* monitoring all studies on animal stress and advising members on implications for farming practices related to animal rights issues;
- \* developing positive themes to neutralise what coalition members see as irresponsible attacks on animal farming practices by animal rights groups;
- \* maintaining communications with other animal-rearing or user groups, particularly those concerned with laboratory animals;

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<sup>47</sup> Including the American Dairy Science Assoc., American Farm Bureau Federation, American Feed Manufacturers Assoc., American Meat Inst., American Society of Animal Science, American Veal Assoc., Animal Health Inst., Commission on Farm Animal Care, Farm & Industrial Equipment Inst., Holstein Assoc., Livestock Conservation Inst., Livestock Marketing Assoc., National Broiler Council, National Cattlemen's Beef Assoc., National Lamb Feeders Assoc., National Livestock & Meat Board, National Livestock Producers Assoc., National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Turkey Federation, National Wool Growers Assoc., Poultry Science Assoc., Provimi, and United Egg Producers. 'In addition to those industry groups, the US Dept. of Agriculture is also listed as a member' (Guither 1998: 133).

- \* preparing their organisations to deal effectively with the challenge of the animal rights movement and implementing an ongoing communications programme, and
- \* researching the attitudes and knowledge level about animal rights issues prevailing in the wider circle of agribusiness (quoted in *ibid.*: 133-34).

Guither (*ibid.*: 136) goes on to detail other pro-animal farming organisations set up to counter dangerous and unwarranted ‘animal rights’ views, with descriptions of some of their campaigns. For example, there is the ‘I care’ programme run under the auspices of the ‘American Farm Bureau Federation’ designed to ‘foster humane treatment of animals’ and ‘demonstrate that young people do believe in good animal welfare’. This particular federation also publishes handbooks such as *Meeting the Animal Rights Challenge*, published in 1991, and *Handling the 20 Toughest Animal Rights Assertions*, published in 1994. Another pro-use organisation, the ‘Pork Producers’ Council’, advise members to respond to ‘animal rights’ claims in measured tones, suggesting lines such as: ‘We share with them their concern about the welfare of farm animals. We wish they were better informed about the way pork producers take care of their livestock’ (*NPPC Handbook*, quoted in *ibid.*).

Their handbook concludes with good advice for all those fashionably waging ‘war against terrorism’: ‘The animal rights movement is acquiring the earmarks [!] of international terrorism... animal rights activists want the entire farm industry to live in a state of anxiety. Don’t give them the satisfaction. On the other hand, don’t be careless’ (quoted in *ibid.*: 137).

While the ‘United Egg Producers’ stress the ‘safety factor’ of chickens being locked into battery cages (and the importance of allowing ‘adequate freedom of movement’), the ‘Fur Farm Animal Welfare Coalition’ speaks of ‘responsible management’ techniques and the clear dominionist notion of a ‘controlled harvest of fur-bearing animals’ (in *ibid.*: 137-38). Further organ-

isations supporting the use of animals in experimental procedures follow a similar pattern, stressing 'sensible use' and 'humane care' of laboratory animals. Citing Barbara J. Cultin's 1991 article in *Nature* 351.6327, Guither notes that the 'biomedical research community' believes that 'the animal rights movement is not about reason. It is about eliminating the use of animals in research...' (in *ibid.*: 139).<sup>48</sup> The 'Scientists' Center for Animal Welfare' says it promotes the 'well-being' of laboratory animals, and while some pro-vivisectionists suggest that mice are currently '*helping*' in the fight against the 'anthrax threat' which may or may not be connected with the events of 'September 11th'.<sup>49</sup> The 'Livestock Conservation Institute' relies on theological constructions as it talks of farmers being 'responsible stewards of livestock'.

While the 'National Animal Interest Alliance' note that 'meeting the animal rights challenge' amounts to educating the public about the 'critical difference between animal welfare and animal rights', an organisation known as 'Putting People First' (PPF) defines its objectives as enlightening 'middle America about the work of animal rights groups, to provide balanced education about animals and their use with school-age children, and to protect human health through disease control and support for biomedical research' (*ibid.*: 140-41). The founder of Putting People First, Kathleen Marquardt, characterises her materials produced for school use as 'balanced', while she dismisses what the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA) organisation has to say about human-nonhuman relations as a form of 'brainwashing' (*ibid.*: 141). One of PPF's most original campaigns is called the 'Hunters for the Hungry project' which entails hunters donating venison to church shelters to feed the 'needy' (*ibid.*: 143).

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<sup>48</sup> The strength of this linguistic construction suggests that a wish to abolish animal experimentation is incompatible with a rational assessment of the subject.

### More 'Media Dancing'.

Research suggests that many social movement activists are extremely sensitive to, and actively engaged with,<sup>50</sup> the media reaction to their activities (see Goldberg [1991] for an account of the 'high-risk media dance' that occurs between many social movements and the media, and Yates [1998] for details of how animal activists' perceptions of press coverage of their campaigning changed over the years in Britain: 1970's-1990's).

Data (Yates 1998) on the British animal protection movement suggests that some animal activists have perceived a general (downward) qualitative shift in the media coverage of their cause in recent years. Indeed, British activists subjectively report what they once regarded as generally positive media coverage of their campaigns during the early 1980's, but many note that recent years have seen an increase in reports which they view as examples of largely 'negative coverage'. One apparently common form of media coverage of 'protest', according to Rochon (1990), focuses on militancy and law breaking but with little or no articulation of the issues involved. While Rochon talks about the 'exacting criteria' of the media, other social movement theorists note that 'media communication industries' actively 'filter' reports of the activities of social movement advocates (Zald 1992: 338).

There is some evidence (Yates 1998) - supplemented subsequently by material from animal protection email networks - to suggest that contemporary animal advocates are just as curious about the media's reporting of their campaigning as all other social movement activists, and have frequently experienced

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<sup>49</sup> 'September 11th', and lately '9-11', appears to have become the widely accepted shorthand for the terrorist acts of retaliation in New York and Washington on that date in 2001.

the style of coverage identified by Rochon. Responding to the increased use of electronic mail among animal advocates, one or two animal groups have organised the dissemination of media reports, encouraging their supporters to write to media outlets to express 'animal rights' views.<sup>51</sup> As noted above, interpretations of media coverage are subjective. For example, views were reported (in *ibid.*) ranging from 'whoever said all news is good news was wrong' to suggestions that even perceived negative coverage at least kept the issue 'in the public eye'.<sup>52</sup> Rochon's (1990) point about selective coverage of protest apparently underlines suggestions that media constructions may play an ideological role in society (see Miliband 1969; Cohen & Taylor 1973; Habermas 1976 - and also Thompson's 1995: 7 seemingly misplaced assertion that early Frankfurt School accounts of 'the culture industry' were 'too negative').

If not direct examples of press coverage of action with little or no elaboration of the protesters' motivations and aspirations, a good deal of recent journalistic analysis of 'animal rights' in British media appears to be ideological in intent. It certainly is not difficult to find example in which 'the case for animal rights' is grossly misrepresented or interpreted in misleading ways.

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<sup>50</sup> Indeed, Gamson (1992) suggests that social movement activists are often engaged with the media reaction to their campaigns on a weekly, daily, or even on a *hourly* basis.

<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, pro-use organisations, such as the Countryside Alliance, are also involved in similar media monitoring and encouragement of members to contribute to newspaper letters pages and media 'message boards' (via media web sites). Another consequence of this constant monitoring of the mass media and the encouragement of supporters to make contact is the apparent distortion of 'public' opinion polls on contested issues such as foxhunting and 'culling' badgers.

<sup>52</sup> I have been struck by modern activist reaction to press inquiries compared to how activists responded to the press in the past (meaning 1970's & 1980's when I often acted as a 'press officer' for 'animal rights' mobilisations). Modern advocates appear to be much more cautious about press contacts than the earlier generation of campaigners. Typically, they will alert other activists of journalistic interest, accompanying such information with requests for knowledge about the 'track record' of the journalist in question. Those thought to be potentially unsympathetic or downright hostile to 'animal rights' messages are avoided or warned against. However, given the increase in media outlets, this factor alone could explain changing patterns in social movement contact with the mass media. In other words, modern advocates may be able to afford to 'pick and choose' who they talk to with no apparent loss of column inches.



Furthermore, as seen in the journalistic treatment of Barry Horne's hunker strike cited above, a great many critical evaluations of what is often called 'animal rights activism' contain blanket assertions that self-evidently, the *proper* and *most appropriate* way to approach any 'animal question' is through the philosophy and regulatory mechanisms of animal welfarism. Many commentators and journalists display an extraordinary inability or disinclination to 'break free' of conventional thinking about human-nonhuman relations. It was suggested that such an inability may be a product of the cultural dominance of animal welfarism, this not aided by the philosophical confusion within the animal protection movement. However, it was also suggested above that many examples may be found in which authors appear to actively be motivated by a desire to discredit the entire notion of 'animal rights'. A number of commentators, such as Mike Hume, Germaine Greer, Kevin Toolis, Clare Fox, Stephen Rose and Dea Birkett, none ostensibly connected or employed by pro-use mobilisations, may be cited in this regard. For example, in 1990, Germaine Greer wrote about what she called the 'fallacy of animal rights' (*Independent Magazine*, 13 Jan 1990).

Having decided that 'animal rights' is *really* about class antagonism, she seems to charge the animal movement with the apparently grave misdemeanour of *queue-jumping*. In other words, she confidently asserts that 'animal rights' thought and action inevitably places nonhuman animals' rights *above* those of women and children who, being human, must quite naturally *come first*. Animal advocacy certainly must be seen, she suggests, as at least an unwarranted *distraction* from children's and women's issues.<sup>53</sup> Pointing out that the second-wave 'animal rights' movement has invented the 'crime of speciesism', Greer

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<sup>53</sup> Here Greer reasserts her oft-repeated notion (first articulated in the BBC2 video referred to earlier in the thesis) that acceptance of 'animal rights' would eliminate the use of 'beasts of burden', leading to an increase in the incidence of women (obviously mainly in 'developing' countries) having to fetch and carry.

concludes her piece with a quite typical appeal toward the logic of conventional animal welfarism. Thus, although she identifies ‘an innate conviction to superiority’ in animal advocates, along with an allegation of their display of ‘garbled arguments’, she nevertheless accepts that ‘man [sic] has no right to harm animals’. In the characteristic move common in discussions of ‘animal rights’ views, animal welfarism yet again is inevitably suggested as the transparently appropriate paradigm by which we should consider the plight of nonhumans. Therefore, Greer accepts that ‘some of the uses we make of animals’ are ‘barbarous’ and therefore should be ‘outlawed’. However, again entirely consistent with animal welfarist thought, she defends eating animals and killing farmed ones for their fur; presumably within the welfarist understanding that general uses and exploitation of ‘animal resources’ can be organised and regulated without (or with very little) ‘unnecessary’ cruelty or suffering. As a commentator apparently committed to producing sustained attacks on ‘animal rights’ thinking, Greer made sure she took the opportunity to reiterate her critique of ‘animal rights’ during a radio discussion concerned with the events of ‘September the 11th’ in October 2001.

*Guardian* journalist Kevin Toolis makes a habit of writing about what he calls the ‘animal rights’-inspired ‘Vegan Wars’ (Toolis 1998; 2001).<sup>54</sup> Apparently taking some elements of Keith Tester’s (1992) perspective on ‘animal rights’ activists, Toolis describes animal advocates as ‘victims’ or adherents of a type of ‘fundamentalist religion’ based on the vegan diet. Even though he states that attending a British ‘animal rights’ demonstration means coming face to face with a ‘cross section’ of British society - from ‘grey-haired matrons’ to ‘black-hooded anarchists’ - he nevertheless asserts that ‘to the majority of Britons,

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<sup>54</sup> Toolis is the partner of reporter Dea Birkett who also takes a strident anti-‘animal rights’ stance. One of her articles revealed that she ‘always dreamed’ of working in an animal circus.

most of the animal rights agenda is just madness' (Toolis 2001: 7). Extrapolating from one or two interviews conducted with 'animal rights' campaigners, Toolis also maintains that the movement argues for the need for 'de-industrialisation' (1998: 18); the 'elimination' of most of humanity; 'the rejection of Western science'; and a return to some 'past Utopia' (ibid.: 21).

Rochon's (1990) suggestion that a great deal of social movement coverage may be focused on action and militancy rather than discussing or elaborating the campaigners' views is seen explicitly in Toolis' commentaries on 'animal rights' and animal activism. For example Toolis engages (1998: 16) - but extremely briefly - with Singer's non-rights thesis in the sense that he allows a single sixteen-line paragraph of discussion about pro-animal philosophy within seven pages of magazine text and pictures. He not once mentions the writing or existence of Regan or Francione, perhaps the foremost contemporary animal rights thinkers, preferring to conflate some of the activities of militant activists with general animal advocacy, and suggests that the position of one or two individuals are the generalised view of all.

At the end of his lengthy attack, he perhaps reveals a direct and personal source of his antipathy toward 'animal rights' thought and activism. It transpires that Toolis believes he was 'saved' by animal experimentation after he contracted tuberculosis in 1971 at the age of twelve (ibid.: 21). This belief has apparently led the journalist toward a severely critical assessment of 'animal rights' views, dismissing rights views outright as the ideas of 'cranks' and 'lunatics'. Since Toolis states near the end of the article, 'It is not true that animal experiments do not work', it is at least evident that he bases his critique on his understanding of his own medical history. However, not once does he acknowledge the work of scientific anti-vivisectionist experts and medical historians such as Richard Ryder (1983), Robert Sharpe (1988; 1994), Tony

Page (1997) and Hans Ruesch (1979; 1982) who extensively cite medical and academic opinion that suggests that animal experimentation is a seriously flawed and limited medical methodology.

The works of such anti-vivisection medical authorities suggest that animal experimentation is sustained more for commercial reasons than medical ones. If they are correct (and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to assess this matter) then vivisection experiments on nonhumans may *hinder* medical progress and human sufferers of diseases and injury are ill-served by them. Given his personal history, one might expect a journalist such as Toolis to be interested to genuinely explore this suggestion for its implications for general *human* health when he writes about the activities of elements of the social movement that suggests it. Besides all of these factors, Toolis also fails to address the issue of vivisection from an animal rights position which would focus on the morality of the practice rather than its methodological validity.

If an intensely personalised reason for rejecting ‘animal rights’ views may be identified, Toolis’ perspective also has connections with other themes of this thesis. For example, he reproduces the common assertion that ‘animal rights’ means ‘choosing’ between the lives of guinea pigs and the lives of human beings, while no genuine animal rights philosopher has stated that such a choice is necessary or desirable. Reflecting fellow *Guardian* journalist Polly Toynbee’s perspective (cited above) that animal activists are ‘rent-a-mob’ personalities in search of a cause in the so-called ‘postmodern condition’, Toolis suggests that, given the ‘triumphant era of capitalism’, ‘animal rights’ may be regarded as the sole radical alternative.

