

Proceedings of  
the Conference

# Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society

*held at the  
University of Exeter, UK*

*10 March 2012*



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*Edited by Chris Calvert and Jessica Gröling*

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# Introduction by the editors

*Chris Calvert and Jessica Gröling*

**T**he Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society (CPAS) conference took place on 10 March 2012 at the University of Exeter in the south-west of England. The event was open to everyone and free to attend, attracting around 150 academics, animal advocates and hybrids of the two from all over the UK and Europe. The day was packed with presentations, workshops, film showings, stalls, vegan food, and even performance poetry and music, as well as a keynote address by the philosopher and veteran campaigner Dr Richard Ryder.

As is usually the case at conferences, speakers were given relatively little time to present, so we are pleased to be able to give greater space to the work of several of them through the publication of these proceedings. We also bring you extended reports from three conference workshops, additional reflections and even a comic. The presentation sessions and keynote address were filmed for the benefit of all who could not be present on the day, and can be viewed on the CPAS website ([animalsinsociety.wordpress.com](http://animalsinsociety.wordpress.com)) or on YouTube ([youtube.com/user/animalsinsociety](http://youtube.com/user/animalsinsociety)). We highly recommend watching the presentations not featured in written form here, as a supplement and companion to what you can read in this collection.

The feedback received from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, which makes us hopeful that other similar events can be organised in the future. If you would like to be involved in planning and delivering a future event or would like to make a suggestion, please get in touch with us. Whether this experience can be repeated depends greatly on the enthusiasm of those in a position to organise a follow-up. You can stay up to date with any developments, and much else that may be of interest, by visiting the website, and by joining the mailing list (email us at [animalsinsociety@gmail.com](mailto:animalsinsociety@gmail.com)) or Facebook group (search for “Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society”). Amongst other resources and opportunities for discussion, a list of taught courses and academics of possible interest to readers is maintained there.

## Contributions in brief

This collection opens with the keynote address given by **Richard Ryder**, surveying the progress of the animal rights movement since the 1970s and offering advice from a career spent at its heart. This makes invaluable reading for anyone who wishes to engage with the political process—understood in its broad sense, to include the shaping of public opinion via the media—for the benefit of animals. Ryder's reflections offer a fascinating insight into what factors he considers to have contributed to the many advances already achieved, and the priorities he has in mind for the campaigners of the future. The theme is taken up by **Kim Stallwood**, who looks first to the individual motivated to transform their relationship to animals, before switching to the societal level to ask what kind of a phenomenon animal rights really is. He presents a five-stage model for the progress of social movements and advocates a renewed conception of animal campaigning as being centred on political and not just individual change, making recommendations for how campaigners should see themselves as fitting into the political system.

Three more papers based on presentation sessions follow, exploring cultural, literary and artistic representations of animals. **Jane Flynn** leads us to the horses of the First World War battlefields and discusses how they were used and understood, juxtaposing contemporary sentimental tales of brave soldiers and their horses with the harsh economic logic of the conflict. Moving to the middle of the last century, **Seán McCorry**, who at the conference spoke on farm fictions of that era, concentrates here on Orwell's *Animal Farm*, asking to what extent it can be seen as a pro-animal text, and unearthing the tensions that underlie previous critical readings of its pastoral setting that neglect the real position of the farmed animal. Bringing us up to the era of film and television, **Gill Bliss** traces the cultural roots of anthropomorphic animals and defends their use in storytelling, turning the spotlight on her own work as an artist bringing animal forms to the screen through animation.

A presentation-derived paper and two workshop reports turn our attention to some specific sites of human interference with animal lives. **Daniel van Strien** continues in the historical vein of the preceding contributions by considering Edinburgh's Institute for Animal Genetics as a window into an inchoate animal–industrial complex, examining its aims and connections to the wider edifice of exploitation. **Jessica Gröling** reports on her workshop about tools for campaigners researching vivisection in the UK, revealing her own findings in this area and offering extensive practical assistance in making freedom of information requests. In his workshop report on the topical controversy of the UK badger cull, **Alexander Badman-King** issues a plea for greater understanding of the priorities and preconceptions brought to the table by opposing parties, looking to seventeenth century discussions of forestry for insight into present-day disagreements about conservation.

Whether the conference would be judged a success or not always depended in part on the extent to which it brought together people interested in and concerned about animals from the worlds of academia and campaigning. It was gratifying to see such a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, opinions and personalities at all sessions during the day, and there cannot have been many academic conferences in any field with quite the same range of attendees. **Sarah Crowley** offers a workshop report that explores questions of epistemology and the role of emotion at the interface of research and activism. Then in the concluding written contribution to these proceedings, **Chris Calvert** attempts to synthesise and reflect on some of the views expressed by a variety of conference attendees and other interested parties, exploring the differing perceptions of academics and activists, of welfare scientists and abolitionists, and giving practical suggestions to those who wish to advance co-operation. Finally, **Nathan Stephens Griffin**, who presented in part on the subject of his unconventional research methodology, rounds off this collection with a comic summing up how he—and, from what we have heard, others—felt about the conference.

## About CPAS

Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society began as a project founded by a small group of postgraduate students with the following aims:

1. To create a space for postgraduates across disciplines including Politics, Geography, Sociology, Philosophy, Law, History, English, Education, Psychology and others working in the emerging fields of human–animal studies and critical animal studies to present their research to a supportive audience of other academics and animal advocates
2. To actively engage those working and campaigning on animal issues and provide space in discussions and workshops for their voices, concerns and ideas to be heard
3. To raise awareness of the ways in which those who campaign on animal issues can contact academics and be involved in research
4. To act as a springboard for future collaborative work between postgraduates working in this field, as well as between academics and campaigners, by creating a network that can share resources, brainstorm research ideas, provide a forum for the discussion of the potentials and pitfalls of collaborative and participatory research, and organise and promote future events
5. To remind the academic community that human practices have real and detrimental consequences for the lives of the billions of animals with whom we share the planet, and to encourage academics to consider how their research can have a positive impact on animals and human–animal relations

Although the intention was to showcase the work of primarily postgraduate students, CPAS evolved to include independent academics as well and we saw little reason to discourage this.

## The critical dimension

There has been some discussion surrounding the use of the word ‘critical’. So many of the people that CPAS brings together are in some way critical of human relations with the nonhuman world, and in particular the ways in which humans exploit other-than-human animals. All of us are also familiar with the use of the word ‘critical’ to indicate that we have reached a decisive, important or crucial moment in time. We may indeed be at such a juncture. The growth of meat and dairy consumption across the globe, and in particular the extension of the factory farming model to the developing world, along with the knowledge and technology that now enables humans to modify and control so many aspects of nature, are all contributing to global problems such as climate change, habitat destruction and species extinction, as well as raising important questions about the notion of human supremacy and the origins it shares with many other forms of oppression.

There is one other thing the CPAS organising committee are critical of and that is the current state of academia and its relation to the ‘real world’, which includes campaigning groups and animal advocates who are making a difference through education, awareness-raising and direct intervention. We believe that academics can contribute to social change by deliberating on tough ethical questions, providing sound analyses of social and natural phenomena and developing alternatives to our current mode of living. But we think they can do all of this most effectively if they conduct and disseminate research in an open, committed and collaborative manner. CPAS endeavours to bring the worlds of academia and animal advocacy closer together through dialogue and discussion.

## Acknowledgements

There are several individuals and organisations whom we would like to acknowledge for making the conference a success and for contributing to this publication:

- The speakers, panel chairs and filmmakers
- Dr Richard Ryder, our keynote speaker
- Heidi Stephenson and *Resurgence* magazine for kindly donating copies of their March/April 2012 edition “Animals: A New Ethics”
- The campaign groups and their volunteers who held stalls on the day, namely:
  - Abolitionist Approach
  - Animal Equality
  - Catholic Concern for Animals
  - Cornwall Action for Animal
  - Devon Badger Group
  - Ethical Investors
  - Exeter Friends For Animals (EFFA)
  - Farplace Animal Rescue
  - League Against Cruel Sports
  - Loving Homes Dog Rescue
  - South Devon Animal Rights
  - Vegan Society
  - Vegetarian and Vegan Foundation (VVF)
  - Vegetarians’ International Voice for Animals (Viva!)
  - Voice for Ethical Research at Oxford (VERO)
- The University of Exeter, and particularly Debra Myhill, for providing sponsorship for the conference and for providing us with a venue
- Event Exeter and the porters for their help in the planning and smooth running of the conference
- Our caterers Fresh Ideas and the Long Lounge, and Herbies restaurant for providing the evening meal
- The North Bridge Inn, who kindly hosted our evening fundraising event
- ONSIND, Some Sort of Threat and Lorraine Parker for entertaining us and helping us raise over £200 for hunt saboteurs’ groups in Devon and Cornwall at the evening benefit gig
- Our anonymous reviewers, who made many valuable comments on the papers included here
- All others who attended and contributed to the discussions we had on the day

On behalf of, and with thanks to, the conference convenors: Jessica Gröling, Nikki Shaw, Louise Squire, Nathan Stephens Griffin and Daniel van Strien; we very much hope you enjoy reading these conference proceedings.

*Exeter, April 2013*



# Conference programme

- 9.00 Welcome by Jessica Gröling
- 9.30 Keynote address by Dr Richard D. Ryder: “Campaigning techniques”
- 10.20 Break, with stalls by animal advocacy organisations
- 10.45 **Session 1**
- Presentations: “Animals in the public arena” chaired by Mark Gold
- Kim Stallwood Animal rights: moral crusade or political movement?
- Lee McConnell Animals as property: the adequacy of current legal protection
- Workshop: “Research and communication tools for activists and academics”  
with Jessica Gröling
- 11.45 Break, with stalls by animal advocacy organisations
- 12.00 **Session 2**
- Presentations: “Conservation” chaired by Dr Nigel Pleasants
- Nicole Schafer Dismantling media-produced fear towards predators  
*via video link from New Zealand*
- Livia Apostol A critical approach to the study of prosocial  
donations for the conservation of animal species
- Workshop: “Responding to the badger cull” with Alexander Badman-King and Nikki Shaw
- 13.00 Lunch, with stalls by animal advocacy organisations and film showings:
- Tangled Waters* by Nicole Shafer (25 mins)
- Kissing Stallions* by Olivier Daley (11 mins)
- Making Amends* by Olivier Daley (7 mins)
- 14.30 **Session 3**
- Presentations: “Textual animals” chaired by Louise Squire
- Seán McCorry The political aesthetics of mid-twentieth century farm fictions
- Gill Bliss Animals with attitude: finding a place for animated animals
- Tina Hartmann A dog’s words: animal language and animal intelligence in ethology and literature
- Presentations: “Theoretical perspectives” chaired by Tereza Vandrová
- Hannah Strommen Biblical animals: returning to Genesis in the wake of Jacques Derrida
- Catherine Duxbury The Other that therefore I am: critical feminist perspectives on the ‘natural’
- Nathan Stephens Griffin Doing critical animal studies differently: learning from Lorde
- Workshop: “Activism and academia: bridging the gap” with Daniel van Strien
- 15.45 Break, with stalls by animal advocacy organisations
- 16.00 **Session 4**
- Presentations: “Animals, symbolism and visual culture” chaired by Dr Samantha Hurn
- Jingjing Zhao Chinese zodiac: animal images in Chinese culture
- Stuart Evans From fairytale to roadkill: animals in art
- Jane Flynn Sense and sentimentality: a critical study of the influence of myth  
in portrayals of the soldier and horse during World War One
- Presentations: “Speciesism, environmentalism and capitalism” chaired by Nathan Stephens Griffin
- Christian Stache The failures of metaphysical anti-speciesism and the benefits of historical  
materialistic Marxism for a social theory of animal liberation
- Daniel van Strien Capitalism, Marxism and the animal–industrial complex
- Oscar Horta Disregarding sentient beings: speciesism and environmentalism
- Workshop: “Emotions or evidence? Effective activism needs hearts *and* minds”  
with Sarah Crowley (*née* Batt) and Toni Vernelli
- 17.15 Break, with stalls by animal advocacy organisations
- 17.30 Closing plenary
- 19.30 Conference dinner at Herbies restaurant
- 20.30 Benefit gig in aid of South Devon and Cornwall Hunt Saboteurs



# Keynote address: Campaigning techniques

*Dr Richard D. Ryder*

**B**Y ‘CAMPAIGNING’ I REFER TO ANY ORGANISED SERIES OF actions aimed to gain support for or to build up opposition to certain practices. A campaign seeks change. Usually it seeks change at the root of a problem and not at its edges.

There are two further common features of a campaign: first a campaign often aims to prevent something bad happening in the future, rather than picking up the pieces after it has happened. Secondly, it usually seeks general change, and not just change for a particular case. In the words of the metaphor: a campaign aims to provide a fence at the top of the cliff, not an ambulance at the bottom. So how can we campaign for animals in the twenty-first century?

I was fortunate to be in at the beginning of the modern animal protection movement — an extraordinary period that has stretched, in the UK, from the mid 1960s until about the year 2006. It was four decades of remarkable achievement in which huge changes have been gained not only in attitudes but in laws and regulations both nationally and internationally. Being in this privileged position I could observe what techniques were effective in animal protection terms and what were not. The modern animal rights movement began, incidentally, in Britain and not in the USA! In this paper I will try to outline some of my conclusions.

So, how do we start a campaign? Here are five useful steps:

1. targets
2. publicity
3. public opinion
4. decision-makers
5. follow-up

## 1 Targets

First, you need clear-cut targets. It is no use saying “I want people to be nicer to animals” or “let’s stop being cruel!” These expressions are too fuzzy. Powerful people are busy. They don’t have time to work out the details of what needs to be done. They may want to help you, but you must still tell them exactly what it is you want.

These clear-cut targets must be concisely and clearly expressed. For example: ‘BAN COSMETICS TESTING’, ‘STOP LIVE EXPORTS’ or ‘SAVE THE SEALS’ were effective. Slogans are useful for several reasons: they immediately identify the issue, they unite like-minded people and they tell those in positions of influence what they have to do.

Such slogans work especially well in public, in order to enlist new support and to motivate existing supporters. In private, however, far more specific and concrete targets may be required. When negotiating with a government minister or a company CEO you have to speak their language. So it is: “amend Section 3 of the 1976 Act so as to prohibit fur farming”, or “delete exemption 2 of Regulation 5 so as to make castration an offence”,

or “repeal the 1934 Act so as to permit prosecutions for cruelty”.

These are fictitious examples but are given to illustrate the need for good campaigners to know exactly what it is they want. Campaigners must give chapter and verse. You must be able to state exactly what it is you want to achieve.

## 2 Publicity

The second step: most campaigns need initial publicity. A brief analysis of some of the successful animal campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s reveals that they *all* started with high-profile and emotive publicity.

Pictures work better than words. When human beings actually see pictures or film of animals suffering, about 70% react strongly and positively in support of the animals. Thank God. So publish the pictures!

There are two chief ways to manufacture publicity: pay for advertising or create your own news stories.

### Pay for advertising

Gavin Grant’s 1989 RSPCA *Pile of Dead Dogs* advert rocked the Thatcher government, and Brian Davies’ 1990 full page “blood-bespattered” anti-hunting adverts started off the successful modern campaign to outlaw hunting with dogs. David Bailey’s 1985 anti-fur TV commercial *Dumb Animals* (made for Mark Glover of Lynx) was similarly brilliant. (Good agencies like Abbott Mead Vickers and Bogle Bartle Hegarty played key roles in these.) What do these three examples have in common? The answer is that they were all shocking!

### Generate news stories

This is harder but less expensive. Usually it needs inside investigations and photos. The Sunday People’s photos of the ‘smoking beagles’ in 1975 is a case in point. At our suggestion the newspaper infiltrated their reporters into the ICI laboratories in Alderley Edge. They took jobs as laboratory technicians. In the USA there were Henry Spira’s infiltration of a New York museum where sex experiments on cats were being conducted, and

then came the two shocking stories of the Silver Spring monkeys and the hammering of the heads of conscious primates. Brave whistle-blowers and infiltrators got pictures of these atrocities. In Britain we saw film footage of cruelty to elephants in circuses, cruelty in slaughterhouses, cruelty to rabbits in experiments, cruelty to seals and cruelty to whales. All these involved photographs or film obtained dangerously by courageous infiltrators but without violence or risk to the lives of the animal abusers themselves.

Let me say this clearly: nothing is to be gained by violence to the abusers. The media will immediately turn it against the campaign. It is also highly morally questionable to cause suffering in order to stop suffering. So violence is to be avoided at all costs. There are, however, various relatively non-violent ways to create news stories such as:

- a) shocking or emotive pictures
- b) the use of celebrities
- c) tying the story to some other newsworthy event (timing can be important here)
- d) wrapping it in something funny or novel: a stunt
- e) creating an event, e.g. a demonstration, a conference or by publishing a report.

All these are media-worthy ‘pegs’ on which to hang good stories.

Good relations with the media count for a lot. The media need news stories as a car needs fuel. So establish good personal relationships with journalists and reporters. Some will be genuinely interested in animal welfare and some will not be. But all need good copy. So work with them. Meet them. Lunch with them. Convince them that you are a reliable source of accurate information. Sometimes they will let you down, or their editors will. They may turn against you. They may twist a good story or fail to publish it. This doesn’t matter. You must expect this. The important thing is that sometimes they will publicise cruelty to animals, and that is what you want.

Some journalists are specialists in environmental, farming, wildlife, pets, animal politics or animal science issues. So, pander to their special needs. Get to know them so that you can email or

telephone them at any time if you have a good story.

Dish up the story carefully. Even quite ordinary events can be presented in such a way as to make them exciting. You can help the media by doing this for them. So, collaborate with the journalists in creating good stories. Remember, we are at a huge advantage here because animals are a highly desirable media issue. We are not trying to promote saucepans or toilet paper or insurance, but animals! So we start with an advantage.

Remember, publicity is the universal lubricant when a campaign gets stuck! However good the negotiators on the inside of the tent, it can often help them if those on the outside start banging drums!

Sometimes, of course, publicity gets out of hand. If this happens there is no need to panic. Dealing with the media is like sailing a boat. Sometimes the sea can get a little rough but the trick is to use the wind to your own advantage to get to where you want to go. The more it blows, the faster you can get there. But not launching the boat at all means you don't go anywhere. A controversy is often a good thing. It's like a gale: it can double your publicity!

When doing live interviews on radio or television, prepare one or two main points and then make them repeatedly and clearly, almost regardless of the questions. Tell listeners what to do (e.g. email their MPs).

If you ask journalists to agree to let you speak 'off the record', ninety per cent will honour that undertaking. Ask reporters and producers in advance what their 'angle' will be. Stress the cruelty of what you are campaigning against. Complain to editors if there is bias, etc.

### 3 Public opinion

The third step is to rouse public opinion and focus it onto the decision-makers. Most campaigns benefit from having public opinion on one's side. So rouse it! Rouse it by publicity, letters, emails, Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc. When you've roused it, measure it professionally. You can then truthfully say "70% (or whatever) of the public (or the elect-

orate) are on our side!" This can make a great impression on those who can change things — especially on politicians. Then ask your supporters to bombard supermarkets, governments, politicians, etc., with demands to do what you want them to do, using emails, telephone calls, letters, etc.

## 4 Decision-makers

Then arrange to meet the decision-makers. Make sure, as I have already said, that:

- a) you know exactly what you want, and
- b) that you are meeting the people who have the power to actually deliver it

The golden rule is to contact the people with the real power. It is still who you know as much as what you know! So don't waste too much time with backbench MPs if it's the government you should be moving. Don't pressurise laboratory researchers if it's the Home Office who can actually change things. Get your targets right.

In Britain, ordinary MPs can help a little but not much. Parliamentary questions, early day motions and debates can be helpful, of course, but not sufficient. You should be meeting ministers, or their officials or their special advisers! Outside the UK you should meet commissioners, the directors-general of the great quangos, as well as presidents and their advisers.

When you meet them, present your case correctly. Some of us have worked hard in recent decades to develop the science of animal welfare, and outstanding figures in this country, such as Professors John Webster, Donald Broom, Stephen Harris and David Moreton have hugely helped to make progress. Science has become the leading form of evidence in animal welfare campaigns generally.

In fact, there are only about six types of evidence that impress those in power:

1. evidence of the cruelty itself (pictures included)
2. scientific evidence (so commission the right scientific research)
3. public opinion (so use opinion polls)
4. legal opinions (so employ top lawyers)

5. economic advice (use economists for this)
6. evidence of cruelty-free *alternatives*, that do not cause cruelty to animals (e.g. tissue cultures for laboratory testing)

## 5 Follow-up

The final step is always to say thank you when you get a result but, even so, keep checking that the result is being enforced. After crucial meetings write summaries of the progress that has been agreed and send copies to those with whom you have been negotiating, so they can't forget!

## Notes

Not all campaigns need a high profile. Some campaigns can take place behind the scenes in the 'corridors of power' and produce excellent results. Even a single telephone call can sometimes produce results — or a series of private meetings over dinner. Examples are my telephone call to the head of a shipping company which resulted in his stopping the live exports of calves for six months. Another is a friend who met a dictator who, overnight, outlawed the eating of dogs in that part of the world! All these, however, were already in a context of support. So try your usual contacts: work on the inside as much as you can.

Once a campaign is off the ground and running well, good results can often be achieved by quiet negotiations in committees. RSPCA scientists, for example, sit on scores of official committees. Such meetings don't always need publicity, although the *threat of further publicity* is often a vital element that can lubricate such negotiations. Get to know those who can help. Make friends with them.

Campaigns should be both reactive and proactive. Campaigning is not just a matter of reacting to events. As we have just explained, brand new issues can be launched out of the blue and new news stories created over night. Often one hears the question: should we be reacting to events or should we be proactively creating new ones? Clearly, it's not a question of either-or. Good campaigners should be doing both.

When I was heading the Political Animal Lobby (PAL) I would scan the media every day and frequently would find a news story involving animals to which I could respond productively, either by issuing a press release, or telephoning a friendly journalist, or writing a letter to a government minister or doing something to pursue PAL's animal welfare objectives. Even bad events are opportunities to get your message across. They should never be missed. They are all bandwagons onto which one should jump in order to steer them in the direction of animal welfare.

In the business of campaigning one has to be good at multi-tasking. One has to react creatively to new events while, at the same time, pressing on steadfastly with established campaigns. Focus and flexibility must be combined.

## Examples of good campaigns

Let's just consider a few old examples of successful campaigns that achieved good results in the past. They follow approximately the five steps I have just suggested:

1. clear-cut targets
2. initial publicity
3. the rousing and focusing of public opinion onto decision-makers
4. meetings with those decision-makers
5. thanks and follow-up

**The Scottish seal cull in 1978** was called off after:

- a) provocative publicity created by a Greenpeace boat that confronted the foreign marksmen
- b) Brian Davies' huge adverts in the national press showing seals, and urging readers to 'write to the Prime Minister'. (Mr Callaghan received a record 17,000 letters in a week!), and
- c) my face-to-face RSPCA meetings with the Secretary of State, providing a scientific face-saver for the Government. (Thanks to Bill Jordan, we produced evidence showing that nobody knew for certain how much fish a seal actually eats!)

**The smoking beagles affair of 1975** produced a ban after:

- a) undercover journalism (directed by campaigners) generated shocking publicity (i.e. photographs of Beagle dogs) being forced to smoke in research laboratories
- b) a tour of the country urging the public to write letters to MPs
- c) a face-to-face meeting with the Home Secretary, Mr Carr

**The import ban on baby seal skins in 1983** was achieved in the EU after:

- a) several years of shocking publicity of the Canadian seal slaughter on TV, etc.
- b) cooperation between IFAW and RSPCA
- c) a scientific report from the RSPCA into its cruelty
- d) visits to Canada by celebrities (RSPCA sponsored)
- e) letter-writing campaigns to MEPs and meetings with EU officials
- f) mass demonstrations in London, Brussels and Strasbourg. (This was one of the occasions I found myself standing on the plinth of Nelson's Column addressing a crowd of several thousand. Later, in Brussels, I shared a platform with Brigitte Bardot!)

