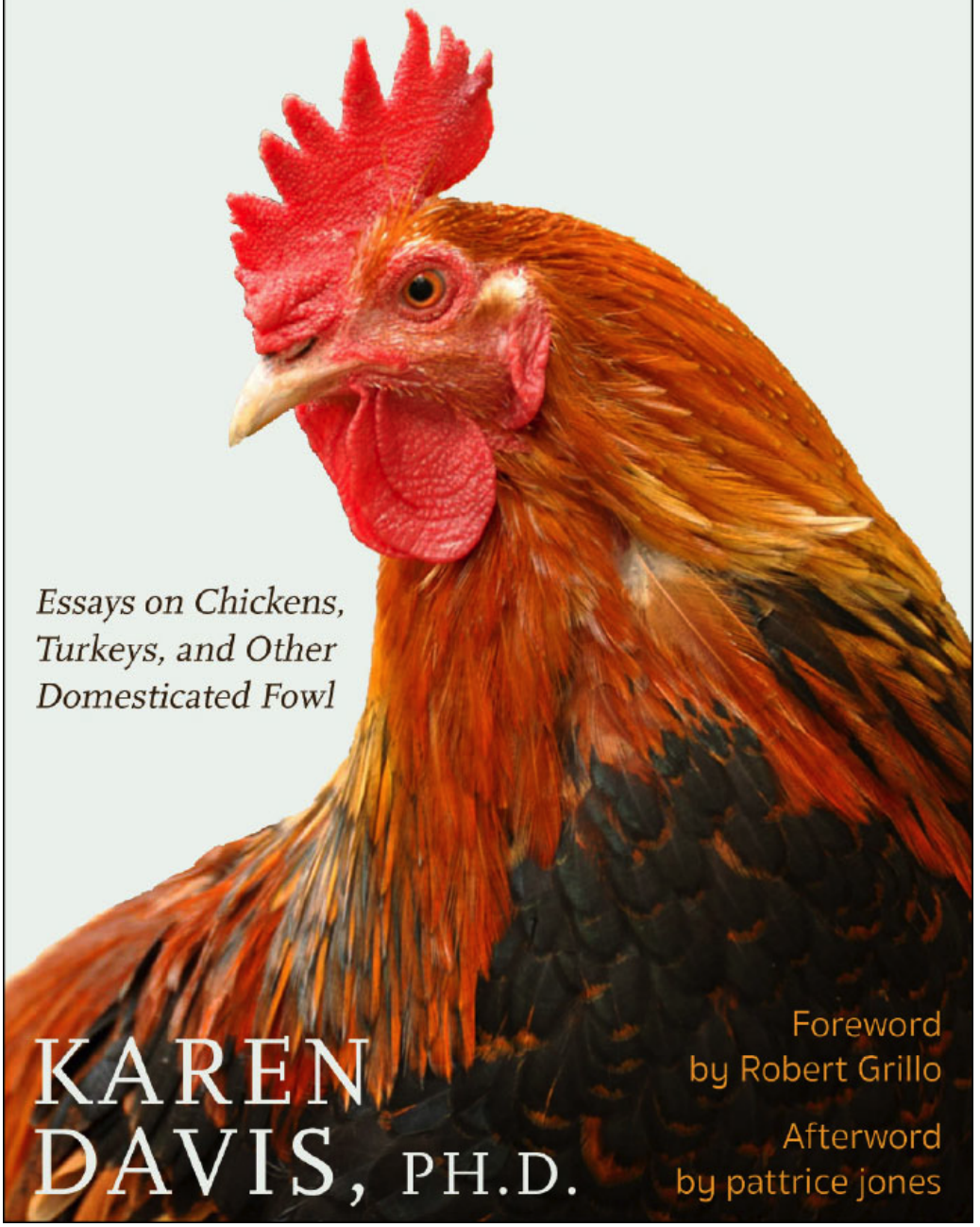
FOR THE BIRDS

From Exploitation to Liberation



Essays on Chickens, Turkeys, and Other Domesticated Fowl

KAREN DAVIS, PH.D.

Foreword by Robert Grillo

Afterword by pattrice jones

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I dedicate this book to every sentient soul on Earth: those who anguish, those who languish, and those who liberate.

I also dedicate this book to Liqin Cao and Franklin Wade, whose commitment to United Poultry Concerns from the very start and in every respect is a priceless gift.

And to Ronnie Steinau and Hope Bohanec and everyone who supports justice for animals and is working to make it happen.

To every bird, fish, mammal, insect, and habitat, I dedicate this book with gratitude for your existence.

Opposite page: Cypress Hens 2 by Susan Rayfield
Following pages: Boris by Susan Rayfield
Karen with Florence by John H. Sheally (top)
Karen with Nicholas and Nathaniel by Holly Wills (bottom)
Karen with Buffy by Davida G. Breier


Stick Up
For
Chickens

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Foreword

Robert Grillo

One spring day in 2009, I made an impulsive decision to adopt three orphaned chicks from a school chick-hatching project. I raised Doris, Danita, and Riccardo into adulthood and they became part of our family. They would be the first of many chicken rescues in the years to come. The problem was, I knew nothing about raising chickens and eagerly, albeit naively, sought advice in backyard chicken forums. I quickly became disillusioned by the sentiments expressed by most of their members, which ranged from apathetic to appalling. Many offered dangerous advice on DIY "medical" procedures to perform on birds (as a substitute for proper veterinary care), or shoddy advice on housing and safety, while others coldly advised questioners to gas to death unwanted or sickly chicks. When I finally landed on Karen Davis's United Poultry Concerns website in 2009, I realized I had found not only a vast repository of sound information about chickens, but also a truly evolved way of caring for and relating to them. I was immediately struck by the passion and power of her words and the rich insights I gleaned from them.

"Procrustean Solutions to Animal Identity and Welfare Problems" is a groundbreaking look at the physical and cultural disfiguration of the chicken into a cheap food source, resulting in the erasure of the chicken's true identity. The modern-day Procrustes masterminds new ways to force his victims into grotesque physiological and psychological contortions, all the while masquerading as an animal welfarist who frames new technologies in torture as a win–win, good for both the birds and his bottom line. Davis lays bare the brutality and deception of the poultry

industry while recalling the lost and little-known attributes of the chicken's nature, based on both scientific studies and lay observation. Her vast knowledge of the egg industry is revealed in "The Life of One Battery Hen." Reading this, one walks away with a portrait of an industry that is as morally broken beyond repair as it is fully committed to the cover-up of its immorality and indifferent to the crushing suffering of its victims.

"The Mental Life of Chickens" and "Viva the Chicken Hen" are Karen's moving, personal accounts of caring for, observing, and interacting with a variety of individuals she's rescued over the years. These works heightened my receptivity to chickens and all birds, and to the potential for how we might interact and learn from them.

It's been several years since I first discovered Karen's writings on chickens. Since then, I've read many more articles and letters by Karen, listened to many of her presentations, watched her videos, and conversed with her in person and over the phone. One of her most striking traits is the ease with which she moves from scholar to activist speaking to reporters on the street. People are moved by her clear command of her subject, her lifelong dedication to animal activism, and her seemingly unstoppable energy.

Many other qualities in Karen's writings and activism have left a deep impression on me. One of the most enduring visuals I have is a photo of her holding one of the chickens she rescued from a cruel ritual in New York City. It's a beautiful image of her holding this rescued baby bird close to her in a protective and consoling way as the atrocity unfolds around her. In addition to years of her own activism, Karen takes time to mentor young and novice activists. In "Moving Beyond the Rhetoric of Apology in Animal Rights," she addresses some of the most common pitfalls activists confront when communicating with the public, from giving our critics the power to define us in disparaging ways to betraying our message in an attempt to make it more palatable to the public.

Over the years, Karen and I have exchanged many ideas for letters to editors of major and independent media outlets. We both appreciate the power of the media to shape and potentially change public perceptions

of animals. It's been immensely valuable to have her input on some of my own letters to editors. In the face of continual misinformation and offensive, callous characterizations of animals in the media, allies like Karen have made me a stronger communicator. For this reason, I was pleased to see her so aptly describe many common media tropes in her piece, "The Disengagement of Journalistic Discourse about Nonhuman Animals." Her scrutiny helps us specifically identify how journalists so often patronize animals and those who care about them in animal-related stories, and why we must challenge journalists in our effort to hold the media more accountable and demand that animals be accurately represented.

Karen has also pioneered the study of animal rights in connection with other social movements, including progressive politics and feminism. In "Are Feminists Right to Resist Comparison with the Females of Other Species?" she deconstructs the speciesism and "us and them" mentality that explains why we consider a comparison to a hen insulting, whereas comparison to a lion is complimentary. She is also unflinching in her analysis of subject matter that other authors would find too difficult. In "Interspecies Sexual Assault: A Moral Perspective," Karen questions the tenuous cultural and economic lines we draw between criminal bestiality and the routine breeding practices of farmers—practices involving the sexual manipulation of chickens, turkeys, cows, pigs, and other species for profit that, defended as "strictly business," violate the animals while eliciting prurient pleasure in the manipulators.

For the Birds substantiates the enduring value of Karen Davis's work as an author, an activist, and a rescuer. Those who are new to her writings will be struck by her range of subjects and analysis, whereas more seasoned readers will be grateful to find her important ideas gathered in a single volume. I am confident that Karen's readers will be greatly rewarded, and that the birds and all animals will benefit, as they already do, from the abiding passion and influence of her advocacy for them.

Robert Grillo is the executive director of Free from Harm and author of *Farm to Fable: The Fictions of Our Animal-Consuming Culture*.

Acknowledgments

One of the pleasures of publishing a book is the opportunity it provides to acknowledge the people who have helped make the book possible. The list is longer than I can credit in this short space, but I particularly want to thank Carol J. Adams for urging me to turn a short piece I'd written earlier into "Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection," and John Sorenson for urging me to develop some previous observations into an analysis of "disengaged journalism" for *Critical Animal Studies*. I am deeply indebted to every person who has pressed me to write an article, even when I felt "too busy."

For this volume, I especially thank the following contributors:

Robert Grillo, executive director of Free from Harm, for kindly accepting my invitation to write the Foreword.

pattrice jones, cofounder of VINE Sanctuary, for graciously accepting my request to write the Afterword.

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Veda Stram of All-Creatures, who also serves on United Poultry Concerns' Board of Directors, for her initial preparation of the manuscript from diverse sources of original publication and continuing involvement in the book's progress.

Bill Ferguson, web assistant for United Poultry Concerns, for helping Veda resolve some of the trickier issues at the beginning of the formatting process.

Mary Britton Clouse, cofounder of Chicken Run Rescue and a member of United Poultry Concerns' Board of Advisors, for her dedication to

chickens ever since we met over a museum exhibit in Minneapolis featuring two suffering chickens, which we succeeded in getting cancelled following our protests of animal cruelty.

Finally, I thank Martin Rowe, publisher of Lantern Books, for publishing this volume with the judgment, attention, and support that he brings to every publishing project: including two of my earlier books, *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality* and *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities*.

Introduction

> "Changing how the world treats animals ought to start with the ones hanging off the end of a fork."—**Mary Britton Clouse**, cofounder of Chicken Run Rescue

Poring over some papers recently, I came across the introduction to a speaking engagement composed by my friend and fellow animal rights advocate, Susan Roghair, at a Florida Voices for Animals dinner in Tampa, Florida. Susan told the crowd: "Karen Davis is the founder of United Poultry Concerns. Speaking candidly and forthrightly, she makes no apologies. Her crusade exposes the cruel realities of the poultry industry. She reveals the suffering of the defenseless birds. This is Karen's mission. It will not end until every chicken is freed from the jaws of mankind."

I found this intro touching—and true, even though I will be long gone if the day ever comes when chickens are free from the jaws of humanity.

"Freed from the jaws of mankind" conjures up themes of mine going back to the 1980s, when I joined the animal rights movement, which was just then forming in Washington, DC, to the very moment I sit here writing this Introduction in 2019.

What themes am I talking about? To begin with, there is the theme of people literally consuming chickens and other animals, including the mental and physical suffering these animals endure on their way to being turned into food. There is the theme of "badmouthing" other animal species, especially those destined for the table: belittling and caricaturing them in ways that make it seem almost as if they "deserved" the

punishments we heap on them in the lexicon of abuses that parallel and reinforce the literal abuses we so liberally dispense.

And there is the theme of who chickens and turkeys (my particular topics) are in and of themselves within their own worlds of experience and expression as revealed in circumstances that are as free as possible from the preconceived notions that distort our perception of them.

If there had been an animal rights movement in America before the 1980s, I would have gravitated to it as naturally as I did to books and music and dogs and birds as a child, while shrinking from the animal cruelty I often saw and heard being carried out growing up. As I write in "From Hunting Grounds to Chicken Rights" in this volume, I did not have to be deprogrammed from believing that other animals are inferior to humans or that they were put here by "God" or some other force for our use. Since I never "supported" eating or otherwise harming animals, but was simply ill-informed, I did not have to be persuaded to abandon one position for another. What I needed was to be made aware and for my natural affinity for animals to be represented conceptually for contemplation and, ultimately, for action.

The emotion inspired in me by chickens and turkeys that informs my writings is inseparable from the analytical perspective I bring to a consideration of their lives. Focusing on my personal life with these birds over many years and on the injuries our species inflicts on them in countless ways, I would like to be able to share the optimism of those who believe that human beings as a whole will eventually, or already do deep inside, experience a fellowship with chickens and other creatures more potent than the overt attitudes that, almost everywhere you look, overshadow the primal sympathies.

The metaphorical figure of Procrustes came to mind one day as I was reading a summary of a talk by an agribusiness professor that distinguishes between the "science-based" view of animals and the "sentimentalized," a.k.a. anthropomorphic, view. In Greek mythology, Procrustes is a tyrant who keeps an iron bed on which he places the victims he snares in his lair after stretching or shrinking the bed in advance to reshape his prey

to reflect his will. If they are too tall, he amputates their excess length. If they are too short, he stretches them to size. Metaphorically (and literally), exploiters do this to animals all the time. In this volume, I examine the procrustean reshaping of animals' bodies and identity by exploiters, including the involvement of society as a whole.

What I call the "procrustean solution" is the *real* anthropomorphism, in the pejorative sense of falsifying and fabricating other individuals and groups in order to have your way with them, and attributing *your* way to *their* will as a collaborative effort benefiting both parties. Animal exploiters in the fields of farming and research formulaically invoke "anthropomorphism" and "sentimentalism" to discredit the observations and concerns of animal advocates.

But look around. Cartoons, circuses, zoos, agribusiness, animal research, hunting, fishing, horseracing, cockfighting, advertising, rodeos, you name it: at every turn, chickens and other animals are cut and pasted, mutilated and incarcerated, defiled, deformed, blamed, and bullied to reflect and bolster the human enterprise at their expense.

As animal advocates, we must take care to avoid the rhetorical traps that can cause us to replicate and perpetuate the demeaning stereotypes from which we seek to rescue animals as part of our overall goal of rescuing them from the jaws of humanity so that they may be, and be respected for, who they are. So that they may have homes on Earth outside of a zoo. The fact that we have disfigured and disrespected the bodies of birds and other animals for "food," for example, does not mean that we may add insult to injury by reflexively characterizing our victims as "Frankenstein freaks" and similar terms in an effort to try to gain public sympathy for them and their plight.

Likewise, the adult members of other animal species are not comparable to human infants and cognitively impaired humans. Regrettably, the animal advocacy movement has picked up some bad language and bungled analogies from some of its leaders. Rather, as the naturalist Henry Beston wrote in *The Outermost House* in 1928, other animals are not underlings. They are not lesser souls. They have their own identities,

their own life experiences, and their own dignity, voices, interests, and feelings. They possess intelligence. They know happiness and playfulness. They know things that we do not. It is only in our clutches, apparently, that chickens and other creatures become abject, pathetic, and melancholy mad. In my view, it is a mystery of iniquity and not just "survival" that has caused so many people and cultures throughout history to find comfort and self-worth in defeating other creatures.

I call on animal advocates never to "apologize" for animals and to hone a posture of affirmation worthy of those for whom we have chosen to speak. I share with fellow activist pattrice jones the importunity that we learn to listen to animals before attempting to be their voice, and that we "use our empathy accurately." That is to say, facts matter. Confidence matters. Keeping faith is essential. Avoiding the procrustean blades of annihilation and refusing to be silenced by the iron edicts of "experts" is a tough call, but it is *our* call. The rhetoric of exploitation requires a counter-rhetoric of animal liberation. That is what this book seeks to deliver on its promise to the birds and all creatures: that we will not stop our crusade until they are freed, and free. This is my contribution to our mission.

1

From Hunting Grounds to Chicken Rights

My Story in an Eggshell

The Concentration Camps

People often wonder how I started as an academic and ended up as an animal rights activist, rescuing and defending the rights of chickens and turkeys.

Before I was an "academic," several things happened that bear on my life as an animal rights activist and founder of an organization fighting for the rights of chickens and turkeys. I grew up in Altoona, Pennsylvania, a railroad town, and I attended two Pennsylvania colleges: Westminster College, which I left in my sophomore year in the throes of a psychological crisis, and Lock Haven State College, where I earned a degree in the Social Sciences in 1968. As a freshman I graduated instantly from reading books like *Marjorie Morningstar* and *Gone with the Wind* to fervid absorption in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and existentialist philosophy. At Westminster I became interested in Russian and German history, above all in Stalin's slave labor camps and Hitler's concentration and death camps. So immersed did I become in thinking about these camps that I had to leave school. One autumn day, my father visited me and I mentioned going to law school to become a civil rights lawyer. Two weeks later, I called my parents to come and get me. I dropped out

of college, unable to carry on as a student while coping with a growing obsession with the human-engineered suffering of people, which had become like a cancer, eating me alive.

I became obsessed with the question of retaining personal identity under conditions intended to destroy personal identity along with the core of oneself. By "identity" I mean one's innermost sense of self, rather than one's appearance to the outside world. I began trying to imagine myself in the concentration camps and inside the skin—the minds—of people forced to live in those camps. Inwardly, I was driven to "go" to places where I imagined how it would be to no longer feel like, or be, oneself, though still remain alive and functioning. I tried to imagine every conceivable kind of human-imposed suffering and at what point one (I) would stop being oneself (myself)—and how that would feel.

"Tried to imagine" is somewhat misleading. My obsessions had a life of their own. I felt as if I had been invaded by an infection of superclarification of abysmalness and horror. Words for these kinds of perceptions lie somewhere in the region of the profane and inane, for there are states of consciousness for which no verbal equivalent exists. This is why it irritates me to hear the word "language" used to distinguish humans from other kinds of animals. There are many languages besides human verbal language. There are languages of the intestines and the lungs, as well as of the heart and of the animal being, and I say this as one for whom verbal language is extremely important.

Words—books—helped save me from an ordeal that I thought for a while I might not survive. Back home, my father, an attorney, felt betrayed. He couldn't accept a concentration camp obsession as a reason for leaving school, flouting the education he was paying for. Desperate, my mother arranged for me to see a psychiatrist. When I told the psychiatrist about my need to suffer and how I was plagued with guilt because I wasn't in a concentration camp (and how I felt guilty, too, because I didn't want to be in one), he said, "In a way, you are in one." This was a consoling—almost bracing—thought. Years later, I read a book by A. Alvarez, a friend of the poet Sylvia Plath, who described Plath's particular form

of mental suffering as a "concentration camp of the mind." This captures something of what I was going through at that time.

I was never in a concentration camp, and I do not pretend to equate my experience with the experience of those who were. Yet the fact remains that learning about these camps affected my perspective, on the threshold of adulthood, more profoundly than any other single previous event. My subsequent preoccupation with the human-imposed suffering of billions of nonhuman animals, far from being an abandonment of the perceptions I gained in the course of my preoccupation with the concentration camps in the 1960s, involved a radical extension of those earlier perceptions to include the largest class of innocent victims on earth.[1]

During those years, I don't recall ever thinking about abused animals in the light of concentration camp victims, although I would have been able to do so because of the cruelties I saw, and in some cases participated in, while I was growing up.

At the time of my obsession with concentration camps, I gorged on hardboiled eggs because an article in *Vogue* magazine had said that it takes more calories to digest hardboiled eggs than they contain, so the more eggs one eats, the more weight one loses. I had no idea, then, that the eggs I devoured by the dozens were the opposite of a "comfort food," that they came straight from the kind of a hell I was agonizing over. The battery-cage system of egg production was just then being consolidated as an industry. Perhaps those eggs incubated to hatch my future.