However, what ‘animal rights’ fundamentally represents for Toolis is ‘a terrible, terrible, childish dream’ (1998: 21). Reflecting a point made earlier in the thesis, Toolis makes it clear that this is because pro-animal attitudes appear

to be interpreted as a kind of 'denigration of humanity'. He suggests that campaigning for nonhumans may be associated with a denial of the 'glories of our own species,' incorporating (and bringing his analysis once again to a personal level) 'the daily miracles of our technologies' resulting in 'medicines that save millions, and even the lives of animals' (ibid.)<sup>55</sup>

The position adopted by Kevin Toolis is almost exactly mirrored by that of Clare Fox of the Marxist-inspired 'Institute of Ideas'. On the 7th of July, 2001, the BBC Radio 4 *Moral Maze* 'team', including Fox, discussed the notion of 'animal rights' in the light of the on-going campaign against vivisection experiments at Huntingdon Life Sciences laboratories in Cambridgeshire, England, which reportedly kills around 500 nonhumans every day. In language reflecting conventional institutionalised and internalised attitudes to human-nonhuman relations, Fox states that she thinks 'animal rights' views 'tells us a lot more about how we view humanity than animals'.

She believes that a rights view must 'denigrate our view of humanity'.<sup>56</sup> This is because, she claims, nonhuman rights intimates that 'we' humans are in a reductive sense 'no better than animals'. Therefore, any talk of a 'holocaust of rats' serves only to highlight a terribly 'low view' of humanity. On the same programme, Roger Scruton can make little sense of fundamental rights without a connection to apposite duties, therefore, for him, as for many philosophers, this simply rules out the whole notion of nonhuman rights. However, even

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<sup>55</sup> It is common to find 'animal rights' opponents emphasising that some animal experiments have been beneficial to other animals. Since this point fails to acknowledge the animal rights position on the property status of nonhuman animals (not to mention objections to exploiting one right holder to benefit another), it does not address the issue from an animal rights understanding. Again the tendency is seen that commentators approach human-nonhuman issues with anything but a rights view of the matters at hand.

<sup>56</sup> A similar line is taken in the USA by the National Institute on Medical Health (NIMH) which states that 'the [animal rights] movement's philosophy is based on a degradation of human nature' (Adams, quoted in Munro 1998). Guither (1998: 143) reports that the founder of the North American countermovement, Putting People First, Kathleen Marquardt, co-wrote a pamphlet warning of the dangers of 'animal rights fraud', entitled *Animal Scam: The Beastly Abuse of Human Rights*.

though this entire radio programme was directed toward an exploration of the notion of 'animal rights', and included a lengthy contribution from Andrew Tyler, the director of the British organisation Animal Aid, once again the discourse frequently turned to the precepts of animal welfarism in order to talk about human-nonhuman relations. For example, Scruton had no absolutely difficulty in understanding humanity's 'duty of care' toward animals. Thus, he said, using a central tenet of animal welfarism, 'due care' should be taken when 'killing animals for food'. Yet again, any notion of 'due care' toward other sentient beings does not mean that their lives cannot be systematically 'sacrificed' for human interests. However, Scruton persists - as if reading from a script, non-human animals should not be subjected to 'unnecessary suffering'; and thus human beings must behave in a 'humane' way toward them.

The apparent general inability to differentiate genuine rights arguments from animal welfare positions,<sup>57</sup> can result in some commentators on animal advocacy making outrageously inaccurate observations. As suggested, some such inaccuracies often appear to stem from a real confusion and misunderstanding of the complexities of differentiation, rather than being the product of a deliberate debunking of the 'animal rights' stance. Nevertheless, such confusion can result in a serious misrepresentation of genuine animal rights motives and ideas. For example, in a piece about animal activists who openly express 'militant' views, the leader comment in the *New Scientist* of December 12th, 1998, presumes that animal advocacy must have some intrinsic connection with

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<sup>57</sup> As noted above in comments on the hunger strike carried out by Barry Horne, it is not difficult for welfare and rights issues to become confused. Journalist John Arlidge, writing in the *Observer* of December 6th, 1998, contributes to the confusion in an article entitled: 'Animal lover ready to die to end vivisection'. Arlidge notes the animal rights credentials of Barry Horne but also recognises that the provisions in New Labour's 1997 manifesto (part of which Horne's hunger strike became ostensibly aimed at enforcing) were purely based within the purview of animal welfarism. For example, Labour's leaflet about their plans, *New Labour: New Life for Animals*, states only that: 'Labour has consistently shown itself as the only party to trust on issues of animal welfare...We will support a Royal Commission to review the effectiveness and justification of animal experimentation and to examine alternatives'.

‘loving’ nonhuman animals: ‘Those at the core [of the Animal Liberation Front] seem to be motivated as much by a hatred of society as any love for animals’. The writer seemingly cannot conceive of the reason why some activist ‘leaders’ are reported to regard pets as ‘slaves’. The conclusion is drawn that perhaps this view represents the perspective of extremists out of step with ‘appropriate’ mainstream positions which are, of course, welfarist in nature.

The leader comment further suggests that, ‘We need a “peace process” where the many people concerned about animal welfare can express their views democratically and the extremists can be seen for what they are’. Perhaps it may be taken as given that the phrase ‘seen for what they are’ does not mean: ‘not adherents of traditional animal welfarism’, and does not mean ‘animal advocates who may stress non-traditional welfare or rights views’. It seems clear that it means being regarded as ‘human-hating extremists’ who fail to adhere to any ‘normal’ orientation toward other animals: that is, being concerned with ‘loving’ them as ordinary people love their pets; being interested in their welfare-in-use as every vivisectionist and circus owner claims to be; and interested in what some of them taste like once ‘humanely’ slaughtered.

Similar confusion, although contradictory in part, is present in a *Daily Telegraph* ‘opinion column’ of December 9th, 1998, in another piece discussing activist Barry Horne’s hunger strike. Suggesting that ‘we should learn to balance human need with proper animal welfare’, the writer declares that ‘Horne has turned animal welfare into animal warfare’, which may be neat journalese but carelessly misses out on understanding the perspective of the animal advocate in question. The writer also unaccountably suggests (as Sperling [1988] does) that ‘animal rights’ is solely concerned with anti-vivisection initiatives. The author, however, points out many problems of pet keeping and treatment stating, for example, that keeping parrots in cages is “cruel”.

However, it is further asserted that such legitimate concerns are ‘not something the animal rights activists like to mention’. Why? Apparently because ‘pet lovers are their staunchest allies’.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, and quite mistakenly, the claim is made that ‘animal rights’ campaigners will not ‘launch a crusade against carnivores, who make up 93% of the population’. This wholly erroneous and grossly misleading statement would greatly surprise the international rights-based anti-factory farming organisation VIVA!, as much as the national Animal Aid mobilisation, especially since the latter organisation was founded in England in 1977, and has always taken at least a pro-vegetarian, and latterly, pro-vegan, stance against meat eating. So, what exactly is the ‘animal rights’ agenda according to the *Daily Telegraph*? ‘They just attack those “callous” scientists who are using animals in research. But animal experimentation is used in only five per cent of research projects. Even then it is guided by 20 different codes of practice and the animals are anaesthetised’.<sup>59</sup>

Clearly, such contributions may add heat but not a great deal of light to the ‘animal rights debate’ or Regan and Ryder’s ‘battle of ideas’. Those seeking a clear elaboration, and perhaps a cool assessment of animal rights claims, would simply have to look elsewhere. Indeed, future sociological research on this would be most interesting; perhaps investigating with the methodology of content analysis the extent of ‘animal rights coverage’ which may be said to contain little or no ‘animal rights content’ and comparing this to coverage which genuinely appears to attempt to report on the published ideas of authentic animal rights philosophers and activists.

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<sup>58</sup> This position is the exact opposite of that taken by some pro-use countermovement mobilisations who delight, as seen, in telling ‘pet owners’ and animal welfarists that ‘animal rights’ means ‘having your pets taken away’.

<sup>59</sup> Garner (1993: 123) suggests that 60% of animal experiments take place without anaesthetic, while activist Juliet Gellatley (2000: 87) states that ‘most’ take place without anaesthesia. Gellatley also notes concerns that animals do not receive analgesics after procedures to reduce post-operative pain.



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This section has been primarily concerned with examples of the reaction to so-called animal rights advocacy from groups and organisations that support the use of nonhuman animals as a human resource. It has also included some of the reactions to nonhuman advocacy from a number of media commentators. It is suggested that most of these reactions have been based on economic incentives, personal reasons and understandings of rights and duties. However, a common factor in each and every case is a strong ideological orientation toward orthodox animal welfarism, seen, almost 'naturally', as the most appropriate and, certainly, realistic lens by which society can, and should, view human-nonhuman relations. If orthodox animal welfarism may be seen as the dominant paradigm in terms of assessing such relations, no widely-advocated genuine rights position appears to have emerged to successfully or seriously challenge its societal influence.

The next chapter elaborates on the social psychology of the reaction to messages like those emanating from the animal movement. Various advocates of nonhuman interests claim that the general public are their principal 'target audience' (Yates 1998): the following section explores research on how the public may react to such 'providers of information'.

## Avoiding Unpleasure and Evading Knowledge.

Far more crucial than  
what we know or do not know  
is what we do not want to know.  
Eric Hoffer,  
*The Passionate State of Mind*, 1954.

It is possible to live in a twilight between  
knowing and not knowing,  
W.A. Visser't Hooft, theologian on knowledge of the Holocaust, 1973.

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On Saturday March 24, 2001, the Welsh edition of the *Liverpool Daily Post* featured a single large picture on its front page. Under the headline 'HEARTBREAK' a man is pictured standing in front of a cow. The man's hand is raised, the cow's head is raised too, as if she is trying to smell what the man holds in his hand. The smell is likely to be metallic because the man holds a primed captive bolt pistol. The gun is pointed at the head of the cow who is locked into a large red restraining device. The subtitle under the headline reads: 'The chilling moment which graphically illustrates the horrific reality of the farm outbreak'. The caption under the photograph reads: 'GRIM TRUTH: A slaughterman shoots a cow in Lamonby, Cumbria, yesterday. We apologise to readers who find this photograph distressing. After much thought, we decided to publish it to show the full effect of the foot-and-mouth crisis'.

Apart from the newspaper's masthead, two adverts for the content of other pages and an advert at the bottom of the page for mobility scooters, the picture and the words above take up the whole of the tabloid-sized front page.

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Albert Bandura (1990) has argued that 'euphemistic labelling' is commonly used to 'mask' objectionable activities. Something thoroughly 'objectionable' occurred regularly during the aforementioned British foot and mouth disease outbreak of 2001. The public saw, or at least had the opportunity to see - often several times daily - on both national and regional television and in all the nation's press and every radio news bulletin - the mass media version of the killing and destruction of animals they normally encounter only as 'meat', or 'hamburgers' or 'pork' (see Agnew 1998: 184), or perhaps as 'cute' lambs or

‘contented’ grazing cows. Ted Benton (1993: 72, and see Plous 1993) points out, most people in the Western world usually purchase meat already *com-modified, packaged* and often *renamed*.

As alluded to earlier, many people do not overtly recognise themselves as purchasers of parts of the carcasses of dead animals. Apart from the case of some fishes, care is generally taken to remove eyes and heads or other parts that would result in ‘meat’ being seen as a piece of an animal (when does a pig end and a pork chop begin? - see Singer 1983: 165-66).<sup>60</sup> However, despite, or because of these points, one question posed in this section is a relatively blunt one: why should people take active steps to know *any* of the details of the deaths of the animals they intend and wish to consume?

In fact, since even a moment’s thought on the subject might be expected to lead many individuals to make a guess that the deaths of ‘food animals’ may not be particularly pleasant to witness, regardless of how ‘regulated’ the process may be, the question is rather: *why shouldn’t people go out of their way to avoid knowing all there is to know about the animal-derived foods on their tables?* Furthermore, what is more sensible than attempting to ‘mask’ known or suspected objectionable activities by euphemistic labelling or by other means? After all, is it not commonsensically assumed that the consumer of, say, pornography will likely avoid focusing on the potential suffering or harm involved in the ‘product’ they consume, and concentrate instead on the personal pleasure that derives from the consumption? Is it not at least appreciated that such consumers are liable to put any ‘known details’ of such harm and suffering to the backs of their minds, or interpret matters in such a way that serves to reduce the harm done? Philosophical appeals that informed adult human beings should

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<sup>60</sup> Keith Thomas (1983) notes a move away from presenting meat on the table complete with heads and in a similar form as when a living animal. Modern meat products are very carefully packaged, using colouring, gas

regard themselves and act as reflexive moral agents are apparently not sufficiently powerful to prevent the purchasing and mass consumption of many products that cause harm. Complex social forces and under-standings are in play here.

In relation to meat consumption, Singer (1983) notes that people, perhaps quite reasonably, do not want to know the *details* about the lives and deaths of the animals they are prepared to eat: for one thing, they do not want to spoil their dinner. After all, *why should anyone want to spoil their dinner?* Adams (1990) begins *The Sexual Politics of Meat* with a dedication: 'In memory of 31.1 billion each year, 85.2 million each day, 3.5 million each hour, 59,170 each minute'. Apart from perhaps placing '9-11' into something of a controversial context, these huge figures might easily spoil someone's dinner, since the figures refer to the deaths of 'food animals' (current numbers require that at least another 12 billion should be added to the total amount cited by Adams, and that figure should be doubled if fishes and shellfishes are to be included). Why would anyone willingly put themselves 'in the way' of such statistics? Why would any meat eater *know* these things? Vegan and vegetarian animal advocates know more of these numbers than meat eaters know: and ironically the former are also the ones who have seen all the videos showing commercial animal slaughter.

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and chemicals to increase 'attractiveness', all of which means that the finished product on the shelf seems to bear no relation to the animals it came from (see Walsh 1986; Gold 1988, chap three: 'Meat & Drugs').

You never know  
You never know who's for lunch today.

Who's for Lunch Today?  
Albert Hammond, 1973,  
Mums Records.

Toward the end of 2001, there was a lengthy discussion on a nonhuman advocacy email network about issues arising from the annual North American 'Thanksgiving' celebration. A non-meat eater had written in saying she was negotiating with family members about how the day should go; particularly, what was to be done about the traditional 'Thanksgiving turkey'. Not wanting to spoil the occasion for others, the animal advocate was considering allowing her mother to have her way and visit brandishing a specially pre-cooked turkey. Her email was an apparent reflection of her anxiety about compromising her principles; but it also seemed to reveal her recognition, and even partial acceptance, of the cultural importance of a turkey dinner on this particular social occasion.

There is the suggestion that 'animal rights' views in this case had the clear potential to disrupt and upset a hitherto not-especially-thought-about aspect of Thanksgiving: that is, the plight of the millions of turkeys killed for it. This appears to be a case in which some awareness truly had the ability to 'spoil' a dinner: and an awareness of the emailer's views had made her relatives, perhaps for the first time, think about turkeys at Thanksgiving, rather than simply think about Thanksgiving Turkey. When Groves (1995) investigated the role of 'emotion' in social movement activity about human-nonhuman relations, he found a similar situation. He found that animal activists were often accused of 'spoiling' happy celebrations and occasions, and it is clear that this generally means that the philosophy of 'animal rights' had made people directly *think*

about certain aspects of their relations with other animals (ibid: 441). For example, one activist told Groves that friends, aware of his and his wife's position on human-nonhuman relations, stated before a meal: 'We're not going to say anything about food in front of our kids'. If a child comes up and mentions something about meat, the activist says of his friends: 'They'll all look at us like 'don't start him thinking!'' (ibid.)

Groves also recounts how a North American female activist had caused her mother to be very angry when she did talk about the plight of turkeys during Thanksgiving. Her mother's rage was at least partly prompted by the presence of the activist's aunt and the potential of a spoilt meal following the campaigner's comments. The activist states that she was told by her mother: "This is supposed to be a happy occasion. It's Thanksgiving. You're supposed to be thankful'. I said 'I am thankful. I'm thankful I'm not a turkey!'"