**The UK Act and EU Directive on animal experimentation in 1986** followed:

- a) much publicity about cruel experiments from about 1970
- b) a book that helped provoke parliamentary debates, EDMs and television (Victims of Science)
- c) formation of a group of scientists and politicians for reform (CRAE) in 1976 (chaired by Douglas Houghton)
- d) meetings with Home Secretaries calling for CRAE's detailed reforms (we met Willie Whitelaw and Merlyn Rees)
- e) successful lobbying for pledges in election manifestos (Margaret Thatcher agreed in 1979 to 'modernise' the law)
- f) contact with EU officials (e.g. Stanley Johnson) led to an EU directive, also in 1986

**The ban on otter hunting in 1977:**

- a) peaceful but funny protests at hunt meetings in order to generate publicity
- b) cooperation with conservationists
- c) serious articles placed in scientific press after planning with friendly journalists
- d) contact with MPs and ministers
- e) presentation of combined scientific, economic and legal evidence with evidence from polls of public opinion

As I've said, in general it pays to have the reputation for being able to create embarrassing publicity against animal abusers, governments, breeders, hunters, transporters, laboratories, trappers, etc. Don't forget President Teddy Roosevelt's campaigning motto: "Talk quietly but carry a big stick". The big stick in our case is usually publicity.

## Conclusions

These examples all illustrate the principles I have listed. Campaigning requires a lot of hard work and one must be prepared to persist long enough to get results. You can spend months bringing pressure to bear without any sign of progress and then, one more little shove, and hey presto, resistance suddenly collapses!

Campaigns vary hugely in length. Sometimes, as I've said, you can get a result after one persuasive phone call. Other campaigns drag on for years. The modern campaign to reform the UK law on animal experimentation started in 1970, for example, and only achieved new legislation in 1986. Sixteen years. The modern campaign to stop hunting with dogs was started by Brian Davies (and myself) in 1990 and only reached fruition with the Hunting Act of 2004. Fourteen years. (Of course, ineffectual campaigning had been going on since the 1880s.)

I mention Brian Davies. He has been the person from whom I have learned most about campaigning. Brian moved calmly and creatively. He cut himself free from bureaucracy. He always went direct to the top. So he met presidents, prime ministers and chief executives. He would make friends with them.

How did he gain access? Sometimes by offering

good publicity (and public support) to these figures of power; sometimes he did it with donations to election funds or party coffers. For six years, I was Director of the Political Animal Lobby (which Brian and I created in 1990) and we made large but legal donations to each of the main political parties in the UK. Subsequently Brian and I met all the party leaders—Prime Ministers John Major and Tony Blair, as well as Paddy Ashdown and Neil Kinnock. We discussed animal welfare and what we wanted, both with them and their personal assistants, special advisers and chiefs of staff (e.g. Jonathan Powell, Peter Mandelson and the young George Osborne).

You should always try to work on the inside but you must never lose touch with your own grassroots or with the power of public opinion which you can mobilise on the outside. I have campaigned throughout Europe, in Washington and in Canberra (Australia) and have found that the basic principles are the same all over the world. In developing countries, which lack elaborate constitutional structures, progress can sometimes be easier—provided you meet the right people!

Of course there were many other great campaigners in the ‘golden age’ besides Brian. I will mention only some of those who have now retired or died: Clive Hollands, Douglas Houghton, Dave Wetton, Joyce D’Silva and Peter Stephenson are shining British examples, each specialising in their own fields. My old friend Kim Stallwood has been a pioneer both as a campaigner and as a publicist. In America there were the elegant Christine Stevens and the dynamic Henry Spira and later, Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco. Since then, and still active, are many others.

As I’ve said, violent extremists have proved counterproductive, the media giving them short shrift and the whole movement becoming tarred with the same brush. Since the great controversy over hunting with dogs, the opposition has worked hard to get the media onto its side, sometimes persuading agencies to change their allegiances, or seducing individuals to do so, and often exaggerating the support they have. Insulting accusations of ‘terrorism’ have been circulated against animal welfarists indiscriminately.

In the early days there was a tendency for the organisations to compete counter-productively. So Hollands, Houghton and myself instigated a movement to bring the campaigning groups together in joint action committees (CRAE, FAWCE, JACOPIS and GECCAP) which made us more effective. We started the attendances at party conferences, revived political lobbying generally and promoted the use of scientific and other high-grade data. In 1978 I persuaded the RSPCA to set up the Eurogroup for Animals in Brussels which has had so much success, and runs along similar lines, bringing all the EU countries together, lobbying the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament.

The recent successful campaign against hunting also illustrates the effectiveness of the organisations working together—from the early 1990s we formed a working group of the RSPCA, LACS and IFAW. For the record, it was Douglas Batchelor at the League who performed so well in fronting the campaign. The RSPCA’s role was to organise back-bench support for reform and this, too, turned out to be important when faced with a vacillating Tony Blair. PAL played a behind-the-scenes role in commissioning research, influencing the party machines, funding party animal welfare researchers, and supplying our own high-grade technical evidence (on economics, pain, conservation, opinion surveys and even ethics) direct to Downing Street.

I mention ethics. It has in fact helped the modern animal welfare movement very much that the whole issue has been underpinned by huge international support from first-rank philosophers such as Professor Tom Regan (who gave academic credibility to the theory of animal rights), Professor Andrew Linzey (who supplied the theology) and Professor Peter Singer (who championed animal liberation on utilitarian principles). The ethical revival started in Oxford in about 1970 (e.g. with my theory of speciesism and the ground-breaking book by the Godlovitches and John Harris entitled *Animals, Men and Morals*) and then, five or ten years later, spread through the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Europe and the rest of the world. We were also indebted to Brigid Brophy.



Gradually the human race is beginning to realise that the other animals are simply our evolutionary cousins. They suffer just as we do! Speciesism is a prejudice no better than racism or sexism.

A good strong ethical argument always helps but is, sadly, never sufficient on its own. Of course, as a psychologist, I am aware that some people make better campaigners than others. Intelligence, commitment and drive obviously are important. Persistence also. A couple of years ago I listed twenty-one skills that I thought are important in campaigning. Most of these are being able to use the various techniques and tools available. In particular, the good campaigner will use the internet as a tool, make and keep top contacts (e.g. with ministers, editors, CEOs), speak publicly and eloquently, see how to use science as a tool, see how to use opinion polls as tools, see how to use the law (legal opinions, judicial reviews, injunctions, court proceedings, etc.) as tools, see how to use media and creative publicity as a tool, see how to use direct (non-violent) action as a tool when necessary, see how to use advertising as a tool, mobilising public opinion and focusing it effectively, formulating sexy slogans and sound bites, using positive incentives (e.g. awards), having charm and leadership skills, and seeing the way through and around problems. Good campaigners must also show drive, persistence and determination to achieve results, have commitment to the overall objects of animal welfare, the ability to mobilise parliaments, persuade committees, inspire the public, publicise successes, show knowledge and grasp of the subject and be able to focus on proactive issues while, at the same time, reacting positively on the full range of issues as they arise.

The perfect campaign team would thus include:

- a) a high status **leader** who will be listened to by other high status people (e.g. prime ministers, CEOs, heads of professions)
- b) a good **lawyer** who knows how to use legal arguments and procedures for campaigning purposes
- c) good **scientists** who can produce scientific evidence for reform and for humane alternatives
- d) a good **psephologist** who can show the force of public opinion on votes, etc.
- e) good **publicists** who can mobilise the media, and rouse public, political and specialised opinion through publicity, using events, celebrities, protests, etc.
- f) a good **economist** who can point out the economic case for reform, where this applies
- g) good all purpose **lobbyists** and **networkers**

Much can be achieved still by strength of personality, charm and sheer drive!

Our successes have been remarkable: besides huge changes in attitude we have created five new laws in the UK, twelve in the EU, and many elsewhere in the world including a new anti-cruelty law now being planned in China. The movement has worked because it has ranged across the board from those prepared to protest in the streets, to those who passed resolutions in respectable institutes, from frankly emotional outbursts to the cool and sophisticated findings of science and the law. The movement has been successful because it encompassed such a wide cross-section of the community.

Campaigning can be fun. I remember campaigning in Scandinavia when the icicles hanging off the gutters were five feet long, meeting the baby harp seals in Canada, and speaking on the steps of a fifty-foot high statue of Lenin surrounded by six beautiful Russian models wearing only body make-up! (That was in the summer!) Somewhere in what had been the old Soviet Union I addressed an audience of five hundred young veterinary students about the need for animal rights and was amazed when the three granite-faced professors — all Brezhnev lookalikes — solemnly agreed with me. I was not used to getting the support of elderly veterinarians back in Britain! When I mentioned my surprise to my host afterwards — a local animal-minded oligarch — he merely murmured, “well, I pay them!”

Since about the year 2006 the movement in Europe and the UK seems to have slowed. Three important UK laws passed in the present century were, in fact, planned and lobbied for in the 1990s — the ban on fur farming which came into effect

in 2000, the Hunting Act of 2004, and the Animal Welfare Act of 2006 (announced by Elliot Morley when he opened the RSPCA's Headquarters in 2001). For the record, the innovative 'duty of care' provision in this Act (Section 9) was proposed by Mick Flower of the RSPCA, while the redefined cruelty offence (Section 4) followed proposals from David Thomas and myself.

Maybe the time will come when young people with the energy of youth will reawaken the movement. So much is accepted now that was ridiculed in 1970. Animal welfare is now widely agreed to be a serious and worthwhile scientific, political and moral issue. As a successful political move-

ment it deserves more serious academic study, to support that begun by Robert Garner. Hopefully, after the current world recession is over, we can begin to move forward again after a few years of unwanted stagnation. In an increasingly global planet animals need protection all over the world, and I look forward to the day when there will be a Convention on Animal Rights at the United Nations and when  $x$  amount of pain in a dog or a cow will be given the same amount of moral and legal importance as  $x$  amount of pain in a human being.

We now need a new start. This conference could be the new beginning!

*Dr Richard Ryder was Chairman of the RSPCA Council, Founding President of the Liberal Democrat Animal Protection Group and Director of the Political Animal Lobby. He also taught Animal Protection as Mellon Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Tulane University, and his latest book is Speciesism, Painism and Happiness: A Morality for the Twenty-First Century, Imprint Academic, 2011. He was one of the pioneers of the modern animal rights movement, starting his campaigns in Oxford in 1969, and coining the term speciesism in 1970. His new approach to ethics generally, covering human as well as animal issues, is known as painism.*

# Animal rights: moral crusade or social movement?

*Kim Stallwood*

**Abstract:** Animal activists seek their objective of moral and legal rights for animals by promoting the adoption of personal choice cruelty-free, vegan/vegetarian lifestyles. This strategy is informed by personal transformative moments (PTMs), which are individual, powerful situations when the veil of institutional animal exploitation is lifted. The transformation to an animal activist is profound. Animal rights becomes a moral crusade. The animal liberation objective which animal activists seek will be achieved, they believe, by creating similar situations for others to experience PTMs. These are moral shocks triggered by public educational campaigns. Thus, people become animal activists. It is naïve to believe, however, that everyone will care about animals as deeply as animal activists do. Consequently, animal activists need to understand how society responds to change, particularly from social movements and, then, apply this insight into achieving animal rights. I propose five stages which successful social movements move through. As animal activists learn how to function as animal advocates, by focusing on public education (e.g., protests, consumerism) and political objectives (e.g., public policy, lobbying), the animal rights movement will advance further along the five stages toward achieving its mission.

**T**HE QUESTION I SEEK TO ANSWER IS THIS: IS ANIMAL rights a moral crusade or a social movement? I will conclude that it is both; however, the animal rights movement currently sees itself as more of a moral crusade than a political movement. I will make the case that this impedes our ability to achieve moral and legal rights for animals. The animal rights movement must understand itself as a social movement and be engaged with the mainstream political arena.

For the purposes of this talk, I use animal rights to mean a broad range of organisations, with vary-

ing ideological perspectives, and differing tactics and strategies. I work from the assumption that what unites them is a genuine concern for animals and a commitment to end animal cruelty and exploitation.

Everyone who I have met who advocates for animals (except for those who are raised by vegan or vegetarian parents), has a compelling personal story of how they changed from being a meat eater to a vegetarian or vegan. My story began when I was a student in 1973, and worked in a chicken slaughterhouse. It led me to becoming a vegetarian

in 1974 and a vegan in 1976.

Sociologists Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper (2003, p. 54) describe moral shocks as moments when in the “course of daily life something happens to us that distresses, surprises, and outrages us.”

Moral shocks are triggered by direct exposure to animal cruelty and exploitation, as in my case when I worked in a chicken slaughterhouse. Or they may be caused by making connections between products we consume and the animals used to produce them. Reading books, watching DVDs, talking to friends, visiting websites — these and many other ways are how people experience moral shocks. This is how people discover animal cruelty and exploitation is present throughout our world, in the lives we live, the products we buy and where we work and play.

Tom Regan describes in *Empty Cages* (2004) three types of animal advocates. The Damascan, who has a startling revelation. The Muddler, who struggles with the challenge of animal rights throughout their life. The Davincian, who intuitively understood all along. My colleague at the Animals and Society Institute, Ken Shapiro (2007), characterises animal advocates as ‘caring sleuths’, who discover, seek and embrace the suffering of animals. These personality types help to illustrate who animal advocates are and how we each arrived from different places.

Regardless of any differences, each personal narrative is unique. Everyone experiences a personal transformative moment when what was previously hidden from view and what we are trained not to see reveals itself for what it is: institutionalised animal exploitation. We see meat, not as delicious steak, but as the charred remains of dead animal body parts.

The personal transformative moment is powerful. So compelling that it overwhelmingly informs the rationale of most of the animal rights movement’s current strategy to educate the public. This is why the animal rights calendar is full of media stunts, information dissemination, demonstrations, advertising campaigns, personal appeals by celebrities and so on. These are all attempts to influence people to go vegan. Not that there is any-

thing wrong with that.

As a moral crusade, these public education campaigns are primarily seen as the only tool available in the tool box. Their importance becomes overstated. Consequently, they take on the vicarious urgency of animal rights as a quick fix or a moral shock. Celebrities make animal rights ‘sexy.’ Living as a vegan is seen as a fashion statement, which could just as easily go out of fashion.

This is how animal rights becomes a moral crusade.

But not everyone will go vegan. Do we even have all the time needed to make progress one life at a time? So, concurrent with changing ourselves and inspiring others, we must also change society.

Any change in society is accomplished in a surprisingly small number of ways, such as politics, education, culture, competition, cooperation and, unfortunately, war. Fortunately, for most of us, we live in a democracy, however flawed it may be.

One of the most important ways we compel people to behave is with public policy. In other words, regulations and legislation. The assemblies, congresses and parliaments elected by the people pass laws. Some of us may not need laws to compel us to act in the interests of animals. But many, if not most, will need to feel the impact of pro-animal public policy to make them live in ways which do not harm animals even if they are not interested in doing so.

The animal rights movement fails to transform its animal activists (‘moral crusaders’) into animal advocates (‘political activists’). Presenting simultaneously the need for personal transformation with social and political objectives explains why vegan living is not only lifestyle choice but also an enduring political statement. There is a need for an animal rights movement to simultaneously function as a moral crusade and a social movement.

Sociologists define social movements as a “collective, organized, sustained, and noninstitutional challenge to authorities, powerholders, or cultural beliefs and practices.” (Goodwin and Jasper 2002, p. 3)

The animal rights movement is a social movement. There are many similarities among social

movements, including the animal rights movement, but there are two significant differences which makes our movement truly unique.

Animals cannot organise themselves into their own social movement. Unlike humans, animals cannot be the agency of their own liberation. We have to do it for them on their behalf. This onerous responsibility makes it even more important for us to understand how to achieve animal rights.

Second, we have to tackle the complex issues of the benefits accrued from animal exploitation. I tend to think these benefits are overstated by the animal-industrial complex. When the public think about their relations with animals they are reluctant generally to give up any pleasure (e.g., eating meat) or benefit (e.g., curing disease) they may feel is their entitlement. But as Barbara Noske (1989, p. 23) asks, “*which* human needs are being fulfilled and *whose* interests are promoted by the existing animal industrial complex?” Are all the products and services derived from animal exploitation, as well as all the other ways we use animals, truly essential for our survival? I think not.

Whatever may or may not be at risk, the benefits we do accrue from not relying upon animals to produce food and manage disease are considerable. History shows that social movements are accused routinely of seeking change which will adversely impact society if they achieve their objective. But it rarely, if ever, turns out to be true. Indeed, it is any wonder that we have made the social and economic progress that we have, given these outrageous claims.

Those who maintain we must use animals to produce food and fight disease will say any rights animals may have must be subordinate to dominant human interests. This frames human and animal interests as a competition. A strategic dichotomy all too prevalent in human history: men superior to women, whites to blacks, natives to immigrants, heterosexuals to homosexuals, and so on. In our case, it is humans are superior to animals, which is called speciesism. As society evolves and we become aware of our superiority prejudices, we seek to resolve them, as we become more aware of the resulting injustices. We readjust, accommodate and move on, in all likelihood, all

the better for it.

The same, I have no doubt, will be true for animal rights; particularly when we understand that, if we want to feed the world’s population and encourage well-being, animal exploitation in factory farms and research laboratories are not only fundamentally problematic, but also significant contributing factors to aiding famine and disease. This is why it is vital animal rights is understood as part of a progressive agenda of social justice alongside other liberation movements. The animal rights movement must learn, including from other social movements, how social justice is accomplished through the practice of politics.

Animals are already in the political arena. It is their representatives whom we should be concerned about. Powerful commercial interests that profit from animal exploitation are well-established political players. Their involvement in the political process helps to maintain the status quo, adopt regulations and pass laws that help animal users more than the animals. This political bias in favour of animal exploitation is reinforced by our continued institutionalised, commercial use of animals as property and disposable commodities. There is a lot of money to be made from animal exploitation and many other non-financial gains. It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the present regulations and laws relating to animals are more about protecting our interests in what we do to them than in us defending them from our actions. Animals are represented in public policy by those who benefit from the power and control they exert over them. Animal researchers (not antivivisectionists) and factory farmers (not vegans) are more likely to be members of the policy-making networks which determine regulations and laws governing our relations with animals. Consequently, animal-related public policy is more about how to use animals than protecting them from us.

From reading *Eco-Wars* by Ronald T. Libby (1998), I came to the conclusion that social movements pass through five stages from public ignorance to public acceptance. He discusses, in an informative chapter on the animal rights movement, the analysis of Bill Rempel, a research

scientist at the Department of Animal Science at the University of Minnesota (Libby 1998, pp. 62–63). Bill Rempel's bias is toward animal agribusiness. He sees animal rights as passing through four stages: development of an issue, politicising the issue, legislating the issue and litigating the issue. I liked his analysis but thought it needed revision and adapted his approach to reflect more accurately my understanding.

I imagined a society in which animal rights are widely, if not universally, accepted. I worked backwards from there to our present time. From this exercise I came to the conclusion that social movements pass through five stages from public ignorance to public acceptance. The five stages are:

1. Public education, when people are enlightened about the issue and embrace it into their lives
2. Public policy development, when political parties, businesses, schools, professional associations and other entities that constitute society adopt sympathetic positions on the issue
3. Legislation, when laws are passed on the issue
4. Litigation, when laws are implemented and enforced on the issue
5. Public acceptance, when the issue is embraced by the majority of society

This is the lifespan of a successful social movement, as it emerges from obscurity to acceptance. It is possible to determine which stage is reached, what is next, and why some organisations and issues fail, stagnate or succeed. We can discover the lifespan of a successful social movement and anticipate what happens next.

The moral crusade of personal lifestyle choice and the social movement for institutional societal change are very different approaches in a complex, long-term process. Most issues start in stage one and expand to the others, but not always in a clear sequential order. Life is very complicated. Everything never fits neatly into any analysis. Simplistic schemes are problematic. Nevertheless, they help to determine where we have come from

and where do we go from here.

For any social movement to achieve its mission it must pass through each of the five stages and maintain an active engagement in each one. In doing so, its ability to resist setbacks, obstacles and opposition from opponents is diminished more and more. In other words, as a social movement expands its presence in each stage while maintaining activities in each one, the power and control that any opposition may wield against it is increasingly weakened.

For example, bloodsports in Britain—fox, stag and deer hunting and hare coursing—existed in Stage One (public education) for decades with occasional success in Stage Two (public policy, e.g., opposition from local governments and others). After many attempts at legislation in Parliament (Stage Three) as private members' bills (bills that are not government-sponsored and likely to fail), the passage of the government (non-opposition) backing of the Hunting Act 2004 triggered the next stage, Stage Four, enforcement. Pro-bloodsports enthusiasts failed in their attempts to sue the government in the House of Lords and for civil liberties in the European Court of Human Rights. The abolition of bloodsports has enjoyed public support (Stage Five) for many years; however, a law is only a law as long as the legislation is on the statute books and as long as it is enforced—an important point to remember given that, at the time of writing, the coalition government consisting of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats is committed to a free vote in the House of Commons on the future of the Hunting Act. A 'free vote' is the name given to a procedure whereby MPs and Lords are given permission by their leaders ('whips') to vote according to their conscience. Normally, the whips instruct MPs and Lords to vote along party lines. Free votes in Parliament are usually reserved for issues considered to be moral and cross party affiliation and ideology (e.g., hunting, abortion, gay marriage, death penalty).

The passage of the Hunting Act legitimised the public policy and legal position that hunting is a cruel and ineffective wildlife management tool deserving of prohibition. It also empowered hunt

opponents as public policy makers and made hunt proponents as the protestors. The Hunting Act became law because of a multi-decade, multi-faceted effort, which took on an important direction as part of Lord Houghton's 'Putting Animals into Politics' campaign at the general election in 1976, consisting of securing manifesto or platform commitments from the political parties. Consequently, hunting became a mainstream political issue. The important turning point came when the Labour Party was elected in 1997 with a manifesto commitment to a 'free vote in Parliament on whether hunting with hounds should be banned by legislation.'

This meant that it was government policy, not the responsibility of an individual MP with a private member's bill, to move forward any legislation on the issue.

Contrast this with other animal issues that are not presently framed as legitimate public policy. For example, the breeding of so-called pedigree cats and dogs and its impact on companion animal overpopulation. There is also a lack of action by the government to promote a vegan diet as beneficial for human health and well-being as well as for the environment, including challenging global warming. Companion animal protection and vegan diets should be the policy of political parties. If and when they are elected to form a government, they have the mandate of the electorate to implement these commitments in Parliament with legislation.

The five stages are personified in the transition animal activists ('moral crusaders') must make to

animal advocates ('political activists'). We can never assume a growing collective of personal lifestyle change automatically leads to institutional, societal change. The capriciousness of human nature is subject to change. Institutionalised regulations and laws are much more entrenched expressions of society's values. The animal rights movement on its own will not achieve animal rights but it will succeed if it embeds its values into the policies of mainstream political parties who go on to form governments. Then, informed and sympathetic governments will act more decisively in favour of animal rights.

Presently, I conclude the animal rights movement is mostly in Stage One (public education) with some presence in Stages Two (public policy), Three (legislation) and Four (litigation). If Stages One and Two are the moral crusade, Stages Three and Four are the social movement. In contrast, the animal-industrial complex is resolutely entrenched and fully engaged in all five stages.

To conclude: The animal rights movement's present strategy reveals our political naïvety. Actions frequently occur in isolation and absent any long-term strategic, organised political vision or mission. They do not make a coherent long-term, macro-strategy to achieving institutional change. Surely, the mission of the animal rights movement is to encourage individual change and work for institutional societal change.

Animal rights is more than just a moral crusade. It is a political, social movement, too.

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# Sense and sentimentality: a critical study of the influence of myth in portrayals of the soldier and horse during World War One

*Jane Flynn*

**Abstract:** Tied closely to traditional images of warfare and to British national identity itself, the soldier's horse came to inhabit a space between myth and reality, in which it was often imbued with allegorical meaning and symbolism far beyond the reality of its physical existence. The horse had many faces, but in its popular portrayal as the recipient of the soldier's compassion and kindness, it provided consolation by inferring that such humanity would be afforded to the soldier himself. In effect, it became a means through which to portray the wider tensions and concerns of the British at war. It is testament to the power of this desire for reassurance, that these portrayals have tended to eclipse the real experience of soldier and horse, which was starkly at odds with these romantic portrayals.