Growing Up

I grew up in a family and community where sport hunting was normal and expected. When I was in grade school, schools closed on the first day of deer season, and probably still do. My father hunted rabbits and ring-necked pheasants (pen-raised pheasants turned out on the first day of hunting season), then "cleaned" them in the basement. He said he didn't hunt deer because he didn't want to have to lug them through the woods. His defense of rabbit hunting was "everything hunts the rabbit." My father and his friends hunted grouse, squirrels, and small birds, but I don't

recall anything about turkeys. Maybe they were "too big" to lug through the woods. We ate some of his killings, and the rest simply disappeared. There was talk such as: "Hell, I don't want them; give them away . . . or *throw* them away." One of my uncles loved to tell the story about how he threw away twenty pheasant pies his wife had baked.

Not until Tim (the oldest of my three younger brothers) was a teenager, and wanted to spend Saturday with his girlfriend, do I recall a family conflict over hunting. My father flew into a rage when Tim announced that he didn't want to "go huntin'" with his dad. He was accused of being "a girl" because he preferred to be with a girl that day.

My middle brother, Amos, had his eye knocked out with a slingshot when he was five, yet he grew up to be an avid small-game hunter with a penchant for killing pheasants and quails. He could admit that some nonhuman animals had feelings. His own family had a golden retriever named Coffee, who was kidnapped from their yard in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Weeks later, when they somehow got her back, "Coffee's fur had turned white from fright," Amos said.

My father kept a succession of hunting dogs at the far end of the yard. These beagles had a wooden doghouse filled with straw and lived at the end of a long chain tied to an iron stake. Whenever I visited "Nellie," or "Gus," or whoever was there at the time, the dog would cower inside the doghouse or approach me crouching, with his or her tail curled under trembling back legs. My father trained his dogs by hitting them with a work-gloved hand. I'd hear them whimpering from inside the house. I heard stories about hunting dogs who had heart attacks running in the fields because they had been tied up, without exercise, for months between hunting seasons. My father took the beagles out for runs during the year to keep this from happening. In the fall, the men stood in the kitchen in the early morning talking about the great day of killing that lay ahead. They'd then load Dad's dog into the trunk with the other dogs, all yelping, and off they'd go.

I was an avid meat eater. I loved broiled fat, which I would eat off other people's plates: "Give it to me, I'll eat it!" Nonetheless, around the

age of thirteen, I started arguing with my father about hunting. We'd be at the dinner table when the fight would commence. I'd be yelling at my father about hunting, and he'd be yelling back—over prime rib or baked ham or broiled lamb chops. Needless to say, my father never changed. He stopped hunting in his eighties only because he could no longer see well enough to shoot, but he hunted for years with poor eyesight before quitting.

I never thought then that I was eating sentient beings. I remember my mother proudly announcing: "I buy fresh chicken from Imler's" (a poultry slaughter market still in business). Chickens weren't real to me the way pheasants were. Growing up, I saw ring-necked pheasants dead and alive. Occasionally, one flew into our windshield on a country road. As a child, I begged my uncle George, a cabinetmaker, to carve me a big wooden pheasant. I colored in the pheasant's eyes and neck and carried it protectively under my arm. Now I know that chickens *are* pheasants.

One of my most vivid childhood experiences was when the white duck who lived up the street with the Mallory family was run over by a car. I cried inconsolably on the couch. I loved that duck, and for some reason it was more painful to me for a duck to be hit by a car than a dog, which I saw often enough, and which was traumatic enough.

As a very young child I spent feverish nights suffering over baby robins that fell out of nests in the trees in our yard. They would be naked and their mouths would be open, crying, and my mother would help me "take care of them." But the next morning they were always gone.

I loved parakeets, too. My parakeet, Wiffenpoof (a budgerigar, actually), loved to push a rubber jacks ball across the rug with his beak. He sat on my father's head whistling loudly while Dad yelled sternly at my brother, on behalf of our neighbor, Mr. Feathers: "I told you to stay out of Mr. Flower's Feathers!" One day, I came home from school and Wiffenpoof was gone. My mother said they gave him away. My parents bought me a wind-up canary in a plastic cage to take his place. It still hurts to wonder where they took Wiffenpoof. In those days, no one recognized such parental decisions as both an act of animal abuse and an act of child abuse.

In truth, my mother couldn't stand to see an animal hurt and suffering. I still picture her crying in our driveway over a mouse with an injured foot that she tried to coax with cheese into a bucket. At the same time, my brothers and I picked many butterflies off the flower bushes in our yard and put them in jars and cigar boxes, with a handful of grass, until their wings were tattered and transparent, and they either died or we "put them back." We also caught grasshoppers, grass snakes, and worms. Why were we allowed to hurt these creatures? How could *I* do that?

Only years later did I recall seeing my best friend's father pull a brown hen out of a dark shed next to their house one day, lay her on a wooden block, and chop her head off with a hatchet. Her head lay clucking on the grass at my feet while her body ran around the yard. It was definitely a hen. I see her as clearly as if the episode happened yesterday.

When I was eight or nine, my father decided to get rid of the rats under the house by killing them with the whisk of a broom. This project was carried out in the same gleeful spirit as when he and his brother, my uncle Clyde, killed bats in the attic with rolled-up newspapers and tennis rackets. Meanwhile, my mother went through the house shrieking, "God didn't make rats, the devil made rats." That was how she dealt with the cruelty she couldn't bear to watch, much less take part in, but didn't have the courage to speak out against in our household. I can still see a rat deep in a hole in our yard with two bright eyes looking out, and my father bent over the hole with a broom.

Racial Prejudice and Civil Rights

A story in the teenage magazine *Ingenue* titled "Them!" drew my attention to racial prejudice in the mid-1950s. "Them" referred to the black students being escorted by police into the all-white high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, in a hate-charged atmosphere vividly evoked by the writer.

I remember asking my father about the cause of this hatred, which I couldn't grasp through the writer's depiction of these students. (Perhaps that was the point of the story.) I don't recall his answer, but later, when I was at Westminster College and shortly before my obsession with the

concentration camps, I became involved in the racial conflicts that were just then surfacing on campus. I dated a few black students, which was taboo, though it was accepted for a white girl to "fast dance" with a black male student in the student union. At the time (1962) campus fraternities and sororities excluded black students, though a special status, "associate member," was created in one of the fraternities for black football players.

One weekend I was home talking with my father about racial issues at school, and he said that if I ever brought a colored person to the house, male or female, he would not let them in. He said that growing up in Altoona, he and his family used to tip their hat to the single colored family in the neighborhood, but never invited them into the house, and the family didn't want to come in anyway. When I questioned his point of view, my mother said I should respect other people's opinions. But I replied that I was only obliged to respect other people's right to hold an opinion, not the opinion itself.

The opinion at Westminster College (I was sent to this Presbyterian school to satisfy my mother's concern for my "safety," not because my parents were religious—they weren't) was that there were certain lines you must not cross, certain things that were immutable. For example, the school choir's prize soprano, June Singleton, was black, so she had to stay in separate hotels when the choir toured the South. Despite all the talk about Christian love and courage, the administration defended this policy. One day, two girlfriends and I went to the college chaplain and urged him to take a stand against racial discrimination on campus; he argued that "separate but equal" was God's will. Such moments marked the beginning of my intellectual awakening of opposition to much of conventional society's way of thinking. My sensibility began to take shape in the form of ideas and values that were frequently at odds with the norm.

Seal Hunt

After college, in the early 1970s, I lived in a black neighborhood in Baltimore with my boyfriend and worked at a nursery school at the end of the block called the Little Red Hen. Following that, I became a juvenile

probation counselor for the state of Maryland. Out of the blue, I started getting mail from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IWAF) in New Brunswick, Canada, about the slaughter of the baby harp seals in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The seal slaughter opened my eyes to animal cruelty on a large scale. Brian Davies, then head of the IFAW and the author of *Savage Luxury* (an excruciating book about the Canadian seal hunt), sought to convince the Magdalen Islanders in the Gulf of St. Lawrence that more money could be made by treating the seals as a tourist attraction than by slaughtering them for fur. To this day, the effort to protect the seals has not succeeded.

In March of 1974, I joined an IFAW-sponsored tour to the Magdalen Islands to see the newborn seals and their mothers on the ice floes off Grindstone Island. For two days we holed up in the hotel waiting for a break in the weather that would allow the helicopters to land us safely on the ice where the seals were nursing.

I assumed everyone on the tour opposed the "hunt," which was not a hunt, just a clubbing of infants. The other visitors were an eye-opener. A retired oilman from Oklahoma had brought a tripod to set up on the ice to film the slaughter for his friends back home for entertainment. A wildlife reporter wanted a piece of fresh-skinned fur to take back to her editor. Several woman in our group said that, although they felt bad for these *baby* seals, they couldn't work up the same emotion for the bachelor seals, who are clubbed to death each year on the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea, because they were (to their eyes) unattractive. They said things like, "I could never stand to see a dog mistreated, but I don't have the same feeling about cats (or rats)."

These discussions showed why laws are needed to protect the defenseless against the caprice of human sentiment. The idea that most people have compassion for nonhuman animals, and would be kind to them if society would just encourage compassion, overlooks the extent to which each of *us* depends on legal protection. Anyway, where does "society" begin if not with people? Who in the United States would surrender the protections afforded them by the Constitution and entrust

their fate entirely to human compassion—an easily overridden emotion even when it is present?

On Grindstone Island I met a professional wildlife photographer named Bill Curtsinger, whose color photograph of a baby harp seal's whiskered face on the ice was a beautiful and popular poster at the time. Bill hated the seal hunt. He told me that growing up he'd dreamed of becoming a photographer for National Geographic, a dream that came true. One of his first assignments was to cover a beaver colony. For several days he waited quietly for the beavers to feel safe in his presence before taking pictures. But his editor at *National Geographic Magazine* didn't like his pictures, and asked him to wreck the beaver colony in order to procure a certain story angle. Bill refused and another photographer was sent to complete the assignment.

On the third day of our stay, we were helicoptered onto the ice floes. Imagine a universe of infants crying piteously in all directions. That's what the ice floes sounded like. Baby seals and their mothers were everywhere, and so was pink-stained ice. Beyond us were the local sealers, the "landsmen," with their long clubs, clubbing the seals—not for "survival," but for sport.

A *Washington Post* journalist to whom I later told this story wrote that I couldn't "process the evil" I'd witnessed that day on the ice.[2] Mistakenly, I'd thought that the seal hunt would not be taking place during our visit. Indeed, I was devastated. I couldn't go straight home, but instead spent three days blanketed in a Montreal hotel reading Thomas Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*.

Throughout my life I have found solace and exhilaration in authors who express my pessimism aesthetically and insightfully, without illusion. Describing Ivan Karamazov's despair in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky says that Ivan's soul was sunk in a heavy mist, and Thomas Hardy describes Jude Fawley's clairvoyant suffering in his novel *Jude the Obscure*, in biblical terms—the blackness of darkness. Around the time of the seals, I wrote a poem titled "A Confession of Ultimate Night," which ends: "For I am composed of countless unlighted places that never will

know the light of any summer sun / nor feel how warmth can melt even a dark and weighted space of lead and iron and Age that began to be Old on the very First Day."

Becoming a Vegetarian

I ate so much steak one summer in the late 1960s, while I was working as a waitress at the General Putnam Inn in Norwalk, Connecticut, that the landlady of the boarding house where I was staying bought me a steak knife as a joke. After graduating from college in 1968, I spent a semester at the University of Maryland's School of Social Work, in Baltimore. Almost every day after classes, I'd run to the Lexington Market, buy a barbecued chicken, take it back to my room on Cathedral Street, and devour it on the bare floor next to the iron bed, crunching bones with my teeth, chewing and almost sucking in the skin, then bolting the flesh. Occasionally, there'd be a rubbery vein or something that gave pause—not a moral pause, just a kind of distasteful "hmmm, what is this?" Yet the day was approaching when I would discover the meaning of "meat" and become one of those people who, in the words of a former chicken slaughterhouse worker, "just couldn't look at a piece of meat anymore without seeing the sad, tortured face that was attached to it sometime in the past."[3]

Just as I became obsessed with concentration camps in the early 1960s, so in the early 1970s I began to agonize over the suffering and abuse of nonhuman animals. After the seal hunt, I visited a large dark warehouse in Maryland filled with thousands of parrots, who were stacked in tiny cages waiting to be sent to pet stores. In 1972, I bought a parrot from a pet store simply to get her out of there. My parrot, Tikhon, and I lived happily together until her death, for more than twenty years.

Shortly after I bought Tikhon, I discovered an essay by the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy called "The First Step."[4] In this work, Tolstoy argues that being a vegetarian is the necessary "first step" to becoming the type of nonviolent Christian he aspired to be in his later years. It wasn't Tolstoy's conceptual arguments that convinced me to stop eating

animals (though they would have, were I a Christian). Rather, it was his grueling description of cows and lambs in the Moscow slaughterhouses. Meat-eating, milk-drinking "egghead" that I was, I needed no further prompting to drop flesh from my diet. I agreed with Tolstoy, and a decade later, with Peter Singer, the author of *Animal Liberation* (1990). Because I had never "supported" eating animals in the first place, I did not need to be persuaded to abandon one position for another; I needed only to be made aware.

Becoming an Animal Rights Advocate

Three events in the early 1980s brought me into the animal rights movement that was just then getting underway. A few months after the seal hunt, I moved to San Francisco, where I remained a vegetarian (with a few lapses). I worked for a short time at a no-kill shelter called Pets Unlimited, a terrible place for the dogs and cats who died slowly and went crazy in an upstairs room where visitors did not venture. After that, for the most part, I stayed away from animal issues for nearly a decade, fearing their effect on me. But one's temperament follows its own path.

While teaching a writing class to pre-nursing students at the University of Maryland, College Park, I provoked a furor in the classroom over a student paper that sought to absolve the Silver Spring Monkeys experimenter, Dr. Edward Taub, of wrongdoing. Taub was convicted of cruelty to animals in 1981, in Maryland (Pacheco 1985). My request that the student redo her paper sparked a semester-long, emotionally charged discussion about the treatment of animals and animal rights. It evolved to include an outpouring of suppressed emotions in the students over how much compassion they should sacrifice in order to meet the demands of impersonal professionalism drilled into them by their instructors. They saw a connection between the experiments they were expected to perform on animals and the detachment they were expected to cultivate toward their human patients, even those who were dying. As one troubled student wrote, "I would like to be merciful, but I have to be professional."

In 1983, *The Washington Post* published a long, dismissive article about Ingrid Newkirk, "She's a Portrait of Zealotry in Plastic Shoes" (Brown 1983). Ingrid, with Alex Pacheco, had recently founded People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. The article sought to discredit Ingrid by mocking her compassion; for example, cupping her hands with water for thirsty chickens stacked in crates in the midsummer heat on a slaughterhouse loading dock in Maryland. I saved the article. A few months later, when I saw a newspaper ad for World Laboratory Animals Day in Lafayette Park near the White House, I went.

Lafayette Park was the turning point. As I looked at poster scenes of animals suffering in laboratories, two images in particular struck me. One was of a beagle whose body had been burned. The other was of a nonhuman primate whose head had been transplanted onto another animal's body. The look on their faces, the suffering in their eyes, transfixed my attention. It was an indescribable look that said from the depths of their being, "Why have you done this to me?"

Their faces spoke of the terrible things that had been done to them by human beings. Standing there, I remember thinking: If you find it unbearable to imagine what these individuals are going through, remember that what you find unbearable merely to imagine, the animals are forced to endure in reality. At that moment, I pledged never again to abandon nonhuman animals to the iniquity of our species because *I* couldn't bear the knowledge of their suffering. From that moment, I became an animal rights activist, a person who works and calls for a remedy.

Choosing Chickens and Turkeys

My first encounter with turkeys took place at Farm Sanctuary in the mid-1980s, where I worked one summer as a volunteer. At Farm Sanctuary, there was a flock of about twenty white females and two bronze turkeys, named Milton and Doris. One thing that impressed me then, and has stayed in my mind ever since, was how the turkeys' voices, their "yelps," floated about the place in an infinitely plaintive refrain. Doris wandered about the farmyard all day by herself like an eternal embodiment of a

"lost call," the call of a lost young turkey for her mother. Milton followed visitors around on his gouty legs and swollen feet, impressing them favorably. They were surprised at how companionable he was. From behind a bristling armor of iridescent brown feathers, his dark eyes watched us through pendant, heavily wrinkled pouches of colorful, folded skin, like a soul imprisoned deep inside his body.

Soon after, my husband and I adopted two young female turkeys named Mila and Priscilla. They loved to forage in the woods around our house and sunbathe and dustbathe together, although their temperaments were completely different. Mila was a gentle and pacific turkey with a watchful manner. Priscilla was moody and frustrated by her inability to hatch the many unfertilized eggs she laid in the wooded nooks where she nested. When Priscilla got angry, she would glare at my husband and me combatively, ready to charge. What stopped her was Mila. Perking up her head at the signals, Mila would stand directly in the path between Priscilla and us. She would tread back and forth in front of Priscilla, uttering soft pleading yelps, as if beseeching Priscilla to calm down; and she did.

Over the years, I became more and more interested in turkeys and revolted by the ignominious role society has assigned to these remarkable birds, and the absolute brutality of the turkey industry. I adopted several more turkeys. I was drawn to their friendly, though sometimes prickly, behavior and lively inquisitiveness. Determined to bring the truth about turkeys to light, I researched the matter extensively, and in 2001 published *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality.*

In 1990, a crippled and abandoned chicken from the meat industry, named Viva, led me to found United Poultry Concerns. From the moment I pulled Viva out of a muddy shack in Maryland and saw her face, I knew I had a story to tell that would never let go.

When I met Viva in 1985, I was an English teacher completing my doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland, College Park. Although I was spending more and more time on animal issues, attending protests and learning the facts, I expected to teach English for the

rest of my life. At the same time, I was increasingly drawn to the plight of farmed animals; the number of these tortured beings is astonishing. At the very bottom of this gigantic pile of victims were billions of birds, totally out of sight. Farmed animals were generally dismissed as beyond any moral concern, because, it was argued, they'd been bred to a substandard state of intelligence and biological fitness, and were "just food" that was "going to be killed anyway."

My experience with Viva put these matters into perspective. Viva was expressive, responsive, communicative, affectionate, and alert. She was cursed with a "manmade" body, forced to bear many times the weight of a normal chicken, resulting in a weak heart, a crippled skeleton, and related genetic infirmities that prevented her, as they prevent all chickens and turkeys bred for meat production, from claiming her birthright and earthrights. But there was nothing wrong with her personally. She already had a voice, but her voice needed to be amplified from within the oppressive system in which she and her brothers and sisters were trapped. There were billions of Vivas out there who were just as special.

Viva's death hit me hard, but she clarified my future. Viva was a valuable being, somebody worth fighting for. She was not "just a chicken." She was a chicken, a member of Earth's community, a dignified being with a claim to justice, compassion, and a life equal to anyone else's. I dedicated my book *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs* to Viva, and to working for a future in which the voice of every chicken is heard (Davis 1996; 2009).

Pessimism of the Intellect

I work towards this end, this longed-for future, but I am pessimistic about the fate of chickens. Chickens (and other so-called poultry) are propagated by the billions in industrialized hatcheries around the world. The human species has not shown any significant sign of evolving to a more compassionate way of being.

Though there are places in the world where chickens continue to live the free-roaming life of their jungle ancestors, billions of chickens now live indoors. They do not enjoy even the "pampered" life of farmyard

chickens in the Victorian era, when roosters and hens were idealized as models of domestic felicity and decorum. Today the majority of hens and roosters exist only as unrealized potentials, slaughtered as babies without ever knowing the comfort of a mother hen's wing, or the reassuring sound of a rooster's crow.

Unnatural Suffering

As a college student, I was obsessed with trying to imagine what it would feel like to be in a place that was utterly inimical to one's sense of self, against one's will—to be forced into the abyss of total imprisonment, moral abandonment, and bewildering cruelty—a concentration camp or a death camp where everyday suffering is overwhelmed by human-induced suffering. For me, it is natural to try to imagine what it must be like for a nonhuman animal (like a chicken, or a turkey, or a sheep) to be forced into a human-contrived, inimical universe. For these individuals, the hell they experience is unnatural.

There is nothing in the psyche of chickens to prepare them for having their beaks burned off at birth, and being crammed in a filthy building filled with toxic gases along with thousands of other suffering, terrified birds. How do these foraging creatures, with the leafy green world of the jungle embedded in their genes, experience entombment? How do turkeys—birds who evolved not only to run and fly, but to swim, roost high in trees at night, and roam with their mothers for five months after they hatch—how do *they* experience being stuffed into buildings as contaminated as cesspools? How does a grazing animal feel being forcibly herded onto a huge ship, jammed in a filthy pen, and freighted from Australia to Saudi Arabia or Iraq? How is it for a sheep to float sea-sickeningly across the Persian Gulf on the way to slaughter?