Having seen Degrazia's (1996) suggestion that negating early socialised lessons may take a certain independence of mind, it is further appreciated sociologically that any development of such independence of thinking is subject to, mediated, and controlled by forces of social interactions conditioned by social understandings surrounding any given issue. Sociologists Berger & Berger provide an interesting perspective on this sort of social experience as part of their 'biographical approach' to sociology. For example, they state that, "society is our experience with other people around us" (Berger & Berger 1976: 13) and that means that other people constantly mediate and modify human understanding of the social world, systematically imposing and reinforcing many of the norms and values of prevailing society.

There may have been sufficient media coverage, especially in recent years, of various views about human-nonhuman relations for most people to know that continual claims are made about animal agricultural practices. There-

fore, even some of the more radical positions have recently had at least the potential to make up part of the social understanding of such relations.<sup>61</sup> However, there is absolutely no reason, apart from appeals for the evolution of ethical thinking, to suggest to people that they must actively engage with, or would want to evaluate, any such potentially disruptive claims. It may be further understood - and it seems essential that animal advocates fully understand this point - that even a vague awareness of claims about the human treatment of other animals is likely to contribute to the belief, and the suspicion, that even a superficial enquiry about the ins and outs of animal farming (or animal experimentation or any other human usage of animals) is at least likely to be *psychically painful* as well as socially disruptive.

There is growing evidence, to be reviewed in the following pages, that it is extremely common for the vast majority of people to attempt, again ostensibly quite reasonably, to avoid such pain; perhaps especially if new claims may disturb long-held views about the appropriate treatment of other animals by humans. Much of the following section is based on Stanley Cohen's (2001) intensely disturbing book, *States of Denial: knowing about atrocities and suffering*, and the work of Kevin Robins (1994). However, initially, an account of a social phenomenon Tester (1997: 32) calls humanity's 'learning curve of indifference' is offered. Tester suggests that modern 'knowledge denial' can be understood, at least in part, as the result of developments in information technology and the immediacy of 'knowing while not knowing'.

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<sup>61</sup> There is little doubt, however, that such coverage (measured in column inches or TV time) will be much less than the amount of 'pro-meat' advertising, straightforwardly in advertisements and in cookery programmes.

Humanity's 'Learning Curve of Indifference',  
or Knowing While Not Knowing.

Tester notes that, regardless of where and when they take place, it is now virtually impossible not to be almost instantaneously aware of the occurrence of horror and suffering, and the minute details of many of the modern world's wars and calamities. At least it is true to say that the technology exists which makes this awareness possible on an increasingly global scale.<sup>62</sup> Of course, sociologists take a great interest in social change and many have been keen to understand the societal effects of new developments in communications technology. Numerous studies have focused on technological change and the resulting transformations in work patterns and political attitudes (Goldthorpe, *et al*, 1968; 1969; Blauner 1972; Gallie 1988), while other sociologists have attempted to place such change on a continuum between conceptualisations of technological and social determinism (Clark, *et al*, 1988; Zuboff 1988; Grint 1991; Kling 1991).

Tester (1997: 22) partly concentrates on the moral implications of technological developments. He cites the existential experience of Max Weber's brother, Alfred, who was acutely discomforted when (in 1947), he found wars that had previously taken, say, six months to be reported were now immediately broadcast on his new radio: 'served up to us piping hot', as he put it. Modern warfare, Weber continued, seemed to be 'going on in the same town, almost in the same room' (cited in *ibid.*) Although such experiences are almost routine for twenty-first century citizens, Alfred Weber was rather shaken up by this 'conquest of space' and time. For him, the world had dramatically become



much smaller. It is one thing to know of far away countries; it is quite another to suddenly become emotionally and morally involved in their day-to-day dealings. For Weber, the conquest of space and time meant that individuals could hardly be alone again.

The consequence of this is twofold, he thought. On the one hand, an individual becomes transformed into a knowledgeable 'citizen of the world' but, on the other, and more terribly, knowledge can result in individuals suffering from what Tester characterises as 'a surfeit of consciousness about the world' (ibid.: 23). Thus, Weber is far from welcoming his new form of knowledge. On the contrary, he would *feel* far more comfortable remaining ignorant of the (Turkish) war in question. Weber suffers personally due to what Giddens calls the '*intrusion of distant events into everyday consciousness*' (Giddens 1991: 27, emphasis in original). Tester, following the analysis of the mass media provided by both Giddens (1991; 1994) and Roger Silverstone (1994), argues that it is possible to view Weber's experience as common to many, indeed most, individuals. Anthony Giddens' view, as developed by Silverstone, places Weber as a subject of 'late modernity', experiencing a process of 'detraditionalisation'; listening to news on his radio, and suffering from ontological insecurity. Feeling the sensation of 'disembeddedness' due to new knowledge, Weber is trying desperately to make sense of it all.

However, Tester is keen to suggest that Weber is not 'one of us' at all (1997: 26). Acknowledging the problems in lumping whole groups of people into one category, Tester nevertheless argues that 'we' are currently further down the 'learning curve of indifference' to the horrors of the world than Weber was in the 1940's. As a result, we generally do not respond to knowledge of

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<sup>62</sup> Given this statement, it is incumbent to acknowledge the sociological research that points out the reality that the information which is potentially available is ultimately controlled by media gatekeepers, regardless of technological developments (e.g., see Elliot 1972).

wars and horrors in the manner that Alfred Weber did. Of course, there are spectacular exceptions to this, even in modern times, and now the 'Events of September 11th' stands as the most immediate example. It is noteworthy that the attacks on the USA were shocking - but the fact that people could witness it live on global television networks was not. However, '9-11' cannot be seen as anything other than an extraordinary event, and Tester is claiming that Weber's reaction to 'everyday' knowledge is remarkably different to most twenty-first century humans (ibid.) For, Weber was greatly moved by immediate knowledge - and particularly by the immediacy of the information he had acquired. The immediacy and startling *newness* of the medium by which that knowledge came to him meant that Weber felt he must try to make some sense of it. What was he now to think of himself? Of others? Of relationships?, and perhaps of new responsibilities? (ibid.: 27). Furthermore, cast into the role of a consumer of immediate knowledge perhaps better *not* known, at least not contemporaneously with events, Tester thinks Weber was left 'struggling to come to terms with how he can possibly bear to know so much' (ibid.)

Thus, in the contemporary world of increasing and immediate access to a vast amount of 'information', Tester suggests that a strategy of 'moral indifference' has become an essential *coping mechanism* to enable individuals to deal with their new and rapidly increasing store of potentially painful and disturbing knowledge about the world. Therefore, what makes 'us' different from Alfred Weber is that we - unlike him - know exactly what to do with potentially painful knowledge: *absolutely nothing* (ibid.)

Of course, the point Tester makes here would absolutely outrage many of those people who are campaigning daily to close down vivisection laboratories and/or stop road developments, and perhaps even those who managed to plunge their hands into their pockets during events such as Live Aid and 'Red Nose

Day', precisely because it is 'knowledge' relating to these issues and events which they claim spurred them to act. The point would also likely get a cool response from those participants in the current wave of 'anti-capitalist' demonstrations who follow 'world leaders' around the globe to make their protests, or those demonstrating to stop the current 'war on terrorism'. However, Tester could conceivably reply (as pessimistic Frankfurt School-inspired critical theorists may) with the suggestion that the overall numbers of people who attend such protests and demonstrations, drawn as they often are from several countries, are relatively very small.

In many - perhaps most - sociological accounts, the tension of generalising from the particular are evident. It is unlikely that any so-called meta-narrative captures the experience of all, as no individual case can ever be seen as precisely the same as others. Tester seeks to generalise about *humanity's* indifference, contrasting that with Weber's response as an individual, and presumable with many currently engaged in social movement activism; and wisely he acknowledges the difficulties involved. However, he suggests that the generalised modern 'we' of today largely do not share Weber's emotional response to new knowledge. For 'we' are used to living in a world 'stimulated by the mediated surfeit of consciousness' (ibid.: 26). If Weber's reaction can be regarded as the result of hearing the piping-hot details of war and human suffering, Tester argues that modern responses to similar details are distinctly blasé and even akin to *boredom*. Any moral imperative incorporated into what is heard within systems of 'global, 24-hour knowledge' may now be entirely negated by notions of 'compassion fatigue'. Unlike Weber, therefore, 'we' have 'heard it all before'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Tester's view does not provide a great deal of encouragement for 'animal rights' activists engaged in 'public education', especially in the light of Jasper & Poulsen's (1995) suggestion that recruitment often relies on

### Overcoming Animal Pity.

Bauman focuses on society-wide sentiments when he investigates the social construction of 'moral distance', and the availability of societal 'moral sleeping pills' (Bauman 1989: 26). He states that moral distance may be available for many people at different levels of involvement and awareness of harm-causing issues.

Against the proposition that human beings are 'naturally aggressive' and violent animals (see Yates 1962; Lorenz 1977; Charny 1982), Bauman starts with the suggestion that human individuals have a strong and innate aversion to seeing the suffering of others. Attempts to 'overcome' these innate feelings require an efficient, powerful, and sustained program of socialisation. Hannah Arendt (cited in Bauman 1989: 19-20), argues that humanity has a natural and almost instinctive 'animal pity' by which 'all normal men are affected in the presence of physical suffering'. Philosopher Clark (1984: 42) says this sentiment of basic human solidarity can be also found in the work of Schopenhauer and Ruland, the latter's 1936 book being called, *Foundations of Morality*. However, as briefly outlined below, Bauman shows throughout his forceful sociological treatment of the Nazi Holocaust that effectively-utilised social forces and processes have the ability to shape, influence and eventually *overcome* this 'naturally-present' pity.

Taking such ideas, and following Levinas' *Ethics and Infinity*, Bauman explores - and reverses - a traditional sociological orthodoxy which suggests that society itself is a 'morality-producing factory'. In contrast, he suggests,

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'morally shocking' potential advocates for nonhuman animals with literature rather than, say, recruiting them through contact with social networks.

*'Morality is not a product of society. Morality is something society manipulates - exploits, re-directs, jams'* (Bauman 1989: 183, emphasis in the original).

Exploring the notion of 'overcoming animal pity', Bauman (ibid.: 24) notes that it involves socially producing conduct 'contrary to innate moral inhibitions'. In other words, against everything that this fundamental pity implies in relation to attitudes and behaviour, people can become the murderers of others in certain social circumstances. However, there are other factors involved, including the connivance of those Bauman calls 'conscious collaborators in the murdering process'. Earlier sections of the present thesis sought to demonstrate that socially constructed stories, not least that 'enemies are other', and especially that 'enemies are animals', can produce a sufficiency of moral distance that, in turn, enables the serious harm or death of chosen victims. If social mechanisms exist to allow people to involve themselves in harm, Bauman states that other mechanisms exist to deliberately distance the majority from *knowledgeable* involvement. For this large group, they are effectively freed by this process from having to make difficult moral choices and freed from the need to directly 'stifle' animal pity for victims of harm: morally, they sleep or doze.

Bauman notes that other writers, such as Hilberg, have argued that the vast majority play no direct role in the holocausts conducted in their name. Furthermore, even those who 'administer death' can be kept at some distance from the moral, physical and psychic discomfort of 'direct' knowledge. Thus, even the bureaucrats of the Nazi holocaust, apparently innocently, busied themselves composing memoranda, talking on the telephone and attended conferences. All this rather than being involved in firing rifles at Jewish children or pouring gas into gas chambers.

Bauman's suggestion is that even were such individuals to make all the difficult and necessary connections between what *they* did and the existence of an organised genocide, such knowledge would remain (deliberately) 'in the remote recesses of their minds' (ibid.) Moreover, when connections between actions and outcomes are difficult to spot, who is going to criticise those who engage in a little 'moral blindness'? After all, 'Little moral opprobrium was attached to the natural human proclivity to avoid worrying more than necessity required' (ibid.) Who is going to examine 'the whole length of the causal chain up to its furthest links'? In sum, Bauman forcefully argues that societies can be other than morality-producing. Rather, social systems have the ability to be efficient manufacturers of those seemingly vital *moral sleeping pills*, with equally powerful social mechanisms for the production of 'moral distance', 'moral invisibility' and 'moral blindness'.

### In a State of Denial.

It is likely that Stanley Cohen's *States of Denial* (2001) will become essential reading for anyone wanting to know about the social psychology of knowledge evasion, issue denial, forms of moral blindness, or the social manufacture of the 'moral sleeping pills' referred to above. Although Cohen presents a great deal of psychological and sociological evidence about many various forms of denial, he wisely comments that 'this is neither a fixed psychological 'mechanism' nor a universal social process' (ibid.: 3). However, forms of denial have been extensively researched by cognitive psychologists who 'use the language of information processing, monitoring, selective perception, filtering and attention

span to understand how we notice and simultaneously don't notice' (ibid.: 6).

There are also theories based on a concept known as 'blindsight' which suggests that parts of the human mind can 'not know' what is known in other parts. Cohen is keen not to lose the wider picture about denial, noting, for example, that, although data suggests that family members can become engaged in 'vital lies' about a range of abuse issues, it should also be recognised that reliance of forms of denial effect more than just individuals and families: 'Government bureaucracies, political parties, professional associations, religions, armies and police have their own forms of cover-up and lying' (ibid.) Current political events in Britain and the United States in relation to the fallout after the 'successful' war in Iraq may have served to highlight the validity of these words.

### Accounts, Justifications and Excuses.

It is when Cohen turns to the sociology of denial that his work is most directly relevant to the present work. That said, when it comes to understanding forms of denial, psychological and sociological factors must be interwoven for the fullest picture to be drawn. In a chapter entitled 'Denial at work: mechanisms and rhetorical devices', Cohen (ibid.: 51- 75) gives a comprehensive account of sociological denial theory; ranging from C. Wright Mills' observation in the 1940's that motives cannot merely be regarded as 'mysterious internal states' that ignore social situations, to 1990's feminist analysis of abusive situations, and other investigations of 'bystander' politics.

Cohen (ibid.: 58) points out that denial operates before and after the fact (and see Sykes & Matza [1957] on this), so some verbal motivational statements become guides to future behaviour. Again, it would represent a serious error to regard any 'internal soliloquies' as entirely private matters: 'On the contrary: accounts are learnt by *ordinary cultural transmission*, and are drawn from a well-established, collectively available pool' (ibid.: 59, my emphasis). Moreover, 'an account is adopted because of its public acceptability', which seems to support sub-cultural notions that alternative - that is, generally unacceptable - accounts may be adopted for 'shock value'. Cohen says that it is socialisation processes that 'teaches us which motives are acceptable for which actions' (ibid.) As children, individuals learn that 'accounts are needed', and are frequently 'required', to explain behaviour. Commonsensically, it is those accounts that are likely to be accepted that are the least problematic. Cohen follows Mills in noting that different audiences may require different accounts, yet this, 'far from undermining the theory, confirms the radically sociological character of motivation' (ibid.) Some accounts can be said to be in the form of justifications, others can be regarded as excuses. Drawing on the work of Scott and Lyman and Sykes and Matza from the 1950's and 1960's, Cohen notes that:

Justifications are 'accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it', whereas excuses are 'accounts in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong or inappropriate, but denies full responsibility' (ibid.)

Therefore:

A soldier kills, but denies that this is immoral: those he killed were enemies who deserved their fate. He is *justifying* his action. Another soldier admits the immorality



of his killing, but denies full volition for his action: this was a case of involuntary obedience to orders. He is *excusing* his action (ibid.: emphasis in the original).