**T**HE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WAS A PERIOD OF RAPID technological and social change. However, although horses had been replaced by the railways for long distance transport and haulage, horse transport was still widely used for shorter journeys (such as those to and from the railway station) and for making local deliveries. In farming, the horse would not be replaced by the tractor until after the Second World War. As Stephen Caunce (2006) has noted, this was not because farmers were 'innately conservative', but because horses were still by far the most practical proposition. Instead, farmers preferred to invest in items of judiciously chosen labour-saving machinery which could be moved by the horse, rather than to replace their horses with

a tractor. Horses were still considered to be far more reliable than the early tractors, or steam ploughs, and horses had the distinct advantage that they could be supported to a large extent by the farm itself.

In the cities, however, horses were far more costly to run. As a result, the city bus and tram companies were already well on the way to complete mechanisation by 1914. This would create difficulties for the Army purchasers on the advent of World War One, as these had long been a reliable source of horses of the type the army increasingly required for its artillery and transport regiments. Not only this, but mechanisation was also creating a growing, and increasingly horse-

illiterate, urban population. Horse regiments preferred recruits already skilled at handling and working with horses, but mechanisation was making these men increasingly scarce. Although it could recruit men who might prove to have an aptitude for horse work, the Army would now have to assume nothing and begin with the most basic principles of horse management. Indeed, the Army's insatiable need for horse-power serves to remind us of the non-linear, and often highly contradictory, nature of mechanisation in the early twentieth century.

Following the recent war in South Africa (1899–1902) the horse supply and horse wastage question became the subject of a government inquiry. There had been administrative problems throughout. An understaffed Remount Department had done well in the circumstances, but there had been errors made in the horses they had purchased, in how the horses had been transported to South Africa and in how long they had been given to acclimatise to local conditions before being sent into action. These horses, unfit and out of condition from their transportation by sea, did not survive well once in the field. Carrying up to twenty stone, troopers' horses soon suffered from fatigue and sore backs. Constantly on the move, lameness and minor injuries went unchecked. The veterinary service, frustrated by its unwelcome attachment to the Remount Department and by serious understaffing, was often unable to intervene.

The reforms which followed in the intervening twelve years ensured that, by 1914, the British Army was modern, mobile and, increasingly, mechanised. Indeed, it was hoped by many that the horse would no longer be needed on modern battlefields. However, as events were to prove, this would not be the case:

Between 1914 and 1918 hundreds of thousands of horses were employed on the Western Front, as they must be in every war. People who do not understand the realities of warfare think that horses are not required on modern battlefields. They think that all battles will be conducted by mechanical means. So they will be for the first few days, then it will be the horse. Truly the horse might cry out more loudly than any other creature, "Give peace in our time, O Lord." (Seely 1934)

In August 1914, the British Army increased its horse establishment from 25,000 to 165,000 horses (Corrigan 2003). Many horses had already been identified as suitable for Army work and had been registered with the Horse Registration Scheme. Commercial horse owners were happy to register their horses, as they were paid to make their horses available to the Army in case of war. However, many other horses were compulsorily purchased and, while many owners handed their horses over with very little fuss, in other cases search warrants had to be issued. Remarkably, in just two weeks, the Army acquired all the horses it would need to accompany the British Expeditionary Force.

The UK supply of horses was soon exhausted, however, and Britain turned to the world market for its horse supply. The Army's purchasers were sent to North America, New Zealand, South America, Australia, India, Spain and Portugal to purchase the best horses (and mules) they could find to fill the Army's quotas: looking for anything from heavy draught horses (to haul the heavy artillery guns) to lightweight officers' chargers. Again reinforcing how vital horses were to the war effort, it is necessary to emphasise that the initial cost of purchase was merely the tip of the iceberg. One source suggests that to supply each Australian horse cost £600. At the time a vast amount of money, but once we consider the cost of the initial purchase, of transportation, training, equipment, vaccination and veterinary care, shoeing, feed and so on it is not difficult to see how this figure was achieved. Singleton (1993), for example, estimates that, "between 1914 and 1920 the Remount Department spent £67.5 million on the purchase, training and delivery to the front of horses and mules."

As the war progressed, demand for horses increased. By 1917, horses and mules owned by the British Army peaked at 804,000 (Corrigan 2003). Horses carried men, laid cables for telegraph communications, delivered ammunition and supplies to the forward troops and hauled artillery guns. Indeed, so vital were they that one contemporary observer pointed out that nothing moved, "that didn't have a horse attached." Far from being

an anachronism, horses were still as one soldier put it, “sacrosanct in the army”.

Sacrosanct, however, did not mean that the Army had some sentimental attachment to its horses. Instead, they were a vital tool in warfare. Thus, although how many horses an army had was important, how fit these horses were to do their job was even more so. Singleton has suggested that the reason horses were treated as well as they were during World War One was simply because the War Office recognised the economic, and practical, benefits to be gained (Singleton 1993). In short, horses were valuable assets which it made financial sense to protect. Indeed, while the Army purchasers were advised to pay between £40 and £100 per horse (a reasonable figure, but low in comparison with prices often paid on the open market) the average soldier earned just one and a half shillings (eighteen pence) per day. (At this rate, it would have taken a soldier one and a half years to buy a horse costing £40.) It is not so surprising then that, where the welfare of its horses was concerned, the Army proceeded with pragmatism and economy. If horses were to be killed, then this was to be as the result of enemy action and not (as had been the case in the Boer War) through avoidable ill-treatment and disease. Recruits on joining up in any horse regiment had it swiftly impressed upon them that the horses’ welfare came before their own. And again, this was not merely a matter of sentiment, but a matter of life and death. A horse could keep a man alive, or kill him, just as easily as a well, or badly maintained, rifle.

Managing horses in war was no easy task and soldiers in horse regiments had a hard life. The drivers of transport and ammunition wagons often found themselves the target of enemy shell fire, particularly on the Western Front where, because of the atrocious conditions, horse transport rapidly became the only means of carrying vital rations, ammunition and supplies to the forward troops.

Struggling slowly through mud, whilst shells dropped all around him, was a situation one horse transport driver described as “silent death”. He also believed that, when he was assigned his pair of horses, this was his luckiest moment in the

Army. Without his saddle horse, Splitear, he was quite convinced he would not have lived as long as he did:

A fellow soon becomes attached to his saddle horse and the feeling is very mutual, as I sometimes think the horse has the better sense of the two, and appreciates a little kindness a whole lot. [...] I believe my saddle horse knew more than I did, and it is one of the reasons I lasted as long as I did. He took care of me. (Johnston 2004)

Johnston was painfully aware that anyone reading his memoir might think him overly sentimental. However, modern study of horse–human interactions demonstrates how the soldier–horse relationship had the potential to keep both man and horse alive (Dierendonck and Goodwin 2005; Keaveney 2008). A driver who trusted his team, and horses which trusted their driver, were far more likely to come out unscathed than those who did not. If the Army nurtured this soldier–horse relationship, which in many respects it did, then this was because it knew this made the team a far more valuable weapon in war.

Although it would be wrong to assume that all soldiers had the same degree of respect for their horses as that expressed by Johnston, there are sufficient examples to suggest that for some soldiers the plight of their horses made as great an impression upon them as that of their fellow men:

The patient’s feelings about horses were very intense. He had been used to horses since childhood [...] As a boy he was engaged about the stables and then became a groom. He wept profusely when talking to me of the sufferings experienced by the wounded mules in Gallipoli, and when I suggested that human beings suffered more he would not have it so. Animals could not talk. No animals should have been allowed there, he said. He had never had any trouble with horses, for he understood them exactly, and he was always given the difficult ones to manage. [...] He identified himself with the horse. [...] Consciously the soldier instinct in my patient would know no fear for himself. (Eder 1917, pp. 81–2)

Thus, the horse allows us to understand what came to be a “gap in experience” (Winter 1986) between the war as it was in reality and the war as it was imagined. It provides a unique medium through which to explore the mindset of the British as they, in turn, lived through the events of World War One. What did they expect this new

war to be like? Inevitably, this question would be answered largely by their experience of previous conflicts; an experience which, for the vast majority, was one which had been created for them by the artists of the Illustrated Press.

By World War One, photography and war illustration began to be used side-by-side. Together, they provided full pictorial coverage of the war's events, but alone, the photograph still had severe limitations. One problem was that, although it was seen to show events 'truthfully', the equipment was still very cumbersome. Very occasionally photographs appeared in the illustrated press claiming to show the action as it took place, but it was far more common for photography to record scenes behind the lines, before a battle, or after it had taken place (Wilkinson 2003).

During the war, in addition to the existing press, a number of publications emerged simply to cover the war's events. Some, such as *The War Illustrated*, were relatively inexpensive. Postcards could be bought of the more popular illustrations, while many editions included posters of significant events; to pull out and keep. Others included 'free gifts' such as themed backgrounds with which to mount a photograph of a loved one serving in the War. Thus, the war illustration had the potential to live on far beyond the edition of the newspaper in which it had originally appeared.

One such example of this is Fortunino Matania's *Goodbye Old Man: An Incident on the Road to a Battery Position in Southern Flanders*, which appeared for the first time in July 1916. Now 100 weeks (and therefore 100 editions of the *War Illustrated*) into World War One, this image of a young soldier saying a hurried goodbye to a dying artillery horse whilst under shell-fire, was to achieve lasting popularity.

Matania created an artistic interpretation of events, which at least appeared to show events as they happened. The force of the shell and the true horror of the incident were only suggested. Tension was instead created by the destruction of the nearby building, the smoke and flying debris and the crater made in the foreground; indicating the full force of the blast which had wounded the dying horse. Pieces of hurriedly cut harness tell us

that the soldier had returned, not simply to console the horse, but to retrieve what was an expensive piece of equipment. After all, Remounts would provide them with another horse and, perhaps, the harness could be used again. Perhaps, in this seemingly small detail, lies a brief glimpse of the sense behind the sentiment.

Far removed from any association of the horse with the foam-flecked glamour and excitement of the cavalry charge, both horse and soldier in *Goodbye Old Man* are really very ordinary. It was easy to identify with 'Tommy Atkins' and his humble draught horse and this, no doubt, added to its appeal. Both central figures look tired and worn: the horse displays marks across quarters and chest which show where the harness has rubbed. The soldier meanwhile looks drawn, tired and old beyond his years. Just as the soldier had been torn from the safety of his normal life, so too had the horse. Portrayed repeatedly as an innocent, the horses' unquestioning bravery was a popular theme for writers as well as artists:

Imagine the terror of the horse that once calmly delivered goods in quiet suburban streets as, standing hitched to a gun-carriage amid the wreck and ruin at the back of the firing line, he hears above and all around him the crash of bursting shells. He starts, sets his ears back, and trembles; in his wondering eyes is the light of fear. He knows nothing of duty, patriotism, glory, heroism, honour — but he does know that he is in danger. (Lockwood, cited in Evans 2009)

It is not difficult to see the public fears which lie behind this account. Indeed, Matania's portrayal of death itself betrays concerns far more painful than those pertaining to what is, when everything is taken into account, simply a dying horse.

The horse, when viewed closely, is clearly beyond any sort of aid. It is very nearly dead; its eyes roll upwards and blood bubbles at its mouth. However, what is important is that it is not alone. Other than mercifully despatching the horse there is nothing more the soldier can do, but he still puts himself in mortal danger to say a last goodbye to a faithful comrade. This image, then, is not so much about the horse as about the soldier and his humanity. It certainly suggests a hope of kindness which would have been a comfort to those whose

loved ones were in the war. I think we can allow them a little sentimentality in such circumstances.

## Conclusion

Today, we are privileged not to have to rely on horse transport or traction and this has significantly changed our perception of the horse and our relationship with it. Nowhere is our detachment from a pre-mechanised world more pronounced than in our understanding of the use of animals in war, where a tendency to judge the horse's use unfavourably and to sentimentalise its sufferings has become an almost irresistible force. Instead, we must be mindful of the seemingly obvious (but too often overlooked) fact that horses were an

integral part of every land army's machinery and part of the landscape of the battlefield. In short, there had never been a land war without horses in it and few envisaged that war could be waged in any other way. Hence, modern responses to animal suffering do not necessarily assist us in understanding the necessities and hardships of warfare, or to respond critically to the pragmatic and economic decisions unusual to war.

It is testament to the enduring appeal of images such as *Goodbye Old Man* that, even in this mechanised age, the soldier's horse can still capture the public imagination. However, what we must be wary of is that we, in seeking to recapture the past, do not misunderstand (or mislay) the *sense* which, at all times, underpinned the *sentimentality*.

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# Agrarian nostalgia and industrial agriculture: George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as political pastoral

Seán McCorry

**Abstract:** This article will consider the merits of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as a pro-animal text. Against readings which focus exclusively on the allegorical referent of Orwell's novel (that is, the Russian Revolution), my reading takes the animal story seriously as a commentary on contemporary agriculture. While earlier interpretations of *Animal Farm* read the pastoral aspects of the novel as an apolitical and ahistorical counterpoint to the historical and political trauma of the Russian Revolution, I claim that this opposition is untenable; the pastoral itself is always a site of historical change and political conflict. My reading notes Orwell's hostility to technology — a key site of increasing violence towards nonhuman animals in the early years of industrial farming — but argues that Orwell's critique of mechanised agriculture ultimately adopts a nostalgic mode which falls short of a full critique of instrumental violence against animals, instead offering a conservative defence of the pre-industrial *status quo*.

AS HE WAS WRITING *ANIMAL FARM* (2008 [1945]), George Orwell was living through a period which would decide not only the fate of European liberal democracy, but also the relations between land, labour and community. After a lengthy depression in the first decades of the twentieth century, agriculture in Britain had been stimulated into renewed activity by the demands of the war economy. The commandeering of resources for the war effort worked to construct agricultural capacity as a collective resource of the whole community in a manner which would anticipate the postwar social democratic reforms of Clement Attlee's government. Public information films

exhorted rural labourers to contribute to the collective effort of a society at war (*Country Town*, 1942) and County War Agricultural Committees emerged to coordinate this production drive (Holderness 1985, p. 7). With this redesignation of agriculture as national capital, affective and material relations between British citizens and their land were transformed; each citizen became a stakeholder in the nonhuman world. In *Animal Farm*, George Orwell imagines this expanded concept of community still more radically. He dispenses with the anthropocentric logic that allowed the postwar technocrat, Solly Zuckerman (1988, p. 116), to argue for “the rebuilding [of] the national herd”,

presenting instead a vision of agrarian life which calls into question the understanding of animals as mere resources or commodities. Before we can approach the task of re-evaluating the potential of *Animal Farm* as a pro-animal or green text, however, it will be necessary to engage with the form of Orwell's novel with a view to exploring the ways in which this form has frustrated anti-anthropocentric readings.

We might begin by considering the relationship between the text's status as allegory and the exclusion of actually existing nonhuman animals from the political domain. Responding to the feature film based on Orwell's novel, one commentator (Brown, cited in Leab 2007, p. 137) notes that the particular virtues of the animated animal story allow it to convey "important ideas in accessible form [...] without *apparently* carrying an ideological or political position." This semblance of political neutrality attracted the attention of the CIA, who covertly sponsored the filming of *Animal Farm* as a contribution to the cultural Cold War. The conventionally pre- or anti-political character of animal narratives in general, and farm stories in particular, was seen to make Orwell's text an excellent candidate for instrumentalisation as propaganda.

The generic conventions of allegory encourage readings which mark a sharp break between the literal and figurative meanings of the text, and the conjunction of this form with the generic conventions of the animal story encourages the general tendency in anthropocentric cultural criticism to "read animals as screens for the projection of human interests and meanings" (Armstrong 2008, p. 2). In the case of *Animal Farm*, the animal story functions as the literal level of meaning which stands for—and yet helps to obscure—the real referent: the fate of proletarian revolution in Russia. If conventional pastoral is characterised by a spatial differentiation of the urban *polis* from the rural space of retreat, this spatial distinction in *Animal Farm* transformed into a formal differentiation between figurative (that is, historico-political) and literal (or pastoral, extra-political) strands of meaning. In Orwell's allegory, the apparently ideologically innocent, conventionally

apolitical quality of the animal fable is appropriated to represent one of the decisive political events of the twentieth century. The effect of this formal strategy, which the CIA recognised so clearly, is to naturalise anti-communism by associating it with the perceived ahistorical universality of agrarian life, in which the farm setting serves to place the narrative outside history and oppose it to the turbulent reality of contemporary political struggles. In the words of Orwell's friend T.R. Fyvel (1982, p. 196), *Animal Farm* is set in a "timeless English Edwardian landscape". Fyvel's contradictory formulation exposes the ideological basis of the apparently apolitical pastoral; the impossibility of being at once 'timeless' and 'Edwardian' points to the inadequacy of readings which seek to dehistoricise farm narratives.

The task for pro-animal literary criticism must be to insist on the historicity of pastoral, and on the relationship between pastoral narratives and material conditions. In privileging the literal rather than the figurative layer of the text (that is, the animal fable rather than the Russian Revolution), my aim is *not* to recover what Richard Smyer (1988, p. 25) has called its "prepolitical" meaning. A properly pro-animal orientation requires us to reject nostalgia for "the more vital, emotionally healthy and socially cohesive" character of an extra-historical agrarian past (Smyer, *loc. cit.*). What is called for instead is the recognition that the presentation of literary pastoral as apolitical and ahistorical itself conceals an implied anthropocentrism. My reading refuses the opposition between politics and pastoral, insisting instead that this opposition depends upon an anthropocentric definition of the political which takes for granted the exclusion of the interests of nonhuman animals. From the vantage point of critical animal studies, pastoral is always-already political.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the legacy of an author of Orwell's canonical standing would be claimed by commentators representing various and competing political traditions. Indeed, the reception history of Orwell's work is in large part comprised of a struggle between those who would recruit him as a liberal ally to the West's Cold War and those who stressed his radical, sometimes



revolutionary socialism. From the perspective of pro-animal literary criticism, Orwell's legacy remains ambiguous. While it would be anachronistic to hold Orwell to the standards of rights-based or post-rights pro-animal thought, some recent criticism has argued for a limited pro-animal orientation in Orwell's fiction. In both Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010, p. 149) and Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson's animal rights polemic *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon* (2003, p. 9), Orwell's remarks in the preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm* serve as a point of departure from which to recover an ethical project at the heart of Orwell's novel. In the preface, Orwell recounts an encounter in which he witnessed the beating of an uncooperative draft horse. This incident leads him to

analyse Marx's theory from the animals' point of view. To them it is clear that the concept of a class struggle between humans was pure illusion, since whenever it was necessary to exploit animals, all humans united against them. (Orwell 1968, p. 406)

This attentiveness to the suffering of nonhuman animals finds expression in *Animal Farm* through the porcine Lenin, Old Major, who reminds his comrades that "our lives are miserable, laborious and short. [...] The very instant that our usefulness has come to an end, we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty" (*AF*, p. 3). Orwell's animal fable thus refuses to obscure the violence towards nonhuman animals which is often elided in conventional representations of pastoral.

We should notice, however, that though the *recognition* of nonhuman suffering is a precondition for ethical engagement, it does not in itself imply a positive ethical commitment. Orwell's contempt for contemporary pro-animal movements is made explicit in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (2001 [1937], pp. 161–2), where he describes the typical socialist as "a prim little man with a white collar job, usually a secret teetotaller and often with vegetarian leanings". Orwell opposes the perceived effeminacy of the organised socialist movement — the petit-bourgeois "pacifist and feminist" "food-crank[s]" who were active in the socialist parties of the thirties and forties — to the imagined virility of the authentic proletariat. This entanglement of

gender and class identities with animal ethics figures vegetarianism in familiar terms as a product of the emasculated sentimentality of bourgeois culture.

The novel approaches a recognisably pro-animal politics most clearly in its representation of the technological violence done to nonhuman life in modernity. Resistance to technology is a sustained theme in the text, and in the context of a rapid mechanisation of agriculture in the mid-twentieth century, this can be read as an ethical response to the damaging effects of a nascent industrial agriculture. In this, Orwell is articulating a characteristically mid-century suspicion of instrumental reason and its effects on the nonhuman world. I suggest, however, that Orwell's affective response to animal suffering makes sense only as a symptom of a generalised anxiety about technological modernity, rather than as a concern for animals as such.

In *Animal Farm*, technology and artifice function as the marks of oppression. The first taboo to be formulated by the revolutionary parliament of animals proclaims that "No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or engage in trade" (*AF*, p. 6); that is, no animal should share in the technological or artifactual fruits of human domination. This first meeting of the animals, which represents the birth of a nonhuman political subjectivity, is dispersed by the repressive exercise of technology as an extension of human power. Farmer Jones's gun scatters the animals, and this association between technology and human violence is reflected in one of the first acts of revolutionary justice meted out by the victorious animals:

The bits, the nose-rings, the dog-chains, the cruel knives with which Mr Jones had been used to castrate the pigs and lambs, were all flung down the well. The reins, the halters, the blinkers, the degrading nosebags, were thrown onto the rubbish fire which burned in the yard. So were the whips. All the animals capered with joy when they saw the whips going up in flames. (*AF*, p. 13)

If technology is a key site of struggle between the animals and their human oppressors, it also comes to define the terrain of struggle *within* the animal

community. The degeneration of the revolution is marked by the appropriation of human technologies by a privileged caste of nonhumans in the form of Orwell's pig-bureaucrats. Susan McHugh (2011, p. 183) is right to point out that "what makes pigs indistinguishable from humans is their coterminous dependence on and mystification of technology". The loss of revolutionary idealism begins as the pigs appropriate Jones's harness room—the former storeroom of the technologies of domination—as a "headquarters" for the study of "blacksmithing" (*AF*, p. 20) and other technological practices, and the degeneration of the revolution is completed by the pigs' adoption of whips (*AF*, p. 90).

Orwell's representation of technology thus inverts a conventional humanism, in which the mastery of the nonhuman world is legitimated by the abyssal difference between it and ourselves. In this anthropocentric ontology, the human marks an ontological break with the nonhuman world by its supposedly unique capacity for the creation of technologies, which themselves become the instruments of the domination of nature. *Animal Farm* refuses this modern teleology of ever-increasing technological mastery, figuring it instead as a narrative of loss. In Orwell's text, the violence of technological modernity is figured through the symbol of the windmill. Both factions of the animals' revolutionary leadership advocate the construction of an electric windmill which (it is claimed) will lessen the burden of physical labour demanded from the animals, but which in fact causes a pronounced intensification of labour culminating in misery and starvation. The windmill, then, exemplifies what Orwell sees as the false promises of technological modernity, representing both the electrification of the Soviet Union and the mechanisation of farming in the postwar period. It will be instructive to read this symbol against the practices of contemporary agriculture.

As historian Susan D. Jones (2003, p. 99) notes, "animal husbandry became 'animal science' in the interwar years, a speciality with its own university programs, journal, and national organisation". This shift had the effect of constructing nonhuman life as biological material to be managed, and this

management was to be achieved by the proliferation of new technologies. Whether or not a historical analysis of agricultural production would bear out the conventional analysis of a decisive historical break with tradition, it was understood as such by a variety of mid-century writers and intellectuals from across the political spectrum. Although I am suspicious of the claim that this intensification of agriculture marked the arrival of a wholly novel ethics of instrumentality—a view which can easily obscure the presence of instrumental relations of domination in non-mechanised animal agriculture—its material effect on agrarian life was undeniably a historical innovation: "The huge operations in which food-producing animals increasingly lived their whole lives in the decades after World War II had no exact precedent" (Jones 2003, p. 100). According to B.A. Holderness (1985, p. 110), the general trajectory of postwar farming in Britain has seen "an immense investment in new equipment, electrical installation, implements, tractors, milking machines, pig and poultry units, cattle houses, milking parlours, etc."; in short, the mechanisation of agriculture on a wide scale. These technological developments have left their mark on the nonhuman inhabitants of farms. As Holderness (p. 113) notes, "in 1935–38 there were 675,000 farm horses, and still over half a million in 1944–46. A rapid decline set in soon after". The war economy encouraged the replacement of draft animals with tractors, and over the course of the war, "mechanized horsepower increased by 150 per cent" (p. 7).