Keeping Faith

In thinking about the bizarre and hideous cruelties our species inflicts on others, I believe that nonhuman animals suffer in ways no human has ever dreamed of or experienced, and that there are elements in human

nature that exult in creating strange new worlds of misery. With such thoughts, it is tempting to give up on a better world, which is why I find inspiration in the words of the writer Colman McCarthy, a peace advocate whose nonviolent teachings include nonhuman animals and vegetarianism. Asked by an animal rights activist, "Do you think we'll ever succeed?" McCarthy replied: "Don't worry about being successful, just be faithful" (Bartlett 1988).[5]

This advice has the advantage of realism over romanticism. Though we hold the moral high ground, and though we work with dedication, we may not prevail over the forces arrayed against animals to build the world that we long for. We do not have full control over outcomes, but we do have control over whether we are, and will remain, faithful.

Faithfulness is not about having faith, but about *keeping* faith. This recognition has been a point of light shining into the otherwise dark places to which our species condemns countless billions of our fellow creatures for reasons that, despite various explanations, remain unclear.

2

Viva the Chicken Hen

The story of the little chicken who started it all . . .

This essay was originally published in *Between the Species: A Journal of Ethics*, Winter 1990

Buried in the trees behind the fence at the back of our yard, a chicken shed opened onto the cow pasture on the other side. When we first rented the place, I used to pass by it regularly on my way to the pond at the bottom of the pasture slope. A ramshackle structure made of wood with a door latch tied shut with a string, it sat low on the pasture side under the sky, surrounded by broken pieces of old farm equipment scattered and piled every which way. Approached from the overgrown garden path, it rested among flickering shadows of yellow and green leaves, with shafts of sunlight and small breezes filtering through. When we first moved in it was empty, and I gave scarce thought to what manner of life it had housed before our coming. Peering through the dusky screen, I could see a compacted dirt floor with a large metal cylinder in the middle, and over at the far end, a low shelf crammed with junk. Stray wisps of white feathers lay about, some lifted by the breeze.

One June day on my way to the pond, I stopped short. Through the leaves, I thought I saw white forms moving on the other side of the screen. Listening, I thought I heard voices. A moment later I was staring through the screen. White, young-looking chickens covered the

ground. Several, when they saw me, came over and sank down in front of me. Back then I knew almost nothing about chickens, but I could see that their legs weren't right. They tended to be thick and swollen with the toes curling inward and outward in odd sorts of ways. Many could barely make their way to the metal feeder that stood at a considerable distance, under the circumstances, from the water trough rigged up along one wall. A few fumbling steps and they would sink down on their broad, heavy breasts, their eyes peering at me.

From then on I used to visit the chickens almost every day, wondering dimly as to their ultimate fate. One morning in August I went out to see them as usual. Only, this time the place was deserted.

Then I saw her. She was stumbling around over by the feed cylinder on the far side where the low shelf piled with junk made everything dark. A shaft of sunlight had caught her, but by the time I was able to get inside she had scrunched herself deep in the far corner underneath the shelf against the wall. She shrank as I reached in to gather her up and lift her out of there. I held her in my lap, stroking her feathers, and looked at her. She was small and looked as if she had never been in the sun. Her feathers and legs and beak were brown-stained with dirt and feces and dust. Her eyes were as lusterless as the rest of her, and her feet and legs were deformed. I let her go and she hobbled back to the corner where she must have spent the summer, coming out only to eat and drink. She had managed to escape being trampled to death, unlike the chicken I had found some weeks earlier stretched out and pounded into the dirt.

I made her a bed by the stove, close to our kitchen table. We named her Viva. Neurotically adapted to corners by now, Viva would hide her head in whatever closest corner she could find inside the house, or if outside, she would often stick her head under a bush or a pile of cut grass and just stay that way. Despite this, she liked to be outdoors. To see her sitting among the bright leaves scattered over the grass in the autumn sunshine, you would not have guessed what her legs and feet were like. Yet she liked to move around. When we first had her she used to cover a surprisingly wide territory in spite of her hardship, for though

crippled, she was quick, and I would sometimes catch her hobbling vigorously to some point or other straight across the yard with her little wings fluttering.

She used her wings for balance in order to get about. To steady herself, and to keep from falling, she would spread them out so that the feather ends touched the ground, and standing thus, she would totter from side to side in a painstaking adjustment before going ahead. Much of her energy was spent upon this procedure every other step or so.

At first, I hoped that exercise would help strengthen her legs, but as her body grew bigger they got worse. Often, I would find her sitting with them spread out on either side of her, and sometimes they would even get caught in her wings, causing her terrible confusion and distress. One day, I noticed that certain parts of her legs and feet were a greenish-blue, and wondered if she had some disease. I'd been thinking lately that even if she were not in actual physical pain, which I wasn't sure of, she was still in some kind of acute misery, for she acted as though she was. She hid her face in corners more and more as the weeks went by, and ordinary efforts like eating and turning around were increasingly done with a commotion that left her exhausted.

One of the most touching things about Viva was her voice. She would always talk to me with her frail "peep peep," which never got any louder and seemed to come from somewhere in the center of her body that pulsed her tail at precisely the same time. Also, rarely, she gave a little trill. Often after one of her ordeals, I would sit talking to her, stroking her beautiful back and her feet that were so soft between the toes and on the bottoms, and she would carry on the dialogue with me, her tail feathers twitching in a kind of unison with each of her utterances.

I decided to have her looked at, so I made an appointment, and on a Saturday morning took her in a bed of straw in a cardboard box to the veterinarian's office an hour away.

The veterinarian asked briskly, Was this some sort of pet? What was it? "No," I said, "not exactly." Viva was our companion, I explained. She had been abandoned and she lived with us in our house. The veterinarian

looked at me. She said, "Most people would not care what happened to a chicken."

She spread out Viva's wings and showed me that the undersides were black and blue like the blotches in her legs and feet. She said that because of her struggle with her condition, Viva's body was full of wounds, inside as well as out. I asked, "What is her condition?" She said Viva suffered from a congenital leg defect, called splayfoot, an inborn weakness in her joints typical of birds bred for the modern food industry. She said Viva should be euthanized and that she would use an inhalant, which is more gentle than the usual leg injection. She had to look in on another animal just now, which would give me time to spend a last few minutes alone with my friend.

I pulled up a chair next to the box on the table with Viva in it. Just then a young veterinary aid rushed in. "Where is it? Can I see it? I've never seen a chicken," she said, making for the table. She left. I thought my heart would burst. Viva was very peaceful, and when I spoke to her she piped back in the way that she had, her little tail pulsing its perky beats, from somewhere inside.

The veterinarian took Viva away. Later, as I was leaving, she said Viva would not die fast enough so she had used a leg injection after all. She thanked me for caring about a chicken. I placed Viva in the car on the seat beside me. The box in which she had travelled alive she was carried home dead in. My husband and I dug a hole in the corner of the yard and laid her inside. We covered her up with the dirt. I made a note on the inside cover of my dictionary: *On Saturday, November 28, 1985, soft Viva died.* ∞

3

Thinking Like a Chicken

Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection

In the mid-1980s I became interested in how the philosophy of deep ecology harmonized with the philosophy of animal rights. This happened during the time when my interest in animal rights was becoming increasingly centered on the plight of farmed animals. Years earlier, an essay by Tolstoy that included an excruciating account of his visit to a slaughterhouse opened my eyes to what it meant to eat meat.[1] After that, except for the occasional fish, I stopped eating meat and drifted away from eggs. However, I continued to consume dairy products until a description of the life and mammary diseases of dairy cows ended my consumption of those products.

I was well into my thirties and a semi-vegetarian for nearly a decade before I realized that a cow had to be kept pregnant in order to give milk or thought about the strangeness of continuing to nurse after infancy or of sharing a cow's udders with her calves, let alone shoving her calves out of the way so that I could have all of her milk for myself. My growing preoccupation with the plight of farmed animals did not particularly arise from the clear perception I now have of the exploitation of the reproductive system of the female farmed animal epitomized by the dairy cow and the laying hen. However, two important things happened, one through reading and the other through personal experience, to clarify my thoughts and, ultimately, my career.

My reading led me to two contemporary essays in which chickens are represented as a type of animal least likely to possess or deserve rights. One was by Carl Sagan. In "The Abstractions of Beasts," Sagan argues against the view that, in the words of John Locke, "Beasts abstract not." He shows that chimpanzees, at least, have demonstrated the ability to think abstractly through a variety of behaviors, including maltreating a chicken. A researcher watched two chimpanzees cooperating to lure a chicken with food while hiding a piece of wire. Like Charlie Brown to the football in the *Peanuts* cartoon, the chicken reportedly kept returning, revealing that "chickens have a very low capacity for avoidance learning," whereas the chimpanzees showed "a fine combination of behavior sometimes thought to be uniquely human: cooperation, planning a future course of action, deception and cruelty" (Sagan 1977, 108). Sagan poses the question whether nonhuman species of animals with demonstrated consciousness and mental ingenuity should not be recognized as having rights. At the top of the list are chimpanzees. At the bottom somewhere, in this view, are chickens.

The second essay derived from the field of environmental ethics. In "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," J. Baird Callicott draws upon "The Land Ethic" of *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold to argue that domesticated and wild animals have differing moral statuses and that, similarly, individual animals and species of animals have differing moral statuses. Wild animals and species of animals have characteristics entitling them to a moral considerability that is intrinsically inapplicable to the characteristics of domesticated and individual animals. The smallest unit of ethical considerability is the biotic community of which the individual "nonhuman natural entity" is a component of value only insofar as it contributes, in Leopold's words, to the "integrity, beauty, and stability of the biotic community" (Callicott 1980, 324–5).

Regarding domesticated versus wild animals, the relevant distinctions for Leopold are between things that are "unnatural, tame, and confined" and things that are "natural, wild, and free." Domesticated animals, farmed animals in particular, "have been bred to docility, tractability, stupidity, and dependency." They are "creations of man," making

"the complaint of some animal liberationists that the 'natural behavior' of chickens and bobby calves is cruelly frustrated on factory farms" about as meaningful as "to speak of the natural behavior of tables and chairs. . . . Leopold to all appearances never considered the treatment of brood hens on a factory farm or steers in a feed lot to be a pressing moral issue" (Callicott 1980, 314, 330).[2]

In the midst of these reflections I moved to a place where for the first two years the owner continued her practice of raising a small flock of chickens each summer for slaughter. That is how I became acquainted with Viva, the first chicken I ever really knew. In the essay I later wrote about her [which immediately precedes this chapter], I describe how I found her, her broken body, and her particular personality. [. . .]

This kind of nature and experience did not seem to have a niche in environmental ethics, including the radical branch of deep ecology, making environmentalism seem in a certain sense to be little more than an offshoot of the prevailing scientific worldview with its hard logical categories and contempt for the weak and vulnerable. Concerning farmed animals, even the animal community tended to stand clear and, as ecofeminist animal advocate Harriet Schleifer pointed out, to hedge on the issue of "food" animals and vegetarianism, making the public feel "that the use of animals for food is in some way acceptable, since even the animal welfare people say so" (Schleifer 1985, 70).

During this time a letter appeared in *The Animals' Agenda* from a woman requesting that more coverage be given to farmed animals similar to the coverage accorded to whales. The Editor's Note that followed explained that "the plight of whales remains a high priority with both animal advocates and environmentalists." Whales are "intelligent, amazing, and benevolent creatures," whose increasing fund of world sympathy, built up by the agitation on their behalf, had yet to protect them. "Given that, if we can't protect the whales, what chance do we have of protecting the chickens of the world?" (Dahl 1987, 47). It seemed, however, fair to ask what chance there could ever be of protecting the chickens of the world if their only defenders viewed their plight as less than a "high priority."

This dilemma, crystallized for me by my recent encounters with Sagan, Callicott, and Viva, led me to compose an essay, "Thinking Like a Chicken," on the triangular affair between feminism, farmed animals, and deep ecology. I argue that although nonhuman animals are oppressed by basic strategies and attitudes that are similar to those operating in the oppression of women, it is also true that men have traditionally admired and even sought to emulate certain kinds of animals, even as they set out to subjugate and destroy them, whereas they have not traditionally admired or sought to emulate women.

Animals summoning forth images of things that are "natural, wild, and free" accord with the "masculine" spirit of adventure and conquest idolized by our culture. Animals summoning forth images of things that are "unnatural, tame, and confined" represent a way of life that Western culture (and not only Western culture) looks down upon. The contrast can be vividly seen in our literature. Whereas in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* the hunters of the great white whale conceive of their prey as an awesome godlike being, in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the little boys view the nursing sow, whom they violently rape with a spear, as an object of disgust.[3] The analogy between women and nonhuman animals overlooks the perhaps more crucial comparison between women and farmed animals.

Not only men but women and animal protectionists exhibit a culturally conditioned indifference toward, and prejudice against, creatures whose lives appear too slavishly, too boringly, too stupidly female, too "cowlike." Moreover, we regard conscious logical reasoning as the only valid sort of "mind." Evidence that chimpanzees possess such a mind is a primary reason why many are now insisting that they should be granted "human rights." Human rights for chimpanzees? Yes. Human rights for chickens? Meaningless.

This brings in the question of deep ecology. The philosophy of deep ecology, with its emphasis on the ecosphere as a whole, including both sentient and nonsentient beings, presents a salutary challenge to the reductionist logic and homocentric morality of Western culture. As the

branch of environmentalism that emphasizes the spiritual component of nature and of our relationship to the natural world, deep ecology offers deliverance from the Western exfoliative global enterprise based on mechanistic models and unbridled greed of acquisition and inquiry masquerading as progress.

However, like its parent stock of environmentalism, deep ecology is infested by a macho mystique, whereby "things natural, wild, and free" continue to be celebrated and phallocized as corresponding to the "human" order of experience and idealized existence. Activities such as hunting, fishing, and meat eating are extolled on recreational and spiritual grounds as part of the challenge posed by Leopold to "think like a mountain." Homage is paid to the "hunter-gatherer" lifestyle, with virtually all of the tribute going to the hunter and none to the gatherer. Armed with the new ethic, men essentially give to themselves a new lease to run with the predators, not the prey, and to identify with the "wild" and not the "tame." Western culture's smug identification with the "knower" at the expense of the "known" stays intact, albeit mysticized in a headdress claimed to derive from the Mythic Past.

Thus, it is not surprising that many proponents of deep ecology cannot find an ethical niche for farmed animals or for the qualities of mercy and compassion and the desirability of treating others as we wish to be treated. And there things stood until my participation in the 1992 Summit for the Animals Meeting recalled them to my attention so vividly that I wrote a reply, this time from the viewpoint of a battery-caged "laying" hen.

In the meantime, in October 1990, a year and a half before the Summit Meeting, I founded United Poultry Concerns, a non-profit organization that addresses the treatment of domestic fowl in food production, science, education, entertainment, and human companionship situations, and promotes the respectful and compassionate treatment of domestic fowl as fellow creatures rather than a food source or other commodity. United Poultry Concerns grew out of the above experiences and from my volunteer internship at Farm Sanctuary, where I extended my acquaintance with chickens and got to know turkeys, ducks, and geese.

Back home, I discovered that another lame hen had been left behind following the owner's removal of the flock to the slaughterhouse. Tulip was my beloved friend for a year until she died of the heart attack that chickens bred for rapid growth and excessive breast muscle ("meat") are susceptible to. Since then, chickens have become the center of my personal and professional life. I built an enclosure onto our kitchen for rescued chickens who had the run of our three-acre yard. Amid the darkness of my knowledge of the horrible experiences inscribed within billions of chickens by our species, they are the peace and the light.

The Summit Meeting's featured speaker was environmentalist-historian Roderick Frazier Nash, who presented the attractive holistic concept of environmentalism, along with the, to me, unattractive outlook in which species and biosystems prevail over the individuals composing them—except in the case of the human species, for which environmentalism in general provides an exemption. Concerning hunting, the familiar justifications were given, including the inquiry how and why the sacrifice of one or two deer should matter as long as the herd or species is preserved from decimation or extinction. Humans are predators by nature. In Nash's "Dream of Island Civilization" essay, the ecotopian future is one in which "Humans could take their place along with the other predators . . . in an expanded ecological brotherhood" of all beings (Nash 1991–1992, 2). Ideally, an intensely urban culture would flourish on the basis of a hunter-gatherer society complete with predator initiation rites. The exciting hunter part is vividly evoked; the boring gatherer part is left for the reader to infer.

As usual, farmed animals are relegated to the wasteland of foregone conclusions in which they are considered to be not only ecologically out of tune but too denatured and void of autonomy for human morality to apply to them. The recognition that human beings are specifically and deliberately responsible for whatever aberrances farmed animals may embody; that their discordances reflect our, not their, primary disruption of natural rhythms; and that we owe them more rather than less for having stripped them of their birthright and earthrights have not entered

into the environmentalist discussions that I've encountered. The situation of these animals, within themselves and on the planet, does not appear to exact contrition or reparations from the perpetrators of their plight, whereas the victims are *per se* denied "rights," of which the most elemental must surely be the right of a being to be perceived before being conceptually trashed.

In an article following "A Triangular Affair," J. Baird Callicott assigns farmed animals a fixed degraded niche in the conceptual universe: "Barnyard animals, over hundreds of generations, have been genetically engineered (by the old-fashioned method of selective breeding) to play certain roles in the mixed community [human communities including domesticated animals]. To condemn the morality of these roles . . . is to condemn the very being of these creatures" (Callicott 1988, 167).

I think to myself listening to the trumpet blasts and iron oratory of environmentalism, How could the soft voice of Viva ever hope to be heard here? In this world, the small tones of life are drowned out by the regal harmonies of the mountain and their ersatz echoes in the groves of academe. A snottish article in *Buzzworm: The Environmental Journal* (Knox 1991) on animal rights versus environmentalism clinched matters.

This is how I came to write "Clucking Like a Mountain," in which I examine the ethical foundations of environmentalism from the imaginary viewpoint of a factory-farmed battery hen via a human interpreter. Aldo Leopold's plea for humans to think ecoholistically—"like a mountain"—has been taken by some environmentalists as a mandate to exclude from substantive and ethical consideration the individuated existences that help constitute the mountain, particularly those classified in Leopold's terms as "unnatural, tame, and confined," in contrast to those regarded as "natural, wild, and free." The ontological result is a holism devoid of contents, resembling an empty shell. The ethical result is moral abandonment of beings whose sufferings and other experiences are inconsequential compared to the "big realm."

I raise questions concerning our moral obligations to genetically altered and weaker creatures, especially those debilitated by our activities.

I point out, moreover, that domesticated chickens have been shown to retain their ancestral repertoire of behaviors, which undermines the *prima facie* assumption that they have been rendered docile and servile through breeding for specific traits.

Clucking Like a Mountain

> "'Why do you keep putting off writing about me?'
> It is the voice of a chicken that asks this."
> **—Alice Walker** (1988, 170)

In answering the call of ecologists to think like a mountain, I have to know whether this would conflict with my effort to think like a chicken. For I have chosen with the American writer Alice Walker to be a microphone held up to the mouths of chickens to enable them to step forward and expound their lives. I am glad that I have been able to see and identify with a chicken, though I grieve that my ability to communicate what I have seen and have identified with may be limited by profound but obscure obstacles that it is nevertheless my task to try and traverse. To think like a mountain implies a splendid obligation and tragic awareness. Environmentalist Aldo Leopold (1949, 1966) coined this image to contrast the abiding interests of the ecosphere with the ephemeral ones of humans, arguing that unless we can identify with the ecosphere and "think like a mountain," our species and perhaps even our planet are doomed.[4]

Individuals inspired by Leopold and others have poignantly expressed on occasion the yearning of many humans to break out of our isolation as persons and as a species and recover, through the story that connects us with all beings, our larger identity in the heartbeat of the living universe (see Seed 1988, 57). I prize these thoughts but have been saddened that Aldo Leopold may not have intended that chickens, too, should give voice in the Council of All Beings along with California Condor, Rainforest, Wombat, Wildflower, and the rest of the biotic host convened in empathic rituals designed to reconstitute the experience in

humans of a larger ecological Self. In the Council of All Beings, says a workshop guideline, "the beings are invited to tell how life has changed for them under the present conditions that humans have created in the world" (Seed 1988, 111).

Megaphone please . . .