Cohen's in-depth exploration of forms of denial, mechanisms of rationalisation, vocabulary of motivations, and justifications and excuses, means that it is apparently clear beyond much doubt that 'turning a blind eye' does not have to mean 'not looking'. Rather, it is more about *not registering* or *actively avoiding* what has been seen or what is known. Denial is often about 'deflecting', 'redirecting', 'turning aside', 'dodging', and 'escaping' from what is essentially 'known knowledge'.

It would not be surprising to discover that the grim details of human harm contained in *States of Denial* could potentially spoil someone's dinner, although it is interesting that Cohen openly admits that he himself is 'in total denial' about animal rights issues (ibid.: 289). He states that he is in denial about environmental issues as well, which is a little ironic in that environmentalists such as George Marshall (2001) have begun to use *States of Denial* as a substantive source in accounts of the psychology of denial about issues such as climate change and global warming.

Cohen's thesis is that denial can be common, and indeed a *normal* state of affairs, and he provides an account of his own denial about these two issues. Moreover, and this is something making Cohen's position even more interesting and particularly relevant to this thesis, he admits that it is *not* the case that he cannot see the coherence of the arguments presented by environmentalists and animal advocates. In fact he reports that he 'cannot find strong rational arguments against either set of claims' (2001: 289). Yet, emotionally, he remains largely unmoved and 'particularly oblivious' about animal issues. For example, while accepting that animal experimentation and animal agriculture may involve

the treatment of other animals that can be difficult to defend, he resorts to putting his 'filters' on. He therefore tells himself that some issues are not really anything to do with him; that there are 'worse problems' in a suffering world; that 'there are plenty of other people looking after this' (ibid.) In fact, he employs many of the rationalisations and techniques of neutralisation that constitute the substance of his own book. Finally, and animal activists will especially recognise this stratagem, he relies on attack as a form of defence, stating: 'What do you mean, I'm in denial every time I eat a hamburger?' (ibid.)

Cohen suggests that there is what he calls a 'meta-rule' in operation here, involving all the elements of his thesis, and many seen in Bauman's work on the sociology of morality. This 'meta-rule' is obviously quite speciesist, but it is a rule that also seriously threatens the well-being of any human 'stranger'.

Can it be any surprise to discover that the meta-rule states that 'own people' should always come first? Can it be a shock that the meta-rule suggests that 'extensions' of moral concern beyond families, friends and our 'intimate circle' are uncertain? Humanity draws a moral line; establishes an ethical threshold and, on a pessimistic note for all social movement activists, 'we cannot be confident that more information (or more dreadful information?) will change the threshold' (ibid., brackets in original). Cohen suggests that the problem may not be the absolute lack of concern, suggesting that people tend to think that *human* suffering is not normal or tolerable; the difficulty may be a 'gap' between concern and action; a gap that regrettably does not show great signs of closing.

Searching for some understanding of the lack of action against deliberately caused human suffering within Western democracies, Cohen notes that many individuals may indicate their moral concern (their 'moral investment') by supporting a *portfolio* of social movements, or events such as Live Aid; yet,

in the case of Britain, future prospects for action may be 'unpromising' given that 'new sectors of the population are born-again free-market individualists and chronically infected by the selfishness of the Thatcher years' (ibid.) People of 'the Left' have a range of new social movements which have effectively 'fragmented' concern, he claims, and they are engaged in a trend that encourages competition 'about which group has suffered the most' (ibid.: 290). Cohen does attempt to be optimistic, or at least he says that a 'more hopeful' narrative of the recent 'evolution of a more universal, compassionate and inclusive consciousness' is possible (ibid.) This latter point may tend to resonate with activists 'known' and 'met' on email networks. Many, just like Henry Salt and many others before them, insist on keeping the interwoven nature of oppression at the front of their minds.

Returning to knowledge denial, Kevin Robins' (1994) analysis significantly adds to the themes developed here by similarly examining the interplay between individual psychology and social factors. Robins notes that recent work in media and culture studies have identified a 'postmodern' 'active audience' who consume products in ways that seemingly 'empowers' them. This relatively new view of media consumption - the notion of *the consumer self* - is seen in opposition to the 1960's and 1970's positions outlined by critical theorists such as Stuart Ewen and Herbert Marcuse who 'saw consumerism as a 'Corrupting Other''. Robins cites Alan Tomlinson's (1990) acidic comment on this 'older generation' of theorists, whose position Tomlinson characterises as 'elitist', 'sad' and even 'menopausal'.

However, if it is really the case that modern consumer culture should be regarded as 'fun', 'exciting', 'novel', 'convenient' and a 'marvellously subversive space' then, Robins asks, what happens when people consume 'media products' depicting, for example, the Bosnian war? In other words, what does

the putative 'empowered' and fun-oriented 'active audience' make of something that 'anguish, despair or compassion might be more appropriate responses?' (Robins, 1994: 452).

### Avoiding 'Unpleasure'.

Robins' analysis appears to provide an interesting additional psychological and social psychological component to Tester's and Bauman's sociology. Bauman (1989) himself introduces this dimension through the work of the controversial social psychological experimentalist, Stanley Milgram (see Milgram 1965; 1974). However, Robins' account begins with Freud's notion that human beings are purposely and deliberately involved in carefully avoiding the experience of 'unpleasure'. After all, human beings have historically been quite sensibly interested in self-protection. This protection has been achieved throughout the ages with the use of physical measures, but often what is equally important is psychic protection from fear and anxiety and protection *from* knowledge. On the physical level, Canetti (1973: 266-7) acknowledges the 'care' and 'cunning' human beings have historically employed to protect their 'naked and vulnerable' bodies. They 'fend off' the things that they perceived to be harmful. They invented shields and armour, and built 'walls and whole fortresses', in order to try to feel invulnerable.

Robins claims that defensive cultural barriers can also be constructed in which 'forms of cultural organisation and expression have been mobilised to sustain the sense of invulnerable existence' (1994: 454). When the going gets tough, it is not so much that humanity gets going; rather humans have a tenden-

cy to block out or hide from what they believe may be harmful, including knowledge of pain, death and that staggeringly elusive thing, 'reality'. Robins cites Don DeLillo's 1985 novel, *White Noise*, in which the author notes that 'reality' is something humans often try to get away from: and when it comes to pain and death, we think these are unnatural: 'We can't bear these things as they are'. Humans can also 'know too much', Delillo suggests using Freudian language, 'So we resort to repression, compromise and disguise' (quoted in *ibid*). Humans do this in order to be able to 'survive in the universe'. Delillo argues that repression, compromise and disguise make up part of 'the natural language of the species' (*ibid.*) Indeed, Freud (1972) - who uses the term 'repression' interchangeably with 'defence' (Madison 1961: 15) - does state that the human need to avoid unpleasure may be regarded as even more important than the want of obtaining pleasure. Therefore, with regard to what they might come to 'know', human beings, just like Stan Cohen, are likely to employ essential and apparently effective 'knowledge filters' to help to screen out painful realities.<sup>64</sup> An alternative to this strategy, Freud suggests, is to attempt to transform reality with a substitute version. These strategies are able to diminish the impact of painful knowledge, as individuals find adequate methods of *containing* and *controlling* the 'pain of reality' (Freud, 1972: 15). A significant way of doing just this, recalling Bauman's thesis, involves *distancing*: keeping what is perceived as 'suffering' at a distance, or perhaps placing illusion before 'reality'. Thus, human beings appear able to re-create the world, and 'recast' unbearable features as *something else*, thereby able to essentially 'remould reality'. Freud further argues that this process can apply to both the individual or social collectives.

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<sup>64</sup> Freud himself has been accused of screening out painful realities, such as his alleged knowledge of the sexual abuse of children (Rush 1996).

Robins, however, feels he is still left with something of a puzzle. After all, apparently 'post-modern' consuming is *not* based on hiding away from cultural products - or based on the requirement to block them out. On the contrary, go-getting contemporary consumerism is commonly regarded as 'liberating', 'self-affirming' and 'fun': even '*therapeutic*' (perhaps it is just as well that Marcuse died when he did: at least he heard little of this stuff). However, like Tester, Robins says (of television consumption), that there is little doubt that watching T.V. 'in our culture is to be exposed to violence, suffering and death' (Robins, 1994: 457; compare this with Ignatieff's [1998] optimistic account of the potential of television to increase the moral imagination). The conundrum for Robins involves working out what motivates consumption of, say, the 'pain of war' - when this particular consuming does not, on the face of it, appear to be 'liberating' or 'fun', while it does not initially seem to involve hiding away from the existence of painful knowledge. Noting that modern society is actually rather keen to sequester 'the real experience of death', he questions the motivations (and the effects of the medium) of this consumption and wants to know what 'uses' or 'gratifications' can the active audience gain from this watching. He cites Slavenka Drakulic's disturbing account of death in Sarajevo (Drakulic 1993), to illustrate that, if humans want to consume the pain of war, they can apparently 'see it all': the mother who has lost a child, the child's body wrapped up in a sheet. Yet, apparently this is not enough: the camera rolls on, and the sheet is lifted for a full-colour, screen-filling, 'close-up of death'. Also easily seen are pictures of beheaded human corpses - food for pigs and dogs - or skeletons, or children with no legs, perhaps sniper-killed babies, and a 12-year-old describing being raped.

Much can be said at this point, of course. For example, the number of 'active consumers' whose 'activity' would be to reach for the 'off' switch is not

at all clear. Whatever their number, perhaps it is just as likely that they never switched on, say, a 'serious documentary' in the first place. Again, why should they? There is *bound* to be a whole series of 'soaps' or 'postmodern', 'ironic' (read sexist) comedies on another television channel. If not, the video acts as a safe standby.

Robins notes that it has been suggested that people have watched war to genuinely gain knowledge to drive their active concern (Debray 1992, cited in Robins 1994: 460). This is the way Keith Tester characterises Giddens' and Silverstone's perspectives on the experience of media consumption (1997: 28). Alternatively, it has been suggested that watching war is an example of 'living through the deaths of others' (Bauman 1992: 34), or perhaps an example of being glad that *someone else* has died (Canetti 1973: 265). In these senses, perhaps this 'consumption' can be seen to have elements of therapeutic value after all.

### Evading Knowledge.

Regardless of whether these views adequately supply information about 'what's going on', Robins notes (1994: 458) that those who do willingly engage with this violent war material appear *not* be overly damaged by it. Perhaps surprisingly, audiences appear 'relatively unscathed' by their television wars and their encounters with screen violence, he says. Robins argues that this is something that still needs further explanation:

If it is difficult to fully understand why viewers choose exposure to pain and dying, perhaps we can say a little more about how, having once exposed themselves, they are able to escape the emotional and moral consequences of seeing and knowing (ibid.)

He says there is a need to 'reorientate' theory in relation to commonsensical view (and the view advanced by Giddens and Silverstone) of the rationalistic nature and motivations of information gathering. For example, 'We take it for granted the desire to know', Robins asserts. However, 'We generally do not take account of, or even recognise the existence of, the equally strong desire to *not* know, to *evade* knowledge'.

Human beings are thus sometimes in a situation in which they seemingly have to watch in order to know that *this* is the particular knowledge that they *do not want to know*. 'In this context, consumption activity may be driven by the desire to create defensive barriers and to avoid or minimise anxiety. Such resistance will serve to screen out the reality of what is seen and known' (ibid.: 466). Robins takes care to note at this point that he is not describing purely a phenomenon of individual psychopathology, 'but rather a collective experience which is institutionalised as the social norm'. An informed critical theoretical mind would perhaps also inquire as to *who* benefits from this social norm.

Robins simply argues for a theoretical level that moves beyond 'the too simple choice between 'passive' or 'active' notions of consumers and viewers' toward an analytical complexity that understands the hedonistic ideas of 'consumption freedom' within the constraints of social and historical structures (ibid.: 465-6). It may be taken from Robins' analysis that even the open display of 'knowledge consumption' does not necessarily mean that knowledge is actually 'consumed'.



Moreover, while understanding the desire - and the apparent practical benefits - of evading knowledge, it is something else to recognise that there may also be a perceived *hopelessness* of knowing. In this regard Robins states that, 'to know some awful truth without the possibility of changing it can lead to utter despair' (ibid.: 459). In her Bosnian research, for example, Drakulic notes that watching the war in all its macabre details only seems to make sense *if*, by watching, 'something can change for the better'. If the possibility of change is absent, then surely there is something obscene about the knowing? However, reintroducing the practicalities of knowledge evasion, there is an alternative interpretation to consider. Suppose that it seems that 'changes for the better' may realistically come about from gained knowledge but then, bringing about this change would necessarily involve some important lifestyle or political change? If this were the case, Robins suggests, such a change may appear to be very painful for individuals or for groups. For example, the BBC 2's *Newsnight* programme reported (17/4/2001) that the global market in chocolate was intrinsically linked with modern child slavery. Presenter, 'hard man' Jeremy Paxman suggested to a representative of chocolate manufacturers and retailers that they could, and indeed should, take action to break this link, with a nod toward the chocolate-buying public that *they* too were implicated as the consumers of unethically-produced goods. For determined 'chocoholics', then, knowledge evasion may definitely be called for in relation to this matter, perhaps requiring the formation of 'defensive organisations' designed to *resist* and *refuse* the knowledge that their ostensibly innocent enjoyment of a chocolate bar can result in serious human harm. However, as Bauman suggests (1993: 127, and see Varcoe and Kilminster 1996: 238-39), moral responsibility is subject to a high degree of ambivalence and 'floatation'. Thus, how can an individual work out what is morally right when she is just one in a whole chain of people

involved in any human enterprise? The actually chocolate bar held in the hand of the chocolate lover is hardly inscribed with suffering: how is she to know if the reports of child slavery are true? Out of date? Grossly exaggerated? In any case, who says her preferred bar is implicated? *Why oh why* should she even begin to try to find out?

Moreover, what point is there in even attempting to work out morally correct conduct when we know in the ‘vanity of human efforts’ that whatever is done by one counts for little in the overall scheme of things. Even if one person decides to ethically ‘opt out’ (if she can work out what that actually entails), she knows full well that ‘another person would promptly fill the gap’ (ibid.: 19). There is surely some moral relief and a deal of certainty in a belief that ‘somebody else’ will do whatever another has decided not to: in such a complex and unsure situation, why make such a decision? When knowledge may be evaded, or its ‘disruptive possibilities’ may be *contained*, Robins argues that, ‘the known may be withheld from the process of thinking; it may exist as the ‘un-thought known’ (Robins 1994: 459). He also notes that Bion (1963) has suggested that humans can do other things with thoughts than *think* them!

### Nonhuman Animals.

The intention at this point of the thesis is to fairly briefly outline the perspectives of one or two writers who have attempted to shift analyses, such as those above, to the experiential situation of billions of nonhuman animals and the consumers of their ‘products’. This is something some humanistic positions (such as that of Clare Fox) may regard as inappropriate, and more likely down-

right insulting. This chapter began with Tester and Bauman: John Robbins' (1987) position, which essentially advocates an animal-free diet, contains some interesting parallels to their analyses. Robbins' work is about the harm caused by the human consumption of the flesh of other animals and products such as the milk of cows (calf food) and the eggs of chickens. In a section concerned with 'knowledge denial' and the effects of advertising campaigns, Robbins starts with the concentration camp experience of German pacifist Edgar Kupfer whose secret *Dachau Diaries*, the writing of which could have cost him his life, are now preserved in a special collection in the library of the University of Chicago (Robbins 1987: 122-3).