In *Animal Farm*, this technological transformation of agrarian culture is instantiated in the windmill, which promises to alleviate the labour of the animals while in fact only increasing them. The draft horse, Boxer—whose "one real ambition" was "to see the windmill well under way before he reached the age of retirement"—works to construct the windmill until his labours cause him to become physically incapacitated (*AF*, p. 74). Here Orwell seems to be responding (at least in part) to the contemporary erasure of draft animals from the agrarian scene by mechanisation. We should be wary, however, of reading this as a pro-animal turn in Orwell's fiction. Although our sympathies are

engaged by Boxer, what is being lamented here is less the tragic death of an overworked animal, and more the displacement of a nostalgic image of agrarian life by industrialisation. The fate of the animal is subordinated to the perceived loss (for *human* culture) of a simpler way of life.

Orwell marks the break between authentic and inauthentic modes of agrarian production by recourse to a narrative of technological alienation. Immediately following the Rebellion, before the porcine technocrats had conceived of mechanising the farm, the animals' inability to use human-adapted technology means that they work "in the ancient style and blow away the chaff with their breath, since the farm possessed no threshing machine" (*AF*, p. 18). The authenticity of 'ancient' tradition, undertaken without the mediation of technology, is counterposed to the destruction of tradition represented by the "chaff-cutter" which would be powered by electricity from the windmill (*AF*, p. 32). "Beasts of England", the animals' revolutionary anthem, likewise refers at once backwards to a pre-modern tradition of agricultural authenticity, and forward to the anticipated utopia. This link to tradition is broken by the technological consummation of bureaucratic power, as the technocrat pigs announce its abolition upon definitively seizing power over the other animals. Again, Orwell's discourse in these instances has little to do with the fate of nonhuman animals in modernity; rather, his adoption of a nostalgic mode is more closely related to a British Romantic left-wing tradition (including William Morris and, later, E.P. Thompson) which stresses the community and social solidarity of the pre-industrial rural working class.

From the perspective of critical animal studies,

it is apparent that this resistance to industrial agriculture and the nostalgia for traditional agrarianism do not amount to a properly pro-animal orientation as such. Recalling this, it may be appropriate here to address the textual afterlife of Orwell's novel. In his *Orwell Subverted*, Daniel J. Leab (2007, p. 76) notes that "the 'Investors' [in the Halas and Batchelor film of *Animal Farm*] did not wish to antagonise legislators, lobbyists or publicists involved with American agriculture". The "investors", who were in fact a CIA-linked covert operations outfit, saw that managing the film's representation of farming could placate agribusiness *and* dovetail with their anti-communist aims. To this end, they enforced changes to the film to bolster traditional agrarian imagery as a way of sharpening the "contrast between the good and bad farmers" and, following the allegory, between the respectful and exploitative bourgeoisie (Office of Policy Coordination memo, cited in Leab 2007, p. 79). The additions included "a sheepdog [with] a kindly farmer, [...] a contented cat, [and] a fat calf" (Leab 2007, p. 80). These images remind us that even the most positive representations of animal husbandry only sanitise and obscure the violence inherent in the human ownership and domination of nonhuman animals, and that such representations are perfectly compatible with the economic interests of agribusiness. In an age of intensive agriculture, agrarian nostalgia—and I would include Orwell's novel in this category—can provide cover for mechanised agriculture by reinforcing the traditional image of farming. These nostalgic images tie the work of representation to an aesthetics of loss, obscuring the seismic shift in material practices which are transforming nonhuman lives and deaths.

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# Animals with attitude: finding a place for animated animals

*Gill Bliss*

**Abstract:** The history of animation is interlaced with the use of anthropomorphism and zoomorphism as a device for creating popular characters and narratives. In the ‘post-modern’ critique of animal representation in art, there has been a largely negative debate surrounding anthropomorphism and the symbolic use of animal forms; echoing theories formulated for scientific studies in biosciences, social anthropology and social geography. How, then, can animation be understood as a relevant creative medium for investigating relationships between human and nonhuman animals in the modern world? The first section of the paper will identify a range of anthropomorphic forms and show how these are present in character design and narration. Links will be made to an understanding of human psychology (Winnicott 1971; Langer 1953) and the development of storytelling (Boyd 2009; Ingold 1994). This will include an exploration of ‘the metaphor’ as a literary and visual device capable of bringing richness to the language of moving image work (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Moving on, the role that animation has played in a present day discourse of ecological and socio-biological issues will be highlighted and related to modern day discourses. In this way, the unique qualities that animation has as an expressive art form will be shown to be eminently suited to portraying the diversity of experiences that human and non-human animals share.

## **Anthropomorphism and zoomorphism: definitions and frameworks**

Animal characters have played an integral part in the history of animation, through ongoing changes in technique (from simple drawn lines through to present day special effects), and development of

narratives (from two-minute gags to full-length feature films). Usually, the characters are not truly animal in form or nature, but are hybrids of humans and animals: anthropomorphic or zoomorphic creatures.

**Anthropomorphism:** the attribution of human characteristics to a god, animal or object.

**Zoomorphism:** the attribution of animal form to a god, human or object.  
(Oxford English Dictionary)

From these two definitions we can understand a range of imagery that uses combinations of animal and human characteristics: hybrid creatures containing both animal and human references. This type of character has been present in some form throughout the history of mankind and in most cultures—from cave paintings, through different religious forms (e.g., shamanism, Egyptian gods, deities of Hinduism), in myths and cultural folk tales, in a wealth of adult and children’s literature and political and social satire. Each new technological advance (the type and range of materials and techniques) has also brought forth a development of hybrid creations, from drawings made in mud and charcoal, through etched and printed book illustrations, to present-day digital and moving image film-work. When thinking about the design of these characters, it is possible to create a scale of reference, which has animal characteristics at one end and human characteristics at the other and all forms of hybridization in between (see Fig. 1).

The idea of a sliding scale of anthropomorphism is not new and examples that examine animation characters are discussed in the writing of Collignon (2008) and Atkinson (2006). Jardim also describes animation characters, but includes inanimate objects at one end of the scale, humans at the other and animals in between, in a reworking of the sort of scale referencing the interplay of human characteristics and mechanical/robotic devices (Jardim 2011).

Further investigation suggests that other factors need to be included when creating anthropomorphic/zoomorphic characters, and so we have the formation of grids of reference rather than a simple scale. Certain forms of character design

have developed because of the working process of animation: the processes and materials affect elements of drawing, rendering or making the figures. These designs are now seen to be natural animation forms and themselves often have an influence on the work of young animators, but their inherent characteristics were actually developed because of needs of the studio process, the constraints of materials or techniques. This can be followed, for example, through the changing shape of Mickey Mouse, which became simplified to ovals and tubes over a number of years: a body more easily drawn and manipulated in the animation studio process. In my own experience, working as a model maker in stop-motion workshops, the designs of characters was modified in different ways in order to make puppets function as moving figures, and to work efficiently with materials, timescales and budgets. It was because certain features were easily and successfully achieved that they became key design elements, for example the exaggerated facial features recognized in Aardman characters that make effective use of the mould making and replacement nature of plasticine stop-motion animation. In my anthropomorphic grid then, ‘design from process’ becomes an important factor influencing the make-up of characters.

Cultural factors and the knowledge of stories, myths and legends, world religions and different societies are now a huge melting pot of ideas from which anthropomorphic and zoomorphic characters can be re-assimilated. Today we must also include film, animation, media and advertising as part of the shared cultural knowledge from which future work can be drawn. The Bestial Ambivalence Model created by Wells (2009), recognizes cultural knowledge as a defining feature of anima-

**Anthropomorphism:**

the attribution of human characteristics to an animal, object or god

**Zoomorphism:**

the attribution of animal characteristics to a human, object or god

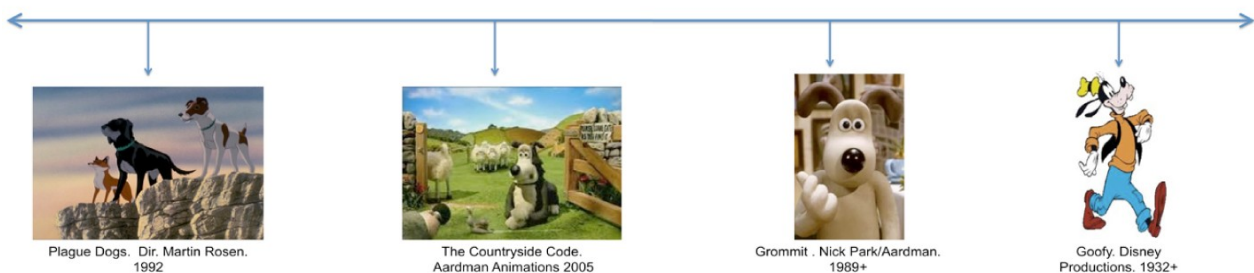


Fig. 1

tion characters, and also includes the psychological context, the intent of actions which also adds to the characterization. An important point is that characters may have changing roles over the course of a film rather than one firm plotting according to their outline form and characteristics (Wells 2009).

A framework, such as that illustrated in Fig. 2, may help to give some order to the melting pot of elements that come together to make up anthropomorphic characters; but anthropomorphism is discussed across a wide range of disciplines including philosophy, theology and sciences, each presenting a “range and complexity of ideas” (Mitchell, Thompson and Miles 1997, p. 4). Here too we find confusion, and in my view, this holds the key to much of the criticism of anthropomorphism and zoomorphism used in art and forms of creative image making such as in the following extract, taken from Yvette Watt’s (2011) article for *Antennae*:

[A]nimals are so often marginalised in recent contemporary art, even when they appear at first to be the primary subject. Accordingly, the respectful representation of the animal as an individual and the avoidance of using the animal as symbol or signifier is a matter of great importance to be heeded by artists and curators, lest the animals be exploited as beasts of burden forced to carry inappropriate conceptual agendas, allowing for a range of problematic and unethical uses and representations in animal artworks. (Watt 2011, p. 62)

It is personal experience of such negative response to my own creative work that has led me to look for ways in which I can gain and promote more of an understanding for anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery.

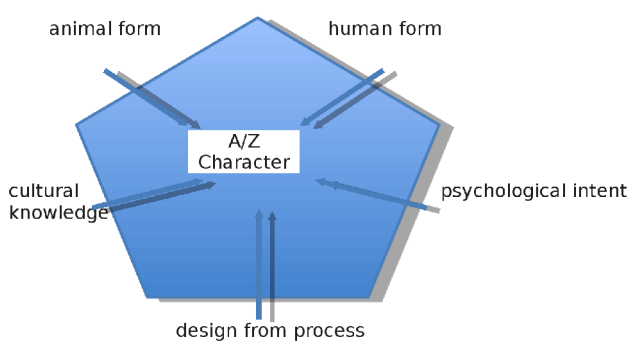


Fig. 2

## In defence of symbolic storytelling

Philosophical ideas relating to animals dating back to Aristotle tended to set up a divide between human and nonhuman animals and create hierarchies of competency with humans always at the top. This is further accented by western Christian religion: giving dominion over animals and making humans in the likeness of god. Whilst in Eastern religions we find a different outlook, that humans have a more custodial role, the state of being animal is still seen to be a lesser or lower state than that of being human (Fudge 2002). From philosophy and religion, there has been a feeling that any comparison of animals and humans is demeaning to humans.

In many of the sciences, such as the biological sciences, social anthropology and social geography, the traditional methods of gathering data were felt to be biased by human interpretation and only quantifiable forms of data collection became accepted as valid scientific work. More recently, things have eased and qualitative description is felt to give richness to otherwise bland and statistical data. J.S. Kennedy (1992, preface) makes the point in *The New Anthropomorphism* that during the preceding fifty years “the pendulum has swung both ways between anthropomorphism and behaviourism.” The radical behaviourists favour a Cartesian-type view that animal actions are simply responses to reflexes and tropisms without conscious effects of goal-orientated thought. Kennedy cautions against errors in ascribing intentional influences to animal behaviour, and seems to see the new sciences of ethology, behavioural ecology and social biology as being particularly in danger of succumbing to “un-witting anthropomorphism” or “neo-anthropomorphism” with the use of a subjective, everyday language (Kennedy 1992).

From both of these areas, philosophy and science, we can see an uneasiness and ambivalence towards the use of anthropomorphism, which would link humans and other animals together. While, historically, this was because humans were felt to be debased by too close a connection to animal nature, more recent concerns to bring animal welfare to prominence have transformed

this, so that it is now felt to be degrading of animals to be used to portray characters that are funny, evil or highly stereotyped. Further complications arise with representations of animals including anthropomorphic characters used to subvert notions of authenticity in advertising and promotional media (Potter 2010).

All of these ways of thinking about animals have had an impact on how artists' work is discussed and theorized, with some strong views against the use of any form of symbolic animal imagery. My starting point for redressing the balance and throwing a positive light on anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations has been to understand the drive behind the production of these images that I and many other artists feel is at the core of our work.

Looking at research in social anthropology and social archaeology, storytelling has progressed alongside cultural development. The most basic form of storytelling was the making of lists of animals and other things in the world. With more complicated forms of human interactions there came a need for storytelling to evolve into different forms such as myths and legends, moral tales and lastly novels, each related to ways of understanding differing aspects of the world. The use of symbolic reference and metaphor reflect the fact that the human brain is capable of abstract thinking, which has important implications for survival.

Such 'expression' is the function of symbols: articulation and presentation of concepts. Herein symbols differ radically from signals. A signal is comprehended if it serves to make us notice the object or situation it bespeaks. A symbol is understood when we conceive the idea it presents (Langer 1953).

Anthropomorphic use of animals in imagery and narrative has been present through the evolving nature of symbolic storytelling and can therefore be seen as integral to human cultural development (Boyd 2009; Ingold 1994).

Looking at research in psychology and psychoanalysis, Winnicott (1971) and Case (2005) state that having a relationship with transitional objects and phenomena is an important part of human development, allowing for the working through of

problems and anxieties, and the understanding of concepts such as 'similarity and difference', 'internal and external space'. These often take the form of animal characters. This does not mean that all anthropomorphic and zoomorphic creative work has to stay in childish form, but it does mean that most adults will respond to and recognize this type of symbolic referencing. So, using characterization and narrative in an anthropomorphic form is documented as a natural part of cognitive development.

## Animation beyond entertainment

In recent years animation feature films have taken ecological issues as part of their narrative content. Examples are seen in *Happy Feet* (2006, dir. George Miller), which weaves a tale around issues of over-fishing and the less well-known *FernGully* (1992, dir. Bill Kroyer), which builds narrative on concerns for loss of habitat. There is of course debate as to the extent that the advertising and merchandising surrounding films produced by large studios overshadows any positive messages within the films. Whilst there may be some novelty in the anthropomorphic penguins, fish, bats and so on who now play leading character roles, all seem to contain a large design input resembling the stuffed toy or plastic ornament that will undoubtedly follow on from the film screenings. My opinion is that these films have a job to do: they are made to be mass entertainment. But, it is because this work reaches such a large number of people that they can also give a platform for important issues. Animation and moving image is particularly attractive because it contains image, narrative, sound, movement in space and time. We need to be proactive as viewers in evaluating the different layers of ideas present, working to recognize the symbolic and metaphorical references that can be highlighted as a reading of the work, and making these issues ripe for discussion.

It is perhaps less well known that many charities are now following in the footsteps of the large studios, in realizing the possibilities that animation holds for promoting ecological issues. Simple but effective design, colour and texture, often with a





**Fig. 3:** 2007, 2011 Bernard the Gurnard, mascot for the Wildlife Trusts' Marine Bill campaign. Archipelago



**Fig. 6:** Companion animals: Wallace and Gromit, Aardman Animations since 1989



**Fig. 4:** "Pocoyo", created by Zinkia Entertainment. Global Kids' Ambassador for World Wildlife Fund's Earth Hour Initiative 2011 and 2012



**Fig. 7:** Animals with diverse taxonomy  
The Cameraman's Revenge 1911  
Director Vladislav Starevich



**Fig. 5:** Animals within ecological issues  
Rango 2011  
Director Gore Verbinski

touch of humour; combine all of this with movement and attractive characters are brought to life in a way that undoubtedly 'draws people in' (Figs 3 and 4).

In my research I am using categories found in the sciences, such as 'companion animals', 'animals with diverse taxonomies' and 'animals within issues of ecology' to document animation work and establish cross-disciplinary links. Examples are shown in Figs 5, 6 and 7.

Thus it is possible to highlight the way that, throughout the history of animation production, a diverse range of animal life has been brought to the attention of viewers. Of course these definitions themselves change and develop, but the fundamental principle lying behind this work is still strong: that the presence of a wide range of animal representations throughout the history of animation practice can usefully document human interaction with other animals and provide a

means for disseminating information and inspiring future collaborative discourse.

## Moving forward with artistic expression and anthropomorphism

We now come to the indisputable fact that one of the main uses of animal–human hybrid imagery in expressive artwork is to represent ‘the human condition’: to explore personal issues, to present political statements and examine social conditions to do with humans. This is the basis for much of the criticism of anthropomorphic representations. In relation to this, whilst it is positive that art and forms of creative output are finding a place within cross-disciplinary academic relationships concerning animals, it seems that presentational techniques are dominating (i.e., the use of photographic imagery and live action film). In discussion, I have discovered the reasoning that, to remove the mark of the individual artist and reduce any creative or imaginative interpretation is favoured as it gives a greater prominence to animals themselves. At this point, I feel it necessary to explain from an artist’s point of view, what is happening when imaginative and invented imagery that includes animals is created; to put forward a case for this creative work reflecting positively on society’s awareness for animals.

One of the main points to make is that many artists who use animal imagery in an interpretive way (with fragmented form, manipulation of form, hybrid animal–human form and so on) are strongly involved in studying animals, not in a scientific way, but with deep interest and respect. This attention to animals is good: curiosity, fascination, wonder, delight — all of these things can be passed on, to family, to friends, to colleagues, to audiences.

From my own experience as an artist creating figurative work that includes combinations of animal and human structures, characteristics, textures and movement, I have always felt that the images that evolve from the creative process are neither animal nor human, but a discourse of emotions, responses, interaction. The main point that I am trying to express in the work is the relationship between human and nonhuman animals; the involvement of diverse living beings. As Fudge suggests, “[I]t is this paradox of like and not like, same and different, that exists in our fascination with animals.” (Fudge 2002, p. 7)

It is true that in trying to find a way of expressing the essence of both human and animal presence in the work, an abstraction and symbolization takes place, but there is no hierarchy of one above another, one taking from another (see Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: Personal work by Gill Bliss

For this reason I put forward ‘the metaphor’ as described in the Blending Theory developed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) as a way of referencing this work. Here, two or more ideas are blended together to form a new entity, and whilst this is largely documented as a literary form, it would also seem to work well for visual outputs.

It should be understood that at this point, the research into anthropomorphism and zoomorphism has shifted from being seen as a device for character and narrative development, to a broader interpretation of an animation film gestalt. I have re-examined the definitions of ‘anthropomorphism’ and ‘zoomorphism’, which make use of the ‘form of animals’ and the ‘characteristics of humans’ and have taken the view that ‘form’ and ‘characteristics’ can be signified by fragmented elements and stylized or abstracted representations. My personal interest is now to create short animation films that use experimental techniques to create hybridized and metamorphic forms — emotional and aesthetic qualities — to represent interactions and relationships between diverse living beings.

## Conclusion

In this paper, the overarching theme of how anthropomorphism and zoomorphism has been used to portray animals in animation has provided several lines of research. Firstly the definition and setting-up of frameworks is used as a means of analyzing the design of characters and narrative content, thus providing a way of discussing historical work and thinking about future creative development in this field.

Some viewers find any representation that shows a mix of form between human and nonhuman animals disturbing, abhorrent or trivial. The question arises as to whether animals themselves are being trivialized or being made invisible when worked into creative and imaginative fictions. A second strand of research looking at psychology and sociology highlights the importance of storytelling for human cognitive and cultural development, and certainly the use of hybrid animal

characters has played a part in this. Moving image and animation film work are modern tools for storytelling. It has been part of this investigation to look beyond the populist notion of ‘cartoons’ as largely children’s entertainment and understand the platform that animated film has provided for a full range of ideas concerning environmental and ecological issues, and human interaction with other animals. In this section it is seen that an analysis of animation film using definitions recognized in animal studies may bring possibilities for future cross-disciplinary collaborations.

The last section of the paper relates the most personal element of research; how as a creative practitioner I am using animation to investigate and communicate my interests in experiencing interactions with animals. In this work, I am choosing to put aside the form of character development and linear narrative most usually associated with anthropomorphism/zoomorphism in animated television and cinema productions. In this new work, the storytelling devices are replaced by blended metaphorical references that suggest interaction and connection between individual beings. The hybrid notions defined by anthropomorphism and zoomorphism are still present, but the forms of human and nonhuman animals are fragmented and abstracted, wishing to connect to emotional and psychological responses to experiences with animals.

The starting point for this paper was to find working definitions for ‘anthropomorphism’ and ‘zoomorphism’. To close, I now re-examine these words and find myself dissatisfied with the term ‘anthropomorphism’, which bears such a confusion of ideas that it is no longer a helpful defining word. Winnicott (1971) has used ‘zooanthropomorphism’, which seems to portray more fittingly the inclusive nature of the metaphorical images I am creating. Milton (2005) prefers the word ‘egomorphism’ as describing individual experiences and responses to other beings. Both of these words I will take forward as more appropriate for future research in this area.

*Gill Bliss has been a practising artist for over thirty years, exhibiting sculpture, drawings and moving image (animation). The work explores relationships between human and animal forms as a means of expressing a curiosity and wonder for the diversity of living things. As a freelance model-maker for animation companies she worked on films and TV series such as Chicken Run, Creature Comforts, Wallace and Gromit and Timmy Time. She has also been a part-time/visiting lecturer for animation, drawing and 3D design courses in higher education and further education and undertaken residencies and community projects. At present she is undertaking PhD research at Loughborough University investigating animal imagery in animation. She can be contacted at g.e.bliss@lboro.ac.uk.*

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# The Institute for Animal Genetics: a case study of the animal–industrial complex

*Daniel van Strien*

**T**HIS PAPER WILL ATTEMPT TO EXPLORE THE UTILITY OF THE animal–industrial complex framework for critical animal studies (CAS). This will be done by drawing on the archives of the Institute of Animal Genetics in Edinburgh which formed the basis of my master’s dissertation. This paper will begin by briefly outlining the animal–industrial complex and some of the possibilities it presents for critical animal studies. The second half of the paper will briefly explore the animal–industrial complex in relation to my specific case study and discuss the strengths and limitations of using the animal–industrial complex framework. This paper will also briefly touch on the potential applicability of historical case studies to contemporary understandings of the animal–industrial complex and the ways in which historical case studies more broadly may be of use.

The concept of an animal–industrial complex (AIC) was first introduced by Barbara Noske in *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals* (1989). However, Twine (2012) has argued that since its introduction, the concept has seen little sustained theoretical development. Twine (2012) sought to address this lack of theoretical engagement with the concept of an AIC and present some arguments for why an AIC might offer a useful framework for critical animal studies research.

Providing a brief definition of the AIC will allow for further exploration of the benefits it may present. Richard Twine has outlined the AIC as:

a partly opaque and multiple set of networks and relationships between the corporate sector, governments, and public and private science. With economic, cultural, social and affective dimensions it encompasses an extensive range of practices, technologies, identities and markets (Twine 2012, p. 23)

This definition offers a concept which suggests that we understand various animal uses not “primarily within a rubric of inadequate ethical frameworks but as part of the wider mechanics of capitalism and its normalizing potential” (Twine 2012, p. 4). The concept of an AIC shifts the understanding of animal use from an individual/moral question and instead focuses on the context of systems, industries and societal norms within which animal use takes place.

In approaching critical animal studies with reference to the concept of an AIC, Twine has suggested that one of the major tasks of CAS should be to ‘reveal’ the networks of the AIC which support and legitimate animal use. Of interest to this case study is the relationship between research institutions, universities, agricultural industries and the government. What is of note in this case study is that the material impacts of the Institute on agricultural practices were in many respects limited. However the Institute began to develop early forms of the logic and networks that underlie contemporary animal genetics research. It is this early history of an Institute’s attempt to legitimate itself that reveal the gradual means through which a new science is incorporated into the AIC.