> I am a battery hen. I live in a cage so small I cannot stretch my wings. I am forced to stand night and day on a sloping wire mesh floor that painfully cuts into my feet. The cage walls tear my feathers, forming blood blisters that never heal. The air is so full of ammonia that my lungs hurt and my eyes burn and I think I am going blind. As soon as I was born, a man grabbed me and sheared off part of my beak with a hot iron, and my little brothers were thrown into trash bags as useless alive.
>
> My mind is alert and my body is sensitive and I should have been richly feathered. In nature or even a farmyard I would have had sociable, cleansing dust baths with my flock mates, a need so strong that I perform "vacuum" dust bathing on the wire floor of my cage. Free, I would have ranged my ancestral jungles and fields with my mates devouring plants, earthworms, and insects from sunrise to dusk. I would have exercised my body and expressed my nature, and I would have given, and received, pleasure as a whole being. I am only a year old, but I am already a "spent hen." Humans, I wish I were dead, and soon I will be dead. Look for pieces of my wounded flesh wherever chicken pies and soups are sold.

According to J. Baird Callicott, the treatment of hens on a factory farm has not been morally important in the development of environmental ethics. Ecologically, this hen, like other domesticated "farm" animals, is not on a moral par with the authentic and autonomous creatures of the world but with all of the intrusive human technologies, from dune buggies to hybrid corn, doing their dirty work of contributing to the despoliation of the biotic community into which they had been inserted. Moreover, it is as absurd to complain that the natural behavior of a chicken on a factory farm is frustrated as it would be to talk about the "natural behavior" of a

piece of furniture. Black slaves were "metaphysically autonomous." Wild animals are metaphysically autonomous. Even caged wild animals retain metaphysical autonomy as "captive, not indentured, beings." But cows, pigs, sheep and chickens? Veal calves and domesticated turkeys? Callicott asserts, "They have been bred to docility, tractability, stupidity, and dependency. It is literally meaningless to suggest that they be liberated" (Callicott 1980, 330).[5]

This *lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate*[6] focused my concern about the fate of domesticated animals in environmental ethics. This branch of philosophy seems in large part to cloak the old macho mystique of unrestricted power, conquest, and disdain for the defenseless, idolized by our culture, in pseudoscientific, pseudopoetical distinctions between beings who are "natural, wild, and free" and things that are "unnatural, tame, and confined" (Leopold 1949; 1966, xix). Pity—look down on but do not sympathize or identify with—all the dodos and dunces in the history of the world too dumb to succeed in the cosmic power plays wherein the metaphysical autonomy of just one species is ensured.

This attitude contains errors of fact and logic and draws attention to certain unfavorable elements in our cultural and species psychology. In *Where the Wasteland Ends*, historian Theodore Roszak writes: "The experience of being a cosmic absurdity, a creature obtruded into the universe without purpose, continuity, or kinship, is the psychic price we pay for scientific 'enlightenment' and technological prowess" (1973, 154). The fact is, we are not the only ones paying this price, nor is a psychic price the only one paid, as billions of chickens worldwide can tell us now. A Nietzschean analysis might suggest that the "rational" relegation of domesticated animals to the moral wasteland in environmental ethics is yet another instance in our species' history of the "irrational" heaping onto other creatures, to be punished and banished in our stead, of things that we fear and hate in ourselves, such as the capacity for enslavement and the destructibility of our personality, identity, and will by conquerors more powerful than ourselves. We project our existential anxiety and inanity onto our victims: "I am not the creature obtruded into the universe without

purpose, continuity, or kinship but this genetically altered cow, this egg-laying machine of a dumb-ass chicken. I created them, which gives me the right to despise and abuse them. And they let me 'create' them, which gives me the right to despise and abuse them." The next step is to assert that these animals wanted, even chose, to resign their metaphysical autonomy to the will of humans on the darkling plain of evolution.

Environmentalism challenges us to think about how we view and treat the weaker and more pacific beings in our midst, be they nonhuman or otherwise. It invites us to explore how we want, on principle, to regard these beings. Are we content to maintain that a genetically altered creature, or a docile and perhaps even stupid one, deserves to be morally disdained or abandoned? Do we believe that a weaker creature is less entitled to justice and compassion than more vigorous types? Do we suppose that creatures whose lives we humans have wrecked do not have paramount moral claims on us?

Environmentalism has a tendency to blame such victims. There are implications that ecological sophistication comports with turning away from them sniffily, like a bored husband, or Dr. Frankenstein, to things more "interesting" and grand, like a mountain, or, more aptly, to "thinking" like one.

Adherents of environmentalism have rapped animal rights advocates on the knuckles for caring about "little things," like individuals and beings with feelings. By contrast, environmentalists operate in the big realm:

> They at least attempt to listen to the entire fugue of rocks and trees, amoebas and heavy metals, dodos and rivers and Styrofoam. Animal rights, by contrast, is a one-note samba.
>
> Where environmentalists worry about salt marches and all the plants and creatures therein, animal right activists worry about the suffering of individual animals. Where environmentalists worry about the evolution of island endemics, animal right activists worry about the suffering of individual animals. Where environmentalists worry about species extinctions, animal rights activists worry about the suffering of individual animals. (Knox 1991, 31–2)

A question for environmentalism concerns the nature of the big realm it claims to represent and worry about. If, ecologically regarded, the concrete manifestations of existence are inconsequential, what substance does this realm possess? What are its contents and where do they reside exactly? Can the ecosphere be thus hollowed out without being converted to a shell? An ecologist once said in an interview that the individual life is a mere "blip on a grid" compared to the life process (Pacelle 1987, 8).[7] Yet, it may be that there is no "life process" apart from the individual forms it assumes whereby we infer it. The "process" is an inference, an abstraction, and although there is nothing wrong with generalizing and speculating on the basis of experience, to reify the unknown at the expense of the known shows a perversity of will. How is it possible, as the environmentalist asserts, to worry about "all the plants and creatures" of a system while managing to avoid caring about each and every one? Why would anyone *want* not to care?

I know of no composer or lover of music who disparages the individual notes of a composition the way some environmentalists scorn the individual animals of this world. Maybe this is because the musically educated person perceives in each note the universe of song that note in turn helps to create. The poet William Blake said that we must learn to see the universe in a grain of sand. We must learn with equal justice and perception to hear the music of the spheres in the cluck of a chicken, starting with the hen who, historian Page Smith says, "is rich in comfortable sounds, chirps and chirrs, and, when she is a young pullet, a kind of sweet singing that is full of contentment when she is clustered together with her sisters and brothers in an undifferentiated huddle of peace and well-being waiting for darkness to envelop them" (Smith and Daniel 1975, 334).

If I think like a mountain, will I be able to hear this hen singing?

To accept the environmentalist argument that the suffering of individual animals is inconsequential compared to the ozone layer, we must be willing to admit that the sufferings of minority groups, raped women, battered wives, abused children, people sitting on death row, and our

loved ones are small potatoes beneath the hole in the sky. To worry about any of them is, in effect, to miniaturize the big picture to portraits of battered puppy dogs.[8] Or does environmentalism shift to the more convenient ground, when it comes to humans and oneself, where all species are equal but one species is more equal than others and membership has its privileges? An environmentalist writes: "We care about bears and buttercups for themselves, but also for us humans. That's the selfish, Cartesian bottom line: I think, therefore I deserve a hospitable environment" (Knox 1991, 37). The reasoning may or may not be sound; the sensibility makes my hackles rise.

This sensibility has placed many environmentalists at a distance from so-called "farm" animals and allowed them to patronize the nature of these animals without checking the facts. Environmentalism has two major moral arguments against agricultural animals. One is that agricultural animals disrupt the natural environment. Environmentalists and animal rights advocates agree that large-scale intensive animal agriculture is ecologically inefficient and unseemly, and ethically obscene. The United States' poultry industry pollutes fields and streams with billions of pounds of manure and billions of gallons of wastewater each year. This is detestable, but it is not the chickens' fault. It is ours.

Environmentalism's second major moral complaint against domesticated farm animals is that they lack the behavioral repertoire and *élan vital* of wild animals, including their own ancestors. As a result, "farmed" animals are disentitled to equal moral consideration with wild animals. If this is true, the blame is not on them; it is on us. Morally, we owe them more, not less, for bungling their birthright. But how diminished is the nature of these animals genetically? Two researchers who've been studying "laying" hens for years state:

> A good place to begin thinking about what a hen needs for a decent life would be in the jungles of Southeast Asia where, with persistence, one can track the red jungle fowl ancestors of the domestic chicken. These wary birds live in small groups of between four and six, and are highly

> active during the day—walking, running, flying, pecking and scratching for food, and preening. At night they roost together in the trees. Domestic chickens released on the islands off Queensland, Australia, and the west coast of Scotland showed remarkably similar patterns of behavior. David Wood-Gush and Ian Duncan, of the Agricultural and Food Research Council's Edinburgh Station, observed that the Scottish birds formed small, discrete social groups which spent much of their day foraging either separately or together, then returning at dusk to roost. The hens concealed their nests and raised and defended their broods. In short, there is no evidence that genetic selection for egg laying has eliminated the birds' potential to perform a wide variety of behaviour. (Nicol and Dawkins 1990, 46)

This snookers the industry claim that "laying" hens have been "bred" for the cage and are genetically accommodated to a sterile, docile, and slavish existence that would drive humans and wild animals mad. How many environmentalists are aware that, in addition to the routine debeaking of these birds (to help "adaptation" along), efforts have been made to fit them with contact lenses to "calm" their "uneconomical" frenzy by destroying their vision (Davis 1992)?

Dr. Nedim Buyukmihci, a veterinary ophthalmologist at the University of California, Davis, says of even these birds that, upon release from the cage and removal of the lenses, following a period of adjustment, the hens in his care "would do all the things hens normally would do if allowed: scratch for food, dustbathe, spend time with one another or apart from one another, make attempts at flight, stretch their wings and legs simultaneously, preen, and the like. Preening, of course, was severely curtailed due to the mutilation of their beaks" (Buyukmihci 1992).

Contrary to the unexamined assumption that "laying" hens are our metaphysical slaves, Dr. Page Smith, the cultural historian of the chicken, correctly observes: "Chickens are, on the whole, very sturdy creatures or they could not have survived the experiments that have been performed

on them in the last fifty or seventy-five years in the name of scientific chicken raising" (Smith and Daniel 1975, 331).[9]

Paradoxically, like most of us, chickens are sturdy and vulnerable and, in situations that insult their nature, pitiable. Their experience of being alive in the flesh, be it one of pain, joy, or learned helplessness, is as much a part of the biosphere as the composite experience of a mountain. It feels good to think like a mountain and experience the Romantic Stone Age sensations of a predator (not prey) and a hunter (who in deep ecology has taken equal trouble to ramify the gratifications of being a gatherer?). It does not feel good to think like a battery hen and view oneself and one's species through her eyes, not as an autochthonous Hero in Chains but as a bewilderingly cruel creature who punishes her and has no mercy.

Epilogue

I submitted "Clucking Like a Mountain" to *Environmental Ethics*, "an interdisciplinary journal dedicated to the philosophical aspects of environmental problems," because it seemed to provide the best opportunity to meet the environmentalist community on its own conceptual grounds. The editor turned it down. Of the two referees, one favored and the other opposed publication. The one in favor did not "share the author's views," but considered it a "highly worthwhile essay . . . a provocative piece, challenging the views that generally dominate the pages of *Environmental Ethics*."

The second reader, seemingly a poultry researcher, insisted that the arguments ignored "much factual information," for instance, that "it is in the interest of those individuals that raise hens in battery cages that the welfare of those hens is not so ignored that egg production is impaired" and that "the industry has made considerable strides in determining the proper mesh size for battery cages to avoid leg entrapment." The two major problems of hens in battery cages, as in all intensive animal agriculture, are that when things go wrong they go wrong in a big way, and waste disposal. I had failed to mention the major benefit of "increased productivity through a savings in time and labor." Moreover, I had implied that

hens could care about the death of other chickens and ignored the disadvantages of free-range production, making the imaginary viewpoint of a factory-farm battery hen via a human interpreter read like "lopsided anthropomorphism."

In rejecting the manuscript, the editor said it ignored much material that readers of the journal are familiar with, including Callicott's "'Triangular Affair,' which discusses chickens in some detail," and Birch and Cobb's *The Liberation of Life*, "which specifically contrasts the lives of chickens with chimpanzees" (Hargrove 1992). The editor had a policy of not publishing papers on animal welfare ethics unless they pertain specifically to environmental ethics. The point of a revised paper would have to continue to be that domestic chickens should be a concern of environmental ethicists from an environmental perspective, supporting Callicott's argument in "Back Together Again" (1988) that we need a single ethic.

I believe that we need a single ethic in which we are a voice not only for life but for lives—for all of the soft and innocent lives who are at our mercy. I share Callicott's Darwinian view that we and other animals have a common biosociality rooted in evolutionary kinship and, in the case of domesticated animals, direct interactions that often include mutual affection. However, I do not share his view in "Back Together Again" that "barnyard" and other domesticated animals have an *a priori* ontological status whereby their very being is synonymous with the diminished roles humans have assigned to them as food sources, plow pullers, and pets.

Nor do I believe that there is a kind of evolved unspoken social contract between "man and beast" in the so-called mixed community of humans and domestic animals, in which the "beasts" just happen to be our slaves and inferiors whom we treat exactly as we please, as in our manipulation of their reproductive systems for market efficiency and other purely human ends, rather than species fitness or their individual and social happiness. The will of the domesticated animal is no different from that of a human slave in being at the mercy of an "owner" backed by a legal system that defines her or him as property.

The contract idea ignores these and other facts such as the innumerable diseases of domestication, which, pertinently, have created flourishing animal research, pharmaceutical, and veterinary industries. It romanticizes and exonerates our relationship to domesticated animals and teasingly suggests that species who in other environmentalist contexts are rigorously denied moral agency and autonomy, in some sort of lopsided scapegoatism, just happen to have them here. Domesticated animals were themselves once wild and free. "Egg-type" chickens released into wild habitats they personally have never known revive their suppressed behavioral repertoire. Whether farmed and other domesticated animals could survive under feral conditions, it is inappropriate to refer to an "unspoken social contract" between themselves and their human "masters."

The editor of *Environmental Ethics* cites Birch and Cobb's contrast between the life of a chicken and the life of a chimpanzee. In *Matters of Life and Death*, John Cobb, a professor of Christian theology, raises contemporary issues including whether humans have the right to destroy the environment and exterminate or cause extreme suffering to other species. In the section on animal rights, he distinguishes between the life of chickens, veal calves, tuna, and sharks and the life of humans, nonhuman primates, and marine mammals, arguing that whereas God's perspective comprises both groups, "the right to life applies much more to gorillas and dolphins than to chickens and sharks" (Cobb 1992, 36). Understandably, chickens and sharks regard their lives as most important. However, "judgment" regards their death to preclude further experiences of much less distinctive value than does the death of a primate or sea mammal, and their contribution to the divine life to be much less significant. The potential experiences of veal calves, chickens, and others consigned to their class are "not remarkably distinctive." These animals' fear of death is "not an important factor in their lives," and their death "does not cause major distress to others" (40).

In short, the editor's letter, with its suggested reading, acts out my own analysis. It seeks to shout down the voice of the individual animal and author and to delegitimize me as a speaker who knows chickens in

deference to the "experts" with whom the world order and divine mind just happen to agree that animals humans like to eat, such as chickens, veal calves, and tuna, and animals who like to eat humans, such as sharks, have less valuable personal and interpersonal experiences and a lesser part in the universe. How do the experts know? They decided.

I have been impressed by the realization that a few men have virtually "decided" what experiences count and even exist in the world. The language of Western science—the reigning construct of male hegemony—precludes the ability to express the experiential realities it talks about. Virtually all of the actual experiences of this world, expressed through the manifest and mysterious characteristics of all the different beings, are unrepresented in the stainless steel edicts of experts. Where is the voice of the voiceless in the scientific literature, including the literature of environmental ethics? Where do the "memory of suffering and the truths of subjugated knowledge" fit into the domineering construct of our era (Adams and Procter-Smith 1993, 302)?

Carol J. Adams and Marjorie Procter-Smith ironically observe that "the voice of the voiceless offers a truth that the voice of the expert can never offer" (1993, 302). This voice requires a different language from the language of experts, a verbal and lyrical equivalent of the subjective and intersubjective experiences linking humans to one another and, through an epistemology rooted in our evolutionary history, to other animals and the Earth. Significantly, the poultry science referee of my "Clucking" essay chides me with "too much first person singular" and snorts that "sixteen billion chickens cannot tell me the psychic price of scientific enlightenment."

If women feel bludgeoned by this oppressive mentality, how must the animals be affected by it? Let us consider not only the pain that we impose on them, but the moral ecology within which we inflict it—the belittling, sniggering atmosphere of pompous hatred and contempt that we emanate, in which countless billions of beings are forced to live. This moral ecology is as distinctive a human contribution to the range of experiences in the world as anything else that our species has conferred.

I have a photograph of a poultry researcher posing for the media in an experimental battery hen unit with a scientifically blinded and defeated hen in his arms and a smile on his face (Greene 1992, A-6). I have a letter from a poultry experimenter who writes: "I think you will agree that the human species is the only one that has any compassion for its prey. . . . I perceive in your literature the proposal that chickens be treated as pets. The child who is holding a Plymouth barred rock hen should stay near a supply of clean clothes. I have been involved with many thousands of chickens and turkeys and I don't think they are good pets, although it is evident that almost any vertebrate may be trained to come for food" (Jukes 1992).

This is the voice of the expert so insensitized that the image of a little girl tenderly holding a hen in her arms produces only thoughts of the hen's defecation—a reminder that his involvement with thousands of chickens and turkeys is such that they evacuate when he touches them. In being barred from entering the environmentalist dialogue by way of "Clucking Like a Mountain," I cannot help wondering how far the delegitimization process acts as a form of intellectual protection against the mute importunities and soft dialogues of all the Vivas in the world. There is no comfort in seeing the eyes of a hen staring out of the cage built especially for her. The supposition that she has no expression, nothing to express, is, however, a great comfort.

4

Procrustean Solutions to Animal Identity and Welfare Problems

Throughout history, people have configured nonhuman animals' identities anthropomorphically in order to use animals. The needs and desires of animals and the wishes and desires of animal users seldom coincide, so a procrustean solution is sought whereby the animal/argument is, so to speak, either cut down to size or stretched to fit the agenda. In literature, Procrustes ("the stretcher") is a symbol of tyranny and cruelly enforced order. He appears in Greek mythology as a bandit who keeps an iron bed to which he forces people to conform. Watching his victims approach from his stronghold, Procrustes stretches or shrinks the bed in advance to predetermine their failure to fit into it so that he may torturously reshape them to suit his will. If the victims are too tall, he amputates their excess length; if they are too short, he stretches them to size. Procrustes is thus a fit symbol of the false anthropomorphism in which nonhuman animals are forced to conform to constructions that are alien and inimical to the animals themselves, whereby they sustain a genocidal assault on their identity. They are physically altered, rhetorically disfigured, and ontologically obliterated to mirror and model the goals of their exploiters.

In "Why Look at Animals?" John Berger presents the environment of the zoo as a paradigm of extinction by incarceration, a form of genocidal anthropomorphism, in which a wild animal, with all of that animal's

defining traits and activities, is reduced to a mere object in a fabricated, deadening setting. The space that modern, institutionalized animals inhabit, Berger writes, is artificial: "In some cages the light is equally artificial. In all cases the environment is illusory. Nothing surrounds [the animals] except their own lethargy or hyperactivity. They have nothing to act upon—except, briefly, supplied food and—very occasionally—a supplied mate" (Berger 1985, 286–7).

Animals on display are the objects of blind, and blinding, encounters between a human audience and the animals' human-imposed personas. Zoo-goers do not really *see* the animals they are looking at, and the animals being looked at have been "immunized to encounter" since "nothing can any more occupy a *central* place in their attention," Berger writes. Animals who break out of their phony images are punished (further punished, since the condition of spectacular captivity—captivity for the sake of spectacle—is, of itself, the fundamental punishment) by being beaten, starved, isolated, sold, killed, or all of the above. Zoo animals, so-called, are imprisoned in a world that expresses elements in human nature that no normal animals would voluntarily consent to enter or live in. Animals on display are manikins of their true selves in varying conditions of atrophy, apathy, "hysteria," or extinction.

Defenders call zoos the "Noah's Ark" of the modern world. Philosopher Dale Jamieson responds that if zoos are "arks" protecting animals from extinction, then these animals are like "passengers on a voyage of the damned, never to find a port that will let them dock or a land in which they can live in peace" (Jamieson 2006, 140).