Kupfer was apparently sent to Dachau because he would not fight. He was also appalled that his fellow Germans stood by and silently accepted the genocide which was happening all around. However, the situation was not quite so stark as it sounds put this way. For it was not the case that the majority of German people knew every 'precise detail' of the Holocaust. While Bauman (1989) describes the careful and purposeful steps taken by the Nazis to prevent such full public awareness, Robbins nevertheless maintains that 'most of them, it must be admitted, preferred not to know' (1987: 124) suggesting that, for many, the activities of the Nazis became an 'unknown known'.

Therefore, often voices such as Kupfer's, who had risked so much to record his experiences on scraps of paper, were not as much silenced as simply not listened to. Robbins describes 'a web of knowledge repression' that can permeate such times. As seen above, however, this is an understandable and even entirely sensible situation designed to serve 'a collective determination to avoid the immense pain that would have come from really seeing what was happening' (ibid.) In language similar to Bauman's, Robbins describes a 'psychic numbing', and a 'narrowed awareness' which the majority embraced:

While there were always some people who resisted, who did what they could to save the lives of those hunted by the Nazis, often risking their own lives in so doing, most others tried to ignore the horrors, tried to keep a stiff upper lip and pretend nothing amiss was happening. Though it was hard to avoid knowing at least part of the horrid truth, they found ways of blocking the impact. They busied themselves with other matters, conjuring up rationalisations, narrowing their awareness, and looking the other way (ibid.)

Of course Robbins' intention is to draw parallels with what he calls the 'process of denial' in Germany in W.W.II and apply it to the present North American consciousness concerning health and environmental issues and relate it all to attitudes about nonhumans used in agriculture. He particularly focuses on the experience of Edgar Kupfer because Kupfer himself explicitly connected his own plight with that of other animals. Indeed, one of Kupfer's essays is entitled, 'Animals, My Brethren', which was written in part in a hospital barracks in Dachau. Perhaps like Alfred Weber, Kupfer is all for engagement rather than denial - even if it may be painful. Given his intent, it is therefore not surprising that Robbins highlights Kupfer's case and tries to use it against knowledge denial he claims is 'once again rampant' (Robbins 1987: 124). He says human beings are all aware on some level that our world is in peril. Their life-support system, many people argue, is at the point of collapse. However, because it often seems too painful to think about these things: responses to this knowledge may often be to 'block it out' (ibid.) Pain hurts, deeply, and many are frightened. However, pleads Robbins, do *not* deny it, do *not* disconnect, do *not* filter out: do *not* isolate oneself from that which cries out for response. Such a plea can be found in just about every pro-animal advocacy book since Singer's *Animal Liberation* first published in 1975. Indeed, it is possible to

trace such pleading as far back as Henry Shakespear Salt,<sup>65</sup> or to Rachel Carson (1963) and Ruth Harrison (1964). All contain similar calls to action. Robbins (1987: 125) asks his audience to 'move beyond denial', yet he immediately recognises the difficulties in doing just that. He says he has had to fight hard against his own tendency to 'withdraw' and 'go numb'. How can someone struggle against something so large, something so *immense*? (ibid.) Recalling points made by both Bauman and DeGrazia, Robbins explicitly acknowledges that a supreme effort on his part was required to resolve to go on campaigning against intensive farming for the hurt it caused to humans and other animals.

### Devices of the Heathen.

The content of the previous section will likely provide little optimism for campaigning animal advocates, yet Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) would probably approve of the stance: simply trying to provide 'just knowledge'? Whatever the information in this section amounts to, regardless of the earlier rejection of the possibility of providing 'just knowledge', it regrettably will not fill animal rightists with the greatest hope for the immediate future. Unfortunately things improve little in the light of philosopher Stephen Clark's perspective on human-nonhuman relations. In *The Moral Status of Animals*, Clark (1984: 47-50; 52-84) outlines in detail what he calls eight 'devices of the heathen' or eight sophisms (clever but deceitful reasons) relating to human attitudes about nonhuman

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<sup>65</sup> Clark (1984: 209-10) provides one of the most detailed lists of Salt's major writings. They are, 1896 (ed.), *The New Charter*, (London); 1899-1900, 'Rights of Animals', *Ethics* 10; 1901 (ed.), *Kith and Kin: Poems for animal life*, (London); 1921, *Seventy Years Among Savages*, (London); 1922, *Animals' Rights*, (London); 1933, *The Logic of Vegetarianism*, (London).

animals.<sup>66</sup> These devices amount to *reasons*, *justifications* and *excuses*, and are (or have been) a handy resource for factory farmers, meat eaters, vivisectors, bloodsports enthusiasts, animal circus proprietors and customers, and a host of others wanting to make some usage of animals and their living and dead bodies. Furthermore, even when apparently successfully and fundamentally challenged, Clark maintains that such excuses have the ability to simply 'give birth' to further justifications about the matter in question. The basics of Clark's account of the device of the heathen follow; frequently reliant on the ideology of conventional animal welfarism in their construction. Although Clark rebuts the basis of each device in turn, it is not necessary here to reproduce all the fine details of each argument. In the light of the above, it is perhaps more important in terms of the direction of the thesis that the institutionalised existence of these devices is acknowledged. Furthermore, their apparent functionality in justifying exploitative practices might also be recognised. In other words, these devices might be assessed on the basis of the extent to which they serve to rationalise conventional attitudes about how humans treat other animals.

The first device (there is a growing amount of literature on this [see Dawkins 1985: 27-40; Gold 1988: 3-18]) involves speaking 'not of suffering nor distress, but only of painful sensations' (Clark 1984: 54). In a tradition of thought that suggests that the presence of 'a mind' is necessary to transform 'mere sensations' into suffering - understood as being aware that one is suffering - nonhuman animals are alleged to possess no 'mind'. They experience sensations, this view admits, but do not have the ability to *suffer*. It clearly does not *matter* if it does not *hurt*. This view might seem initially to be a potentially important constituent of the sort of attitude Midgley (1985) labels 'absolute dis-

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<sup>66</sup> Apparently Henry Salt had a similar notion to Clark's 'devices' which he called 'those dear old Fallacies' (quoted in Gold 1998: 7).

missal', however Clark suggests it can apply to the 'relative dismissal' positions as well. Thus, Clark argues, in the practices of animal usage, regulated by animal welfare legislation, it seems it does not matter 'if it doesn't hurt quite a lot' (1984: 54).<sup>67</sup>

The second device imagines that nonhuman animals 'do not miss what they have not got, or what they never had' (ibid.: 47). This position appears to be based, not so much on the notion of 'you've never had it so good', but on something like, 'you've never had it at all, so what's the problem?' What millions of nonhumans have never had, in the case of hens in battery units, for example, are experiences like the ability to sit down comfortably, stretch their limbs, scratch around in the earth, or even turn around. Imprisoners of hens in battery cages<sup>68</sup> sometimes respond to animal welfare or rights criticisms by saying battery hens have known no other condition - and anyway, farmers claim, they might not be able to flap their wings in the 'normal' sense, but they can stretch their limbs one at a time for the purpose of exercise.

The third device puts 'the victims of our attention' in the assumed position of being rather grateful that humans have so kindly 'made use' of them. Experienced campaigners for nonhuman protection will recognise this position immediately in the 'what will happen to all the cows if we don't eat them?' questions they get on their information stalls and web sites (see Gold 1995: 82; Francione 2000: 167-8). According to Gold (1998: 7), Henry Salt, in a 1897 Humanitarian League publication entitled, *The Humanities of Diet*, responded to the 'what-would-become-of-the-animals?' point with a vision of 'the grievous wanderings of homeless herds who can find no kind protector to eat them'. However, it is perhaps technically true to claim that 'market demand' creates

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<sup>67</sup> This sort of argument has had animal advocates such as Singer acknowledging that a slap administered to a human baby may be far more damaging than a slap of the same order of strength given to a horse or an elephant.

the birth of 'food animals' - nevertheless, Clark notes that this is an odd excuse for murder (1984: 48).

The fourth device is simply based on a customary conservationist habit of concentrating on 'species' survival rather than on individual welfare or rights. Therefore, in such a view, provided that a species remains 'viable' and is not threatened with extinction, exploitation of individual members is permissible. Of course, from a dominionistic perspective, what better way is there to ensure the survival of a species than to deliberately breed its individual members and closely control its population and movements? The fifth heathen's device is to attempt to *balance* nonhuman pains against the pleasures humans get from it, an approach adopted by Scruton who argues that just about any form of human use of other animals will inconvenience or harm them but this price is often worth paying (not, note, by himself) for the amount of human pleasure accrued. Animal welfare ideology is central here, precisely because non-cruel exploitation is generally posited as a practical everyday feasibility. Furthermore, Clark suggests that this device is aided by the earlier suggestion that nonhuman animals 'don't feel things like we do' (ibid.) Criticism of this notion of 'balancing' pains and pleasures is, of course, central to some rights theorists' attack on utilitarianism (Regan 1983; 2001; Francione 1996b, 2000).

The sixth device, as explained by Clark, is a little more complicated than those that have gone before. Furthermore, this one is primarily involved with thoughts about animal experimentation, although the point does seemingly widen out to also cover some other forms of 'animal use'. The device is based on C.W. Hume's position that animal experimenters should wonder, 'how would I feel about suffering this?' They ought also to ask themselves, 'should I myself

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<sup>68</sup> Current EU legislation allows up to 6 birds in one cage providing that they have 450 square centimetres of space each, which is an area less than that of an A4 piece of paper (Penman 1996: 82)



be willing to endure that degree of pain or stress in order to attain the object in view?' If, theoretically, this notion may logically be assumed to rule out animal experimentation - if the experimenter herself would not submit to this or that procedure, then it should not be done. *In practice something else occurs.* Clark suggests (1984: 71-2), that animal experimenters take a 'fantastic heroic view' which says on an ideological level that they surely *would* be prepared to suffer forms of distress for the benefit of others. Therefore, by this rather warped thinking they are allowed to cause suffering to nonhuman animals for the benefit of humans. It is noteworthy that this device appears to create a potential human benefit and yet is another 'price worth paying' which nonhuman rather than human animals end up paying. This mind-set of vivisectors, Clark suggests (ibid.: 72) leads them to think of their position as logically coherent, whereas the logic they claim does not really follow at all.

The seventh device is pure animal welfarism, firmly based on the orthodox view that it is wrong to make animals suffer but it is not wrong in principle to kill them (this point regularly creates problems for Singer's utilitarian perspective). Clark suggests (ibid.: 74) that this device, like the sixth, 'does not do what the orthodox would have it do'. Although this particular notion may be a major driving force of animal welfarism, Clark thinks its odd logic may suggest that all sentient life should be ended, since 'all life involves some pain'. The eighth a final device posits that 'there is a great deal of suffering in the world' and, recalling points made above in the outline of Robins' analysis, wonders 'will what I do really make much difference?'

As Clark notes (ibid.: 50), all life involves some pain and it is impossible to stop it all. Clearly, human beings cannot completely extract themselves from all harm-causing in the many everyday things that they do. Opponents of animal rights views often delight in pointing out that the planting of vegetables

will cause the deaths of at least some insects and other small animals.<sup>69</sup> Clark notes that this device is premised upon what might be regarded as something of a Milgramian question: 'Where all is anguish, how can we cavil at a little more?' (ibid.)

If I may be permitted to very briefly direct my attention towards members of the animal protection movement: here we have 'it' before us. Here is a serious campaigning 'problem' - something that must be overcome, and certainly must if anything like the achievement of the basic nonhuman right *not to be treated as a thing* that Francione calls for is ever to come about. Here are the reasons, the social psychology, the social forces and the contexts which will quite probably prevent millions of people from taking a blind bit of notice of what you or I tell them about animal abuse or rights violations. If this section amounts to anything at all, it may represent many of the great and somewhat daunting challenges that 'animal rights' advocates face at the present time. Perhaps one can only fervently hope that these factors do not represent absolutely overwhelming odds against the changing of those Adams (2001b) is currently labelling 'blocked vegetarians'.

Cohen's (2001) work suggests that the portents are not good in relation to the aspirations of many social movement mobilisations. In three devastating pages, Cohen's account of denial supplements points already made. For example, he

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<sup>69</sup> Professor of 'animal science' at Oregon State University, Steve Davis, has produced a challenging perspective on these lines. Davis argues that the most moral meal to eat would consist of grass-fed beef because fewer animals are killed than in the production of vegetables. It has been suggested that Davis' work seriously questions the 'philosophical underpinnings of a strictly vegetarian, vegan diet'.

suggests that 'humanitarian organisations' represent 'living relics of Enlightenment faith in the power of knowledge: *if only people knew, they would act*' (ibid.: 185). And yet, paradoxically, are not these very same organisations in possession of evidence that this faith is, at best, 'misplaced'? Is it not the case that such a faith is undermined by their daily work? (ibid.)

Living in an age dominated by the visual image, cannot these organisations take solace in the fact that new technologies provide the opportunity of recording, and thus *exposing*, suffering and exploitation? After all, visual images have a 'visceral public impact', meaning that written information - 'if only they knew' - may be replaced by 'now they can see' (ibid.: 185-86). Cohen reports that human rights advocate and 'rock star', Peter Gabriel, has suggested that because campaigners 'now have pictures', they also 'have the truth'. 'We are serving notice on governments', Gabriel states. 'We are watching that they can no longer keep their deeds hidden, we are watching' (cited in ibid.: 86).

Cohen suggests that the 'campaigning value' of the dramatic visual image can be evaluated by considering the 'Rodney King effect'. Recalling the 1991 video recording of Los Angeles police officers beating the passive black 'suspect' Rodney King, Cohen suggest that such 'visceral' material could only result in the interpretation that what occurred was an "assault", 'abuse of power', 'violation of civil liberties', 'police violence' or 'racism" (ibid.) The animal protection movement has been particularly skilled at using written and visual exposes of animal exploitation. In fact, Francione praises Singer's *Animal Liberation* because, more than a book about ethics, it includes illuminating chapters on animal experimentation, factory farming and the vegetarian diet. Ever since the 1980s, the advent of certain organisations such as the Northern Animal Liberation League (NALL) and its Central (CALL) and South Eastern

(SEALL) versions, ensured a constant supply of material for the animal protection movement to use and disseminate. Some of the more spectacular raids mounted and filmed by the Animal Liberation Front have resulted in the production of dramatic footage illustrating the negative impact that humans have on nonhuman life. Now and again, footage filmed by animal experimenters themselves have been 'recovered' by animal activists and used to dramatic effect. The classic example of this is a video distributed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA) of vivisectors filming their own head injury experiments on baboons entitled *Unnecessary Fuss*.

Cohen's analysis of such developments as social movements' production of filmed material is once again instructive to the animal advocate. Cohen suggests that a great deal of information is now transmitted by 'electronic witnesses' (ibid.: 187) and such information appears largely accepted by many as authentic in nature. Often, then, social movements are not always burdened with their material not being believed.<sup>70</sup> But then Cohen says this:

Aside from a few thousand academics who take post-modernist epistemology literally, no sane person seriously 'interrogates' truth-claims about, say, infant mortality in Bangladesh. There is no literal denial. On the contrary, the obstacle to action is that you have heard this information so often and have believed it every time. You are tired of being told the truth (ibid.)