## Case study

My dissertation sought to draw upon the concept of an AIC in relation to a specific case study with the aim of assessing how well the framework could be applied to an ‘early’ form of genetics research on animals in twentieth century Britain. Due to space constraints, this article will focus on three areas of the Institute in relation to an AIC: aims, research and networks.

The case study makes use of materials found in the archives of the Institute of Animal Genetics located in Edinburgh University Library. The Institute operated in Edinburgh during the twentieth century and later developed into the Roslin Institute (which became (in)famous for cloning Dolly the sheep). The creation of the Institute was first proposed in 1911 when the “Development Commission formulated a comprehensive scheme for the furtherance of agricultural and educational research” (Edinburgh Archive). There was question at the time of whether the science of animal breeding, or genetics, had gained sufficient scientific standing to warrant support. After deliberation, Edinburgh University was chosen as the host of a new Institute which would pursue research on animal genetics. It was only following delays due to the First World War that the Institute began its work in earnest. Francis Crew was appointed as head of the Department for Animal Breeding (which would later change its name to the Institute for Animal Genetics) in July 1920. Crew was member of a younger generation of scientists who had more readily accepted the science of genetics and who were keen to develop this field. Through a discussion of the aims, research and networks of the Institute in reference to the AIC I will aim to show how this concept can help frame critical animal studies research.

## Aims of the Institute

The Institute articulated a range of aims and these are an important, although not the only, way of assessing how closely the Institute conforms to the concept of an AIC. These aims can be broadly divided between research and education, both of

which embodied both theoretical and practical activities. Crew put forward three “phases of activity” that could broadly be related to the aims of the institute. These included:

1. Teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students
2. Fundamental research on laboratory animals
3. Fundamental research with animals of economic importance  
(Edinburgh Archive)

What do these different aims tell us about the Institute in relation to an AIC? Teaching was an important part of the Institute’s work for a number of different reasons. Due to the limited funding available to the Institute during its early years, much of the budget was to be found from students studying with the Institute. Students also helped in carrying out research and experiments. Through this involvement students would become versed in the new science of genetics. I would suggest that teaching was one of the most important aspects in the process of expanding and legitimising genetic science. These students would go on to spread both the practices and understandings underlying animal genetics. These new ideas and practices were to become increasingly incorporated into broader scientific understanding of ‘organic systems’ and ‘developments’ in animal agriculture.

## Research

Arguably the major focus of the Institute was research. This research was divided between research on ‘laboratory’ animals and research on animals of ‘economic importance’. This research sought in many ways to synthesise traditional animal breeding practices with scientific methods in order to make success more predictable. The Institute’s director and other members of the Institute were keen to make explicit the applicability of their research. However, there was disagreement over how this could best be done. Research on ‘laboratory animals’ aimed to further develop the science of genetics theoretically and did not seek directly to make ‘improvements’ on animals. However it was hoped that this knowledge could later be applied to animals of ‘economic import-

ance'. The rise of genetic understanding takes place in a much longer history of different conceptions of 'living systems' (Jacob 1974). The divide between theoretical and applied research was not rigid, with both forms of research having a similar desired outcome of having applicability to farmed animals and increasing both agricultural and economic productivity. As in the early twentieth century the application of scientific methods to agricultural research had not seen much development and in this respect the Institute carried out much work in trying to justify the application of science to animal breeding practices. Through the AIC we can see this research as not taking place in an isolated 'scientific' setting but instead as part of a larger context of animal use.

## Networks

Networks are a central component of an AIC and one which I explored in relation to my case study. The early Institute sat on the periphery of university life and rather than seeking only to integrate itself further into existing scientific disciplines, the Institute pursued wider engagement and networks. Exploring these networks in relation to research carried out by the Institute on 'poultry' reveals a number of different features of the networks of the AIC. Through this research the Institute sought to engage not only the scientific community but also a range of 'amateur' breeders, poultry fanciers, farmers and others. Many of the birds used by the Institute were donated by poultry fanciers and other members of the public. These various actors provided not only material support but also advised members on different aspects of poultry keeping. The Institute's director, Francis Crew, wrote frequently in popular, agricultural and 'poultry' press. Crew tried to convey the importance he believed his work held for poultry breeders and the potential benefits that could be derived from poultry research.

## Conclusion

Although only having briefly discussed my case study, I hope to have given some indication of the way in which an animal-industrial complex framework provides a useful way of approaching critical animal studies research even in relation to an Institute whose ideas and practices had not yet become hegemonic. Through discussions of different aspects of the Institute my dissertation sought to assess the extent to which it fits into the framework of an AIC. Whilst many aspects of a modern AIC were not developed in their current form, many of the features of the AIC were already present in a rudimentary form.

Exploring the historical developments allows for contextualisation of different aspects of the AIC and the historic situations in which they developed. It also makes more the different technologies and networks that facilitated various 'revolutionary' changes that have taken in the AIC, i.e., breeding, intensive confinement and genetic engineering. The importance of breeding also relates to how in many ways it preceded, and laid foundations for, current forms of genetic engineering. However the current hegemony/dominance of genetic engineering should not be seen as an endpoint but part of a longer process of applying different conceptualisations and technologies onto animals in order to make their bodies more profitable for a variety of networked industries.

Further exploration of both the networks of the AIC, and the way in which these networks operate will allow for a more nuanced understanding of how the AIC interacts with other industrial complexes and the capitalist logic underlying it more generally. Through this, further points of intersection can be identified showing the shared misery faced by both human and nonhuman animals under capitalism and possible ways to challenge and overcome them.

*Daniel van Strien recently completed an MA in Human Geography at Glasgow University. He is interested in a variety of critical animal studies topics, in particular applying Marxist theories to animal industries and trying to conceptualise the position of animals within capitalism. He spends as much free time as possible on vegan education and is also involved in other grassroots political activism.*

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# University ethical review committees and the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act: Using the Freedom of Information Act as a research tool

*Jessica Gröling*

**T**HIS REPORT IS BASED ON A WORKSHOP HELD AT THE Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society Conference on 10 March 2012. The workshop introduced the work of ethical review committees in the UK and outlined how the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) can be used as a research tool by animal advocates and academics to yield insights into animal experimentation at British universities and the work of ethical review committees (ERCs) in particular. The first section introduces the work of ethical review committees in the context of animal experimentation, drawing on some recent research into the inner workings of ERCs. In the second section I outline the remit of the Freedom of Information Act and review how it has been used by animal advocacy organisations before concluding in the final section with a very brief outline of my own research using the FOIA. A sample FOI request is provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 outlines and annotates some of the commonly used exemptions under the FOIA that may prevent the disclosure of certain pieces of information.

## **Ethical review committees in the British context**

Animal experimentation in the UK is licensed and regulated by the Home Office under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Despite the coalition government's promise to "work to reduce the use of animals in scientific research" (HM Government 2010, p. 18) and repeated assurances by previous governments that strong adherence to the 3Rs of replacement, reduction and refinement would lead to an eventual reduction in the number of animals used and in the number of procedures relying on animal models, the latest figures released by the Home Office confirm that 3.79 million animals were used in UK experiments in 2011, up on the previous year and the highest figure since 1981 (Home Office 2012, p. 7). This figure only accounts for procedures likely to involve "pain, suffering, distress and lasting harm" (Home Office 2012, p. 48). Universities now account for approximately half of all animals used in experimentation and three quarters of project licences

(Home Office 2012, p. 16), a share which has also been rising since the 1980s.

In a university context, those tasked with ensuring the effective implementation of the 3Rs and conducting a harm–benefit analysis for each project licence application are the ethical review committees (ERCs)<sup>1</sup> based at individual institutions, who liaise closely with Home Office inspectors and liaison officers. ERCs were introduced as a statutory requirement in April 1999. Their task is to review each licence application submitted to them by academics at their university prior to their submission to and approval by the Home Office (see box below). ERCs are composed of scientists, animal technicians, at least one named veterinarian, animal care and welfare officers, as well as lay members (Bradshaw 2002).

Although ‘lay’ is a rather fluid concept in this context (Job 2012), lay members are usually non-scientific, preferably external members, whose task is to bring an independent perspective to the decision-making process, supply a measure of public representation and hence ensure the integrity of the process (Smith and Jennings 2009, p. 8; Jennings 1994; Dresser 1999). On the rare occasion where somebody with an abolitionist stance on animal experimentation comes to represent the lay perspective on an ERC, they will be restricted to advocating for better welfare measures or a more in-depth harm–benefit analysis (Job 2012). In the UK (unlike in other European countries such as

Sweden) there may only be one or two lay members on a committee.

Initial harm–benefit analysis is one of the primary foci of the ethics committees and the one that I have been most interested in. Harms include components such as pain, stress and reduced comfort, but death is not usually considered an ‘adverse effect’ as any experiment carried out under terminal anaesthesia that does not cause pain to the animal but does result in death is not considered to cause ‘lasting harm’. Opinion is contested, within and between committees, regarding the relative weighting given to particular harms and benefits, a situation that is further compounded by the fact that scientific benefits are always only *expected* (i.e. potential) at the time a decision is made and the *likely* physiological and psychological effects for the animals also cannot always be readily predicted. In addition, individuals are likely to differ in their value judgements and assessments of each licence application based on their different expertise, experiences, and priorities (Galvin and Herzog 1992). It is assumed that through collaboration in the ethical review process, each member of the committee will be able to draw on and share their expertise so that the group can reach a reasonable, consensus-based decision. However, power imbalances are commonly reported by lay members who may feel that their contributions are undervalued and that decision-making is swayed by those with scientific expertise (Job 2012;

**“The ERP’s seven core functions:**

1. Promoting the development and uptake of reduction, replacement and refinement alternatives within animal use, where they exist, and ensuring the availability of relevant sources of information.
2. Examining proposed applications for new project licences and amendments to existing licences, with reference to the likely [welfare] costs to the animals, the expected benefits of the work and how these considerations balance.
3. Providing a forum for discussion of issues relating to the use of animals and considering how staff can be kept up to date with relevant ethical advice, best practice and relevant legislation.
4. Undertaking retrospective project reviews and continuing to apply the Three Rs to all projects throughout their duration.
5. Considering the care and accommodation standards applied to all animals in the establishment, including breeding stock, and the humane killing of animals covered by the ASPA.
6. Regularly reviewing the establishment’s managerial systems, procedures and protocols where these bear on the proper use of animals.
7. Advising on how all staff involved with the animals can be appropriately trained and how competence can be ensured.”

(Smith and Jennings 2009: 16)

Schuppli 2007; Schuppli and Fraser 2005).

Even if the natural variation in values and decision-making styles of individual committee members were better reflected in committee practice and outcome and power imbalances were addressed, ethical decisions are notoriously difficult to make in the context of an objective, rational framework. Schuppli's (2011, p. 414) detailed analysis of ethics committees in the Canadian context revealed that "[p]articipants often seemed to conflate peer review, scientific merit, social value, and the justification of research", in other words mistaking a (scientifically) well-constructed proposal for an ethical one. This concern was also raised through Job's (2012) in-depth analysis of the UK ethical review process, which revealed that the purported benefits of a procedure involving animals are often taken as a given, because most research proposals will have already undergone rigorous appraisal to be granted funding and thus have passed some form of peer review before being submitted to the committee. Furthermore, the potential harms of a proposed piece of research in reality do not only refer to the harm to the animals involved but may also involve the potential for reputational damage to an institution due to an adverse public response (see below, also Job 2012). This often seems to have the effect of distracting from the ethical question of whether the research should go ahead at all in favour of a focus on putting the necessary safeguards in place to protect the institution and its staff should information about a particularly controversial piece of research be made public. This in itself raises ethical questions concerning transparency and the extent to which ERCs can assess proposals from within their own institution in an impartial manner and in a way that retains the primary focus of ethical deliberation on the animals concerned. My research has shown that where a project licence is being transferred from another institution (for instance in the event of an academic moving from one institution to another) ERCs will often defer to the decision made by the originating institution. Deferring to earlier decisions and precedents set by committees at other institutions with regard to projects of a similar degree of severity and a sim-

ilar level of perceived benefits again has the effect of undermining alternative and progressive views. Furthermore, and this point deserves particular emphasis, it is not at all clear how scientists and other members of the ERC are expected to remain abreast of the pace of change with regard to the development of alternative methods and technologies that could replace particular animal experiments.

Statistics from the Home Office (HC Deb 2011) confirm that *not a single* application for a project licence, personal licence, or certificate of designation<sup>2</sup> was rejected in 2008–2010 once it had reached the Home Office for approval, which suggests that ERC decisions are in fact final and that the Home Office approval stage is a mere rubber stamping exercise. Unfortunately there are no statistics as to the percentage of proposals that are rejected by ERCs in the UK. Referring to the American context, Ideland (2009) argues that low rejection rates at the ethical review stage could point to the fact that committees do not consider it their job to reject proposals outright, but rather to assist the applicant in the preparation of his or her proposal in such a way that it can be approved, an observation also made by Job (2012) in the UK. Jennings (pers. comm.) clarified that project proposals are usually formulated initially in conjunction with animal care staff, named veterinary surgeons, Home Office liaison officers or inspectors and other scientists, at which stage issues such as the 3Rs, experimental design, staff training and the sourcing of animals may be addressed. In other words, unacceptable proposals are likely to be filtered out or heavily modified even before they reach the ethical review stage. This may account for low rejection rates. My own research however points to the fact that this process is often much less rigorous and iterative than frequently suggested and that poorly reasoned and perfunctorily assessed proposals fall through the net.

The rigour and reliability of the ethical review process can and has been tested by looking at the levels of consistency in decision-making between committees. For a large American study, published in *Science*, Plous and Herzog (2001) collected real licence applications from committees at fifty differ-

ent US universities, including outcomes of the review each application had undergone at the original institution. Applications were anonymised and subsequently passed to an IACUC (US equivalent of ERCs) at a different institution to assess the levels of agreement between two unrelated committees. The authors found that in the second round “61% of protocols were judged as either ‘not very understandable’ or ‘not understandable at all’, as having ‘poor’ research designs and procedures, or as justifying the type and number of animals in a way that was deemed ‘not very convincing’ or ‘not convincing at all’” (Plous and Herzog 2001, p. 608). Despite the fact that an overwhelming number of applications received such negative reviews, *only 2%* of applications had been rejected by their original IACUC.

[R]egardless of whether the research involved terminal or painful procedures, IACUC protocol reviews did not exceed chance levels of intercommittee agreement. (Plous and Herzog 2001, p. 608)

In all, 79% of committees in the second round gave a different assessment; 85% of the time it was poorer than the original assessment. Plous and Herzog dismissed the suggestion that intercommittee disagreement was a result of procedural differences between the first and second committees on the grounds that there were also very low levels of inter-rater (i.e. intra-committee) agreement. This reiterates the problematic nature of harm–benefit assessment but also underlines my concern about the level of impartiality with which ERCs can review licences from their own institution. Plous and Herzog (in Klemfuss *et al.* 2001, p. 1832) advocate “the implementation of procedures to increase the reliability and validity of the review process, such as the development of explicit evaluative criteria, standardization and simplification of IACUC forms, and enhanced training of committee members”. In the European context, the 3Rs already ought to function as an ethical shorthand to streamline the ethical review process and address strong intra-committee disagreement, but in my review of the minutes of committee meetings in the UK, a mere mention of the 3Rs in many cases seemed to be presented as evidence of eth-

ical deliberation, when in reality very little deliberation may have taken place. Taylor’s (2010) review of 250 randomly selected scientific research papers (published between 1986 and 2006) furthermore suggests that the 3Rs are very badly implemented. Her research assessed the papers on ten parameters according to whether researchers attempted to find alternatives to the use of animals, to reduce the numbers of animals used or reduce their suffering. Out of a possible maximum score of 10, articles involving research on primates only scored an average of 1.5 and experiments on mice scored an average of 0.

An important aspect of accountability is ensuring that the Home Office is regulating animal experiments in a lawful manner — particularly important given that animals in laboratories, self-evidently, cannot whistleblow. (BUAV 2012a)

Although there has been a recent surge of interest in the ethical review process, we still understand relatively little about how decisions are made, how the 3Rs function as tools in the review process and how institutional culture and committee structure influence deliberations. Given successive governments’ empty promises on animal experimentation, the number of animals used in experiments increasing year on year, the lack of transparency of the ethical review process (committee proceedings are not made readily available to the public), and the high level of disagreement between and within similar committees in other national contexts, it is paramount that academics and advocacy organisations examine the ethical review process more closely with a view to addressing the “ethical agnosticism” (Rollin and Loew in Klemfuss *et al.* 2001, p. 1831) that is still very widespread within the scientific community. Although this approach can undoubtedly be criticised as a ‘welfarist’ attempt to improve ethical decision-making on individual animal experiments, I believe that a better understanding of how the ethical review process currently works as well a campaign for increased transparency are essential for informed debate on this issue, and therefore should be of interest to people at every point on the spectrum from welfarism to abolitionism.

The animal experimentation debate is heavily

polarised. Those who oppose the practice appeal to ethical arguments and many campaigns reveal video footage from within laboratories to draw attention to the scientifically sanctioned as well as the unsanctioned violence against animals that occurs within the confines of their walls. Animal advocates are accused of sentimental hysteria, of cherry-picking the worst examples and misrepresenting an industry that is supposedly run by honest and sensible scientists in the interest of the common good, where animal experimentation is reluctantly accepted as a 'necessary evil'. The lack of transparency, from the ethical decision-making process to the everyday reality of laboratory experimentation, has created an impasse that prevents truly informed public debate. Greater transparency is warranted not only by the fact that much of this research is funded by the taxpayer but also by the patient safety argument which refocuses attention on the implications for human health of the use of animals in scientific research. If money is being spent on animal experiments where appropriate and reliable alternatives are available but not adopted because of institutional and individual complacency this will have implications for the animals, for scientific advancement, and for human health (e.g. where treatments undergo extensive animal experimentation but go on to cause human fatalities). In other words, the public has an obvious stake in the debate and should have the ability to scrutinise what is being done on their behalf and hold those in charge of overseeing animal experiments to account.

Currently, certificate holders are encouraged to submit project abstracts to the Home Office for publication on their website but there is no legal obligation to do so and in any case it is unlikely that abstracts would ever provide the level of detail and freedom from bias necessary for informed public debate.<sup>3</sup> Although in-depth ethnographic work with ERCs, building on some of the above-mentioned research, would undoubtedly yield detailed and important insights into the ethical review process, fear of public backlash and the tightening of ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects (which would include

members of ERCs) have made it harder for academics to gain access to ERCs (Job 2012). However, the proceedings or minutes from ERC meetings can also shed light on the shortcomings of the process and reveal to some extent how much deliberation actually occurs before a project is given the go-ahead.

In the following sections I will briefly outline the purpose of the Freedom of Information Act and how it has been used by animal advocacy organisations, before briefly discussing my own research and prospects for further study.

## **Freedom of Information: the concept**

The Freedom of Information Act, which was introduced in 2000, is a powerful, free (within reason) and fairly easy-to-use research tool. It details the ways in which the public can access information held by the government and public bodies, including the Home Office, universities and other bodies that are funded—or part-funded—by the taxpayer. Private companies doing private business are not bound by this legislation, unless a part of their work is public business. Scottish bodies are covered by a specific Scottish version of the Act and environmental information is covered by the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The Act was introduced under Tony Blair's Labour government, although he later regretted the decision amidst complaints that it impedes the ability of officials to deliberate with confidentiality (BBC 2012).

As with all new pieces of legislation, important test cases have set precedents and defined the scope of the Freedom of Information Act. One of the most well-known cases involving the Freedom of Information Act was Heather Brooke's<sup>4</sup> exposé of the MPs' expenses scandal in 2008, which resulted in a lengthy battle with the Information Tribunal. Another controversial case was an FOI request to Stirling University in 2011, which was filed by Philip Morris International, a tobacco giant interested in the results of a survey of adolescents' reactions to tobacco marketing (BBC 2011). Concerns were raised about how Philip Morris

intended to use the data; the idea of a large tobacco corporation gaining access to research data funded by the taxpayer was met with public outrage. The handling of FOI requests by the Climate Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia, which caused the ‘Climategate’ scandal and played into the hands of climate change denialists, is another well-known case. Hacked emails from the CRU had been leaked detailing how scientists had encouraged each other to delete FOI requests for information on research data, which is an offence under Section 77 of the FOIA (Black 2010).

## FOIA and animal experimentation at British universities

Whilst the Freedom of Information Act may turn out to be a litmus test for democracy, one could argue that animal experimentation has become a kind of litmus test for the Act itself. Many of the cases that truly tested the waters and involved lengthy battles over interpretations of the Act are those that have been brought by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV), who have repeatedly requested information about animal experimentation, either from universities directly or from the Home Office.

One of the BUAV’s most significant cases involved the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (BUAV 2011). The BUAV’s initial request in 2008 for information about experiments on macaques was refused on the grounds that it could harm the institution’s commercial interests and also endanger the safety of the scientists involved by attracting attention from animal rights groups. The research had come to the BUAV’s attention after a number of scientific papers had been published about it. These highly invasive experiments involved electrode implants in the brains of the macaques, who were restrained in front of a television screen while their brain activity was recorded. The effects on the animals, who were also subjected to water deprivation to motivate them, were judged too severe by the authorities in Germany, where one of the primary researchers had initially been refused permission to conduct the research.

The BUAV responded to Newcastle’s refusal to disclose information by taking the University to the Information Tribunal. After a three-year-long battle in which both sides repeatedly appealed the Tribunal’s decisions, and as a result helped to set legal precedents for the use of FOIA exemptions (see Appendix 2), the BUAV finally won the case in 2011 and the university was ordered to release the information. The tribunal had concluded that a decline in animal rights-related intimidation meant that scientists were at less risk of being targeted for harassment. The arguments about commercial interests were also dismissed.

Another well-known case involving the BUAV was its exposé in July 2012 of sensory deprivation experiments on newborn kittens at Cardiff University, supported by the Medical Research Council and funded with taxpayers’ money. Some kittens had been raised in total darkness from birth and others had their eyelids sewn shut.

The kittens were then anaesthetised, artificially ventilated and paralysed with a drug to prevent eye movements. They were then subjected to highly invasive head surgery and their brains exposed for recordings. After various tests, all the kittens were killed and parts of their brain dissected. (BUAV 2012b)

The exposé attracted significant media attention and commentaries from scientists and celebrities about the scientific validity and ethics of these experiments. Even though the experiments had fulfilled the licensing conditions set by the Home Office and passed the local ethical review stage, concerns were raised by scientists that “[f]rom a scientific perspective, there are substantial differences in structure and function of the visual system in cats versus human beings. More to the point, there are established methods of obtaining essentially the same information in a humane way from people” (Dr Ned Buyukmihci, cited in Gaskell 2012). This had come after an earlier FOI request in October 2010 had revealed invasive brain surgery on kittens at Cardiff University. Dr Adrian Stallwood from the University of Cardiff commented at the time that “it is highly disturbing that the scientific papers describing the experiments do not fulfil even the minimum guidelines from the National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and

Reduction of Animals in Research — which makes them nearly useless as information sources” (BUAV 2010). This is a good example of how documents and details about animal experiments can be annotated by scientific experts and subsequently used to catalyse a campaign or support an existing one.

Violence Free Science, a group of students at the University of Sussex, produced a very comprehensive report in 2008 from information gathered through the FOIA in conjunction with research using PubMed<sup>5</sup> and other internet search engines (Violence Free Science 2008). The report analysed fifty research papers, the oldest being from 2003, that involved recreational drugs testing on animals (alcohol and cocaine), experiments using alcohol that revealed results that had already been observed in human studies, experiments on animals caught from the wild, and experiments involving animals where proven and documented alternatives such as PET scans and functional MRI were readily available. The rationale for, methods used and results obtained in these experiments were annotated and critiqued in the report by expert scientists. This is just one example of research and collaborative work that can be carried out even by individuals and groups with limited resources, providing a detailed and robust account of the failings of current regulatory mechanisms at a particular institution.