Likewise, animals on factory farms are imprisoned in a world that their psyches did not emanate and that they accordingly do not understand and do not psychologically resemble. Chickens were the first farmed animals to be permanently confined indoors in large numbers in automated systems based on drugs, and the U.S. poultry industry became the model for animal agriculture throughout the world in the twentieth century. The model of the chicken is based on machine metaphors derived from industrial technology. As early as 1927, a chicken

breeder noted in *National Geographic Magazine* that chicken and egg production across the United States was "rapidly assuming factory proportions" (Lewis 1927, 453). In the 1970s, *American Poultry History 1823–1973* discussed the egg industry's manipulation of hens to produce eggs for human consumption in terms of a "continued emphasis genetically on smaller, more efficient but lighter-weight egg machines" (Jasper 1974, 367).

Factory-farmed chickens are not only *in* factories; they are regarded by the chicken industry *as* factories that allow for a continually manipulated adjustment of their bodies to fit the iron conditions of commerce. According to *Commercial Chicken Meat and Egg Production*, the "technology built into buildings and equipment" is "embodied genetically into the chicken itself." Physical characteristics and behavioral attributes deemed "necessary for commercial performance objectives" should enable a "continued adaptation of chickens to the housing systems and management used by commercial producers" (Bell and Weaver 2002, 87, 805). As Michael Watts writes in "The Age of the Chicken," "What is striking about the chicken is the extent to which the 'biological body' has been actually *constructed* physically to meet the needs of the industrial labor process" (Watts 2002).

From the standpoint of the birds themselves, a more excruciating image emerges. In the case of "broiler" chickens—chickens raised specifically for meat rather than for egg production—the "industrialized" body is a wracking construction of pains and pathologies, including cardiovascular disease, crippled skeletons, and necroses of the skin, leg joints, and intestines.[1] According to John Webster, a professor of animal husbandry at the University of Bristol School of Veterinary Science, most of the painful leg disorders in broiler chickens and turkeys can be attributed to birds being forced to grow "too heavy for their limbs." The birds become so "distorted in shape" as to impose unnatural stresses on their joints, which are full of pain receptors (Webster 1994, 156). Up to 50,000 birds per unit sit on their crippled legs in dark, manure-soaked, football-field-long metal buildings thick with pathogens and

poisonous ammonia fumes. Within a few weeks, states a contract grower for Simmons Foods, the birds "can hardly stand because their legs are so weak, and with no natural light or exercise, their joints are too soft to carry the weight" (Forsberg 2003).

In the most encompassing sense, factory-farmed chickens are alienated from surrounding nature, from an external world that answers intelligibly to their inner world. There is nothing for them to do or see or look forward to, no voluntary actions are permitted, no joy or zest of living. They just have to *be*, in an excremental, existential void, until we kill them. The deterioration of mental and physical alertness that occurs under these circumstances has been suggested by some animal scientists as a sign of temporary but not permanent suffering. In this view, as long as an animal survives physically, "its adaptive mechanisms prohibit the occurrence of long-term suffering." F. Wemelsfelder of the Institute of Theoretical Biology in The Netherlands rejects this assumption, noting that the loss of behavioral flexibility on which an animal's adaptive well-being depends "leaves an animal in a helpless state of continuous suffering" (Wemelsfelder 1991, 120, 122). Veterinarian Michael W. Fox points out that even if chickens and other factory-farmed animals may sometimes appear to be adapted to the intensive conditions under which they are kept, "on the basis of their functional and structural 'breakdown,' which is expressed in the form of various production diseases, they are clearly not adapted" (Fox 1983–1984, 209).

In industrialized agriculture, the suffering of animals is obscured by the fiction of exploitation, which proposes that the state of virtual inanition and passive "acceptance" of chronic, uncontrollable abuse, which psychologists call learned helplessness, is an aspect of the animal's inherent nature, hence the animal's "choice" or "benefit," which the exploiter merely facilitates into expression. An example of this way of thinking can be seen in what agribusiness philosopher Paul Thompson refers to ironically as the "blind chicken problem"—ironically, because what he really means to propose is the "blind chicken solution."

Thompson, a professor of agricultural food and community ethics at Michigan State University at the time, called breeding blind chickens for egg production "emblematic" of the "ethical conundrum" involved in adjusting the animal to fit the production system, "rather than adjusting the production system" to fit the animal. Since (he claimed) blind chickens "don't mind" being crowded together as much as normal chickens do, what most people would considerable a horrible thing to do—breeding blind chickens specifically to fit them for captive egg production in battery-cage buildings—really isn't so bad. On the contrary, "If you think that it's the welfare of the individual animal that really matters, how the animals are doing," he said, "then it would be more humane to have these blind chickens" (Kestenbaum 2001).

Thompson argues that animals produced through breeding who lack a given capacity to suffer pain, stress, or a specific pathology have not been "actively deprived" of a capacity they once had. Therefore, he claims, they cannot suffer like the "founder" animals (the original breeding stock), who have not had the capacity bred out of them. Whereas founder animals in inimical circumstances have worse welfare than their debilitated counterparts, genetic strategies that produce animals with debilitations that are specifically (but not "actively") tailored to fit the production environment—birds bred to live blind in battery cages, for instance—should perhaps be used (Thompson 2007, 3–5).

This argument presumes that any behavior of an exploited animal that is deemed to indicate "less stress" in that animal is of interest and value in the agribusiness environment only insofar as it can be shown to contribute to more profitable levels of production—more meat, milk, or eggs being extractable from the animal so used. Thus, for example, researchers at the University of Guelph in Ontario announced that a particular genetic strain of blind chickens they were experimenting on laid more eggs in experiments designed to give egg producers "more tools to alter light techniques for higher performance" in commercially housed hens (Dickenson 2007).

Such findings (or claims of findings) interest researchers not only from a strictly commercial standpoint but from the standpoint that the laying of eggs in normal chickens is dependent on light to stimulate the hormonal activity on which egg formation depends. That is why egg producers burn light bulbs anywhere from fourteen to sixteen hours a day to simulate the longest days of summer inside the hen houses. By eliminating the need for light to get hens to lay eggs, researchers can claim the feat of overcoming nature as well as saving the egg industry money on electricity. The claim can even be stretched into a stewardship argument, as when animal biotechnologists assure the public that the industry "will work proactively to assure good stewardship to animal care" (Glenn 2007, 48).

Geneticist Bill Muir of Purdue University, who has bred chickens and quails to live passively in battery cages, says that "adapting the bird to the system makes more sense" than the other way around and can even accrue benefits if by "selecting for chickens that could tolerate the social stress, we also get chickens that could tolerate environmental stress," such as increased levels of pollution and microbial activity inside the buildings the birds are housed in (Sigurdson 2005, 47).

Still another "solution" is the breeding of featherless chickens, a project in the United States and elsewhere. According to Professor Avigdor Cahaner of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Agriculture, who's been breeding featherless chickens for years, naked chickens are more efficient than chickens with feathers: "No feathers, no waste, less processing costs and less water use during processing. Even more interesting is that these birds do not waste costly nutrients for developing useless feathers" (van der Sluis 2007). In particular, he says, there is "a clear economic advantage" in growing naked chickens in hot humid climates. Not only is their "performance" improved, but the "welfare" of the chickens is improved by the genetic elimination of their feathers, according to Cahaner. He adds: "Genetic material from his stock of featherless broilers can be shipped to interested partners at any time" (Priel 2007).

Animal Genocide

Forcing our psychic pattern on animals who fit the pattern only by being "stretched" or "amputated" to conform is the very essence of the genocidal assault on nonhuman animal identity that, in addition to the direct extermination of millions of animals every day by humans, and expropriation of their land and homes, forms one of the strongest links to the experience of humans similarly treated, as in, for example, the experience of the Jews under the Nazis. By "genocidal assault," I refer to the concept of genocide as it was originally formulated by the Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin in 1944, to refer not only to the deliberate physical annihilation of a group by direct killing, but also to the destruction of the *identity* of the targeted group or groups, as in their "extinction" by incarceration and/or genetic manipulation, an extinction reflected in and reinforced by rhetorical formulations misrepresenting the targeted groups (Lemkin 1944).

Recalling the experience of the Jews under the Nazis to illuminate the plight of nonhuman animals subjugated by humans, Roberta Kalechofsky writes of both victimizations that, "Like the Jew," the animal is trapped in the "symbolism of another group. The animal's life and destiny are under the control of the symbolic signs of others" (Kalechofsky 2003, 55).

A concept of genocide in which physical, cultural, and ideological forms of victim annihilation are comprised allows us to consider humanity's relentless, wholesale assault on the individuals, families, communities, and bodies of other animal species as a "genocidal" project both in its own right and in the context of organized genocidal assaults by human populations on one another. Just as it makes sense to speak of a "genocidal relationship implemented through racism" in the case of America's aggression in Southeast Asia, for example (Sartre quoted in Churchill 1997, 416), so it makes sense to speak of genocidal relationships implemented through speciesism in the myriad examples of humankind's conquest of nonhuman animals and their living space.

The destruction and/or relocation and exile of countless animal species and remnant populations of animals, under the assertion of the human "right" to possess and impose its pattern on them and the land

they inhabit (or inhabited), corresponds to the European colonial assault on the native human inhabitants of the African and American continents. It parallels the Nazi territorial expansionism known as *Lebensraumpolitik*. The Nazi politics of "must have" living space was an extension of the territorial expansionism boasted by the United States in the nineteenth century as its "manifest destiny" of conquering the Southwest and the Northwest, and islands in the Pacific and Caribbean, following its previous and continuing depredations and exterminations in South and Central America (Churchill, 421).

The Nazi concept of "living space," as Enzo Traverso writes in *The Origins of Nazi Violence*, "was simply the German version of a commonplace of European culture at the time of imperialism" (2003, 51). This commonplace, which "postulated a hierarchy in the right to existence," consisted in "the principle of the West's right to dominate the world, to colonize the planet, and to subjugate or even eliminate 'savage peoples.'" In 1850, the American anthropologist Robert Knox called the extermination of native populations "a law of Anglo-Saxon America" (Traverso 2003, 54). Expanding this theme, French anthropologist Edmond Perrier wrote in 1888: "Just as animals disappear before the advance of man, this privileged being, so too the savage is wiped out before the European" (Traverso 2003, 57).

Clearly, civilization (so-called) has spread by both means. As Raphael Lemkin indicated, genocide represents the imposition of the oppressor's pattern of life on the life pattern of an oppressed group. The group is subject to the oppressor's laws, a process that may, but does not invariably, entail the complete and direct annihilation of the subjected group, vestiges and deformations of which may remain for shorter or longer periods, despite, or at the behest of, the oppressing agency. Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre noted, for example, that dependence on the labor of the subject people and the preservation of the colonial economy places restraints on the physical genocide that otherwise tends to proceed where no material advantage is to be gained from restraint. The dependence of the colonizers on the subject people protects them, to a certain extent,

from physical genocide, even as "cultural genocide, made necessary by colonialism as an economic system of unequal exchange," continues (Churchill, 416).

This model of genocide has parallels to the humans-over-nonhuman-animals model of conquest. An example is the maintenance of "theme parks" and zoo populations of animals otherwise targeted for extinction—gorillas, tigers, trumpeter swans, and many more remnant populations of animals whose approaching mode of existence is in the form of genetic material in storage facilities to be manipulated into resurrection in laboratories. In the case of the billions of chickens, turkeys, ducks, cows, pigs, and other animals who, like their wild counterparts, evolved to lead complex social lives in their own natural habitats, and have shown their ability to revert to living independent of humans, i.e., to become feral, the "genocidal" doom is not to be rendered physically extinct, but to be proliferated in virtually endless procrustean re-formations of their bodies to fit the procrustean beds of global industrial agriculture and research.

In considering the fate of chickens, a hideous twist on the myth of the Phoenix emerges. The Phoenix is the mythical Egyptian bird who rises eternally young out of his own self-made funeral pyre and has thus traditionally been regarded as a symbol of the indomitable spirit of life and inexorable ability to be reborn from the ashes of death. In the light of animal agriculture, the Phoenix takes on a sinister aspect. Chickens are unable to die and become extinct under conditions equivalent to their eternal rebirth in a bottomless pit.

A further cruel irony consists in the fact that the ancient Egyptians are considered the original inventors of the enormous incubation ovens that became the model for the mammoth incubators that are used to hatch tens of thousands of baby chicks artificially, all at the same time, without a mother hen sitting on the eggs. From a mechanical Phoenix-like matrix in Hell, the Egyptians produced the very "tidal wave of baby chicks" that flows invisibly across Earth today (Lewis 1927, 457).

Factory-farmed chickens are imprisoned in total confinement buildings within global systems of confinement and international transport.

Baby chicks, turkey poults, and hatching eggs intended for breeding are stowed as cargo on flights from one country to another, adding to the billions of birds being crated in delivery trucks from hatcheries to growout facilities to slaughter plants and elsewhere, up and down main roads and back roads all day every day. As noted by the agribusiness watchdog group GRAIN, which has tracked and reported on the global spread of avian influenza and its sources, "Rare are photos of the booming transnational poultry industry. There are no shots of its factory farms hit by the virus, and no images of its overcrowded trucks transporting live chickens or its feed mills converting 'poultry byproducts' into chicken feed" (GRAIN 2006).

In the Ukraine alone, nearly 12 million live chickens were imported in 2004. The Hastavuk Company in Turkey, which operates Europe's second largest hatchery, has the capacity "to produce over 100 million hatching eggs per year," many of which are exported to Eastern Europe and the Middle East (GRAIN). Adding to this picture, nearly 25 million pigs were traded internationally in 2005, more than two million pigs per month (El-Amin 2007).

These animals are totally separated from the natural world in which they evolved. They are imprisoned in alien, dysfunctional, and disease-prone bodies genetically manipulated for food traits alone, bodies that in many cases have been surgically altered, creating a disfigured appearance. They are debeaked, de-toed, dehorned, ear-cropped, tail-docked, castrated, and (in the case of piglets), dentally mutilated—and always without painkillers. In the procrustean universe of animal agriculture, these brutal amputations can be made to sound sensible and even benign. A poultry researcher writes, for example: "The emotion-laden word 'mutilation' is sometimes used in describing husbandry practices such as removing a portion of a hen's beak. . . . [However,] removal of certain bodily structures, although causing temporary pain to individuals, can be of much benefit to the welfare of the group" (Craig 1981, 243–4). To control the debate between animal agribusiness and its adversaries, a poultry industry veterinarian has suggested that the word "debeaking"

should undergo a procrustean facelift and instead be called "beak conditioning" (Irvin 2007).

Factory-farmed animals are imprisoned in a belittling concept of who they are. Disfigured and lumped together in a sepia-colored, excremental universe, huddled together awaiting their slaughter in a foreseeable future of featherless bodies and mutilated faces already come to pass, they appear to fit the human-created conception of themselves as mere raw material fit only for processing into human food products and animal byproducts. Nor is their predicament new so much as a further turn of the screw that, with genetic engineering and other refinements of unrestrained scientific violence to animals firmly in place, continues to turn.

In *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, Harriet Ritvo shows how animals became surrogates for nineteenth-century agendas, in particular Britain's imperial enterprise in which "material animals" and "rhetorical animals" embodied the most powerful possible symbol of human possession and control: "As material animals were at the complete disposal of human beings, so rhetorical animals offered unusual opportunities for manipulation; their positions in the physical world and in the universe of discourse were mutually reinforcing" (1989, 5).

Anthropomorphism

Ever since Darwin's theory of evolution erupted in the nineteenth century (*On The Origin of Species* appeared in 1859), animal exploiters have invoked the word "anthropomorphism"—a term previously reserved to describe the attribution of human characteristics to a deity—to suppress objections to the cruel and inhumane treatment of animals and to enforce the doctrine of an unbridgeable gap between humans and other animals. Exceptions to this doctrine are made when the concept of continuity between species is necessary to justify a particular enterprise, such as the chicken genome project, in which the chicken is said to be "well positioned from an evolutionary standpoint to provide an

intermediate perspective between mammals, such as humans, and lower vertebrates, such as fish" (NHGRI 2004). The unbridgeable gap doctrine is set aside any time an exploiter requires the formula that a particular use of animals, as in the case of genetic engineering, "has the potential to remarkably improve, not only animal health and wellbeing, but also human health" (Glenn 2007, 46).

The term "anthropomorphism," as it is now used, refers almost entirely to the attribution of consciousness, emotions, and other mental states, commonly regarded as exclusively or predominantly human, to nonhuman animals. While there is no significant disagreement regarding physiological and anatomical continuity between human and nonhuman animals, it remains scientifically questionable to agree with Darwin and others who argue that human and nonhuman animals share similar cognitive and emotional experiences developed in the course of evolution. As biologist Marc Bekoff states in his book *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, "according to Darwin, there is evolutionary continuity among animals not only in anatomical structures such as hearts, kidneys, and teeth, but also in brains and their associated cognitive and emotional capacities" (2007, 33).

Until recently, about the only emotional capacity scientists have been willing to grant unstintingly to animals is fear. Scientists have set up countless "agonistic" experiments to elicit fear and fighting in captive animals, perhaps because there is unacknowledged pleasure in inducing the emotion of fear in others and watching them fight to the death in controlled experiments. In contrast to fear and other stressful emotions, the emotional capacity for pleasure, happiness, and joy in animals is a far more contentious issue.

Although as Bekoff writes, evidence of joy in animals is already "so extensive that it should hardly need further discussion" (2007, 55), not everyone is willing to agree. University of Oxford zoologist Marian Stamp Dawkins criticized ethologist Jonathan Balcombe's book *Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good* for arguing (with copious illustrations) that animals can experience pleasure and happiness. This

idea, she said, threatens to usher an abandonment of "all standards of scientific reasoning," resulting in a chaos in which there will no longer be any distinction "between the anthropomorphism of Bambi and the scientific study of animal behavior" (Dawkins 2007, 84).

The irony of experimenting on animals to learn more about humans and cure human ills at the same time as (and by) defending an unbridgeable ontological gap between humans and other animals has frequently been noted. Richard Ryder quotes an 1885 commentator on the irony of scientists who "instruct us to cast aside the old theology which makes men different from the beasts of the field, inasmuch as he was created in 'the image of God,' and yet would arbitrarily keep, for their own convenience, the line of division which such a belief marked out between man and animals" (Ryder 1989, 163).

But using animals as we wish is based on precisely such ploys. The rhetoric of exploitation cuts and pastes nonhuman animal identity, just as scientists cut and paste the bodies of animals to fit human desires. Sometimes the animal is ennobled if there is something wild and warlike about "him" (the "noble steed," the "majestic wild turkey" who deserves the best gunshot), but usually not. Humans, by virtue of a shared verbal language, can aggressively challenge the profanation of their identity. By contrast, nonhuman animals such as chickens are powerless, short of human intercession, to protect their identity from being defiled, as when a hen is represented by egg producers as an "egg-laying machine," or as a symbolic uterus for the deposition of a human being's spiritual impurities, as in the Hasidic custom of kaporos ("atonements"), in which chickens are configured as receptacles for practitioners' sins and punishments (Wenig 2003).

Likewise, the practice of vivisection—the invasion of a living creature's body with a knife or other instrument of direct physical assault—is based on the anthropomorphic construction of the nonhuman animal as a "model" for the human condition into whose body human diseases are injected in what is, in essence, a form of interspecies rape by a human of a nonhuman animal victim. As in rape, so in vivisection, the victim

is not only treated as a receptacle for the victimizer's defilement; in both cases, the victim is involuntarily made to appear as an aspect of the victimizer's identity, as when scientists call animals used in vivisection experiments "partners" and "collaborators" in the quest for knowledge. A biotechnology representative told an audience at a symposium on the future of animal agriculture that animals who are being modified and "recombined" every which way, to fit every conceivable purpose and whim, are "serving mankind" as part of an enterprise that "recognizes that animal welfare is of paramount importance and therefore has been and will continue to ensure that animal welfare is unsurpassed" (Glenn 2007, 45).

Falsifying the Fate of Victims

Throughout history, nonhuman animals have been represented as collaborating at the level of their destiny, if under no other determinable aspect, in their own destruction. Similar to the myths circulated by U.S. slavery owners about their human "property" during the nineteenth century, animal victimizers typically insist that their victims don't mind their plight, or that they don't experience it "as you or I would," or that the victims are complicit in their plight, even, on occasion, to the point of gratitude. The victims, in other words, are not really "innocent." Thus, for example, at his trial, Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann pleaded, regarding his deportation of tens of thousands of Jews to their deaths, that the Jews "desired" to emigrate and that "he, Eichmann, was there to help them" (Arendt 2006, 48).