Thus, social movements are not only subject to the 'gap' that exists between concern and action, they must content with the possibility that their potential audience(s) are 'tired of the truth'. So many issues demand a caring person's

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<sup>70</sup> However, there is some evidence that pro-use advocates (such as the National Animal Interest Alliance in North America) monitor and contribute to 'animal rights' discussion boards, often apparently in order to dispute the validity of video footage released by animal activists.

attention that she is ‘saturated’ and subject to information overload (the development of the internet hardly helped in this, despite its usefulness).

Cohen develops Simmel’s concept of ‘urban trace’ to explore such ideas. He notes that, ‘Denial theory and common sense recognise that the obvious solution to stimulus overload is *selective* oblivion’ (ibid.: 188, emphasis in original). This suggestion may go some way to explain the frequency that people claim that the ‘animal issue’ should not be dealt with until humans are free from oppressive exploitation: recall that Greer implies that the animal rights movement jumps some sort of ‘concerns queue’. Many of these denial theories tap into the notion of ‘bystander politics’ which so frustrates cause advocates. If any are perturbed by other people’s lack of action and apparently apathy, Cohen supplies them with an account of a great deal of the social psychological study on the issue, as have a number of Critical Theories over the years.

Before the present thesis is involved in a presentation of a summary of the issues under review in the conclusion, the following chapter gives an account of much of the academic work that is inspired by thoughts and campaigns about human-nonhuman relations.

## **The Development of ‘Animal Studies’.**

### **What Has Recent Scholarship Done to Undermine its ‘Thorough-Going Speciesism’?**

Along with an absolutely huge amount of media coverage about ‘animal rights’ activism, albeit with severely limited exploration and elaboration of genuine animal rights philosophy and claims-making, the last two decades in particular have witnessed a remarkable increase in the academic interest in the social sciences and the humanities in ‘Animal Studies’. A good many of this engagement incorporates new thoughts and research about nonhuman capabilities, and investigates ‘animal rights’ activism and thought on some level or other.

With regard to philosophical works about human-nonhuman relations, Tom Regan (2001: 67) states that philosophers ‘have written more about animal rights in the past twenty years than their predecessors wrote in the previous two thousand’. Historian of animal welfarism and rights, Hilda Kean (1998: 8), says this relatively recent interest has resulted in animal issues being ‘news’ in the last few years, while sociologist Adrian Franklin (1999: 1) states that, ‘Interest in human-animal relations has expanded considerably over recent years in both [sic] intellectual, political and policy terms’.

Writing about the animal movement as a ‘radical social movement’, Guither (1998: 5) notes that part of the recent interest in animal protection issues in North America is due to the animal movement being regarded as the ‘successor to the antiwar and human rights crusades of the 1960’s and 1970’s’.

The 1990's has also seen the founding of a three-times-a-year publication from Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PSYETA) entitled *Society & Animals*. This academic journal includes psychological, sociological and criminological research, amongst work from other disciplines, all focused on some aspect of the various issues concerned with human-nonhuman relations, although it cannot by any means be regarded as a strictly animal rights-inspired publication. By 2003, *Society & Animals* was in its 11<sup>th</sup> volume dedicated to publishing 'studies which describe and analyse our experience of nonhuman animals' and to stimulate and support 'an emerging content area within the social sciences and the humanities'. 'Animal Rights Law' is another recently emerging discipline, especially in the United States of America, with university courses – the first ever on animal rights and the law began by Gary Francione in 1989 – now established across the USA.

This section is a brief description of some of the academic work which may be regarded as a response to the 1970's emergence of second wave animal advocacy. The section is designed to broadly illustrate the wide range of new and on-going research and theorising about human-nonhuman relations, rather than going into great detail or criticism of any of them. Furthermore, the extent to which any example actively engages with rights thinking, rather than rhetorical 'animal rights' campaigning, is variable.

After two years of planning a preparation, the Center on Animal Liberation Affairs (CALA), which is run by 'the academic animal rights community', was fully established in 2003. CALA's prime movers are Anthony J. Nocella II and Steve Best; their mission statement reads:

As the first scholarly center dedicated to philosophical discussion on animal liberation, CALA strives to advance the study, research, and dialogue of the principles and practices of animal rights and animal liberation.<sup>71</sup>

CALA argue that it is time for the scholarly investigation of the animal liberation movement in a similar vein to the academic attention given to organisations such as the Black Panther Party, the Irish Republican Army, The Basques, the Japanese Red Army, the African National Congress, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation, and the Zapatistas:

The time is ripe for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) also to receive serious scholarly attention. Since its inception in England in the 1970s, its migration to the United States in the 1980s, and the subsequent spread of ALF cells around the world, the ALF has racked up an impressive record of success for the cause of animal liberation. They have broken into hundreds of laboratories, factory farms, fur farms, and other hellholes of animal exploitation to liberate tens of thousands of animals that otherwise didn't have a chance. They have inflicted millions of dollars of property damage on institutions of animal exploitation in order to slow down or shut down their blood-stained operations. They have inspired countless activists with their courage and conviction. They surely have captured the attention of the FBI who, in the age of the Patriot Act, elevated them and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) to the top two "domestic terrorist" groups in the nation. And so long as animals are being maimed, poisoned, burned, confined, tortured, and murdered at the hands of butchers in white coats or in search of greenbacks, the ALF is here to stay.<sup>72</sup>

Taking this level of academic objectivity and value neutrality displayed in this passage, CALA have begun to organise conferences and take part in others, such as the 'One Struggle Conference' in December 2002 at the University of St. Thomas, USA. Within a clear commitment to study activism, CALA nevertheless promise a scholarly investigation of the philosophy of animal rights and animal liberation. In this they have earned the support of Tom Regan who

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<sup>71</sup> [http://www.cala-online.org/about\\_us.html](http://www.cala-online.org/about_us.html)



writes on the CALA home page: 'CALA offers something new in the struggle for animal rights: an independent platform for all voices speaking to the issue, without interruption, whatever the message. Here, finally, is a place where the philosophical and strategic foundations of animal rights can be explored, fully and fairly'.

Quite understandably, the very emergence of 'the animal rights movement' as a visible and vocal social mobilisation has provoked a good deal of social research on the phenomenon (see, for example, Jasper & Nelkin 1992; Sperling 1988, Garner 1993, Guither 1998, Kean 1998). Such work tends to analyse animal rights, animal liberation and animal welfare positions with a stress on the political and social attitudes and the interaction of those who take up various forms of animal advocacy (Groves 1995; Jasper & Poulsen 1995). There is also a good deal of interest, like CALA's, in animal advocates' campaigning or attitudinal links with human rights issues, and 'social justice' and 'human social issues' campaigning (see, for example, Nilbert 1994; Friedrich 2000).

According to Adrian Franklin (1999: 1), zoologists, sociobiologists, psychologists, veterinary scientists, geographers and sociologists are currently among the 'range of disciplines which have an interest in [human-nonhuman relations] and their specificities'. Stating that the field of human-nonhuman relations is rapidly becoming one of the 'hot areas of debate in the social sciences', increasingly occupying the centre stage once held by the study of 'the environment' (ibid.), Franklin identifies some of the 'several fronts' of this relative recent academic interest:

- the philosophy and politics of animal rights (citing, as examples, Benton 1993; Midgley 1979, 1994);

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<sup>72</sup> [http://www.cala-online.org/Journal/journal\\_articles.html#8](http://www.cala-online.org/Journal/journal_articles.html#8)

- the sociology of animal rights (Tester 1992);
- histories of human-animal relations (Ritvo 1987, 1994; R.H. Thomas 1983);
- the social anthropology of human-animal relations (Cartmill 1993; Ingold 1988);
- animal foods and animals in diets (Bourdieu 1984; Douglass 1975, 1984; Fiddes 1991; Goodman and Redclift 1991; Mannell 1993; Twigg 1983; Vialles 1994);
- animals, nature and gender (Gaard 1993; Norwood 1993);
- hunting and fishing sports in modernity (Cartmill 1993; Hummel 1994; Ritvo 1987);
- pets or companion animals (Serpell 1986, 1995; Serpell and Paul 1994);
- animals, tourism and zoos (Bostock 1993; Mullan and Marvin 1987);
- the sociology of nature (Macnaughten and Urry 1995; Murphy 1995).

Franklin also includes his own previous work on 'animal foods' and hunting (1996a, 1996b) in the list. Inevitably, additions can be found. For example, some elements of 'animal rights' thinking has begun to make an impact on the sociological analysis of criminality in recent years (see Beirne (1995; 1997; 1999; Yates, Powell & Beirne 2001). Agnew (1998) and Cazaux (1998) have joined Beirne in working toward establishing a 'non-speciesist criminology'. This work explicitly recognises animal exploitation and abuse as a legitimate, but neglected, object of study. Piers Beirne in particular has been instrumental in bringing animal abuse issues to the forefront of academic research - with an emphasis on the interests of animals themselves as central concerns, rather than merely 'secondary' victims in incidences of human harm or activities. He has argued that the vast majority of conventional criminology has regarded non-humans in terms that may be regarded as speciesist, for example, as human property, meaning that harm done to them is commonly perceived as harm done to the legal 'property owner' rather than the animal herself.

As well as prompting subsequent work by others (see Flynn 2001), Beirne has continued throughout the 1990's in developing the sociological study of animal abuse, for example, when proposing replacing of the traditional term 'bestiality' with the more appropriate and descriptive phrase 'interspecies sexual assault'. Again, the explicit intention in this work is to directly emphasise the central locus in the victimhood of the animals used, abused and sometimes killed by humans for their sexual satisfaction. As noted much earlier in this thesis, it also might be expected that future development in the field of zemiology will feature a 'nonspeciesist' dimension to its analysis of harm.

In 1998, Robert Agnew provided a social-psychological analysis of animal abuse, presented as a starting point for further research and based on sociological theories of strain, social control and social learning. This endeavour has been described by Clifton Flynn (2001: 82) as the first fully-fledged theory of animal abuse. Agnew's paper is particularly interesting to me because it explicitly acknowledges the theoretical and practical problems created by notions of 'socially-accepted' animal abuse and 'socially-unacceptable' animal abuse (Agnew 1998: 202). Thus, the author notes that much of the early interest in animal abuse research has tended to uncritically adopt a model based on a differentiation that led to a concentration on the abuse of 'pets', for example. This work failed to explicitly place such abuse, as Cazaux (1999) rightly does, in the context of their occurrence in animal-exploiting societies in which animal harm is routine and on a mass scale, involving literally billions of unseen and generally unacknowledged individual sufferers (see Baker 1993 for more on this).

According to Steve Baker (1996), academic feminism particularly since the 1990's has made a crucial contribution to 'academic animal advocacy' (see, as examples, Adams 1990; 1994; Birke 1994; Adams & Donovan 1995). As

recognised throughout this thesis, this feminist-inspired work remains important in emphasising explorations of interrelationships in ostensibly different and allegedly unconnected forms of harm. Recent work in this field, building directly on Carol Adam's *Sexual Politics of Meat* thesis which is described by its author as a version of critical theory, includes an exploration of the political and cultural significance of presenting 'food animals' in sexualised and pornographic poses. This phenomenon has recently been theorised as a product of 'anthropornography' by Amie Hamlin (Adams 2001a). Adams herself has recently completed a ethnographic project based on the experience of 'living among meat eaters' which offers vegetarians and vegans advice about the prospect of living amidst 'animal oppressors', including 'blocked vegetarians', a potential and optimistic new way of looking at meat eating (Adams 2001b).

Reflecting the increasing scholarly interest in human-nonhuman relations and in 'animal studies' generally, the University of Sheffield hosted a wide-ranging conference in July, 2000 entitled 'Millennial Animals', based on 'theorising and understanding the importance of animals', which identified the diversity of interest in animal-connected themes illustrating their exploitation, use, interactions, literary depiction, symbolic meanings, behaviour, and the social construction of attitudes towards animals and their treatment. Adams presented her 'Sexual Politics of Meat Slideshow' with illustrations of cultural links between the male exploitation of women and animals (Adams 1990). Lynda Birke presented themes from her (1994) book, *Feminism, Animals and Science*. Clare Palmer presented a Foucauldian analysis of power relations in her paper, *Humans, Pets and Power* (also see Alger & Alger 1999). Hilda Kean explored the social construction of 'Englishness', using attitudes about animals. Allan Burns explored 'nonhuman points of view'. Julie Smith was interested in theories of consciousness in the 'literary animal'. Matthew Brower spoke about

‘capturing’ animals through ‘hunting with a camera’ in wildlife photography. Jennifer Ham investigated what she called ‘Nietzsche’s gestures of domestication and liberation’ as related to women and animals. Sofia Akerberg and Michelle Henning spoke about animal zoos, the concept of ‘Zoo-Nature’, animal display and ‘ways of seeing’. Christine Kenyon-Jones described late eighteenth-century children’s books about animals which will be a feature of a forthcoming book, *Kindred Brutes*.

Peter Scheers presented an hermeneutical and phenomenological interpretation of ‘animal being’. Teresa Grant talked about ‘ape-men’ in early modern drama. Sociologist Jane Harris spoke about her social movement research on ‘animal rights’ activism; including the involvement and influence of women activists; and perceptions of gender role transgression involved in their participation in protest movements. Lesley King spoke about behavioural science’s view of nonhuman animals and asked, ‘How can we determine what an animal wants or needs?’ Such work continues to contribute to our understandings of nonhuman capabilities which, for many, are crucial in effective claims making.

In August 2001, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, meeting in California, featured a session describing and analysing ‘human and nonhuman animal communities’ including the applied use of animals, animals in popular culture, attitudes toward animals, and the history of human-nonhuman relations. This is the latest of a number of academic conferences in which work in animal studies is being discussed and explored. Furthermore, academics from several disciplines are presently taking part in regular conferences and meetings organised by animal protection organisations, which is part and parcel of the claimed growth in ‘professionalism’ within the modern animal movement (see Ryder 2000). As committed academics founded or became active and involved in

radical prison reform and abolition mobilisations in the 1970's (see Cohen & Taylor 1977), a similar process is currently occurring in the field of animal advocacy, involving a transformation from what Eyerman & Jamieson (1991: 113) call 'intellectual-in-movement' to 'movement intellectual'. However, it should be noted that animal rights orientations (rather than commentaries upon it) make up only a small sector of on-going work, much of which is clearly carried out within the orthodox paradigm of animal welfarism, while conservationist themes are present, along with notions of 'applied animal use' which sounds quite abusive in animal rights terms.

Some recent research (such as Alger & Alger 1999, and Palmer's Foucauldian analysis mentioned above) have sought to take existing sociological themes and methods and apply them to investigations about human-nonhuman relations. For example, the Algers explore whether the notion of symbolic interactionism can 'go beyond' Mead's initial formulation. Mead himself (1962) drew a very strict division between human beings and other animals, yet Janet and Steven Alger (1999) suggest that new knowledge (Griffin 1984; 1992) about animal capabilities indicate a growing need for a reassessment of Mead's initial formulation. Yates, Powell and Beirne (2001) placed nonhuman animals as central victims of harm within an overarching framework of an analysis of a particular moral panic. This work on so-called 'horse-ripping' investigated the social construction of folk devils that typically occurs during moral panics. The paper also explored the effects of a hierarchy of credibility on policing practices and motivations, and theorised the common tendency to persistently pathologise unknown perpetrators of harm, perhaps as defensive measures and distancing devices.