## My findings

I have previously submitted FOI requests<sup>6</sup> to a number of UK universities, including Durham, Leeds, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, York, Bristol and Exeter, requesting a minimum of three years' worth of ERC meetings minutes and correspondence as well as Home Office statistical returns and other data relating to experiments on live animals. The responses I received have yielded interesting insights into how ERCs function in practice, the nature of their relationship to the Home Office and its representatives and particular examples of where the ethical review process has failed, for instance allowing for the near duplication of work that had already been carried out or

allowing for the use of animals where non-animal alternatives were readily available. For example, at the University of Bristol an experiment to determine the effectiveness of phage therapy for the prevention of *Clostridium difficile* infection in an experiment on hamsters and mice had received ERC approval despite researchers' own admission that this work had previously been carried out in the 'Eastern Bloc'. In the absence of a translation, it was decided that there was sufficient justification to give it the go-ahead. This is despite the very clear statement in European law (Council Directive 86/609/EEC, article 7.2) that “[a]n experiment shall not be performed if another scientifically satisfactory method of obtaining the result sought, not entailing the use of an animal, is reasonably and practically available.” Other questionable research projects in my sample which passed the harm-benefit test involved studies into cheaper modes of slaughter for the farming industry, such as the use of oxygen deprivation (hypoxia).

Several ERCs in my sample spent a lot of time in meetings discussing how information about particularly sensitive or controversial research projects could be prevented from being leaked so as to safeguard the institution's reputation. Many ERCs also provide guidelines for scientists on how to write abstracts of experimental procedures for public consumption, suggesting that researchers should deliberately avoid the use of 'emotive' language and detail. Through the deployment of euphemisms and the suggested evasion of disturbing detail in scientific publications, these guidance documents reveal how animal experiments are not only hidden from view but also concealed in language (see also Langley 1989 and Dunayer 2001). What is decorously referred to as 'humanely killing', 'euthanising', or 'terminating by a Schedule 1 method' for instance can involve any number of procedures, from exposure to carbon dioxide gas, dislocation of the neck, or concussion of the brain. Other methods of killing include maceration, decapitation or exsanguination. Animals that are deliberately deprived of food are referred to as 'fasting' and the use of electric shock is referred to as 'stimulation'.

A lot of the raw data that was gathered has

been used by animal advocacy groups to draw attention to animal experimentation at their local university and make a case for greater transparency (e.g. Gröling, Mitchell and Calvert 2008). I have also used this data in my research on the social psychology of moral disengagement, demonstrating how the conditions for mechanisms of moral disengagement are built into the infrastructure, regulatory practices and cultural tools of the animal experimentation industry (Gröling 2011). By unearthing how mechanisms of moral disengagement work to entrench and perpetuate the status quo and undermine ethical and lay scrutiny, my intention has been to highlight points of intervention in the animal–industrial complex (see van Strien, this volume).

### **The future of animal experimentation and the Freedom of Information Act**

Several universities have issued statements to their staff warning of the potential threat of the FOIA, which strongly underlines the case for its use as a research tool for animal advocates. Imperial College London for instance warns that advocates might use FOIA to:

- a. Challenge project licence applications, and suggest non-animal alternatives;

- b. Build up a picture of what research is being carried out where, so as to target their campaigns more precisely
- c. Obtain more evidence of animal suffering (Imperial College London no date, p. 1)

At the same time, public opinion polls are revealing that the public overwhelmingly support greater transparency (YouGov opinion poll from 2009, cited in BUAV 2012a) and the Coalition Agreement proclaims that “[t]he Government believes that we need to throw open the doors of public bodies, to enable the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account” (HM Government 2010, p. 20). The recent Declaration of Openness (Brierley 2012), signed by many of the UK’s major research universities and funding bodies, ought to result in increased transparency in the regulatory process surrounding animal experimentation, although it is not yet apparent how this will be achieved, and, as the purported goal is to restore the public’s declining faith in animal experimentation, one is left to wonder to what extent ‘transparency’ may simply become a euphemism for institutionally filtered and framed information slanted in favour of continued animal experimentation rather than raw and unbiased insights. I therefore encourage animal advocates and investigative social researchers to develop their use of the Freedom of Information Act as a research tool as well as support existing campaigns that call for greater transparency in the interests of animals and the taxpaying public.



## Appendix 1: Sample FOI request

*This is an updated version of the original template.*

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write to request information concerning experimentation on live animals undertaken by or at [name] University, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please provide me with the following information:

1. Minutes, reports and correspondence of any Ethical Review Committee or sub-committee at University or any other level, including but not limited to faculty, departmental and school committees, from the last three years, where these relate to experimentation on or other work involving live animals, and any guidance issued by these committees at any time if it is currently in use.
2. A list of the courses and specific teaching modules, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, currently offering the opportunity to participate in experimentation on live animals.
3. A list of the courses and specific teaching modules, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, currently requiring participation in experimentation on live animals.
4. A breakdown of currently held project licences within the meaning of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 by maximum severity limits for procedures, for the unclassified, mild, moderate and substantial limits.
5. The numbers of regulated procedures within the meaning of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 carried out by the University, in each year for which you hold data.
6. A breakdown by species of the numbers of animals used in these procedures, in each year for which you hold data.
7. The total estimated cost of research, teaching and training involving experimentation on or other work involving live animals, in each year for which you hold data, including some information relating to how the figure was arrived at and what expenditure is included.
8. Copies of the annual statistical returns of procedures carried out under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 submitted to the Home Office, in each year for which you hold data.
9. The numbers of animals procured and subsequently killed as surplus to the requirements of programmes of work, in each year which you hold data.

I would like to stress that I am not interested in information that identifies individuals who are or were involved in animal experimentation. I am happy for you to redact names from information you release if you believe this to be appropriate. I have structured the request as a list of numbered specific enquiries so that if there are problems in fulfilling some of these, it should be possible for you to proceed with the others.

Furthermore, I am happy for the phrase “each year for which you hold data”, as found in several of the requests above, to be altered to “each of the last three years” if, and only if, this is necessary to prevent the cost of providing a response from exceeding the statutory limit. If you require any clarification from me in order to comply with this request, please contact me at the earliest opportunity. I look forward to receiving the information requested within 20 working days.

If for any reason you are not able to provide the information within that time please write to me explaining why, and telling me when you expect to provide the information.

I am grateful for your time and assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

[name]

## Appendix 2: Common FOI exemptions

There are a number of reasons why information may be considered exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The following is a list of the exemptions that are most relevant to information about animal experimentation. Sections 30 and 38 are ‘qualified’ exemptions, i.e. subject to the public interest test.

### Section 21: Information accessible to applicant by other means

In 2008, the BUAV were refused access to information they sought to obtain from the Home Office regarding individual animal experimentation licences, including details as to the purpose of the experiment, what procedures the animals would be subjected to, how the licence holder intended to limit animal suffering and how they had made the case that there were no viable alternatives to the use of animals. The Home Office argued that only information researchers themselves had chosen to publish in their lay summaries could be released, in other words that the information sought by the BUAV was available by other means. Nevertheless, the Information Tribunal ruled in the BUAV’s favour and agreed that the summaries produced by researchers for public consumption were usually spun so as to emphasise positive aspects of the research (BUAV 2008).

### Section 30: Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities

This section relates to information held by a public authority for the purposes of a criminal investigation. This includes materials related to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act Inspectorate’s investigations.

### Section 36: Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs

### Section 38: Health and safety

In 2007, the BUAV requested information from a number of universities regarding the number of primates that had been used in experiments in par-

ticular ways (Information Commissioner’s Office 2009). The request was contested on the grounds that this could lead to the identification of and resulting risk to the safety of the scientists involved. However, the Information Commissioner eventually ruled that the information had to be disclosed because the risk to health and safety had to be “substantially more than remote” (Information Commissioner’s Office 2009, p. 7). One argument that was used was that scientists publish research papers about their primate research without attempting to hide their identity and therefore already accept the kinds of risks that may result from disclosure of information under the FOIA. Different definitions for ‘danger’ and ‘to endanger’ as well as the difficulty of establishing a causal relationship between the disclosure of information and danger to health and safety further complicate a simple interpretation of this exemption. The same applies to the distinction between ‘danger’ and ‘risk’, as was explained in a BUAV case:

Every time a motorist drives on the road there is a risk that an accident may occur, but driving is only dangerous when a particularly risky situation arises. So, for example, there is always a risk that a researcher might become a target of persons opposing animal research by unlawful and violent means, but the researcher’s physical health would not be endangered unless a specific attack were made. We need to consider the likelihood of such an attack, and the likelihood of other conduct which would endanger mental health or other aspects of safety. (Information Tribunal, cited in Hopkins 2011)

### Section 41: Information provided in confidence

Section 41 pertains to information “a) [that] was obtained by the public authority from any other person (including another public authority), and b) the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person.” However, there is considerable debate as to what is meant by information that is ‘provided in confidence’ (see Section 44 below).

### Section 43: Commercial interests

This exemption refers to FOI cases that could pre-

judice commercial interests, including adversely affecting research funding. Universities UK have been trying to convince Parliament to make unpublished research exempt from the FOIA (Stern 2011), which could further restrict the amount and type of information about animal experimentation that is made available under the FOIA.

### **Section 44: Prohibitions on disclosure**

According to Section 44, information is exempt if its disclosure is prohibited by another provision, including European Union obligations. This is an absolute exemption: public authorities do not need to consider public interest. Any disclosure of information prohibited by another provision would be punishable as a contempt of court. This is particularly relevant with regards to animal experimentation because Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 exempts the disclosure of information relating to animal experiments which was “given in confidence”. The BUAV are currently making the case for Section 24 of ASPA to be repealed as it is seen to stifle the free flow of information that the FOIA was brought in to facilitate. Section 24 of ASPA also creates an anomaly in that it pertains only to information held by a body, such as the Home Office, which was given to them by another body, such as a university. Information held directly at the university however ought to be disclosed because the information cannot be claimed to have been given to them in confidence. In a statement a decade ago, the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures (2002) agreed that “[t]he substantive details of anonymised project licences, which describe the expected benefits of the research and harms to the animals involved, should be made public after they have been approved and funded” (para. 5.24), recommending that Section 24 of ASPA be repealed (para. 9.18).

### **Other reasons for refusal**

In addition to the above, Freedom of Information requests may be refused for a number of other reasons, the main one of which is cost. Under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection

(Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004,<sup>7</sup> the relevant body is not obliged to spend more than £450 (£600 for central government) on compiling the requested information. Cost calculations include the (labour) cost of extracting the information from a document containing it and redacting confidential information such as the names and particulars of individuals, calculated at a rate of £25 per hour, as well as the (material) cost involved in making the information available, for example in photocopied form. Multiple requests by the same person within a two month period may be aggregated. However, you should never be charged for your FOI request without having given informed consent and you reserve the right to challenge the figure you are quoted. There are a number of actions that can be taken to reduce the likely cost of an FOI request. Firstly, by asking for the information in a way that does not require specific pieces of information to be extracted from a variety of documents, you can limit the labour costs involved.<sup>8</sup> To find out what type of information is available and therefore know what to ask for, ask to see the relevant body’s information audit.<sup>9</sup> Instead of asking for photocopies, it is also possible to request the information in electronic form.

### **Final tips**

If you are told that the requested information is no longer available as it has been disposed of, always ask to see the records disposal logs for proof. If asked how the information will be used, remind the relevant body that the Freedom of Information Act is ‘purpose-blind’ and as such there is no obligation to disclose your intentions. Always ask for acknowledgement of receipt of your FOI request. This way you can verify when the 20 working days (the statutory limit within which you ought to receive your reply) are over. Follow up letters or emails with phone calls if you do not receive a reply and keep a record of all communication in case you need to eventually lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner. Under Section 16 of the Act, the body you are addressing your request to has a duty to assist you in reformulating your request if it is rejected for any reason and it is

a criminal offence for incorrect information to be given or evidence to be shredded once your request has been filed. A fantastic tool for creating Freedom of Information requests is the website [whatdotheyknow.com](http://whatdotheyknow.com). It contains a comprehensive list of public bodies covered under the FOIA, all of whom can be contacted directly through the website. Requests then are and remain in the public domain, making the information easily accessible to anyone.

### For additional information

RSPCA resources on the ethical review process, of particular interest to lay members, can be found at [rspca.org.uk/ethicalreview](http://rspca.org.uk/ethicalreview). Much information can also be gleaned from the following journals:

- *Contemporary Topics in Laboratory Animal Science*
- *ATLA — Alternatives to Laboratory Animals*
- *Laboratory Animals*
- *Lab Animals and Lab Animal Europe*
- *Animal Technology and Welfare*
- *ILAR Journal*
- *Animal Welfare*

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## Notes

1. Ethical review committees, also referred to as the ethical review process (ERP), are the UK equivalent to institutional animal care and use committees (USA), animal ethics committees (Canada) and animal experimentation ethics committees (Australia).
2. In addition to applying for a licence for each new project, applicants also need to be personally licensed to carry out experimentation on animals and the institution at which they intend to conduct the procedures also needs to be in possession of a licence.
3. In the case of one BUAV appeal to the Information Tribunal it was noted that “the abstracts appear generally to adopt a style and tone intended to persuade the reader as to the value of the proposed experiment. This is in contrast to the style of the licence applications, which are more neutral in tone. This perception of a positive spin having been applied to the published information was increased by the absence from the abstracts of the detail about the experiments themselves.” (Ryan 2008, para. 8)
4. Brooke’s (2007) guide remains one of the most useful sources of information on how to use the Freedom of Information Act. In addition, Bourke, Worthy and Hazell (2012) have produced a helpful guide for academics on making Freedom of Information requests.
5. PubMed is an online database that accesses the MEDLINE database of citations, abstracts and some full-text articles on life sciences and biomedical topics.
6. For easy access to the relevant FOI requests, see <https://vivisectionstats.wordpress.com/>
7. For more information on the calculation of fees and limits, see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/3244/contents/made>
8. In the case of BUAV vs. Newcastle University, the Information Commissioner concluded that it would not be acceptable for the university to include thinking time in its cost calculations and that a lot of the requested information should already exist in compiled format, in the form of returns submitted to the Home Office.
9. For more information, see “Section 45 — Code of Practice”: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/information-access-rights/foi/foi-section45-code-of-practice.pdf>

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# Killing badgers and talking about it

## *Alexander Badman-King*

So, oft in theologic wars  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what each other mean,  
And prate about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!

— John Godfrey Saxe, *The Blind Men and the Elephant*<sup>1</sup>

WHAT FOLLOWS IS, ALAS, REPRESENTATIVE OF ONLY A very narrow portion of that which was discussed in the badger cull workshop held at the Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society conference. A great deal was said at this workshop, much of it fruitful, much of it practical. Perhaps the most common themes centred around questions of national policy, the realities of perturbation, and the logistics of vaccination.<sup>2</sup> This paper, however, will focus on a far more specific, theoretical issue, raised by myself and discussed by all: that of how the discussion between pro-cull and anti-cull (and other discussions of a similar kind) can hope to reach any kind of progress. This ‘progress’, however, is not primarily one of action or implementation (this is not a chiefly political treatment of how badger conservation can improve its practical performance, though this was certainly a topic of the workshop), this is, rather, a matter of persuasion. To what extent are the opposing sides of this debate ‘speaking the same language’? It is suggested that, more often than not, the opposing sides do indeed talk past one another due to undisclosed motivations and an erroneous desire to unravel the discussion in the arena of science and economics. Given this fruitless exchange, it is sug-

gested that an openness of motivation on both sides might permit the debate the freedom it needs to progress beyond a mere shouting match. To illustrate this case I have introduced an historical example of an early conservationist’s attempt to persuade those of differing temperaments. I have done this in the hope that the birth of the environmental movement may offer some inspiration as to how it must continue.

In 1662 John Evelyn presented his treatment *Sylva: A Discourse on Forest Trees and the Propagation of Timber* to the Royal Society.<sup>3</sup> This discussion represented one of the first public forays in the English language into what is now widely regarded as the matter of ‘conservation’. Evelyn recognised the pressure which the English shipbuilding industry was placing on the country’s woodlands and that, to secure England’s naval future (as well as various other industries), new trees would need to be planted. This focus upon the material benefits to be gleaned from planting trees, we might forgivably suppose, reflects a solidly instrumental motivation on the part of Evelyn. What is most interesting though (at least for the purposes of this discussion), is that Evelyn also betrays other

motivations. Of course, Evelyn was writing to engage the interests of a certain audience: he sought to convince landowners of the benefits of planting woodland, and so we may well suspect that the text does not wholly describe Evelyn's own reasons for planting trees. Yet *Sylva* does not hide an interest in other less tangible values of woodlands. He imagines the oakwoods "benignly visited with the gleams of the sun, and adorn'd with the distant land-skips appearing through the glades, and frequent vallies [...] nothing could be more ravishing".<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Evelyn appeals to the king on these aesthetic grounds in much the same breath as he does reasons of material profit.

Now it must be said that the division between preservationist ethics and conservationist ethics has been treated thoroughly (though perhaps not exhaustively) amongst the various commentators on environmental philosophy.<sup>5</sup> One side, the preservationists, wish to preserve the natural world and its denizens for their own sake, the values are innate and irreducible, the other, the conservationists, wish to preserve them for the sake of humanity (and possibly only for a certain section of humanity). It is this issue which my own contribution to the workshop on the badger cull focused on and for a reason which Evelyn's own mixed ethics may help to illustrate.

It may well be argued that Evelyn, even when discussing the beauty of the woodlands he envisages being planted, is still appealing to the landowners on purely conservationist grounds; he does not imagine that the woods themselves are going to be taking in the glorious 'land-skips', it is not for their sake but for the sake of His Majesty and his subjects that these vistas should be created. Whether aesthetic value can indeed be so reduced to its ability to be enjoyed by humans is, alas, a discussion for elsewhere;<sup>6</sup> suffice to say here that there does not, in Evelyn's case, appear to be any disjointedness in his admixture of differing values, no attempt to disguise or translate, and that, contrary to his possessing any purely instrumental motivation, he does elsewhere express a desire to avoid destroying nonhuman life for its own sake. In *Acetaria: A Discourse of Sallets*, Evelyn

seeks to persuade as to the benefits of a purely vegetarian diet. It is here that (although appealing also to biblical, prelapsarian precedent) he wonders why:

any Creature should be put to Death and Pain for him who had such infinite store of the most delicious and nourishing Fruit to delight, and the Tree of Life to sustain him? Doubtless there was no need of it. Infants sought the Mother's Nipple as soon as born; and when grown, and able to feed themselves, run naturally to Fruit, and still will choose to eat it rather than Flesh and certainly might so persist to do, did not Custom prevail, even against the very Dictates of Nature.<sup>7</sup>

Evelyn's quest is a holistic one, there is no strict division between dialogues of conservation and those of preservation, the reasons simply mount, the debate is one (though it may be variously weighted depending on its designed audience).

Yet was Evelyn short sighted in his arguments? There were undoubtedly those who would have remained unconvinced by his suggestions that a vegetarian diet was beneficial for all concerned, perhaps (if a pun might be excused) he was barking up the wrong tree. Yet Evelyn was no fool and his legacy is felt still.<sup>8</sup> Throughout his treatments of silviculture and vegetarianism his chief foci remain economics and health respectively, and whether these are his own personal priorities is, presently, relatively unimportant; what is important is that they are not his only concerns and that his arguments remain sound, communicable and digestible for a wider audience.<sup>9</sup>

My suggestion, at the workshop on the badger cull, was thus: in order to succeed in persuading the pro-cull camp that killing badgers is not the best way to combat bTB in British cattle the anti-cull camp must not only understand its own argument thoroughly but must also ensure that the argument communicated to those in favour of a cull is transparent and compatible with the arguments of this opponent. Not a particularly revolutionary suggestion, it might be thought, and indeed it is not; yet the conversations which were had at the workshop were revealing. The anti-cull argument often continues in this way: "don't cull badgers; many scientific studies of the effects of culling have demonstrated its inefficiency in combating bTB; at



most, all that could be hoped for would be a reduction of 16% of bTB in the cattle of a culled area over about nine years and at massive cost.” DEFRA, though, is very clear about its own counter-arguments, and one recurs most frequently: “without tackling TB in badgers we won’t ever deal with it in cattle.”<sup>10</sup> 16 per cent is still 16 per cent, far better than nothing, and a good, even necessary, start along the path to eradicating bTB. The cost, they say, will be borne out in the long term. This matter was discussed at length at the conference and at times the sense of dismay was palpable. One cannot deny that some badgers carry TB, nor can one deny that a dead badger is less likely to infect a cow with TB than a living badger and this is all that the pro-cull camp need; why not give it a try?

The suggestion of this paper and my own presentation to the workshop is that the respective parties in this debate appear to be talking past one another, both suggest that they are acting on the basis of solid evidence and stark economics, yet all the while one gets the sense that behind each argument there are other reasons far more potent which remain unspoken. Despite, however, these reasons remaining veiled behind a curtain of debate ‘grounded in evidence’, both sides strongly suspect the ulterior motives of the other.

Of course, it must be noted that the ‘opposing sides’ are not themselves internally uniform, no group ever is. The pro-cull camp includes those of varying motivations and tolerances as, more importantly, does the anti-cull camp. When these ‘camps’ are spoken of in this discussion what is being referred to is an imagined (yet evident) moderate interquartile range. Any discussion will exclude certain disputants, their views and convictions will lie outside of any potential middle ground, and, as is so often the case in public debates, any conclusion which might be hoped for is to be hoped for in the form of middle ground. So, the anti-cull camp does indeed include a vocal and vehement collection of individuals so dedicated to the idea of abolishing all livestock farming that they are unwilling to engage in any process of dialogue and compromise with those who are in support of the cull. It cannot be claimed that all

vegans will be unable or unwilling to sue for transparent and fruitful debate with livestock farmers (despite finding their industry inherently unconscionable), it need only be recognised that some will indeed be so.

If, we wonder, there were some shaky evidence to suggest that by washing milking equipment at a similar cost to the cull, there was a similar chance of a reduction in bTB, over a similar time frame, would a majority of the anti-cull camp take so strong a dislike to this proposal? Certainly not. It might be expensive, it might only have a remote chance of reducing bTB sufficiently to save money in the long run, it may well involve mountains of bureaucracy and result in only minimal benefit in the grand scheme of things, but nobody would get hurt. No badgers would die, it would just be a bit of soapy water.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, if a vaccine were developed which cost even more than the cull to implement and which would have similar benefits as the proposed cull then many anti-cull campaigners may well be in favour of implementing it; there would be fewer poorly cows at least.<sup>12</sup> We may also imagine that if an alternate cull were proposed, whereby the farming community were forced to absorb all of the costs, there would be an uproar amongst that particular community with accusations of political betrayal (and the Conservative Party would swiftly find itself devoid of the support of a comfortable farming lobby, not to mention an established blue-tinted population).<sup>13</sup> The economics of the cull may well be questionable, costs and benefits playing an uncomfortably close game over a lengthy, uncertain chain of events (and only then in a best case scenario of maximum bTB reduction), but not for the farmers. The majority of the cost involved in culling badgers is in the policing of the project, not in the shooting of badgers. It is only this latter part which the farmer takes responsibility for and bullets are cheap.<sup>14</sup> And what of it? Doesn’t the farming community work tirelessly for little thanks? Doesn’t this disenfranchised group of forgotten souls, sweating and aching on the fringes of society to supply the sustenance of us all deserve some support? We might sit comfortably in our homes,

nibbling happily on a cheese sandwich, whilst far away some farmer has been awake long before dawn, straining in the bitter rain to manage her herd of vulnerable cows. And then we say that she cannot stop those badgers from infecting her herd, we say she cannot shoot those animals on her own land in a simple attempt to preserve her livelihood?

Two different conversations.

Yet, need it be so? We can be sure that, had Evelyn encountered a single species capable of bringing all landowners greater short-term profit by vast mechanical monocultures, he would have been unconvinced as to its virtues. He was a man gripped by the deepest science, art and wonder of sivilcuture, an endeavour stretching into unforeseen ages; yet this did nothing to impede his support for the king and his landed servants.