This is not exceptional psychology, as students of sexual assault are well aware. Indeed, victimizers are very often likely to represent themselves, and to be upheld by their sympathizers, as the innocent parties in their orchestrations of the suffering and death of others. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Hannah Arendt cites an Egyptian deputy foreign minister who claimed, for instance, that Hitler was "innocent of the slaughter of the Jews; he was a victim of the Zionists, who had 'compelled him to perpetuate crimes that would eventually enable them to achieve their

aim—the creation of the State of Israel'" (Arendt 2006, 20). If you want to hurt someone and maintain a clean conscience about it, chances are you will invoke arguments along one or more of these lines: the slave/animal doesn't feel, doesn't know, doesn't care, is complicit, or isn't even *there*. In the last case, the victim is configured as *an illusion*.

This is a commonplace of victimizer psychology: the transformation of the sacrificial victim into a manifestation of something else in disguise, a being or spirit imprisoned in the manifestation that wants to be "let out," a "vermin" or viral infection that requires a bloodletting ceremony of purgation to protect the community, "race," or nation. In such cases, not only is the victim reconfigured to fit the victimizer's agenda, but the victimizer too is different from what he or she appears to be—a murderer, say, as in the portrayal of Hitler as, "in reality," the benignly motivated liberator of a spiritual wish within the Jewish people to be free. Think also of former U.S. president George W. Bush as the alleged "liberator" of the Iraqi people.

In the case of animals, their fate, for each individual him and her, is to be absorbed into a human-centered hierarchy in which the animals don't count, or even exist, apart from how humans use or have used them. Our use becomes their ontology—"this is what they are"—and their teleology—"this is what they were made for." To this day, animals are ritually sacrificed by Hindus whose practice is based on the idea that "the sacrifice of an animal is *not really the killing of an animal*." The animal to be sacrificed is not considered an animal but is instead "a symbol of those powers for which the sacrificial ritual stands" (Lal 1986, 201). In Hindu mythology, according to Basant K. Lal, "if a soul migrates to an animal form from a human life, it moves from a superior to an inferior form of life, and it does so because of its misdeeds while in the human form" (Lal, 206).

As in traditional Judaism, the Hindu attitude toward animals is not based on considerations about the animal as such but on considerations of how the animal advances the purificatory process leading to human salvation (Lal, 200). In Christianity, lambs disappear into the body and

motivations of Jesus Christ whereby they are elevated and redeemed into something that matters. In Buddhism, according to Christopher Chapple, the animal world is one of the lesser destinies, "along with the hell beings and hungry ghosts." Birth as an animal in the Buddhist tradition is a punishment for "evil deeds" and "deludedness" (Chapple 1986, 219).

Accordingly, there is a long tradition of thought in which nonhuman animals are represented as not only benefitting from their victimization but as gratefully assisting in their own destruction, which is formulated as their "liberation." In Greek mythology, the ox runs from the fields to the city and stands willingly at the altar to be sacrificed. Birds fly to the altar and deliver themselves willingly "into the hands of the high priest" (Porphyry 1965, 36–7). In Hasidic lore, flocks of wild doves come of their own accord to lie down under the slaughterer's knife (Schwartz 2001, 125).

It has been argued that the doctrine of metempsychosis—the belief that human souls can become trapped in "lower" life forms as punishment for their misdeeds—rather than promoting vegetarianism, favors the consumption of flesh, since slaughtering an animal releases the human soul imprisoned within (Schochet 1984, 243). Meat in these accounts does not remind one, as it came to remind former chicken slaughterhouse worker Virgil Butler, of "the sad, tortured face that was attached to it some time in the past," but only of the human sinner or penitent, whose superior identity is defiled by being trapped in an animal's body. In Isaac Bashevis Singer's story "The Slaughterer," the rabbi seeks to convince the main character, Yoineh Meir, who does not want to slaughter animals but is coerced into doing so, that everyone benefits from the slaughter: "When you slaughter an animal with a pure knife and with piety, you liberate the soul that resides in it. For it is well known that the souls of saints often transmigrate into the bodies of cows, fowl, and fish to do penance for some offence" (Singer 1982, 207).

Little has changed since earlier times. In today's world, advertisers tell consumers that pigs and cows and even children want to be turned into Oscar Meyer wieners. Rabbits "collaborate" with vivisectors to test

cosmetics so women can look pretty. Chickens want to be made into buffalo wings and Subway sandwiches. Hunters' lore is replete with the idea that prey animals "want" to be hunted and slain by the superior huntsman.

In the rhetoric of exploitation—as opposed to the language of liberation—only by being sacrificed to "higher" forms of life, via science, religion, entertainment, or edibility can animals be redeemed from being "just animals." Hence, whatever was or is done to them is said to be profoundly, if obscurely, justified by the wishes of the animals themselves. Nonhuman animals want to be raped, mutilated, imprisoned, and even murdered, if it will make them "higher" and more humanlike, or if they can at least serve the human interest. This is the essence of false anthropomorphism and of the genocidal erasure of the animal's true identity—but *not* of the animal's nature—in favor of the abuser's image.

Empathic Anthropomorphism

The opposite of this narcissistic enterprise is empathic anthropomorphism, in which a person's vicarious perceptions and emotions are rooted in the realities of evolutionary kinship with other animal species, in a spirit of goodwill toward them. In contrast to the false anthropomorphism fashioned by animal exploiters, anthropomorphism based on empathy and careful observation is a valid approach to understanding other species. In any case, we can only see the world "through their eyes" by looking through our own. This said, humans are linked to other animals through evolution, and communication between many species is commonplace. Reasonable inferences can be drawn regarding such things as an animal's body language and vocal inflections in situations that produce comparable responses in humans.

Chickens, for example, have a voice of unmistakable woe or enthusiasm in situations where these responses make sense. Their body language of "curved toward the earth" (drooping) versus "head up, tail up" is similarly interpretable. As in comparing atrocities conducted by victimizers and experienced by victim groups, behavioral resemblances

of nonhuman animals to ours don't require an exact match. One may consider these resemblances in terms of the common wellspring from which all experience flows, or in the form of a musical analogy, as in the theme of sentience and its innumerable manifestations harking back to the matrix of all sentient forms.

Anthropomorphism conceived in these terms makes sense. One may legitimately formulate ideas about animals and their needs that the rhetoric of exploitation seeks to discredit. One may proffer a counter-rhetoric of animal liberation based upon empathy and careful observation. As Jonathan Balcombe writes in *Pleasurable Kingdom*, "We cannot feel the hummingbird's response to a trumpet-flower's nectar, the dog's anticipation of chasing a ball, or the turtle's experience of basking in the sun, but we can imagine those feelings based on our own experiences of similar situations" (quoted in Bekoff 2007, 54). Consider, for example, this picture of a wild turkey mother leading her brood, including an errant youngster:

> They hurry along as if on a march to some particular point, sometimes tripping along in single file, one behind the other, and at other times scattered through the woods for fifty yards or more. When on these scattered marches it is pleasant to note some straggling youngster as he wanders out of sight of the main flock in an attempt to catch a fickle-winged butterfly, or delays by the wayside scratching amid the remains of a decayed log in search of a rich morsel in the shape of a grubworm. . . . [W]hen he discovers that he is alone . . . [h]e raises himself up, looks with his keen eyes in every direction for the flock, and, failing to discover them, gives the well-known coarse cluck. Then he raises his head high in the air, and listens intently for his mother's call. As soon as it is discovered that one is missing, the whole flock stops, and the young turkeys raise their heads and await the signal from their mother. When she hears the note of the lost youngster, she gives a few anxious "yelps," which he answers, and then, opening his wings, he gives them a joyous flap or two and with a few sharp, quick "yelps," he goes on a run to join his companions. (Schorger 1966, 283–4)

Empathic anthropomorphism, as this picture shows, is the opposite of the false anthropomorphism of, for example, the fighting cock, the circus elephant, and the Thanksgiving turkey. In cockfighting, roosters are forced to die in stylized rituals of masculinity having little or nothing to do with natural bird behavior in an actual chicken flock.[2] So-called circus elephants are taken from their natural habitats and forced to perform human-contrived antics for human entertainment. Thanksgiving turkeys are maledicted as "dirty birds" that become magically clean only by being slaughtered, cooked, and consumed by "superior" humans.

These constructions exemplify the kind of anthropomorphism on which animal exploitation depends. It consists of insisting that animals are not suffering, that they are happy and grateful to be exploited, despite a congeries of evidence to the contrary. If animal advocates say, for instance, that a hen in a battery cage or a chicken buried alive in his own flesh is miserable, they're accused of anthropomorphism—of attributing human feelings to chickens. If producers say that the chicken is happy or (as one egg producer rewrote the company language in response to criticism) "content," the claim is accepted as "science."

Consider the latitude accorded to agribusiness philosopher Paul Thompson, cited above. His claim that blind hens "don't mind" being crowded together in cages as much as do chickens who can see is accepted as a "science-based" proposition with a view to improved animal welfare in light of the blind chickens' alleged "reduced susceptibility to stress." If blind chickens, or featherless chickens, or whatever genetically modified animal forms can be shown "quietly" to increase cost efficiency in the industrial environment, the procrustean solution can be represented as a "holistic fit between a farm animal and its environment" (Thompson 2007, 3). That sounds reasonable.

A point to bear in mind in confronting these claims is that, as avian ethologist Lesley Rogers has emphasized, a docile or placid temperament is not synonymous with or a necessary sign of reduced intelligence or sensitivity (Rogers 1997, 185). Moreover, many factors can be mistaken for diminished cognitive capacity in industrially raised chickens and

other factory-farmed animals, from the masking effects of their impoverished environments to the complex infirmities imposed upon them that often include unrelieved pain.

As I wrote in my book *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (Davis 2001, 130–1), rather than showing that chickens and turkeys are stupid, the fact that they become lethargic in continuously unstimulating commercial environments shows how sensitive these birds are to their surroundings, deprivations, and prospects. Learned helplessness, which may as well be referred to as "learned hopelessness," is a pathologic reaction of living beings to pathogenic living conditions from which they cannot escape. Children warehoused from their infancy in institutions, and wild animals forced to spend years behind bars, show similar apathy and atrophy of body and spirit. The condition is poignantly discussed in John Berger's essay "Why Look at Animals?" It was dramatically illustrated in human beings in the twentieth century by warehoused Romanian orphans, whose plight of lifelong institutionalization and its effects were highlighted on the television news program *Turning Point* ("Romania" 1997).

On the positive side, the ability of domesticated animals to respond alertly and appropriately to sensory and social stimuli, and to negotiate the physical, social, and emotional milieus in which they find themselves, say, at a sanctuary or in an adoptive home, indicates considerable intelligence, awareness, and learning potential. If Sarah, a former battery-caged hen, climbed the stairs in the morning to get me downstairs to fix her breakfast after yelling from the bottom of the steps failed to produce results, was she not displaying purposeful adaptive intelligence? And what about Katie the "broiler" hen, who pecked at my pants legs to get me to bend down and hug her? Or consider Mila, a quiet-natured turkey rescued from a slaughterhouse, who repeatedly calmed down her belligerent companion, Priscilla, and prevented her from attacking people by inserting herself between Pricilla and the intended target.

All of these birds arrived at our sanctuary in a state of pathological apathy and lethargy quite different from the expressive personalities that

emerged under the influence of fresh air, soft grass, and attention to their needs, as well as the opportunity afforded them to make some decisions on their own. As Michael W. Fox has observed, freedom and wellbeing are more than intellectual concepts. They are "a subjective aspect of being, not exclusive to humanity, but inclusive of all life. This is not an anthropomorphic claim. It is logically probable and empirically verifiable" (Fox 1983–1984, 208).

Procrustean Solutions to Animal Welfare Problems

Thus far we've considered the plight of sentient animals caught in the toils of agribusiness and other institutionalized predicaments in which they and their identities are forcibly reconstructed against their will to fit human purposes. The ethical conundrum posed by this arrangement has been represented in public debates mainly in terms of the fact that these animals can suffer. Animals are feeling beings. They are "subjects-of-a-life," in philosopher Tom Regan's phrase, who are capable of experiencing what is being done to them (Regan 2004, 53–4). The eighteenth-century utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham said that the question of how we treat animals is not, can they reason or can they talk, but "Can they *suffer*?" Adopting this principle, Bentham's protégé, Peter Singer, wrote in his book *Animal Liberation* that the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration of interests, including the right not to be tortured and treated like a thing, is "the capacity for suffering," including the ability for "enjoyment or happiness" (Singer 1990, 7).

But what if an animal's capacity to suffer and enjoy could be significantly reduced or even eliminated? What if scientists could create animals whose adjustment to abusive environments consisted in their being unable to experience their own existence, animals who were in essence the oblivious entities they are treated as being? This prospect may seem farfetched, but how distant is it? More than two decades ago, an engineer predicted, fancifully but seriously, that the future of chicken and egg production would resemble "industrial-scale versions of the heart-lung machines that brain-dead human beings need a court order

to get unplugged from" (Burruss 1993, 16A). In 2018, a student at the University of Oxford won a prize for a paper proposing "genetic disenhancement" of factory-farmed animals' brains "to increase the quality of life" for these animals (Latimer 2018).

The creation of insentient, brain-dead animals to fit the procrustean systems of industrialized agriculture is most likely in the works already. Consider the forecast presented by avian ethologist Lesley Rogers in her book *Minds of Their Own: Thinking and Awareness in Animals*. In the industrialized farming of today, Rogers writes, "the identities of individual animals are completely lost." Chickens and other animals are seen only as bodies "to be fattened or to lay eggs." Their higher cognitive abilities are "ignored and definitely unwanted," and thus an ultimate aim of breeding programs is to obtain animals with minds "so blunted" that they will passively accept the worst treatment and living conditions (Rogers 1997, 184–5).

Meanwhile, Rogers says that the view of domesticated chickens as already stupid and brainless has more to do with how humans prefer to think about chickens than with the abilities of chickens themselves. There is no evidence, she says, that domestic chickens, or any other farmed animals now in commercial use, have been so cognitively impaired that they need no more stimulation than they receive in industrialized farming. Indeed, she writes that with increased knowledge of the behavior and cognitive abilities of the chicken has come the realization that "the chicken is not an inferior species to be treated merely as a food source" (Rogers 1995, 213).

However, the overt signs of sensitivity in chickens will continue to be, as they are now, suppressed by industrialized conditions. A writer for the *Guardian* described his impression of thousands of young chickens being raised for slaughter in a huge facility in the United Kingdom as "a sea of stationary grey objects" (Purvis 2006). The fate of chickens and other farmed animals is not to be treated as fellow creatures with feelings, but as pieces of meat and whatever else the market desires. They may

have minds and consciousness, "but they will not be treated as such" (Rogers 1997, 185).

For some critics of factory farming, the genetic engineering of animals to fit them to conditions from which they cannot escape is a welfare solution of sorts. The utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer exemplifies this view. Asked if he would consider it ethical to engineer wingless chickens to give them more space in battery cages, he replied that a wingless chicken would be an improvement "assuming it doesn't have any residual instincts" such as phantom limb pain (which debeaked chickens have been shown to experience). He added that "if you could eliminate various other chicken instincts, like its preference for laying eggs in a nest, that would be an improvement, too." Asked if he would consider it ethical to engineer a "brainless bird, grown strictly for its meat," Singer said it would be "an ethical improvement on the present system, because it would eliminate the suffering that these birds are feeling. That's the huge plus to me" (Broudy 2006).

One may contest this viewpoint. For one thing, most people who hope for a genetic solution to the suffering of animals on factory farms have no idea of what actually goes on in genetic engineering laboratories where countless live animals are routinely being "modified" and trashed. For example, in 1994 I attended the First International Symposium on the Artificial Insemination of Poultry at the University of Maryland, College Park. In a talk called "Beyond Freezing Semen" (available in the published *Proceedings*, which includes photographs of some of the procedures), Robert Etches, a researcher at the University of Guelph in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science, joked that his presentation might just as well be called "The Night of the Living Dead." He was discussing the freezing and thawing of semen obtained from laboratory roosters (extracted by masturbating them) to create chicken chimeras—chickens with genes from other species inserted into their embryos. Of birds hatching with no outward sign of the desired change, he said, "We simply throw them away" (Etches 1994).

From an ethical standpoint, genetic engineering is not a solution to the suffering of animals on factory farms; rather, it is an extension of the system and mentality that produced and produces such suffering in the first place. Suffering involves more than the sensation of an injury; it includes more than pain. Suffering refers to the sustaining of a harm, wound, or disease, painful or otherwise. Not only are millions of birds and other animals being tortured in laboratories into mutilated forms of existence and discarded with no more concern for them or their feelings than if they were paperclips, but, one must ask, what is the difference from the standpoint of a purported concern for animals between surgical amputation of their body parts and genetic amputation of their body parts? Does anyone wonder how a wingless bird might feel? Are wings just mechanical appendages to the bodies of birds that can be excised or "deleted" at will to enhance the "welfare" of their progeny in the terrible places to which we consign them to satisfy our appetites? Could other aspects of their existence be adversely affected by having their wings removed that would offset any welfare advantage obtained in the tradeoff?

Dr. Eldon Kienholz, a professor of poultry nutrition at Colorado State University, described experiments he did on newborn chickens and turkeys in which he literally cut off their wings and tails to see if by doing so he could demonstrate a savings in feed costs, since feed would not be needed to grow wings and tails in birds raised for meat. Later, he wrote that some of these de-winged birds, as he called them, "couldn't get up onto their feet when they fell over." It wasn't pleasant, he wrote, "seeing them spin around on their side trying to get back onto their feet, without their wings" (Davis 1991, 13).

This raises many questions, including whether a bird's wings are mere physical, expendable appendages, or whether they are an integral part not only of the body but of the very being of a bird. Reflecting upon such questions, an idea occurred to me while reading an article by the neurologist Oliver Sacks, in *The New Yorker*, in which he discusses the persistence of what he calls "emotional memory" in people suffering from amnesia who have lost the ability to connect and recall the daily events of

their lives, but who nevertheless appear to have "deep emotional memories or associations . . . in the limbic system and other regions of the brain where emotional memories are represented" (Sacks 2007, 108).

He suggests that these emotional memories, perhaps more than any other kinds of memories we possess, are what make us, in the most profound sense, who we truly are. Birds, too, possess limbic systems and other regions of the brain in which instincts and emotions are formed and coordinated, and birds have been shown to share with humans a complexly evolved brain that processes information and experience in much the same way as the human cerebral cortex (The Avian Brain Nomenclature Consortium 2005; Weiss 2005). Birds and mammals and aquatic animals are continually being found to have more in common with us than was once thought. We all experience dimensions of interiority and proprioceptive awareness that utilitarian thinking, unaided by deeper reflection, fails to consider.

This brings me back to the question of surgically and genetically mutilated animals and the dimensions of suffering they are likely to experience.

Scientists cite neurological evidence that the amputated stump of a debeaked bird continues to discharge abnormal afferent nerves in fibers running from the stump for many weeks after beak trimming, "similar to what happens in human amputees who suffer from phantom limb pain" (Duncan 1993, 5). In other words, a "memory" of the amputated beak part persists in the brain, beak, and facial sensations of the mutilated bird even after "healing" has occurred. Scientists also cite the persistence of "ancestral memories" in intensively bred, factory-farmed chickens who, though they have never personally experienced so much as the ground under their feet, have "the same drive to scratch away to get their food," given the opportunity, as do their junglefowl relatives, who spend long hours scratching away at the leaves of the forest floor to reach the tiny seeds of bamboo they love (Dawkins 1993, 153).

Perhaps these deeply structured memory formations, retentions, and ineffable networks of knowledge in the body and brain of an

"industrialized" bird have something about them tantamount to what may be called "phantom limbic memories" of their dismembered body parts and the experiences inscribed within those parts that make chickens, and all other animals, who they truly are. Wingless, featherless, blind, and brain-damaged, entrapped in the hell of humanity, do they recall their wholeness in the phantom limbic soul of themselves? And if they do, are such memories of their essential identity, eluding the procrustean blades of annihilation, experienced as a compensation or a curse? When hens in a battery cage fall asleep, perchance to dream, how do they feel when they wake up?

We have become accustomed, through the environmental movement, to think of species extinction as the worst fate that can befall a sentient organism. But the chicken's doom, engineered by humans, is not to become extinct.