Much of the work cited above could well be seen to respond to Steven Seidman's (1998) claim that sociology has sometimes had the tendency to temporarily intellectualise itself beyond firm connections with contemporary public concerns of the day (perhaps the prime example of this being Talcott Parsons' orientation towards so-called 'value-neutrality' and his use of largely impenetrable scientific language). Whatever the claimed benefits of such a 'neutral' stance - which are likely to be mainly financial, organisational and careerist - things may be thought to go too far once students are advised against adopting a 'political perspective' in their sociological endeavours (see, for example, Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). If sociology cannot preserve some of its radicalism (if only as a fringe enclave), then I feel much of its future potential will be lost. This thesis reflects Seidman's call for morally-inspired engagement, deliberately seeking involvement in a growing public and political issue, while being entirely open about its political intent as well as its frightful lack of 'value-neutrality'.

## **Conclusions.**

[Scholars, philosophers, and leaders of the world] have convinced themselves that man, the worst transgressor of all species, is the crown of creation. All other creatures were created merely to provide him with food, pelts, to be tormented, exterminated. In relation to them, all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka.

Issac Bashevis Singer, 'The Letter Writer',  
from *The Seance and Other Stories*.

In the first years of the twenty-first century, animal rights advocates undoubtedly have a most substantial task ahead of them if they aspire to seriously convince people that they act just like Nazis toward nonhuman animals. The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that, for the vast majority, analogies between the fate of the human Jews in World War II and the plight of contemporary nonhumans will be regarded as utterly mystifying and outrageous: outrage will undoubtedly descend upon social historian Charles Patterson whose recent book, *Eternal Treblinka: Our treatment of animals and the Holocaust*, dares to make this very comparison (Patterson 2002).

The sociology of human-nonhuman relations suggests that the philosophical foundations of Western 'civilisation' would disallow such an analogy. Both ancient philosophers and jurists declared that nonhuman animals are on earth for 'us'. The philosophical challenge to such views is a relatively recent phenomenon, while the legal challenge is younger still, having occurred only in the last decade or so. Furthermore, the sociology of human-nonhuman relations reveals that long-standing cultural constructions rule out such unwarranted and unwelcome comparisons. Moreover, this study shows that the conventional societal orientation sympathetic to the moral orthodoxy concerning human-nonhuman relations would also find the correlation appalling if not rather silly.



In this welfarist view, how can a modern commitment to the strict regulation of 'humane treatment' be compared with the grotesque details of Nazi atrocities? Sociological analysis highlights how daily social practice suggests that the analogy must, for most, be ridiculous nonsense. How could such a monstrous analogy apply to, say, 'animal loving' Britain? Don't 'we' demonstrably care for animals? Don't 'we' animal lovers weep if they get a disease or become ill?

However.

Given that the overarching theme of the present work has been engaged in identifying major social factors that create and maintain a speciesist orientation in human-nonhuman relations, then the evidence in the pages above suggests that the initially disturbing comparison with Nazism is not so far-fetched.

There has been a deliberate emphasis throughout this work on social process and processes, such as the socialisation processes. Understanding any society in which forms of exploitation are institutionalised, widely internalised, and seen as acceptable, is not to expect some demigod is present to charismatically suggest to all and sundry that this social attitude is to be favoured. Weber states that modern society becomes dominated by instrumental rationality over time. Societal attitudes and social practices evolve slowly over time, mediated by, and mediating, social norms and values which are shaped by sociopolitical and economic factors. The intention of this thesis throughout has been directed toward advancing the understanding of contemporary social attitudes concerning human-nonhuman relations. Examining firmly sedimented social belief about other animals this thesis serves to reveal how, by physically and system-

atically dominating and exploiting nonhumans for a range of instrumental and sentimental reasons, societies have sought to construct and maintain fundamental human superiority claims to justify both the socialised treatment of - and human views about - other animals.

As evidence presented here suggests, human-nonhuman relation claims are regarded as sufficiently meaningful, fixed and rudimentary even to the extent that individual human beings and whole communities can be conceptually stripped of their humanity; stripped, therefore, of the hope of being right-holders; stripped of being legal and social 'persons'. When this occurs, when human beings as individuals or in groups are portrayed as mere 'things' just like non-human animals, then they are effectively placed in serious harm's way. In effect, social orientations toward human-nonhuman relations can help end the alleged special protection humans are offered just by 'being human' (Bauman & May 2001: 75).

The preceding pages present evidence that methods exist – and are currently employed - that 'reduce' humans into 'devalued', 'subhuman', and ultimately 'nonhuman' categories. Clearly, in the social construction of other animals, 'animal' means 'harmable' or, more technically, nonhuman interests may be *sacrificed* to satisfy many human ones. Those who have exploited other human beings attempted to align individuals and groups alongside those *already* constructed as essentially existing to serve some human need or utilisation. Both dehumanisation and depersonalisation processes are regularly employed and organised in periods of war. They are systematically used in military training techniques, in many pornographic portrayals, and in general racist and sexist discourse. The processes employed rely heavily on widespread *a-priori* social understandings about nonhuman-human distinctions and associated moral worth. They draw on the various widespread social practices - Mason's 'rituals

of dominionism' - involving the human (mis)treatment of other animals, while maintaining the ideological message in which nonhumans occupy 'natural', or 'God-given', 'devalued', 'lower-than', and therefore 'harmable', 'usable', 'exploitable' and easily 'killable' categories of being.

Interrelated philosophy, theology, social practice, underlying ideology and social discourse serves as effective 'constructors of sufficient difference' which provides moral distance between humans and nonhumans. Indeed, over time humans seem to have often sought to mark *any* discernible differences, declare them as morally relevant, all in order to override the sentience and subject-of-a-life status of billions of nonhumans, effectively undermining the evolutionary kinship between human animals and nonhuman ones.

Jasper (1999: 77) correctly suggests that modern humans hold on to the two exploitative orientations towards other animals. Both have been discussed in this thesis. The first orientation involves the qualified acceptance of the instrumental use of other animals as resources, while the other utilisation is mainly sentimental, although this second category seems also to contain a good deal of its own instrumental intent. Added to dominant non-animal rights philosophical and theological positions with regard to nonhuman animals and human beings, the self-serving and economically-driven 'pro-use' arguments seeking to maintain profitable orientations towards the moral status quo are encountered. Such groups, as seen in Guither's work, have their own financial justifications for the continuation of the human exploitation of nonhuman animals.

As indicated above, substantial parts of this thesis have emphasised the vital 'maintenance' role played by the lifelong socialisation processes in the preservation of present attitudes about the ethical status of both human and nonhuman beings. While on-going and day-to-day experience bolster society-

wide orientations toward other animals, the professional socialisation of those whose livelihoods and identities are bound up with various forms of ‘using’ other animals provides this group with further incentives to support current welfarist conceptualisations of human-nonhuman relations. In the light of factors such as these, any sociological analysis cannot ignore overarching consequences of individuals - the vast majority in most modern societies - being socialised as ideological and practising *speciesists*. In a culture that routinely exploits other animals, the phrase ‘they know not what they do’ can be properly applied to its children. Daily, they experience beings they meet *as meat*; or know them as playthings and as personal or family possessions. In a great many aspects of their social learning, children are socialised from their earliest years within an overarching and deeply speciesist ideology to accept the human use of other animals in all its forms. The significance of this for animal rights advocates is clear. As Bauman has indicated, the simplest thing people do with regard to core social values is *abide* by them; indeed, just as many Nazis and Germans did. Since this is exactly what the unreflexive majority does with regard to dominant social values about human-nonhuman relations, supporters of animal rights must understand that their own personal transcendence of orthodox attitudes are exceptions to a widely kept rule. Most people, quite simply, ‘go with the flow’. Perhaps the degree to which animal advocates are thought to have broken away from prevailing ideology about human-nonhuman relations can be seen reflected in the extent to which animal welfarism remains a part of the animal protection movement’s central claims making relating to the treatment of other animals by human beings.

A full appreciation of the magnitude of the task before animal advocates, assuming a commitment to public education strategies rather than to the more militant examples of ‘direct action’, requires – in part at least, an acknowl-

gement of answers to the research questions posed throughout this thesis. Clearly spelt out in the pages above, described step-by-step, are elements of the construction and maintenance systems both creating and sustaining society-wide speciesist social attitudes. The prevalence of various 'us' and 'them' categories, and the social construction of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' are seen to further the aims of the racist, the sexist, the homophobe and so on. Such categorical distinctions, however, are seen to be somewhat dependent on core speciesist attitudes, as Bauman indicates. There are social attitudes that feed into and rely upon orthodox views of nonhuman animals and conventional perceptions about human-nonhuman relations.

These attitudes that are built on and plug into firm social understandings of human supremacy claims, the significance of the 'species barrier', and the harmful uses which the notion of 'the barrier' accommodates. To the extent that exploitative relations among human beings are facilitated by dehumanisation processes, findings in this thesis suggest that opponents of such exploitation and advocates of human rights need to acknowledge central speciesist conceptualisations when humans exploit, harm, and kill each other as well as other 'others'.

Human societies reveal their misothery by objectifying other animals, commodifying them, making them items of various types of consumption, retaining them as items of property and 'legal things' by law. In society, if humans 'damage' a nonhuman animal, including killing him or her, they may find themselves accused and charged with causing 'criminal damage'; that is, causing damage to the 'animal property' of another human being. As with once legal forms of human slavery, such social forces maintain exploitative relations. These are further aspects of a speciesist world into which the young are routinely socialised and, therefore, children learn the norms and values of animal

hating and animal loving societies. Into largely misotherous cultures most people are thrust: cast into societies that continually underlines the ideology that ‘Man’ is king’.

A world that remains characterised by racism and sexism declares over and over again that everything that exists in the world exists *for* human beings: each and every-thing other than fellow humans are ‘resources for the use of’.

Language reveals how humans hate and love other animals and animal life, as they continue to use traditional human-nonhuman orientations to maintain unequal human relations. It has been shown that to call someone an ‘animal’ is to confer upon them a truly negative label: human serial killers are not human according to the popular press: they cannot be allowed the glory of the label ‘human’, so they are named ‘animals’ instead. Such people, after all, ‘behave like animals’. Societies reserve this tag for the *cruellest* people they can think of. Mason says this is because modern humans see nonhuman animals and nature as vicious, base, and contemptible.

As shown in virtually every section of the present thesis, none of the above contradicts any of the principal premises of orthodox animal welfarism. Indeed, the foregone merely affirms for many the absolute need for the normative regulatory role of animal welfare practice and enforcement. Ideological animal welfarism reinforces the idea that theologians and philosophers were and are correct to construct a ‘ladder of being’ as a ‘natural’ order because no substantial bad should result from it. Indeed, much good accrues for both humans and nonhuman animals in present relations. A product of on-going and thoroughly institutionalised social processes, integral to humanity’s ‘agriculture’, is the apparent difficulty that animal rights positions seem to have in their ability to challenge the settled orthodox views about the relations between

humans and other animals. At the present time, and despite of (or because of) more than thirty years of rhetorical 'animal rights' advocacy in Britain, the conventional orthodoxy of animal welfarism continues to adequately provide for the vast majority a secure, multi-purpose, and apparently ever adaptable ideological framework supporting the prevailing industrialised systems of animal exploitation and other modes of animal ownership. Animal welfarism helps to preserve rather than expose or seriously question the exploitative rationality that firmly sediments both conventional instrumental and sentimental attitudes about nonhuman animals.

Taking an 'insider's' view of the animal protection movement for a moment, it seems to be clear that rights views are presently engaged in a discursive relationship with orthodox positions both inside and outside the animal protection movement. Yet animal welfarism is so firmly entrenched, and so widespread and customary, that it appears that even many rights supporters have regular difficulty expressing, articulating and advocating the full animal rights - or any largely non-welfarist - agenda. As far as the latter point goes, of course, reluctance to advocate the whole 'rights agenda' has been traditionally seen in the animal movement as the result of strategic choices and issues of 'framing' (Yates 1998). However, this reluctance can also be seen as a reflection of the way animal welfarism succeeds in presenting rights views as views that go beyond those that are necessary for the well-being of nonhuman animals. A central 'difficulty' for rights views stems from the fact that the resilient orthodox outlook has preserved its authoritative ability to present its own position as entirely 'normal', 'reasonable', 'rational', and the self-evidently 'correct' perspective by which any reasonable person ought to evaluate human-nonhuman relations. For this reason, as seen in the present work to some extent, the orthodox position becomes the easy, confident, 'non-extreme' (and now more

than ever, ‘non-terrorist’) means by which journalists, commentators, the majority of animal advocates, pro-use advocates and politicians talk about the treatment of nonhuman animals by humans.

From the outset, it was to be expected that the ideology of animal welfarism would figure strongly throughout this thesis. That said, its utter *centrality* to virtually every level of discourse about human-nonhuman relations is surprising. Whether exploring philosophical and theological accounts, pro-use statements, political pronouncements, economic dimensions, or journalistic orientations, animal welfarism appears solidly entrenched as the significant defining and discursive factor. It is not a bewilderment, therefore, to discover that the limited number of rights-aware contributors to recent animal email networks appear to appreciate more than ever that forms of animal welfarism can seem to stand as serious impediments to the articulation, advocacy, and realisation of genuine animal rights aspirations.

In a thoroughly frustrating way, animal welfarism seems to amount to a barrier or filter which effectively prevents, or at least serves to mediate, the public rendition of a genuine animal rights philosophy. Animal welfarism appears as a fog in which rights discourse regularly becomes lost, misrepresented and redirected. Animal rights advocates who wish to test the societal reception of their own views of human-nonhuman animals are apparently hindered at every turn by a deeply internalised welfarist consciousness in most of the audiences they seek to influence.

Over and above the prevalence of these continuing social realities, it can surely be of no surprise (and of little comfort to *any* social movement advocate) that



many people are effectively afforded useful methods of 'message avoidance' and evasion. Indeed, this thesis outlines some of the sociological and social psycho-logical evidence that suggests that a general evasive orientation can effectively shield a great many so-called 'postmodern' men and women from engagement in numerous social and political issues related or not with nonhuman animals and notions of animal rights. However, in relation to the treatment of other animals, it seems that institutionalised animal welfarism can assist in the process of the avoidance of authentic animal rights views. In other words, it is entirely feasible that those who wish to largely evade rights messages while not wanting to be seen as doing anything unwarranted toward many nonhumans find the certainty and centrality of traditional animal welfarism a comforting place of refuge. Given that welfarism is the 'obvious' lens for assessing human-nonhuman relations, it is possible to demonstrate socially-approved concern for other animals (the sentimental orientation) while effectively side-stepping 'extreme' abolitionist rights positions. Animal welfarism provides society with a remarkable means by which nonhuman animals can be used, killed, or owned - or in other ways exploited by humans - while simultaneously maintaining an persuasive ideological stance that declares that British society in particular is dotty about animals and nonhuman care.

Such a welfarist orientation simply would not be tenable in terms of human rights issues. If it were, groups such as Amnesty International may be found funding experiments on humans to discover 'welfare-friendly' methods of imprisonment and torture. Moreover, an orientation towards a 'human welfare movement' based on the animal welfare model would presumable result in 'free-range' equivalents of child pornography based on production involving no 'unnecessary' suffering or harm to those so used. Regan asks (1988) whether a human rights campaigner who declares an *absolute* opposition to rape, child

abuse, sexual discrimination and the abuse of the elderly would be seen as holding an 'extremist' position. Regan states that, 'the plain fact is, moral truth often is extreme, and must be, for when injustice is absolute, then one must oppose it - absolutely'.

### Finally, Future Possibilities and Directions.

One relatively 'new strand' that has emerged within the evolution of 'animal rights' thinking in recent years has been the still growing academic interest in the issue. Some of this work may prove to be very important in the history of 'animal rights' thinking; and its importance is recognised in recent works by philosopher-advocates such as Regan and Ryder.