The suggestion here is that the only way to resolve this conflict over the cull (and others of its kind) is to foster a debate in which there is transparency of motivation at the same time as there is a practicality of expression. This is not, though, a small demand; such a process would require significant exercises in public communication and a good measure of political nous. In order for animal rights and the position of farmers in society to be placed openly in the debate, a far wider social dialogue would need to be entered into, whereby such subjects of discussion were removed squarely from any area of taboo. Not only are badgers capable of suffering but they also have a certain kind of right to remain alive. We are not so far (I hope) from such an open debate on animal rights in the UK, as Damian Carrington revealed, “Andrew Praill, president of the British Cattle Veterinary Association, said a cull was required to attempt to control TB: ‘The killing of badgers is an unfortunate necessity’”.<sup>15</sup> It is already widely accepted that killing badgers is not a morally neutral act. Both sides must accept that this is a factor, yet they must also agree to disagree on how significant a factor it is.<sup>16</sup> The issue of rural industries and particularly the situation of cattle farmers in the UK is, sadly, far less well established as a topic of discussion in the UK. It is perhaps here that greatest ground can be gained in the debate. One area

which was discussed frequently at the workshop and which relates closely to this potentially fruitful area of discussion is that of the variety of landowners in the UK. Conventional cattle farmers may represent a significant chunk of the rural, landowning population of the UK, but they are not the sole demographic. Many landowners (farmers and otherwise — as was made clear in our workshop) do not wish to kill the badgers on their land, they like the badgers and do not believe killing them will help with reducing bTB.<sup>17</sup> The pro-cull lobby may only answer for a select crop of old-guard Tory farmers at the top of their representative bodies who themselves perpetuate an established narrative of farmer–wildlife conflict.<sup>18</sup> The anti-cull campaigners need to get involved in this conservative debate, ensuring that the variety of their voice and political temperament is heard. MPs in support of the cull are not concerned about the votes of tree-hugging vegans, the ballots of whom would never have floated their way anyway, they care about maintaining the solidity of a pool of rural Tory supporters in danger of wavering over issues of Europe, homosexual marriage, Liberal incursions and a dangerously unsustainable food market. Even if politics doesn’t demand dishonesty it does demand strategy.

What if the pro-cull said: “We recognise that killing badgers is not the most desirable thing to do — though some of us recognise this more than others — but we stand in the face of a constant risk to our livelihoods. Even with some compensation from government for cattle lost to bTB we cannot maintain our farms unless something changes. The science might be shaky but it’s all we have at this point and we desire the freedom to manage our own farms. We deserve the help of the state, not its opposition”? And what if the anti-cull were to engage in this discussion? What if they were to say something like: “Very well, we ask that you concede that in the face of both weak evidence and uncertain results, the killing of badgers is too high a price to pay, but that in addition to finding other means of combating bTB, you must also be supported in other ways. We cannot concede to the killing of wildlife, but other measures can be taken to support your industry and this discussion should

include a wider debate concerning greater support for, and freedom of, farming in the UK.”

It might be objected that such a shift in the debate would amount only to the anti-cull camp attempting to blackmail the opposing ranks, something which would sit uncomfortably with both sides. Yet it might be said that, far from blackmail, this invitation to open the debate further into the realms of farming politics simply allows the conversation to develop openly and escape the

claustrophobia of a farcical pseudo-scientific discussion. Discussions of this sort necessitate compromise; give and take are the stuff of genuine progress, and as long as each side can be quite honest about its motivations and goals then there might be some hope for a resolution achieved by mutual consent rather than by political posturing and shouting in one another's faces with our fingers in our ears.

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## Notes

1. Saxe (2001 [1849]), p. 25
2. The workshop was aimed at a discussion of the planned cull of badgers in the United Kingdom (aimed at combating the spread of bovine tuberculosis) for 2012. The remit of the workshop was broad, though (and this is important to note in relation to the argument of this paper) it was certainly of a solidly anti-cull character, and served very much as a meeting of similarly minded individuals.
3. Evelyn (2009 [1662])
4. *Ibid.* p. 35
5. Joseph Desjardins (2012), pp. 131–3, offers some indication as to the variety of authors who have debated this issue.
6. Beautiful things may be ‘valuable’ irrespective of their simultaneously being appreciated as beautiful. We can imagine, for example, that had Evelyn been privy, somehow, to the imminent destruction of all life, and he himself were given the option of removing the woodlands he loved from the path of this destructive force, he would undoubtedly have done so. For further reflections on the importance of intrinsic aesthetic value in environmental ethics see Thompson (2008), p. 266. On the matter of the delicate relationship between intrinsic value and value for its own sake, which cannot be expanded upon here, see Gracyk (2012), p. 174.
7. Evelyn (1982 [1699]), p. 94
8. *Cf.* Campbell-Culver (2006), pp. 267–9
9. The audience was not, perhaps, particularly wide by modern standards, for its reception was largely and designedly aristocratic (as the repeated classical references in the text suggest); though amongst these people the discourse was highly popular.
10. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (no date). DEFRA's (2011) report on the study upon which the 16 per cent figure is based is also available online.
11. It must be noted that I am not suggesting here that this could be a realistic way of reducing bTB; it is merely an analogy.
12. *Cf.* Caplan (2012)
13. Owen Paterson MP, who heads DEFRA and is well known to be vehemently in favour of the cull made it clear that he understands the cull to be an important part of the current government's mandate. *Cf.* Carrington (16 October 2012)

14. Prof John McInerney, for one, is clear about the poor economic sense of the cull. Cf. Gray (2012)
15. Carrington (17 October 2012)
16. As aforementioned, it is this agreement, this demand for tolerance, which is likely to trim the poles from this debate.
17. Cf. Caplan (2010)
18. Cf. Woods (1998 and 2003)

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# Emotions or evidence?

## Effective activism needs hearts *and* minds

*Sarah Crowley*

**A**NIMAL SCIENTISTS AND ANIMAL ACTIVISTS OFTEN APPEAR to be at odds with one another, especially if the popular media is to be believed. We are led to understand that science, in its quest for objectivity, has little regard for advocacy and is fearful of emotional connections with its subjects. ‘Scientists’—often portrayed as laboratory researchers in white coats—come to represent the cold, logical, statistical side of human engagement with nonhuman animals, the side that shows detached interest but no real emotion. Activists, in contrast, are often portrayed as sentimental ‘bunny-huggers’, quick to demonstrate high levels of sympathy and empathy towards nonhumans and react to that which they perceive as immoral with the expression of strong emotions, particularly sadness, anger and disgust.

Our workshop aimed to consider both sides of this perceptual coin and attempted to ‘bridge the gap’ by considering both how science can inspire and support advocacy and, equally, how emotional engagement—even activism—has the potential to improve scientific enquiry.

### 1 The role of evidence in animal activism

Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.

— John Adams

The challenge for any campaign based on a personal emotion or belief is just that: both are personal. There is no guarantee that the issues about which you are passionate will motivate everyone—even anyone—else. I, for example, have spent considerable hours researching and writing about camels. I am very fond of camels and a strong advocate for improvements in their welfare as working animals. It did not take me long to find, however, that most people do not feel the same way. There are notably more charities created to support the welfare of donkeys and horses, for example, than there are camels. For various reasons camels do not generally elicit emotional, caring responses in ‘Western’ people and, were I to begin a camel welfare campaign in the UK, I would predict an uphill struggle. When a heartrending, superlative-littered, two-minute long TV advertisement proclaiming the plight of a species is shown—see, for example, the WWF’s efforts with snow leopards and tigers—many people will be moved, some enough to contribute. Others might feel as if the campaigners are attempting to emotionally blackmail them. Others will not care at all. Consequently, although emotional appeals certainly have their place, an activist cannot rely on this alone to garner support for their cause.

This is not to suggest that presenting scientific evidence in support of a campaign is the key to its success. Activism depends on groups of people sharing certain moral values and, of course, these

vary almost as much as emotions. As a result, adding a few statistics and scientific predictions will not necessarily make any difference to those who do not share the same moral ideals. So why do it? Why explain how few tigers are left in the world and how soon they are likely to go extinct, when one could instead invoke the tiger's beauty and magnificence to stir the emotions of prospective supporters?

The answer proposed at our workshop was: to be taken seriously. If a tiger is threatening someone's livelihood, or even someone's life, asserting that he is beautiful and magnificent is unlikely to save him. People — not just scientists — are entitled to understand *why* the tiger is important, why it is inspiring. If an activist knows the facts and can reasonably argue a case without resorting to personal feelings, they are more likely to gain trust and support from others. Although, in the long run, there will always be conflicting moral positions, these cannot be contested through emotion alone; a solid and convincing argument requires sound logic and evidential support.

Animal activists often receive negative press on the basis that they are seen to act rashly, spontaneously and emotionally; that they do not consider the other side of the story. In truth, many activists and advocacy organisations refer to plenty of evidence in support of their claims, but this is not always immediately apparent. Whilst there is nothing wrong with being passionate about an issue, to make a difference with those who do not share the same passions it is vital that animal advocates check their facts. As an immediately available example, the website for one rights group simply states that, "almost all animals are not fully suited to living in human captivity with the exception of domestic dogs and cats". This statement is not accompanied by explanation, reasoning or evidence and actually raises more questions than it answers; are dogs and cats "fully suited" to living in human captivity? What does "fully suited" mean? What about other social commensals, such as rats, who are also considered excellent human companions? In my research for the workshop, I wasn't compelled to look any further at the information on this site. In comparison, I had significantly

more faith in those sites that provided references and reports to support their claims: I felt they were not just making a statement, but stating a fact.

In many cases, such facts come from careful — and often complex, tedious and longwinded — scientific enquiry. It was scientists who posed the possibility of a reproductive bottleneck in cheetahs (O'Brien *et al.* 1987) and, more recently, started to investigate whether and how crustaceans might feel pain (e.g. Barr *et al.* 2008). There are journals dedicated specifically to researching conservation and animal welfare; the authors of such publications, one would expect, contributed in the hope that work they have done will be put to good use. This is because the people under the white coats are often animal advocates, or even activists, themselves. I, for one, read a degree in Animal Behaviour for two major reasons: firstly, because I was fascinated by animals and wanted to learn about them and secondly, because I loved them and wanted to find ways to improve their lives. This being said, I hesitate, even now, to use the word 'love' in an academic context, another example of the problems created by the legacy of separating emotions and evidence.

## 2 The role of emotion in the search for evidence

### a) How did we get here?

During the scientific revolution, based on the philosophy of René Descartes (2007 [1646]) it was widely accepted that humans and nonhumans were fundamentally separate. Animals, believed to lack souls, were perceived as equivalent to machines and believed to feel no pain. This 'Cartesian' mindset allowed for the extensive (and, at least in theory, guilt-free) use of animals in scientific settings, most notably vivisection (see Kalof 2007 for a thorough review). Concurrently, the scientific method was being tried and refined, with a strong emphasis placed on maintaining objectivity. In scientific terms, it should be kept in mind, attempts to remain objective are well-intentioned: essentially, a strongly biased study is both invalid and likely to be inaccurate. However, fear of bias

appears to have led some scientists to believe that they couldn't 'know' anything without rigorous experimentation. In terms of Animal Behaviour, the resulting research was enlightening: Pavlov and Skinner, for example, discovered a great deal about the processes of learning in animals, including humans (Domjan 1998). Others, however, in their quest to find objective answers, conducted some disturbing experiments. The infamous research into attachment theory conducted by Harlow (e.g. 1962) included separating infant monkeys from their mothers to determine whether such separation causes long-lasting psychological pathologies. It may come as no surprise that the answer was a resounding yes. One could reasonably ask, with the benefits of hindsight (and common sense), "was this a fact that needed to be proven?" This apparent emotional detachment on the experimenters' behalves, whilst not wholly representative, remained commonplace in the scientific community until comparatively recently. When, in the 1960s, anthropologist's assistant Jane Goodall began conducting field research on chimpanzees and attempted to interpret her subjects' emotional and social lives, she was initially received with derision by the scientific community (Goodall 1971). Yet her findings, and those of others like her, were carefully documented, well supported and extremely progressive; Western primatology would not be the same today were it not for the emotional engagement of a few trailblazers. Indeed, primatologists in Japan — who were not waylaid by doubting the 'humanity' of nonhuman primates — were already well advanced in this field by the time Goodall began to publish (see de Waal 2001).

## b) Science without emotion

It has been said that man is a rational animal. All my life I have been searching for evidence which could support this.

— Bertrand Russell

Although ethics approval committees should, in theory, prevent experiments like Harlow's from being repeated today, there remains some legacy that science should exist in the absence of emotional engagement. I recently wrote a paper on the

case of the ruddy duck (Batt 2011), which has been almost eradicated by UK conservation organisations because some individuals migrate to Spain and mate with the white-headed duck, creating a hybrid variety. Although the detrimental effects of these dalliances on the white-headed duck's population have not been proven, and although the ruddy ducks' actions pose less immediate threat to the Spanish white-headed duck than human hunters, the official 'scientific' (and conservationist) line is that separate species should remain separate. Consequently, ruddy ducks have been destroyed countrywide. In this case, there is a reverence for theory and principle that continues to overshadow any emotional dissonance that must surely arise from such drastic actions.

Still, there is a place for the advocate who is driven by evidence alone. The Noel's amphipod is a freshwater shrimp. It is not what most would consider an inspiring animal; it is very small, almost translucent and, to the untrained eye, hardly distinguishable from many other types of freshwater shrimp. However, there is only one remaining population of this species in the world (IUCN 2012) and, whether or not your ethics dictate that that sole population should be conserved, someone believes it. A conservation initiative for Noel's amphipods is not likely to be driven by emotional concern for their wellbeing, fear for their individual demise or veneration of their beauty, but rather from the understanding of their potential importance as part of a wider ecology, or perhaps a recognition of their unique attributes.

The central themes of our workshop — discussed in depth by an inspiring group of attendees — were, firstly, that it is difficult and often inadvisable to attempt to divorce science from emotion. Equally, promoting a cause without providing any supporting evidence may render it ineffective. So, rather than separating facts and feelings, maybe both should be recognised and appreciated for their roles in discovery and improvement. Our proposal was that activists could benefit from incorporating good science into their campaigns and that scientists should ensure they considered the emotional or ethical issues surrounding their research. Animal advocates and scientists are often

the same people. Where there is conflict, however, it may help everyone involved to remain mindful

that both emotions *and* evidence are accessible; and that both have a role to play.

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## Note

This workshop was jointly delivered by Toni Vernelli and Sarah Crowley. The above summary has been authored solely by Sarah Crowley and she wishes to make clear that, while attempting to summarise the key themes of the workshop, it does not claim to represent the views or work of Toni Vernelli.

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# Academics and activists: responses and reflections

*Chris Calvert*

**Abstract:** Animal protection has its advocates inside and outside of academia, though they do not always see eye-to-eye. More and better interaction is needed, and to this end, the responses of a variety of academic and campaigning thinkers were solicited on the proper role of the pro-animal academic, the kind of research that would be most valuable, and how to manage tensions around objectivity. Amongst views expressed were that the problem of objectivity is not insurmountable, and that care must be taken to avoid narrow instrumentality in prioritising research. I consider the impression welfarist researchers may have that an abolitionist commitment is ‘extreme’, and make practical suggestions, including better use of existing communication technologies, open-access publishing, and a conscious effort on the part of researchers to disseminate their work in rewritten form for non-academic campaigners and the public.

**M**UCH LIKE THE FIELD OF CRITICAL ANIMAL STUDIES WITH which many of its attendees will have been familiar, the Critical Perspectives on Animals in Society (CPAS) conference was born in part out of frustration at the gulf that so often appears to lie between animal advocates inside and outside of academia. In the first camp are those who have found themselves inclined to and qualified for a career in research, and who wish to bring the tools of scholarship to bear on the pressing questions raised by the prevailing kinds of exploitative human relationships with other animals. Many of these scholars would also consider themselves activists, but others, for reasons of temperament, social setting, workload, biographical history with regard to how they came to think differently about animals, and in some cases perhaps a degree of

frustration with the activist ‘scene’, find themselves at a distance from the campaigns, direct action and outreach that occupy the minds and schedules of animal activists. A commitment to inter-species justice and a desire to make their research relevant and useful motivates such scholars to provide something of value to the cause of advocacy, but it is not always clear to them where efforts should be directed, nor how findings can best be presented and disseminated.

The second group consists of those working professionally or, as is more often the case, voluntarily in the more traditionally activist domain. Attitudes to the record and potential of academic contributions to the shared cause vary considerably. At one end of the spectrum is contemptuous dismissal, prompted either by stereotypes of the ivory tower

or by experience of academic uselessness, irrelevance or self-serving: sometimes well-founded and sometimes only perceived. At the other is a deep respect for and conscious founding of campaigning activity in the output of academic research. Between these poles lies a large group of activists who are open to the contributions of scholarship, but for reasons the conference was in part convened to explore, have hitherto not found as much research output to base their political work on as they would like.

### Improving the conversation

Considerations of how knowledge is legitimated and disseminated within activist circles are central to the functioning of the animal movement as a whole, and these processes are themselves ripe for study. Activists are typically well aware of the centrality of knowledge transfer, publicising a recent revelation one minute and squashing a harmful myth the next, and all the while trying to reach and persuade a public seemingly ignorant of or indifferent to the realities of animal suffering and their complicity in it. At their best, activist exchanges are engaged with political realities and priorities, put the suffering animal at the centre of their considerations, show a sufficiently broad awareness of the range of challenges for priorities to be kept straight, and benefit from a wealth of lived experience of what in other walks of life might be called public relations. At their worst, they exhibit flawed assumptions about human behaviour and about how people react when their lifestyle or principles are challenged, lack of rigour in critical thinking, political naïveté, loss of sight of either the big picture or the everyday reality of individual suffering, intersectional blindspots, vulnerability to conspiracy theories, infighting and tribalism, and endless battles over the “will piecemeal reforms available to us now set back revolutionary changes that might be available down the line?” questions that have vexed all radical movements.

Animal advocacy would benefit enormously from deeper engagement and a more constructive conversation between the academic and activist

camp. The responsibility lies with academics to listen to activists’ needs, use their input to identify and frame important research questions, and make findings available in a way that fosters meaningful action beyond the usual academic next step of “further research needed”, constrained as this always is by considerations of publication potential, career advancement, and individual and institutional reputation. On the activist side, it is necessary to consider carefully what kind of information would aid work towards a particular desired change and let those who might be able to help know about it. Such identification of missing knowledge just might reach the attention of a researcher who could fill the gap, particularly if the time is taken to communicate it to a suitable candidate directly!

Beyond this instrumental conception of a productive academic role in animal advocacy, an expression of less obviously ‘campaign-driven’ thoughts on the part of activists can help to raise important underlying questions that would benefit animals despite seeming far removed from everyday questions of shifting public attitudes, movement considerations of tactical efficacy and empirical work on animal experience, vital though all these are. I raise this now in order to keep in perspective the thoughts of others below on what kind of research ought to be done, and to bookend the following presentation of views with the thoughtful and cautionary words of Seán McCorry, with whose contribution I conclude the section below. The risk of falling into the trap of narrow instrumentality in assigning a role to academics in the task of liberating animals from human-inflicted suffering needs to be borne in mind, and cannot be untangled from wider debates about the scope for intervention in the world available to the scholar. It will be for reflexively-minded academics to ensure the contribution of their fellow professional thinkers is not restricted to mere provision of ‘useful’ knowledge for campaigning purposes, and that their capacity to problematise, to question and to live up to the ‘pain in the backside’ example set by Socrates for all who consider themselves — in the broadest sense of the word — philosophers, is not

abnegated, to the ultimate if not immediately discernible detriment of animals.

## Perspectives of animal advocates

It is my hope that spaces of academic–activist interaction such as the conference whose proceedings are collected in this volume can encourage more and better dialogue between the two parties, which when brought together in a spirit of cooperation frequently turn out not to be so readily divisible. To this end, following the conference, the views of some who attended and some who did not were solicited on the following questions:

1. How should academics researching animal topics relate to activists and the wider world?
2. What kind of research should academics interested in supporting animal advocacy be doing?
3. Does an academic imperative to be ‘objective’ or ‘value-neutral’ present any problems for researchers wishing to be engaged in this way, and how can these problems be overcome?
4. On a practical level, how can academics and animal advocates outside academia be helped to engage with each other productively?

Ruth Semple, responsible for communications, public policy and research at the Vegan Society, rose to the challenge of addressing all of them, and her responses (pers. comm.) are presented here:

1. Academics can benefit in many ways by embracing engagement with the wider world (not least because this is their ultimate source of funding).

Activists and academics can expect to mutually enhance one another’s activities. It has been said that without knowledge, action is useless; and knowledge without action is futile. Activists are interacting with a wide cross-section of people on a weekly basis while academics have the time and perspective to bring insight to the often confusing reactions which activists elicit. It is vital that academics pursue collaboration with activists to increase our knowledge base.

Academics are ideally suited to bridge the divide between theory and practice; by showing activists how can they utilize theories to advocate and campaign for change. Academic ideas and theories are invaluable to the work of grassroots activists, especially in places where such information is essential yet inaccessible.

2. The most pressing area is human behaviour change research as almost every part of animal advocacy involves some kind of significant human behaviour change.

3. Academic objectivity should not present problems as all academics bring their own world-views, cultures and ethical values to their research. One aspect of animal advocacy research involves identifying, studying and making explicit these ‘biases’ present in all academic work.

4. The first step is regular opportunities for communication and dialogue, using channels such as social media and face-to-face meetings. This will enable people who are already involved in both academia and animal advocacy to engage with their peers, thus increasing mutual understanding. Such insight is likely to lead to ideas and practical collaboration. These partnerships will be integral to the creation of relevant research and will also help with advocacy pursuits. Academia and activism can and should exist together, and creating partnerships is one way of ensuring their co-existence.

On the second question, concerning the kind of research those outside academia would appreciate more of, Yvonne Nicola asked (pers. comm.) for “research carried out into the psychological makeup of people engaged in animal abuse — such as vivisection, hunting, intensive farming, angling etc.” The difficulties of drawing firm conclusions in this area are well-known both to psychologists and to activists pondering the seemingly inscrutable minds of those who set out to deliberately harm animals, but it is important to re-emphasise the desire for insight here, in the hope that any who can offer some might venture to do so.

Dawn Bishop sought (pers. comm.) research “centred around the suffering of animals and the complex emotional lives of animals” in the hope of moving “beyond thoughts of animals as ‘objects’ or ‘possessions’ but more as individuals, which may then lead to a paradigm shift on how the ‘world’ views animals.” The work of the ethologists Jonathan Balcombe (e.g., 2006, 2010) and Marc Bekoff, amongst others, can be seen as pioneering in this regard, and may offer academia a compelling model of how scientific practice, with its emphasis on objectivity, can be honestly reconciled with the ethical commitment that arises from a reflexive moral response to its own findings.

Dan Lyons, of *Uncaged Campaigns*, and more recently the promising (and to this topic, highly relevant) new Centre for Animals and Social Justice (CASJ), addressed the third question, on the tension between objectivity and morality by suggesting (pers. comm.) that:

[F]rom a ‘new institutionalist’ perspective (see *Theory and Methods in Political Science* by Marsh and Stoker [2010]) there’s nothing academically flawed with having a normative position as (1) everyone does whether they realise it or not and (2) as long as the normative position is acknowledged and doesn’t clearly skew one’s methodology or interpretation of data, then it shouldn’t be a problem. It can be a problem in terms of short-term impact though because government and powerful interests only tend to take notice of expertise that fits in with their ideology/discourse/interests. Overcoming that power structure is the key task for ethical academics, and that is one of the main goals of the CASJ. Both academics and activists need to avoid simply talking among themselves and engage with the general public and policy-makers who may not entirely share or understand our paradigm.

In relation to the second question, on research priorities, Lyons elsewhere (2011) recommends the use and outlines the application of techniques such as policy network analysis, describing it (p. 6) as “a prominent, orthodox tool in public policy research.” It is a curious feature of the animal protection movement that advocates have so often failed to recognise that other social movements have their think tanks, their politically savvy lobbyists, and organisations that recruit people with academic experience in order to survey the political landscape in rigorous and systematic ways that manifestly win them influence. Lyons’ goals for the CASJ may well prove to represent a considerable advance in this area. The disconnect between the level of concern for animals amongst a substantial section of the public and the absence of debate on coherent visions for animal policy in the realm of national party politics illustrates both how much work there is to do, and how much potential there is for the politically informed to exploit the methods of scholarship in lobbying and campaigning activities. In the words of Lyons (2011, p. 16), here discussing vivisection (although similar sentiments could be expressed on a range of issues), “Animal welfare is neglected by government because

animal protection advocates lack the required resources to gain genuine access to the network, relative to animal research interests.”