5

Interspecies Sexual Assault

A Moral Perspective

In 2016, Merritt Clifton, editor of the online publication *Animals 24-7*, advised me during an email exchange arising from comments I had posted about meat industry consultant Temple Grandin on the *Animals 24-7* website, not to present my opinion without evidence. If I wanted to write something about the methods used to artificially inseminate pigs, chickens, turkeys, cows, or goats, this would be of interest, as long as I gave agribusiness sources their due (Davis 2016).

In this discussion, I look at human sexual assault on nonhuman animals, with a focus on farmed animals, from an ethical standpoint. Does sexual manipulation of a farmed animal for business purposes constitute sexual assault? How is it different from—if it *is* different from—the random sexual assaults on nonhuman animals that society considers "deviant," and that in some cases have been prosecuted as animal cruelty violations? Sexual manipulation is routinely performed on chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows, and other animals by farmers and researchers. Sexual manipulation in one form or another is the very foundation of animal farming, and for this reason it is neither illegal nor regarded as deviant or obscene by animal farmers.

My focus in this discussion is not on Temple Grandin *per se* but on her role as an exemplar, a symbol, and a re-enforcer of the moral contradictions, cynicism, and sentimentality reflective of mainstream

society's muddled attitude toward farmed animals. This includes the humane-washing types of farmers and retailers who advertise sentiments designed to attract conscientious consumers eager to believe that they can have slaughter *and* humane treatment in the same package. The focus of this discussion is on one phase of the animal production process, albeit one that ramifies through all phases: that of sexual manipulation.

How to Make a Pig Fall in Love

Like many people, Temple Grandin professes to love animals, while defending the right of human beings to own, control, mutilate, buy, sell, masturbate, inseminate, incarcerate, slaughter, and sexually manipulate them for business purposes—as long as it is done "humanely." Regarding the latter, her book *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior* has a section called "How to Make a Pig Fall in Love" (Grandin and Johnson 2005, 102–4).

Rather than summarize, I offer this portion for consideration. Grandin writes that:

> Breeding pigs commercially is an art. I talked to a man who had one of the most successful records for breeding sows out there and he told me things no one's ever written in a book as far as I know. Each boar had his own little perversion the man had to do to get the boar turned on so he could collect the semen. Some of them were just things like the boar wanted to have his dandruff scratched while they were collecting him. (Pigs have big flaky dandruff all over their backs.) The other things the man had to do were a lot more intimate. He might have to hold the boar's penis in exactly the right way that the boar liked, and he had to masturbate some of them in exactly the right way. There was one boar, he told me, who wanted to have his butt hole played with. "I have to stick my finger in his butt, he just really loves that," he told me. Then he got all red in the face. I'm not going to tell you his name, because I know he'd be embarrassed. But he's one of the best in the business—and remember, this *is* a business we're talking about. The

number of sows successfully bred by the boars translates directly into the profits a company can make.

Continuing . . .

This same man also told me he had to deal with the female pigs the same way. With a cow you can just take a catheter and insert it into her womb and she'll have babies. She doesn't have to be turned on or interested. But you have to get the sow turned on when you breed her so her uterus will pull the semen in. If she isn't fully aroused she'll have a smaller litter because fewer eggs will get fertilized.

Concluding . . .

So the breeder has to be able to tell exactly when the female pig is ready. One of the signs you look for is that when a pig is sexually receptive her ears will go "blink!" and pop straight up. That's called *popping.* Also, when you put pressure on her back, which is what she would feel when the boar mounts her, she'll stand perfectly still. Breeders call that 'stand for the man.' A good breeder knows when his sows are ready to stand for the man, and he usually sits on each sow's back when he inserts the semen so she feels that pressure on her back. Some breeders put weights on the sow's back to accomplish the same thing. . . . Pig breeders respect the animals' nature, and they do a good job with their animals.

Recounting the sensitive topic of sexual use of one being by another involves more than raw data. Attitude and tone on the part of the speaker inform how the act is perceived by both the speaker and the audience. Grandin's tone and attitude in these passages are jocular: the captive pigs are the butt of her humor. It is axiomatic in circles where she is known outside her field—the fawning public radio and television establishment, for example[1]—that this woman "cares" about animals, that she "knows" and "respects the animals' nature." Her description of how to make a pig fall in love does not portray this view. Rather, it portrays the interface

between business and prurient pleasure on the part of the "breeder" and the storyteller. For both of them, the animal's body and sexual "antics" are a joke.

Bestiality

Historically, the term for sexual activity involving a human being and a nonhuman animal is bestiality. (Note that the word is pronounced bestiality with a short "e" and not "beastiality.") In "Rethinking Bestiality: Towards a Concept of Interspecies Sexual Assault," Piers Beirne, a professor of criminology at the University of Southern Maine, explains that the word comes from the Latin *bestialitas* denoting, variously, the "savage qualities allegedly inhering in nonhuman animals" mingled with negative connotations of primitivism, human–animal sexual intercourse, and nonhuman animals' mating behavior. In modern usage, bestiality tends exclusively to denote sex between humans and other animals. Beirne writes that, in law, "it refers to sexual intercourse when a human penis or digit enters the vagina, anus or cloaca of the animal." It often also entails "any form of oral-genital contact, including those between women and animals and even, in psychiatry, fantasies about sex with animals" (Beirne 1997, 320).[2]

The Hebrew Bible explicitly condemns a man or a woman "lying with a beast" on penalty of death for all participants. Beirne cites three traditional religious beliefs that condemn bestiality as a sin or a crime: 1) it ruptures the natural, God-given order of the universe; 2) it violates the procreative intent required of all sexual relations between Christians; and 3) it produces monstrous offspring that are the work of the Devil (321).

In *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality*, I give two examples of how bestiality was dealt with, following biblical precedent, by the seventeenth-century English Pilgrims and Puritans in Massachusetts. In 1679, a woman and a dog were hanged together for allegedly committing the sexual act.[3] In 1642, a servant named Thomas Granger was accused of conducting "buggery" with a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves, and a turkey.

Discovered raping the mare, Granger confessed to having sex with her not only then, "but sundry times before and at several times with all the rest of the forenamed in his indictment." He and a fellow rapist insisted that sex with animals was a custom "long used in old England." Condemned by a jury, Granger was executed. William Bradford, the Pilgrim governor of Plymouth Colony who conducted the execution, wrote:

> A very sad spectacle it was. For first the mare and then the cow and the rest of the lesser cattle [cattle in the general sense of livestock, i.e., "live property"] were killed before his face, according to the law, Leviticus xx.15; and then he himself was executed. The cattle were all cast into a great and large pit that was digged of purpose for them, and no use made of any part of them.

Writing in the seventeenth century, the English clergyman Richard Capel argued that bestiality is the worst sexual crime because "it turns man into a very beast, makes a man a member of a brute creature" (Beirne 1997, 321).

Despite the conviction that sex with other creatures debases humans into "beasts," Dutch biologist Midas Dekkers in his book *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality* tracks human sexual interest in and use of nonhuman animals as documented in art, literature, court records, personal confessions, veterinary files, and popular culture through history (Dekkers 2000). He points out contradictions in human attitudes toward interspecies sex, forcing us to look at some old things in a new way. He says, for instance, that since the god of the Christians, like Zeus of the Olympians, once descended in the form of a bird to impregnate a woman—a reference to the similarities between the Greek myth of Leda and the Swan and the story of the Virgin Mary being visited by the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove to produce Jesus Christ—Christianity "is founded on bestiality" (8–9).

The fact that Hebrew scripture contains explicit prohibitions against sex between humans and nonhuman animals signals that the practice was common enough in olden times to require strict prohibitions and

penalties. We may assume that the rape of farmed animals has been practiced by men and boys of all cultures that raise animals for food. Given the direct proximity and easy availability of animals on a farm, added to the fact that farmed animal abuse is institutionalized by the food industry, it cannot be difficult, Dekkers writes, for sexual urges and sadism "to find satisfaction" (10), and to insist that the animals under assault "find satisfaction."

Animal Farming Invites Lascivious Conduct

> "Our government appointed dairy, goat and beef farmers to advise on the return of Canada's prison farms. When our group Evolve Our Prison Farms addressed the prison farm advisory panel, our respectful and professional presentation was met with accusations and thinly veiled contempt. We were accused, among other things, of using 'inflammatory' language, such as 'forced' insemination. I asked the accuser, a goat farmer, to explain to the Corrections staff in the room what artificial insemination involves. I asked if it involves (with cows) the insertion of an arm and an insemination gun. He answered yes. I told him that's forced. He said, emphatically and repeatedly, 'No. Believe me. I know. They want you to do it. They want it. They want it. They want it.'"
> —**Calvin Neufeld**, email to Karen Davis, April 25, 2018

Farmed-animal production is and always has been based on manipulating and controlling animals' sex lives and reproductive organs. Their bodies are up for grabs for farmers to do with as they please. Sexually abusive in essence, animal farming invites lascivious conduct and attitudes toward the animals on the part of farmers and producers, as illustrated by Temple Grandin's account of how to make a pig fall in love. But it isn't just the producer side: not unreasonably. Grandin and the publisher of *Animals in Translation* must have bet that the average reader

would not be offended by the story of farmers masturbating pigs—a little embarrassed maybe, but not put off, especially if the tone was titillating and the animals were made fun of and caricatured as liking the experience and not being physically injured in the process. But in case the reader got confused, Grandin inserts into her account a reminder that "this *is* a business we're talking about." Well, thinks the squirmy reader suppressing embarrassment, then I'm okay with it.

Since, legally and socially, manipulating a farmed animal sexually for business purposes is considered neither criminal nor immoral, neither a "sexual assault" nor an act of bestiality in the lewd sense, what *does* get under people's skin? What constitutes an interspecies "sex crime" in today's world?

In 2003, the Indiana Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of "a troubled young man" named Michael Bessigano (Yovich 2003). He was prosecuted for stealing a chicken and killing her in a motel room while forcing sex on her. Previously, Bessigano had been convicted of felony theft and cruelty to animals for killing a dog and having sex with geese. In other words, this was a case of wanton sexual abuse of an animal stolen from the legal owner by "a troubled young man"—a deviant—rather than an instance of a normal man doing legitimated sexual things to a hen in the line of business.

Law and Disorder: The Strange Status of Sentient Property

The legal distinction between interspecies sex for business and interspecies sex for personal pleasure is part of a system of laws and mores in which cruel and obscene animal farming practices are excluded from the legal censure that applies to acts of animal cruelty performed by individuals who cannot claim economic justification for their behavior. In *Beyond the Law*, attorneys David J. Wolfson and Mariann Sullivan explain that in the United States many states have enacted laws exempting from state anticruelty statutes any acts deemed "accepted," "common," "customary," or "normal" farming practices (Wolfson and

Sullivan 1996, 7). Since virtually everything that is done to farmed animals is in some degree cruel, painful, injurious, and degrading, the only way animal farming can proceed is by placing the entire enterprise beyond the law, shielded in a false jargon of "humane treatment" and "animal welfare."

A case study by Piers Beirne and colleagues, "Horse Maiming in the English Countryside: Moral Panic, Human Deviance, and the Social Construction of Victimhood," is instructive (Yates, et al. 2001). The authors analyze the ambiguities and contradictions in the public attitude toward assaults on domestic animals, exemplified by the response to a series of horse maimings in rural Hampshire, in England, in the 1990s. Genital mutilation seems to have been the most common form of attack on the horses, who were slashed and cut by unidentified knife-wielding assailants. Noting that "horses and many other animals have been assaulted in England for centuries," the authors speculate on why this particular series of assaults evoked such a powerful response from the media, the police, and the public, and they are interested in understanding how the horses themselves, being the primary victims in the case, figured in the outrage fueled by the attacks.

The authors observe that the animal victims of an assault are typically relegated to a realm of invisibility in the panics in which they figure. Their roles "tend to be passive and their voices peripheral to the main script" (3). They are not the central characters in the narrative. The human owners of the assaulted animals are much more likely than the animals to be commiserated with than by the community and the press, especially when, as in this case, the owners are well-off, "respectable" people who suffered a business loss.

At the same time, in the horse maiming case, certain horses and their plight did seem to occupy the central role of victim. The fact that some horses were identified by name, plus other evidence of empathy, suggested that at least some owners were genuinely distressed that their animals had suffered pain, wounds, terror, and in one or two cases, death. Still, the authors say: "Clearly, malicious injury to a horse is not

usually regarded as equivalent to the intentional infliction of damage on other forms of fast transportation." The horses are property; and yet, "Animals, like human slaves, are afforded, in law, the strange status of sentient property." The authors speculate on whether the moral ambiguities in this case suggest "traces of guilt, unease and defensiveness about the treatment of animals" below the surface (13–5).

Whether guilt played a part in the public's response to the horse maimings, it seems that the prevailing sentiment was less about the horses and more of a fear that an assault on a horse could portend an assault on a human being. The *meaning* of the mysterious and anonymous assaults, the authors surmise, mattered more to people than the assaults themselves, more than the horses and their suffering meant to them. This view, say the authors, "dulls our ability to see assaults on horses as serious in their own right." From a speciesist perspective, "It's all about us" (16).

The authors stress the unusualness of the horse maiming episode generating so much publicity and moral outrage given that horse owners routinely inflict all kinds of horrible injuries on horses for personal and professional gain without opposition. Thoroughbred racehorses, like all animal investments, are treated "like machines: 'they have a job to do,'" and making them suffer is no obstacle (18). At the same time, characterizing animals as having "a job to do" implies that they are also perceived as having not just a mechanical function, but a *responsibility* toward their owner—why else were they born? Betty MacDonald in her 1945 memoir about her life as a chicken farmer, *The Egg and I*, put this stratagem in comic terms: "If a hen is lazy or uncooperative or disagreeable you can chop off her head and relieve the situation once and for all. 'If that's the way you feel, then take that!' you say, severing her head with one neat blow" (MacDonald 1975).

Such shiftiness is an old story. Whenever convenient in the rhetoric of exploitation, the "sentient property" is assigned agency and obligation, even complicity in being demeaned, imprisoned, tortured, and killed for human benefit. So perhaps in this light, interspecies sex should not

be condemned, unequivocally and categorically, as shameful, sinful, or criminal so long as the animal *wants* to have sex with a human being, or at least enjoys the experience when it happens, whether the circumstances are "business" or "pleasure." As long as the sex isn't "cruel," why be concerned?

If the Sex Isn't Cruel, Then It's Okay?

In *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality*, Midas Dekkers notes that the sex life of domestic animals is "completely organized by human beings." That said, he believes that "as long as none of those involved suffers pain, no form of sex should be seen as pathological, bad or mad" (2000, 148). What *is* unacceptable is sex with small animals such as chickens and rabbits: such sex, he says, "automatically involves sadism." In addition to sexual abuse of small animals, Dekkers documents severe internal injuries that have been diagnosed in cows and calves as a result of being raped by men using everything from their own bodies to pitchforks. He describes men getting revenge on female farmed animals who refuse their advances, showing another aspect of the link between nonconsensual sex and the human penchant for vengeful violence. He cites a French farmer "who thought that many of his chickens and turkeys were dying in suspicious circumstances" (126). He persuades us that such circumstances are not uncommon.

What brought Dekkers' book to light in the English-speaking world, following its translation into English, was the publication, in 2001, of an essay by philosopher Peter Singer, the author of *Animal Liberation* (1990), called "Heavy Petting" in the online sex magazine *Nerve*. Prompted by Dekkers' book, Singer shared the author's opinion that the central issue in any sexual encounter between humans and other animals is whether it involves cruelty, meaning coercion and/or the infliction of physical pain and bodily harm on the animal, regardless of the situation in which the encounter takes place. Like Dekkers, Singer argues that sex between humans and nonhuman animals does not always involve cruelty. It may in some cases be a mutually satisfying experience for both parties, and

there are instances in which a sexual encounter is sought or initiated by, rather than imposed upon, an animal, as when a household dog rubs himself against the legs of a human being. This contention made many people angry, though for different reasons.

Animal rights advocates were so upset by "Heavy Petting" that some wanted Singer to be exiled from the animal liberation movement of which he is often called the "father." Philosopher Tom Regan, the author of *The Case for Animal Rights*, published in 1983, argued that the morality of bodily contact cannot be reduced to Singer's utilitarian parameters of pain and pleasure alone. Indeed, reducing the morality of bodily contact to pain versus involuntary sexual arousal would legitimize Temple Grandin's stance on how to make a pig fall in love . . . "as long as nobody gets hurt."

But even if the pigs in Grandin's account were not physically injured or made to feel pain by the men masturbating them for business purposes, the events she describes constitute a *situation* within a total *context* of injuring and abusing them for bacon and pork. Imagine how an uncooperative pig gets treated whenever she or he refuses to "stand for the man." In my opinion, the abusiveness of the whole ordeal includes using the defenseless bodies of animals to produce babies whose life is only or mainly to suffer, and whose only reason for being alive is to be made dead.

The two main grievances expressed by animal rights advocates in response to Singer's essay were that it discredited our movement in the eyes of the public, and that nonhuman animals, even in privileged domestic circumstances, are not in a position to give informed consent to sexual encounters with humans, given the inherent constraints of captivity: the limited options, inability to escape, physical coercion, and psychological pressure that captivity imposes on a captive individual. A nonhuman animal cannot give or withhold verbal consent to such intimate manhandling, and the majority of domesticated animals are isolated from normal sexual contact with members of their own species. That a captive animal may occasionally show sexual interest in a human being is more likely due to a lack of opportunity for any other outlet.

An Offence to Human Status and Dignity

Mainstream journalists had other objections. The primary objection to "bestiality" and the notion that interspecies sex is not automatically immoral was that sex between humans and nonhumans, regardless of the circumstances, including rape, is "an offence to our status and dignity as human beings." Kathryn Jean Lopez in *National Review* railed against Singer's suggestion that "humans ain't nothing special." She was more incensed by that idea and by Singer's use of four-letter words than she was by his depiction of the institutionalized torture inflicted on hens so that people can eat their eggs, and the agony they endure in being sexually assaulted by men for sadistic pleasure. Singer dared to declare that sexually assaulting a hen for personal gratification, malignant as that is, "is no worse than what egg producers do to their hens all the time."

Peter Berkowitz, writing in *The New Republic* (2001), complained that, for Singer, it appeared that "the only consideration we need bear in mind in using animals to satisfy our sexual desire is whether we are causing cruelty," as if to say that cruelty (or at least cruelty to animals, like the animals themselves in his view) is little more than a pesky footnote in the ethical account of humanity. Berkowitz was more aggrieved by the idea that other creatures have a dignity that links them to us than by the cruelty we inflict on them without a shred of compassion or restraint, which is exactly how hens are treated by the egg industry, which Singer mentioned to show just how deeply embedded in human life obscenity toward nonhuman animals actually is and how arbitrary our moral demarcations are.

Asked in an interview whether he agreed with me that "milking" and artificially inseminating parent turkeys in modern food production are examples of humanity's bestial behavior in areas normally regarded as sexless and innocuous, Singer replied, "Yes, we draw the lines in strange places. That's what Karen's point is all about" (Vaughan 2002b).[4]

That point is what my book *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities* is all about—the moral lines we draw, and

why. The "henmaid" in the title is an allusion to Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. In Atwood's novel, women are valued (by men) only if their ovaries are viable, and they are at the mercy of their keepers, their rapists—ordinary men controlling society with the help of female collaborators. When one day I was describing to a librarian how hens are treated by the egg industry, he said it sounded chillingly like *The Handmaid's Tale*.[5] As soon as he said that, the title of my book was born. The henmaid symbolizes the billions of birds who at this moment, and every moment, are imprisoned in the poultry and egg industries. More broadly, she symbolizes the individuals of all species who suffer and die at our mercy, every creature who is reduced to the level of an insentient object in the obscene universes of suffering that our species is so adept at organizing.

An Unnatural Order

As for literal interspecies sexual assault, we should ask ourselves whether the actions of a sadist toward a hen in a hotel room are truly more evil and despicable than the actions of a researcher working in a sex laboratory for the turkey industry. Here, for example, is a reproductive physiologist named Annie Donoghue speaking to a reporter with *The Washington Post* about what she and her team do to adult male turkeys and how she regards this work: "Electro-ejaculation isn't as efficient as hand massage." The lab turkeys, she explains, "are 'trained' to respond to a 'milker' stroking his [the turkey's] tail feathers in a suggestive manner. 'The turkeys are very, very calm and unruffled throughout the procedure. . . . 'It's almost like they line up sometimes. Some of them hang around afterward, hoping for a second chance, I guess'" (Jones 1996).