For, while many animal activists adopt a commendable 'campaign now, philosophise later' stance (take note, critical theorists), it is important, and also strategically necessary, that there is some evaluation, exploration and serious analysis of the development of the animal protection movement and its philosophy (and, perhaps in the light of this thesis, its relationship with forms of animal welfarism). Current 'cutting-edge' animal rights theorists include Francione and Hall whose vital contribution to animal advocacy at the present time is to attempt to maintain an emphasis on the overall meaning and consequences of real animal rights thinking. This is thinking and advocacy which can so easily be dismissed as extreme and unnecessary; a position most difficult to espouse given the continuing pre-eminence of animal welfare ideology and practice. Future research may be beneficial to aid the further elaboration of the precise meaning and range of animal rights thought, continuing to inspire the

current discourse about the social construction of notions such as ‘the property status of nonhuman animals’; ‘personhood’; campaigning pragmatism and campaigning fundamentalism; and yes, the fraught relationship between animal welfarism and animal rights.

## Appendix 1.

Email about attitudes to nonhuman animals.

Date: Tue, 3 Aug 1999 15:06:15 -0700 (PDT)

From: CZ.

To: sop044@bangor.ac.uk

Subject: more attitudes to animals

Dear Roger

Further to yesterday's email, you might like to read the following, it is very indicative of mainstream attitudes to "food" animals...i.e. they are not animals.

Some months back I was with two colleagues from London Animal Action. We had set up a stall at Angel Islington, complete with posters and leaflets. Whenever people stopped to sign our petitions we invited them to help themselves to as many leaflets as they wanted. About the time when school knocked off, we had a number of schoolgirls (about 13 - 15 years) signing. One group of about 4 started talking to us, yes, they loved animals, and yes, it was cruel to put them in laboratories, circuses etc.

They took a few leaflets, then one noticed the leaflet entitled "Eating Animals." "Oh, look, some people eat animals. How gross." "You're vegetarian or vegan, are you?" I asked. "No. I'm not vegetarian," the one replied. "Then you eat animals, too." "Of course I don't. But I'm not vegetarian," she said. "But, if you're not a vegetarian, then that means you eat animals. Vegetarianism means not eating animals," I persisted. "No, I wouldn't eat animals, that's disgusting." "Then you must be a vegetarian." "No, I'm not. I eat meat, but I don't eat animals."

By this time my two friends were listening to this, quite astounded.

"Well, let's put it this way," I said. "Do you eat hamburgers and things?" "Yes, of course I do. We all do. But they're not made out of animals." "What do you think that lump of mince meat is in the middle of the bun?" "Lamb or cow, or something, I guess." "Right," I said. "And what are lambs and cows? They're animals!"

“No they’re not,” the girls chorused. “They’re not proper animals. Animals are cats and dogs and things like that.”

“No,” I said. “Animals are cows and lambs and pigs as well.”

“Oh, no,” the first one said. “You can’t count them as animals. They’re just things that taste good.”

They went off with various leaflets, but didn’t take the ones on vegetarianism/veganism. They could not acknowledge that they ate animals, real, proper animals that is.

That’s what we’re up against, Roger.

However, one glimmer of hope. I still think the future for animals lies in educating the young, and to that end I will be going into schools representing VIVA!, in order to teach children the happiness and health there is to be had when one desists from eating animals. Viva is having a training day on 18 September, unfortunately that is the day of a Hillgrove national demo, so I had to make a choice, and I see children as a long-term investment.

Regards  
CZ

## Appendix 2.

Books for children and young adults consulted for the socialisation section of this thesis and not used in the main text.

*Our Pets* by Ed Catherall, Hove: Wayland (1985).

'Science is Fun' Series.

For age: 10.

This book features topics such as 'My Pet' and 'Your Friends Pets' etc., with appropriate questions. For example, in the 'My Pet' section (p. 4), the text asks, 'What sort of pet do you have?' In a piece about 'Pet Food' (p. 7), the children are asked, 'Which pet food advertisements can you remember?' In 'Pet Shows' (p. 15), the author asks, 'Have you ever entered your pet in a pet show?', and suggests that children, 'Arrange your own pet show' including categories such as, 'The Happiest Pet', 'The Most Obedient Pet'<sup>73</sup> or 'The Cleverest Pet'. In 'Training Pets' (p. 16), Catherall inquires, 'What is your pet trained to do?' and 'What are your friends training their pets to do?'

In 'Trained Animals' (p. 18), the reader is asked whether she has 'seen circus animals?' 'What tricks could the animals do?' is the next question, followed by the most potentially 'animal rights' question: 'How do you think these animals were trained?' The text (p. 19) recommends that children visit a zoo to 'see how the animals are kept', and asks the question: 'Do they live like they would in the wild?'

By page 23 Catherall is wanting to know 'Which pets are for sale in your local pet shop?' and 'which pet would you most like to own?'

*Animals at Work* by Robin and Jacelyn Wild, London: Heinman (1973).

This book is essential set up as a historical account of how other animals came to 'work' for human beings. The authors imply that a form of social contract exists between humans and nonhumans within a framework of animal welfarism: 'Think of how much we have gained from the hard work animals have done for us so patiently through the years. They still work for us and still give us great pleasure. In return we should look after them and treat them well' (p. 46).

Stories include accounts of how earlier foragers came across young animals when gathering food and subsequently introduced them into human families (p. 9). Farmers are said have benefitted through a cooperative relationship with wild cats who 'came to eat the rats and mice' on their farms (p. 15).

As well as their 'peacetime work' undertaken 'for men', animals also work for humans during times of war. The authors state that 'no animal has fought for us more often than the horse' (p. 28). Page 32 tell the story of bats in WWII who were part of a 'secret plan' to attack the enemy. Each bat was to be fitted with a small time bomb in a harness. After being dropped over enemy territory by parachute, the bats were expected the make for local buildings, chew through their harnesses, fly away and leave the bombs to explode!

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<sup>73</sup> In the glossary of the book (p. 24), Catherall includes 'Obedient' with the definition: 'Willing to do what you are told'. He also states that a shepherd is someone whose job is to 'look after' sheep.

The Wilds go on to tell their readers (p. 38) that 'both children and grown-ups enjoy watching animals do tricks. Explaining that performing bears used to be a common sight as they were 'taken around from place to place for people to watch their clumsy imitation of a dance', the authors note that it is still possible to see performing dogs at Punch and Judy shows and circuses still have 'the troupe of beautiful horses trotting round the circus ring or the snarling lions that jump through hoops of fire. Even fleas can be taught to do tricks!'

*About Some Animals That Work For Us* by Melvin John Uhl, Watford: Frederick Muller (1966).

Uhl tells the story of 'early man's' domestication of animals. Dogs were probably the first to be trained, he says, and as people came to trust dogs they probably 'learned to love them as well. No doubt they felt the same way about their dogs that you do about yours' (p. 4) and luckily, 'a dog will try to do almost anything in order to be loved by its master' (p. 40). Because there were no shops or butchers in those days, Uhl goes on, men had to hunt animals for food and other animals were trained to help them (p. 5).

On page 8 Uhl declares that, 'You probably think of your cat as nothing more than a pet'. However, cats have 'been working for man for many, many years'. Turning to 'animal helpers' in far-away countries, the author states that the mongoose is easily trained as a pest controller but they could not be introduced to Britain because 'if allowed to run wild, they would eat the farmer's chickens, turkeys, and other fowl in addition to the rats' (p. 13).

'Man' is on safer ground with Oxen, who are 'among man's oldest known helpers' (p. 30) and is strong like the water buffalo who is big yet easy to train (p. 33) in contrast to the difficulty in training elephants (p. 28).

*Domesticated Animals* by Bertha Morris Parker & W.S. Weichert, Exeter: Wheaton (1963).

On p. 3 on this book, the authors ask children to 'imagine yourself being forced to get meat to eat by hunting such animals as bear and deer with a rough stone axe. The text says that foragers may take 'all day' to find enough food. P. 4 states that 'man' could tame existing wild animals if necessary. However, 'those tamed long ago serve our purposes so well that animal breeders give little thought to other wild animals that they might domesticate'. On p. 35, the authors give some evidence on being well ahead of future genetic modifiers of other animals - or at least they talk about selective breeding: 'There are doubtless other hybrid possibilities. Some of them are sure to be developed if and when man sees a need for them'.

*Animals at Work* by Edward Ramsbottom & Jason Redmayne, London: Macmillan Education (1977).

Aimed at very young children.

P. 4 introduces children to police dogs. 'Here is Rex', the text says, 'catching a thief'. 'Pretend Rex is your dog. Write a story of an exciting adventure you have together'.

*Animals That Help Us. The Story of Domestic Animals* by Carroll Lane Fenton & Herminie B. Kitchen, London: Dobson (1963).

On p. 18 Fenton & Kitchen tell children about social class relationships around AD900, 'laws decreed that only nobles and gentlemen might keep greyhounds for hunting. Common people

who lived around forests were allowed to keep sheep dogs and certain pet dogs. But anyone who owned a large dog, such as a hound or mastiff, had to make it lame by cutting tendons in its 'knees'. This kept it from chasing the nobleman's deer'.

P. 123 says that, 'Elephants also have good-sized brains. The brain of a 4-ton elephant weighs almost 10 pounds, which is more than 3 times as much as the brain of a human being. But the elephant's brain is not as good as ours, and it cannot think nearly as well'.

*Slugs* by David Greenberg, London: Pepper Press (1983).

More than half of this book is spent on ways people could harm slugs - usually by eating them in various ways (covering them with chocolate, for example, to serve as sweets).

However, there are other ways suggested: 'Sizzle them on light bulbs' (p. 8), 'Dissect a slug with scissors, Poke one with a tweezer, Pop one in the microwave, Freeze one in the freezer' (p. 9). 'Drop one in a blender' (p. 11). 'Slick a Slug with Super Glue' (p. 13). 'Roast 'em, Toast 'em, Stew 'em, Chew 'em, Dump 'em in your mother's bath, Ask her to shampoo 'em' (p. 18). 'Tie one to a bottle rocket, Launch it, Zappo, Zingo!, Shoot one from a slingshot, Through a neighbour's window' (p. 22). The last few pages feature suggestions about what giant slugs might do to you, ending with the words: 'Then they'll stuff you a barbage can, And Leave you overnight, And after how you've treated Slugs, It surely serves you right!' (p. 31).



### Appendix 3.

*The Times*, Thu 8 July 1999:

#### Animal rights protest at Pamplona bull-run

For the first time animal rights activists protested against the annual running of the bulls in Pamplona as an American-funded group attempted to take the glamour out of an event made famous by Ernest Hemingway's novel "The Sun Also Rises".

The small group of American and British-led protesters raised their banners just before six fighting bulls were let loose to chase hundreds of runners, many wearing typical red and white costumes, down the northern Spanish city's narrow cobbled streets to the bullring on the first day of the annual eight-day San Fermin fiesta.

The international campaign against the bull-run included the placing of advertisements in American newspapers and running television advertisements on specialist travel channels.

It urged the thousands of young Americans, Canadians, Australians and Britons who follow Hemingway's route to Pamplona every year to boycott the San Fermin festival.

"Even Hemingway himself acknowledged the cruelty and tragedy of the bullfight," said Andrew Butler, spokesman for the American-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals organisation, which led the protest.

But Hemingway fans, including hundreds of young Americans who each year treat the bull-run as a rite of passage into manhood, prefer to remember Hemingway as one of the greatest admirers of both the bullfight and of the San Fermin fiesta.

Yesterday's protesters said they had been warned by local anti-bullfight activists not to protest at the site of the bull run as the runners could have turned violent. "It would not have been the first time that violence against bulls has been turned against people," Mr Butler said.

However, the protest was largely ignored by the hundreds of runners whose minds were fixed on the dangers of the half-mile dash along the often slippery cobbled streets.

Yesterday's run resulted in several injuries and two local people were taken to hospital though neither was in a serious condition. A total of 13 people have died in the bull-runs since 1924.

The anti-bull protest came as Pamplona itself was busy paying homage to Hemingway ahead of the centenary of his birth on July 21.

## Appendix 4.

From sop044@bangor.ac.uk Mon Feb 28 13:59:07 2000  
Date: Tue, 1 Feb 2000 16:48:54 +0000 (GMT)  
Subject: Meat Eaters Survey.

### 1. Can you in a sentence or two explain why you eat meat?

- I was brought up eating meat so I don't know what it's like not to eat it. (besides, I hate fruit & vegetables!!).
- Because I like it, and in moderation I like to get some meat in my diet each week, usually white meat. for the same reason I eat loads of fruit. So for health and liking reasons.
- Meat is a good source of fibre, protein and minerals which the body needs on a daily basis to maintain growth and general health
- I have a problem with food (psychological problem causes convulsions of stomach and throat) and do not like many thing and so have a limited diet. Animal meat/products are the best single source of protein to help me keep a balanced diet (possibly just the lazy option?)
- Because it tastes nice, and I'm not too keen on a lot of vegetables
- It's tasty, and you don't have to be so picky when you shop.
- It's natural, survival of the fittest, we're at the top of the food chain.

### 2. How would you respond to the argument that humans have no right to eat other animals?

- Humans have been eating other animals since the dawn of time. If it was so bad and wrong, wouldn't someone, somewhere have stopped it along the way?
- I would say that if we are talking morals then no we don't have any rights. But most meat eaters don't consider it to be a moral issue. The argument from nature. Its natural, we are omnivores, and we eat other animals just as other animals either eat or are eaten. Its not about rights, its just about survival. Whether or not the survival argument is relevant in western society today is another issue.
- Humans are themselves fundamentally classified as animals, and since in nature animals prey on other animals for food, it is therefore logical that humans should follow this example. Although, in my opinion the techniques of large output farming are questionable

- at least in their natural surroundings, when animals are hunted down as a food source, they are given a fighting chance.

- Given my faith I try to follow the teachings of the bible and in there is the separation of man from the animals, and our authority to use them as a source of food. Although this is no justification to be cruel to them and make them suffer, and abuse them for the benefit of man in ways other than for food. Also man by design (teeth, eye position, digestive system etc.) is suited to a carnivorous (of at least omnivorous) existence and a lot of organisation and planning etc. is required to get a balanced diet without eating animal meat/products (or does it ?). Could a vegetarian/vegan have survived in the past ?
- Try getting a lion to eat a nut-roast!
- Who says
- There's nothing wrong with it as long as the animals are treated OK (i.e. free range and quick death, with short transport).

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*[from the single vegetarian respondent].*

Hey, this is actually a subject on which I DO have an opinion !!  
Although perhaps my answers aren't appropriate to the questions !

1. Can you in a sentence or two explain why you eat meat?

- I don't eat meat. I've not done so for over 7 years. Why do I not eat meat ? well, I guess superficially it's simply a healthier lifestyle choice. But a more meaningful answer would be a belief in Buddhist philosophy re: transmigration of souls, and the compassion for all living things.
- But when I did eat meat, I did so purely because of tradition. Raised on meat and two veg, it was a subliminal habit.

2. How would you respond to the argument that humans have no right to eat other animals?

- From a spiritual view point we have no right to take a life. But spirituality is all about enhancing your inner self, becoming a "better" person. For some people that is a luxury. When food is scarce, we cannot judge people for killing to survive. It's the nature of things. I live a privileged life where I have a choice. The supermarkets are full of fruit and vegetables, not only can I satisfy my needs quite easily.

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