In closing this section on priorities, here is Seán McCorry’s salutary reminder of the value of less directly policy-orientated, but nevertheless inescapably and avowedly political forms of scholarly enquiry, given (pers. comm.) in response to our second question on the research choices most desirable for academics who want to help animals:

For academics and activists who are committed to challenging our exploitation of other animals, there is an understandable tendency to privilege research which is instrumentally useful to the struggle for animal liberation. There is undeniable value in, for instance, research in the natural sciences which demonstrates the cognitive capacities (or the capacity for suffering) of nonhuman animals; similarly, work in the social sciences can elaborate the socially pernicious effects of animal slaughter (to give one example), or produce analyses of policy networks with a view to enabling more effective political interventions on behalf of animals.

Such work plays a crucial role in supporting the claims of animal advocates, and should continue to be encouraged within (and beyond) academia. There is a risk, however, that the instrumental utility which characterises such research might come to be taken as the sole criterion of value in animal studies. According to this logic, work which engages with more abstract ontological questions (in philosophy) or questions of representation (in art criticism, literature and film studies) is seen to be deficient by virtue of its apparent inability to offer a direct response to the injustices inflicted on other animals. In activist writing and in academic scholarship, this lack of immediate instrumental value is sometimes attacked as signifying a narrowly intellectual interest in animals (and I wouldn’t want to deny that this is often the case in the humanities), or as representing a distraction from the more politically important work of directly undermining animal exploitation: “Why is it,” we are asked, “that when animals are being slaughtered, vivisected or driven to extinction, you are spending your time wondering what an animal is?”

It seems to me that, while such questions are understandable in light of our ongoing violence towards nonhuman animals, they miss the point that our exploitation of them is founded on the assumption of an absolute difference between humans and other animals, and that this assumption has a fundamentally ontological character. When you begin to challenge the claim that humans are absolutely and all respects different from and superior to nonhumans—when you respond, as Jacques Derrida and others have done,

that the philosophical trope of “the animal” as an undifferentiated unity obscures the diversity of capacities which can be found within the nonhuman world — it becomes clear that it is no longer possible to think of animal capacities in terms of privation, as though animals are somehow impoverished versions of ourselves, lacking the enabling faculties of reason, language, and the rest. This kind of intellectual work, despite its indirectness in comparison to more immediately useful studies in the social and natural sciences, is critical to the task of undermining the intellectual foundations of speciesist violence. I would like to see a deeper politicization of animal studies in the humanities, in the belief that all areas of intellectual enquiry can and should contribute to the radical reevaluation of our relations with our animal others.

## Commitment, objectivity and the perception of extremism

Up to this point I have taken it for granted that the reader seeks common ground between academia and activism in order to advance the shared goal of liberating animals from injurious human-instituted systems. Not only is this manifestly not the position of all within academia, where the imperatives of intellectual enquiry are fundamental, and (acknowledged and explicit) ethical commitment is a frequently disdained complicating factor, it was not the view of an important minority of conference attendees, whose presence was nevertheless both solicited and appreciated. This section explores some of what might underlie the tensions that surround animal advocacy within academia.

It should be noted here that much as there has been disagreement within, for example, feminist circles within and outside of academia about desired goals and desired strategy, there is a parallel breadth of ideological and strategic perspectives in relation to animals, which cuts across the distinction I have been making between academics and activists. When the dissenter from mainstream positions on animal use is also an academic trying to research effectively and achieve credibility in the eyes of academic peers, there seem to be two main points of contention liable to arise somehow, the interplay of which results in a complex epistemological and methodological landscape which cannot be described in crudely adversarial terms.

The tensions I single out here arise from disagreements or misunderstandings about objectivity on the one hand, and differing visions for human–animal relations on the other.

A commitment to use research to improve the lives of animals or safeguard them against human exploitation makes those who for whom objectivity is paramount uncomfortable. Objectivity is a problematic concept, adequate treatment of which is well beyond the scope of this discussion. Suffice it to say here that research with no avowed aims beyond the uncovering of truth cannot help but carry the baggage of unspoken assumptions unwittingly imported into the idealised environment of the Enlightenment laboratory: a bounded space hoped by those who work in it and receive its products to be as pristine intellectually as a well-controlled scientific experiment is physically.

A commitment to abolitionism is the second source of difficulty in finding common ground with most academics. Without prejudice to any typology stemming from lengthy debates elsewhere about what qualifies as abolitionism, I am referring here to the ultimate goal of the cessation of all exploitative practices occasioning harm to animals, whether advocacy of welfare reforms along the way is regarded as reasonable or not. The abolitionist vision for the future of human–animal relations is a viewpoint liable to attract the epithet ‘extreme’ from many genuine and compassionate people trying to improve welfare under an assumption of the indefinite continuation of whatever harmful practice they are working to improve, whether this is refining slaughter methods in meat production, 3Rs work in vivisection, or collaborating with zoos to improve enclosure design. This characterisation is quite apart from any suggestion that the tactics a person advocates for bringing about abolition are extreme, but it is often conflated with it.

The reaction under discussion is often complicated by researchers not having previously encountered such a position except through caricatures of the intransigent, irrational and potentially violent ‘animal rights extremist’: an archetype counterposed in the popular imagination both with the rational scientist and with the reasonable,

moderate and humane individual concerned to limit a narrowly conceived category of *gratuitous* suffering in the cause of animal welfare. Crucial in influencing the reception of abolitionist or other ‘beyond-welfare’ viewpoints is prior acquaintance with them, as will perhaps be known to vegan readers experiencing in the reception of their dietary choices differences between committed meat-eaters who have vegan friends and relatives — disagreeing with them but getting along — and those who have never knowingly encountered any vegans and may instinctively locate the idea on the lunatic fringe. When moral philosophy has largely passed a researcher by, and the ethical presuppositions underlying and motivating their work either go unnoticed or are simply held as axioms, the idea that a fellow scholar may regard ‘humane’ slaughter as nevertheless unacceptable, vivisection as ultimately without justification, or zoos as inescapably compromised can be a surprise and an affront.

Having presented above the views of some who were sympathetic to the aims of the CPAS conference and broadly satisfied with the way it went (though it must be emphasised that not all quoted respondents to the four questions were in attendance), I want to turn to some criticism raised by attendees. The following comments are taken from the conference feedback forms, where they contrasted markedly with the prevailing (highly positive) reaction:

Overall it was very enlightening, however I don't think it was a very constructive atmosphere if one of the aims was to ‘bridge the gap’ between people in research and activists. In fact it served to highlight the size of the gap! It was an enjoyable event for the majority of people who shared the same (extreme) view, but I didn't feel that discussion of any compromises [was] welcome.  
(anonymous attendee 1)

My main suggestion would be that you need to get more academics on your side — particularly those that could be in a position to circulate the message of activists — and from a variety of backgrounds: e.g., scientists that directly work with animals for the benefit of the animals — there are lots of these people but they get a bad name with activists, as do activists with those that work in science, when these groups of people should both be working together for the benefit of animals.  
(anonymous attendee 2)

In conversation at the end of the day with two attendees from a scientific background involved (if memory serves) in research aimed at improving the welfare of animals used by particular industries, it was apparent that the ‘activist’ position they encountered at the conference was one they did not feel at home with, which appeared to them to be uncompromising, unfamiliar and even extreme, and which left them with the possibly surprising impression that their own work in the field of welfare improvements would not be given a welcome reception.

My suspicion was, and remains, that a great deal of misapprehension and disagreement is a consequence of many welfare scientists not being engaged with the most relevant and prominent ethical debates over animal use. The stock-in-trade concepts so familiar to activist and social-scientific attendees and interested parties have not penetrated as far as we might wish into the consciousness of people intimately involved in matters that impinge concretely on questions of animal wellbeing, suffering, intrinsic value, interests, exploitation and welfare. Specifically, the distinctions between ‘rights’ and ‘welfare’, and between the utilitarian use position and the abolitionist position (see e.g. Francione and Garner 2010), may be neither obvious to nor indeed felt to be of any relevance by large numbers of scientists, industry actors, regulators and others motivated in their work at least in part by a genuine desire to alleviate animal suffering. If social scientists and philosophers seeking to advocate for animals have pressing tasks to perform within academia, prominent amongst them must be the need to address a widespread failure to understand both the welfare–abolition dichotomy and the political economy of animal exploitation, including what has been called the animal–industrial complex (see Twine 2012; van Strien, this volume), and the way in which it may unwittingly implicate welfare scientists in the perpetuation of the suffering they seek to minimise.

As in so many areas, the pursuit of the natural sciences within academia, often muddled in practice by issues arising from industrial applications and funding sources whose ideological implica-

tions are not always the subject of critical reflection, is revealed as standing on the other side of a faultline that divides it from the social sciences and humanities in matters of training, cultural reference-points and the framing of discussions. C.P. Snow (1956) famously lamented the ‘two cultures’ he saw in the academy of his day, and it seems the tendency to talk past one another is still very much present and a serious problem where the impact of academic research on the lives of animals is concerned. Researchers most at home in one of these cultures would benefit from some attempt to understand the sea in which their colleagues across the divide swim.

In admittedly simplistic terms, we might characterise the present situation as follows. Scientists working towards animal welfare on farms and in labs may frequently do so in a way that is heartfelt, but politically and philosophically naïve, devoid as it is of the serious consideration given to such questions as welfare versus abolition in other areas of scholarship. Seen from the other side, however, those academics in the humanities and social sciences, living the life of the mind and engaging in abstract philosophical discussions of ethics, culture and political theory, risk losing sight of the kind of conversations happening at the ‘sharp end’ of influence over the lives of exploited animals in the industrially applied sciences, missing sites of intervention, dismissing the researchers involved as irretrievably compromised, and neglecting genuine engagement with the power structures that determine the course of so many animal lives. Animal advocates must remain conscious, however, that the ‘welfare science’ position is by no means necessarily based on a naïve conception of what is required to help animals, but often instead a categorical difference in the honestly held views of researchers on the moral dimension to the optimal relationships they envisage for humans and other animals.

## Practical possibilities

It remains to discuss some practical steps animal-friendly academics and non-academic activists might wish to take in the hope of improving co-

operation: the ambit of the fourth question posed to those involved in animal advocacy. Dawn Bishop (pers. comm.) urged those in academia to get involved in local animal rights groups, and regarded the CPAS conference as an “excellent starting point” for productive engagement, pointing out that:

There are also annual events — such as the Animal Aid Christmas Fayre held both in London and Exeter. When I have attended the London fayre, there is a programme of talks. Academics could present at these, which also gives them an opportunity to take questions.

One aim of the conference was to provide such a forum for conveying academic research output into the activist sphere, and a reciprocal challenging of academic priorities and practices by those concerned about animals who are not bound by institutional strictures or unwittingly internalised assumptions and practices. The audiences of the presentation sessions included many who would not otherwise have found themselves at an academic conference, thus avoiding their own missing out on the fruits of scholarly research, and exposing presenters to the different kinds of questions put to them by non-academic attendees. The logical next step, for those researchers who feel it would be helpful, is to take their talks to the wider public at events such as those suggested by Dawn Bishop. Many in academia have at times experienced an unsettling feeling that they are taking part in a grand game divorced from any imperative to have an impact in the real world beyond the insular circuit of conferences and the limited audience of academic books and journals. I suggest that any amongst these with a desire to change the world for animals could greatly enhance the satisfaction they derive from what they do every day by presenting at public campaigning events, despite their lowly position in the hierarchy of ‘bankable’ presentation and publishing opportunities that becomes apparent to postgraduates at the outset of their academic careers.

Aside from physical meetings and print-media publishing channels, academic knowledge is communicated in written and — increasingly — audiovisual form through the internet. This offers enormous potential for the communication of

research findings and informed academic commentary, potential that I believe is still largely unrealised in spite of the massive expansion of the internet and computing technologies into everyday life. More than twenty years ago the World Wide Web was proposed precisely as a means to communicate information as an aid to the efficient practice of research. In the words of its founder:

The project is based on the philosophy that much academic information should be freely available to anyone. It aims to allow information sharing within internationally dispersed teams, and the dissemination of information by support groups. (Berners-Lee 1992)

Academic inertia and commercial publishing interests have meant that some of what was envisaged in the small but vibrant online communities that existed prior to the mid-1990s and before has still not been brought to fruition. Enormous quantities of valuable work done by scholars is not made available to everyone through the internet as it could and should be. The open-access publishing movement is making continual strides towards rectifying this unfortunate situation, but change needs to be individual as well as institutional. As a preliminary, I suggest that activists with an academic background but no academic career to worry about are well-placed to contribute to newer, smaller, or more academically marginal open-access publications work that might otherwise be locked away in more established paywalled journals. These latter journals are often favoured simply because they may offer greater ‘impact’ when defined in its academic-economy rather than straightforward sense, between which meanings an unfortunate gap exists that the academic profession would do well to keep to a minimum.

Secondly and more importantly, in terms of the volume of research output involved, it should be remembered that publishing agreements frequently make it possible for authors to self-archive articles they have authored, or at least pre-submission versions of them, on their own websites, pre-print archiving services or institutional repositories. This is known in the terminology as the ‘green’ rather than journal-based ‘gold’ route to open-access publishing (BOAI 2012), and it is incumbent upon anyone wishing to have their

research read and valued to lower barriers to reading it as far as possible by taking advantage of all latitude they are given by copyright law and journal policy to make it freely available. As Ruth Semple points out above, the ultimate source of funding for so much academic research lies with the public, to whom its fruits therefore ought to be available, but this argument should not even be required for anyone seeking to help animals through the dissemination of their academic work.

Given the everyday familiarity with computers of today’s postgraduates, and the personal web-spaces made available by most universities, I struggle to see why any researcher who has published should not have a basic website: a regular practice since the early years of the Web and indeed back into the 1980s—in the form of FTP sites—of a large proportion of researchers in certain scientific disciplines. The basic requirements for such ‘shop windows’ seem to me to include a summary of research interests, contact details, and a list of publications, accompanied by the full text of such publications wherever possible. No fashionable social media integration or elaborate presentational features are required. Beyond this, I find it unfortunate that while the abstract is a long-established and invaluable means of transmitting research in concise form for easy digestion by other scholars attempting to deal with more material than they can reasonably read in full, summaries of published articles, chapters and monographs written with the educated (or indeed uneducated) non-specialist in mind are almost never encountered. These too would find a perfect home on the personal websites of academic researchers: at least one paragraph for every item in the personal bibliography. Ironically, the ‘lay summary’ is already in widespread use by UK vivisectors in the form of anonymised statements of the purpose of licensed research projects on the Home Office website, made available ostensibly to promote accountability and instil public confidence in the regulatory regime, but as Gröling (this volume, p. 55) has pointed out, often involving sanitised descriptions of procedures at the behest of institutional ethics committees. It is ironic that researchers concerned to protect rather than



exploit animals, and therefore frequently criticised for departing from objectivity, should feel in any way inhibited from writing up their research for the public in a neutral tone when the deployment of propaganda is widespread practice in the public presentation of animal experimentation.

The challenge of communicating research output useful to activists has on the whole been taken up not by researchers themselves, except in cases where they have used their expertise to write non-academic books for the mass market; instead being left to immensely valuable intermediaries such as the Humane Research Council. Their website, [humanepot.org](http://humanepot.org), should have a prominent place in the regular reading of all campaigners interested in making use of research findings. The challenge I would like to issue to academics reading this is to do themselves the job of outreach and communication presently left to the likes of the Humane Research Council. Institutional exhortations to career academics to maximise their research 'impact' are frequently accompanied by press offices seizing on particular studies with a topical hook or media-friendly angle, all with the aim of enhancing the reputation of the university by raising its public profile. The individual scholar or collaborative group taking responsibility for the dissemination of their own work and seeking transformative rather than superficial or self-interested impact is better placed to write non-flashy prose for public consumption, thereby reaching out meaningfully to a world that can benefit from their expertise.

Given the minority status of animal advocacy within academia, and the association many branches of academia have with animal exploitation, much outreach and communication by researchers concerned to protect animals is necessarily aimed at fellow scholars. Andrew Knight, whose background is in veterinary medicine and animal campaigning, in particular for the removal of requirements for veterinary students to participate in procedures harmful to animals, offers (pers. comm.) the following recommendations:

[P]eople judge the merits of your arguments partly on the basis of factors such as your qualifications

and appearance. [...] Always remain polite, professional and factual, whilst maintaining your compassion. [...] It is essential in overcoming the common misperception that [...] concerns [about abusive practices] are irrational and emotionally based, that you base your case on rational arguments and facts, as well as compassion.

As intelligent, highly educated people, there is much academics can do to publicise animal abuse in a wide variety of social settings, and to advocate for change. All academics should be able to provide the reasonable and rational arguments essential for winning any associated social debates.

Even the most erudite of arguments are of little use, however, if their exposure is limited to the readership of specialist journals. To achieve social change academics must also seek to provide messages in the language of mainstream culture, using instruments such as mainstream media outlets. Academics may do so directly, and can also facilitate the ability of other animal advocates to do so, through the provision of information.

Knight offers his own informational website, [AnimalExperiments.info](http://AnimalExperiments.info), as an example. Like the Humane Research Council's work to bring information gleaned from academic research to public and activist attention via the internet, this site offers a model for researchers and campaigners wishing to bring specialist knowledge to the general reader in the interests of animals, in this case by listing relevant studies and articles by topic to allow advocates to marshal evidence in support of their aims.

## Concluding remarks

Having read some responses to the four questions posed to animal advocates in this article, the reader is now challenged to come up with their own answers and so contribute to the debate about how those concerned about animal protection and liberation and the role of research in securing it should proceed. After several decades of the animal rights movement, a substantial body of intelligent, educated and committed people seeking to improve the lot of animals now exists, represented inside and outside of academic circles. There is enormous scope for collaboration, engagement and constructive criticism of each other's contributions. As well as the academic and the campaigner, there is the third position of the public intellectual, writing in journalistic style for a wide

readership or making other extra-academic interventions that may prompt and foster social change. All of these people have much to learn from each other, and can engage in fruitful discussion with scholars not similarly minded when it comes to animals, without compromising any commitments to professionalism or honest intellectual enquiry. There is no contradiction between a career spent seeking truth through the academic lens and a personal commitment to help free animals from suffering. Neither is there any reason why campaigners unfamiliar with formal scholarship should shun the contributions it can make to their cause.

I will end with a reminder of the state of the campaigning sector and its deficiencies in making use of academic research and expertise in its work. This assessment is offered by one experienced observer of the movement, who is concerned that:

*Chris Calvert has a longstanding interest in animal protection and advocacy, and was motivated to get involved by some combination of the movement's philosophical and campaigning manifestations. He graduated with Combined Honours in Social Sciences from the University of Durham, where he led the student animal rights group. Later, an MSc in Sustainable Development and Climate Change took him to Exeter, where he helped with the CPAS conference, filming the presentations and putting together these proceedings. Despite a shift of his academic focus to the natural sciences, he tries to stay abreast of scholarly developments concerning animals and hopes to maintain a foot in both camps.*

Many advocacy groups, including many of the largest, have quite a naïve, short-term, micro-level focus and don't really understand or acknowledge the deeper structural or macro-level obstacles to advancing animal protection. This is partly due to the lack of social science expertise as well as organisational imperatives that drive work aimed at short-term impacts that may not be consistent with any strategic thinking.

While there is clearly much work to be done in rectifying this, it is cause for optimism at least that the two archetypes I presented at the start: that of the scholar and the campaigner, frequently show themselves in the same individual. A large group of those who attended the CPAS conference would fit that description, and it is to be hoped and worked for that in the years to come, they will help to form the bridge between thought and action that animals so clearly need.

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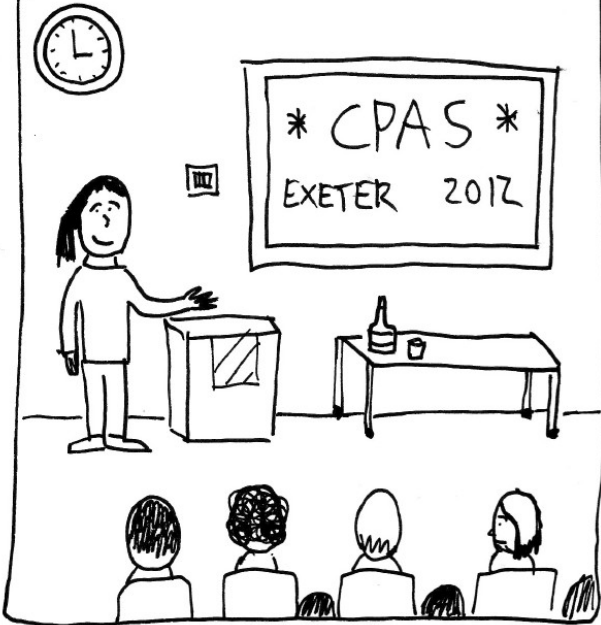
# Visual reflections on the conference

*Nathan Stephens Griffin*

**M**y PhD research uses biographical and visual methods to study the biographies of vegans and animal rights activists. As part of the project, I ask participants to create comics about their lives, and I create my own 'autoethnographic' comics, which are intended to contextualize the research, and offer a reflexive, situated account of the research process. Using these methods, I hope to challenge accepted value systems surrounding 'acceptable' or 'valid' modes of representation in academic contexts, and make my research accountable and accessible to a wider audience. This very short comic provides some brief reflections on the successes of the CPAS conference, as well as some of my hopes for the future.



For anyone who wasn't there, it was a really interesting day. There were academic panel presentations...



...Practical, activist led workshops...



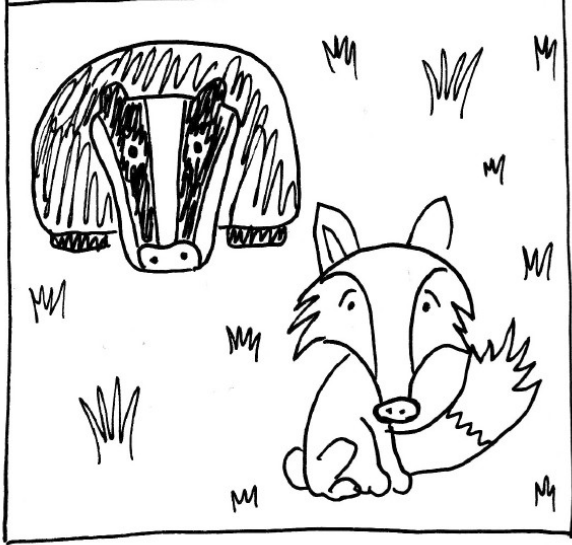
...Stalls for various animal advocacy groups...



...as well as films, poetry and music.



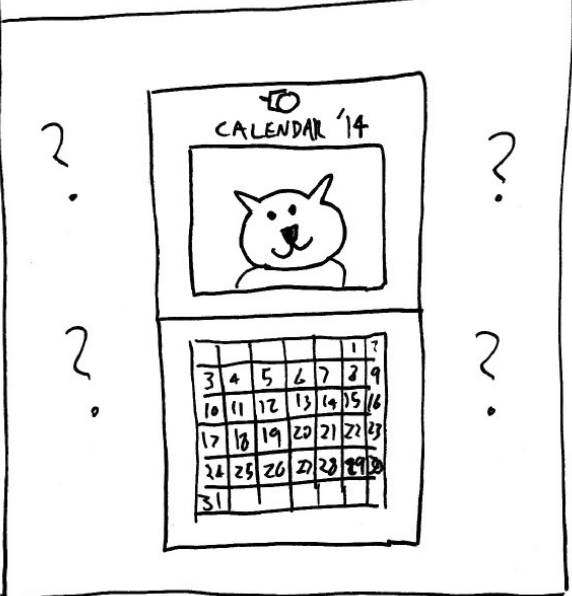
It brought a lot of like minded people together to think about and discuss current issues in critical animal studies and it was successful in nurturing a dialogue between activists and postgraduate academics.



From the feedback we received it seems that many people left with new friends, contacts, and with renewed energy moving forward.



Hopefully we can build from it, and maybe even hold another conference sometime in the future!



So, with any luck we'll be seeing you again soon. In the mean time keep up the good work!