By this account, the turkeys are compliant sex partners with their captors, and an involuntary physiological response to a physical stimulus amounts to the victim's consent. By contrast, Jim Mason, the author of *An Unnatural Order*, described his experience of "breaking" turkey hens at a Butterball breeding facility in Missouri and "milking" the male birds:[6]

Two men herded them—a hundred or so at a time—into a makeshift pen along one side of the house. From there, these "drivers" forced five to six birds at a time into a chute, which opened onto a 5 X 5-foot concrete-lined pit sunken into the floor of the house. Three men worked belly-deep in the pit: Two grabbed birds from the chute and held them for the third, Joe, the inseminator. They put me to work first in the pit, grabbing and "breaking" hens. One "breaks" a hen by holding her breast down, legs down, tail up so that her cloaca or "vent" opens. This makes it easier for the inseminator to insert the tube and deliver a "shot" of semen. "Breaking" hens was hard, fast, dirty work. I had to reach into the chute, grab a hen by the legs, and hold her—ankles crossed—in one hand. Then, as I held her on the edge of the pit, I wiped my other hand over her rear, which pushed up her tail feathers and exposed her vent opening. The birds weighed 20 to 30 pounds, were terrified, and beat their wings and struggled in panic. They were very strong and hard to hold. With the hen thus "broken," the inseminator stuck his thumb right under her vent and pushed, which opened the vent and forced the end of the oviduct a bit. Into this, he inserted the semen tube and released the semen. Then both men let go and the hen flopped away onto the house floor. . . .

The semen came from the "tom house" where the males are housed. Here "Bill" extracted the semen bird by bird. He worked on a bench which has a vacuum pump and a rubber-padded clamp to hold the tom by the legs. From the vacuum pump, a small rubber hose ran to a "handset." With it, Bill "milked" each tom. The handset was fitted with glass tubes and a syringe body; it sucked semen from the tom and poured it into a syringe.

I helped Bill for a while. My job was to catch a tom by the legs, hold him upside down, lift him by the legs and one wing, and set him up on the bench on his chest/neck, with his rear-end sticking up facing Bill. He took each tom, locked his crossed feet and legs into the padded clamp, then lifted his leg over the bird's head and neck to hold him. Bill had the handset on his right hand. With his left hand, he squeezed the tom's vent until it opened up and the white semen oozed forth. He held the sucking end of a glass tube just below the opening and sucked up the few drops of semen. We did this over and over, bird by bird, until

> the syringe body filled up. Each syringe body was already loaded with a couple of cubic centimeters of "extender," a watery, bluish mixture of antibiotics and saline solution. As each syringe was filled, I ran it over to the hen house and handed it to the inseminator and crew. . . .
>
> The insemination crew did two houses a day—6,000 hens a day. Figuring a 10-hour day, that's 600 hens per hour, ten a minute. Two breakers did ten hens a minute, or each breaker "broke" five hens a minute—one hen every 12 seconds. This pace pressured the drivers to keep a steady flow of birds into the chute to supply the pit. Having been through this week after week, the birds feared the chute and bulked and huddled up. The drivers literally kicked them into the chute. The idea seemed to be to terrify at least one bird, who squawked, beat her wings in panic, and terrified the others in her group. In this way the drivers created such pain and terror behind the birds that it forced them to plunge ahead to the pain and terror they knew to be in the chute and pit ahead. . . .

One outcome of this ordeal for the turkeys is a condition called deep pectoral myopathy. In this condition, the chest muscle dies, leading to strangulation of the blood vessels within the muscle. It is the result of the birds' abnormal size and bodyweight, the stress of food deprivation that is used to counteract the pathologies that interfere with their ability to be fertile, the chronic terror they endure without relief, and their "struggling and wing beating associated with catching for artificial insemination" (Pattison 1993, 19, 229).

In 1994 I attended the First International Symposium on the Artificial Insemination of Poultry, a U.S. Department of Agriculture/poultry industry symposium at the University of Maryland in College Park, with attendees from around the world (Davis 1994). I learned a lot about the animal production business at the symposium—the technologies involved and the moral tone of this mostly hidden world, but one image that stands out in my mind especially is a color slide that was shown to the audience of a turkey "milker" in a breeding facility with L O V E printed in red magic marker on his knuckles.

It isn't only the turkey food industry that is based on interspecies sexual assault. In *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality*, I describe the pornography of the turkey hunting industry in which hunters openly brag about the erotic thrill they get from mimicking turkey courtship behavior, imitating a "hot hen" so that a lovesick tom will "offer its head and neck for a shot." These people joke freely in their literature and in the sports sections of the mainstream media about killing the birds for "love":

> Let it be stated now that, because of the fowl he loves, the technology of hunting has advanced by light-years. There are turkey-hunting seminars and videos, new types of camouflage, new firearms, new ways to use old firearms. And new ways to call turkeys to their doom. (Stout 1996, E3)

Unnatural Suffering and Ritual Pathologies

Since we attribute to animals all kinds of things that have little or nothing to do with who they actually are, it is not surprising that they are regularly invoked as metaphors for our own out-of-control sexual behavior. This is almost laughable given that the majority of other animal species have specific breeding seasons whose purpose is to perpetuate their own species into the next generation. It is they who model the Puritanical standard of living decorously according to the "natural order of the universe," the "procreative intent" required of Christians, and the duty not to produce "monstrous offspring" inspired by the Devil. It is notable, perhaps, that people who view "bestiality" as an offense to the dignity of human beings have no problem incorporating other animals into themselves by eating them and feeding their infants milk from a nursing cow or goat. Nor do people draw the line at interspecies organ transplantation.

Similarly, ritual animal sacrifice, which may at first seem unrelated to interspecies sexual assault, is not unrelated. Ritual transference of transgressions to a sacrificial animal victim is, in my view, a kind of rape. Just

as nonhuman animals are deemed fit receptacles for the depositing of human diseases in biomedical research's quest for human health, so they are deemed suitable receptacles for human sin in the quest for spiritual cleansing. In both cases, the animal victim is made to appear as an aspect of the victimizer's identity, even a willing participant in being used as a depository for human diseases, sins, and vices. Humans, by virtue of a shared verbal language, can challenge the profanation and misappropriation of their bodies, identity, and will. A nonhuman animal, such as a hen, is powerless, short of human intercession, to protect herself from being besmirched, as when she is represented by her abusers as an "egg-laying machine" or as a symbolic uterus for the deposition of human spiritual filth.

Today, there is a growing awareness of the many ways in which humans and other animals are related through our common evolutionary heritage and sentience. This awareness is due in no small part to the animal rights movement as well as to sectors of the scientific community focusing attention on animal cognition and ethology. But there are ways in which humans and nonhuman animals radically diverge. It isn't only that other animals can suffer like us, but that they suffer in ways we can hardly imagine in the perverse conditions we force them to endure that have no basis in *their* evolutionary experience and that they therefore experience as *unnatural suffering.*

Interspecies sexual assault, whether by a sadist in a motel room or by an electro-ejaculation machine operator in an agribusiness facility, testifies, among other things, to an animus that humans have felt for nonhuman animals through the ages, rooted in our ambivalence toward ourselves for being animals. The problem is deeper than economics and utilitarianism. Other animals are not just our property, they are our scapegoats—innocent victims whom we blame and punish for the angst of being ourselves. We load our transgressions onto them. We insert ourselves into them through genetic surgeries and a thousand other ways to make them conform to our will. We taunt them and demean them and defeat them and impregnate them with our pathologies. This

is what the man riding on the back of a sow and doing things to make her "receptive" looks like to me. In this respect, how to make a pig fall in love is instructive.

6

The Provocative Elitism of "Personhood" for Nonhuman Creatures in Animal Advocacy Parlance and Polemics

It is increasingly recognized that other animals besides humans have complex mental lives. They not only can suffer pain, injury, and fear, but they are intelligent beings with rich and varied social and emotional lives that include decision-making, empathy, and pleasure. Based on the wealth of evidence, the great apes in particular—gorillas, chimpanzees, and orangutans—have been singled out for showing a range of mental capacities demanding that the moral boundaries we draw between them and ourselves must be changed.

In 1993, *The Great Ape Project*, edited by Paola Cavalieri and Peter Singer, argued that the "community of equals" should be extended to include "all great apes" (4). Accordingly, the Nonhuman Rights Project, founded by attorney Steven Wise, has been working through the courts to change the common law status of some nonhuman animals from mere "things," which lack the capacity for legal rights, to "persons," who possess the fundamental rights of bodily integrity, liberty, and other legal rights to which "evolving standards of morality, scientific discovery, and human experience entitle them" (Wise 2014, 1). Although focusing on legal rights for chimpanzees, the Nonhuman Rights Project

suggests that expanding the moral and legal community to include these animals could initiate a larger break in the species barrier. For nonhuman animals, Wise says, "The passage from thing to person constitutes a legal transubstantiation."

Although this is an exciting prospect, some animal advocates worry that the Great Ape Project and the Nonhuman Rights Project could reinforce the very attitudes and assumptions of elitism that have caused so much misery to animals in the world. In both projects, humans are at the top of the scale and the great apes follow. Below them, some other mammals await consideration, and further down some species of birds may appear. Reptiles, fish, and insects are either absent or at the bottom. In Peter Singer's book *Rethinking Life and Death*, the only beings who qualify conclusively as "persons" are the great apes, although he says that whales, dolphins, elephants, monkeys, dogs, pigs, and other animals "may eventually also be shown to be aware of their own existence over time and capable of reasoning. Then they too will have to be considered as persons" (1994, 182). Meanwhile, they may not be considered as such. The ability to suffer, which should elicit "concern," does not of itself confer personhood or admit a nonhuman animal or animal species to the "community of equals." Even to be a nonhuman "person" on the highest level, within this universe of thought, is to be a poor contender according to its standards of value: the vaunted chimpanzees rank with "intellectually disabled human beings," in Singer's view (183).

In the 2011 edition of his book *Practical Ethics*, certain other animals, including some wild birds, are said to perhaps be eligible to be granted some degree of personhood based on laboratory experiments and field observations suggesting that they possess a measure of "rationality," "self-awareness," and future-directed thinking and desires. However, a sentient "nonperson" or "merely conscious" being does not qualify for what Singer, citing an American philosopher named Michael Tooley, calls a "right to life, in the full sense" (Singer 2011, 85).

I argue that parsing the cognitive capabilities of nonhuman animals in this way relegates the entire animal kingdom, apart from humans,

to a condition of mental disability that is totally incompatible with the cognitive demands exacted upon real animals in the real world. It illogically implies a cerebral and experiential equivalence between the mentally incompetent members of one species and the mentally competent members of other species. Rather than helping animals, this model is more likely to hinder the effort, since most people are not likely to care very much what happens to creatures whom even the animal protection community characterizes as mentally inferior and "disabled." Ranking animals according to a cognitive scale of intelligence is an aspect of cross-species comparisons that should be avoided.

I first expressed my concern about ranking animals in *Between the Species: A Journal of Ethics* (Davis 1988). In "The Otherness of Animals," I asked whether dogs and cats could be adversely affected if science (or "science") should decide that they are not as smart as pigs and porpoises. I thought about the dogs I grew up with, and about my Blue-fronted Amazon parrot Tikhon, who, I was told by a bird rehabilitator in San Francisco in the 1970s, was not "really" intelligent, but a creature of mere "instinct," and thus a kind of imposter who only seemed to be an intelligent, emotional, and reciprocal companion of mine. In this view, I was a sort of dupe who couldn't distinguish fixed behavior patterns from conscious awareness in a bird whose ability to fool me depended on the fact that I loved her and needed to believe that we were bonded.

In short, I wanted Tikhon to be intelligent; therefore she was. And since most people do not want chickens and other animals they eat to be intelligent, therefore they aren't. This being so, we need to consider, for example, whether we are helping "food" animals by elevating pigs above chickens, cows, and other animals in the food producing sector by making pigs the, as it were, "great apes" of the farmed animal advocacy project, as in Singer's assertion that of all the animals currently eaten in the Western world, "the pig is without doubt the most intelligent," endowed with an intelligence that is "comparable and perhaps even superior to that of a dog" (Singer 1990, 119). But what do we really know about the total mental capabilities of any animal that is so conclusive

that we can confidently state, without doubt, that this one or that one is the most, or the least, intelligent? I would also ask what good it does to tell people that their companion dog may not be as smart as a pig, which raises the issue of pitting animals against one another, as if animal advocacy were an IQ contest of winners and losers.

Can science help us surmount our prejudicial attitudes toward nonhuman animals in order to attain a more just understanding of who they are in themselves, bearing in mind that "they" are not a monolithic entity ascending through Nature like the floors of a skyscraper from bottom to top?

Not long ago it was generally assumed "without doubt" that birds were mentally inferior to mammals. Twentieth-century studies upset this assumption. Among birds, in addition to Konrad Lorenz's pioneering studies of geese, jackdaws, and other birds he knew personally and wrote about, pigeons attracted significant scientific interest in the twentieth century due to their homing abilities and their use as messengers in war. Pigeons demonstrate an astonishing ability to handle complex geometrical, spatial, sequential, and photographic concepts and impressions, to solve all kinds of complicated problems, retain precise memories, and invent ways to communicate their understanding, intentions, and needs to human beings. In *Minds of Their Own: Thinking and Awareness in Animals*, Lesley J. Rogers summarizes pigeons' conceptual feats in tests that I personally would fail. Yet despite the evidence, Rogers cites a situation in which a scientist who demonstrated complex cognition in pigeons, including self-awareness, perversely assumed that "if a bird can do it, it cannot be complex behaviour and it cannot indicate self-awareness of any sort" (Rogers 1997, 30, 66–9).

More recently, science investigator Irene Pepperberg, who held firm in a frequently hostile environment of skepticism toward her work, highlighted the intelligence of parrots, based on her years of laboratory experiments designed to coax certain cognitive responses from her African Gray parrot Alex, from the correct use of human verbal language to complex discriminations among shapes, colors, objects, and

relationships (NOVA 2011). It may be assumed that these experiments, conducted mostly in windowless basements, and in which Alex was treated more like a kindergarten child than an adult individual, barely hinted at Alex's true range and specific nature of intelligence, but one hopes that they opened a door.

Current evidence suggests much more than merely that some birds display signs of intelligence. Parrots, pigeons, crows, wrens, woodpeckers, kingfishers, finches, seabirds, and other birds are now being acclaimed for their hitherto underestimated cognitive capabilities. For instance, it used to be claimed that birds could respond only to the immediate moment, without any sense of before and after. But as Alexander F. Skutch shows with many examples in his book *The Minds of Birds*, "Birds are aware of more than immediately present stimuli; they remember the past and anticipate the future" (1996, 13).

In particular, the ground-nesting birds known as galliforms ("cock-shaped") were traditionally denigrated by Western science as stupid "in spite of their fine feathers." Chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quails, peafowl, guinea fowl, and a host of other birds believed to have a common ancestor were dismissed without further ado as "unquestionably low in the scale of avian evolution" (Schorger 1966, 70). Among avian scientists, this assumption has been tossed. As bird specialist Lesley J. Rogers writes in *The Development of Brain and Behaviour in the Chicken*, the information obtained from the research she cites in her book "is beginning to change our attitudes to avian species, including the chicken." She says that with increased knowledge of the behavior and cognitive abilities of the chicken has come "the realization that the chicken is not an inferior species to be treated merely as a food source," and that "it is now clear that birds have cognitive capacities equivalent to those of mammals, even primates" (Rogers 1995, 213, 217).

This claim is upheld by The Avian Brain Nomenclature Consortium, an international group of scientists whose paper, "Avian Brains and a New Understanding of Vertebrate Brain Evolution," published in *Nature Neuroscience Reviews* in 2005, calls for a new vocabulary to describe the

various parts of a bird's brain, based on the now overwhelming evidence that the bulk of a bird's brain is not, as was once thought, mere "basal ganglia" coordinating instincts, but an intricately developed organ of intelligence that processes information similar to the way in which the human cerebral cortex operates (The Avian Brain Nomenclature Consortium 2005).

Other studies confirm that the avian brain is a complex organ comprising high-level cognition comparable to the cognition of mammals. For example, an article in *Science Daily* states that birds possess a range of skills including "a capacity for complex social reasoning" and problem solving. Professor Murray Shanahan, a researcher from Imperial College London, explains that even though birds have been evolving separately from mammals for around 300 million years, they are "remarkably intelligent in a similar way to mammals such as humans and monkeys" (Imperial College London 2013). In "The Chicken Challenge," Carolynn L. Smith and Jane Johnson present the science showing that chickens demonstrate complex cognitive abilities:

> The science outlined in this paper challenges common thinking about chickens. Chickens are not mere automata; instead they have been shown to possess sophisticated cognitive abilities.
>
> Their communication is not simply reflexive, but is responsive to relevant social and environmental factors. Chickens demonstrate an awareness of themselves as separate from others; can recognize particular individuals and appreciate their standing with respect to those individuals; and show an awareness of the attentional states of their fellow fowl. Further, chickens have been shown to engage in reasoning through performing abstract and social transitive inferences. This growing body of scientific data could inform a rethinking about the treatment of these animals. (Smith and Johnson 2012, 89–90)

Notwithstanding these findings—including proof that chickens possess empathy based on studies showing, for example, that mother hens develop stress upon seeing their chicks exposed to stressful

situations (Bekoff 2011)—the privileging of the great apes, along with a very restrictive model of intelligence, continue to skew much of the animal advocacy and academic discourse about animal cognition. This privileging disturbs people who have come to know and care about birds and many other kinds of animals in the course of direct interactions with and careful observations of them conducted in sanctuary settings as well as in formal studies.

In *Minds of Their Own*, Lesley Rogers argues that while The Great Ape Project has raised critical issues, by placing the great apes above all other forms of nonhuman life we are still saying that "some animals are more equal than others." She asks whether, guided by this cognitive-scale-of-being way of thinking, we are going to grant rights to "only our closest genetic relatives." She exposes the fallacy of ranking animals according to their alleged intelligence or awareness, both of which attributes, she says, "are impossible to assess on any single criterion" (Rogers 1997, 194). Rogers argues that, instead of ranking animals according to a simplistic IQ system, we would be more accurate and just in our assessments if we recognized that "there are many different 'intelligences,' rather than ranking all species on the same scale of intelligence" (57).

Even for humans, Rogers says there is no evidence to support applying the single term "intelligence" to a diverse set of activities; likewise, there is no evidence that different species use the same cognitive processes to carry out similar types of behavior. In short, there are no grounds for asserting *without doubt* that one group of animals is smarter than another. Ethologist Marc Bekoff states that ranking animals on a cognitive scale and pitting them against each other as to who is smarter and more emotionally developed, or less intelligent and less emotionally developed, is silly and even dangerous, considering how these comparisons can be used to claim that "smarter animals suffer more than supposedly dumber animals" whereby "dumber" animals may be treated "in all sorts of invasive and abusive ways" (Bekoff 2013).

As Malcolm Gladwell observes in "The Order of Things," in *The New Yorker,* "Rankings are not benign. . . . Who comes out on top, in any ranking system, is really about who is doing the ranking" (Gladwell 2011, 74–5).

Cognitive ranking also raises the quandary of anatomical diversity among animals. In the 1970s and 1980s, the ability of chimpanzees to use American Sign Language, or Ameslan, was news. If chimpanzees could learn this version of human language, then perhaps chimpanzees had a cognitive advantage over all other nonhuman animals, entitling them and their great ape cousins to a semblance of "human rights." Such ideas underlay the founding of The Great Ape Project in 1994.

An important fact about the chimpanzee's ability to use Ameslan, however, is that it depends upon an anatomical feature that resembles one of ours—manual dexterity. Thus, no matter how unique, intelligent, or willing they may be, any creatures with fins, paws, hoofs, claws, or tentacles cannot learn to use (even if capable of understanding) Ameslan. Similarly, chimpanzees appear to be physiologically and anatomically unsuited to using (however competent of understanding) human verbal language, which is why researchers switched to Ameslan. But what about animals who for whatever reason cannot, or will not, communicate on our terms? Whose kind of intelligence is not our kind? Whose modes of experience elude us? Must "illiterate" animals forgo "human rights"? Must they be condemned for being who they are and how they are made to an eternal status of "non-personhood"?

Allied with the cognitive ranking of competent nonhuman animals—who is smarter, a lizard or a lion, a penguin or parrot, a chicken or a chimpanzee?—is the habit of comparing cognitively intact nonhuman animals not only with humans suffering from mental disabilities but also with children who are cognitively incompetent due to developmental immaturity. This type of cross-species comparison, in which adult nonhuman animals are infantilized, has attracted some animal advocates as a way of gaining public sympathy and support for nonhuman animals by placing them in the light of clever and cute yet vulnerable human youngsters. Indeed, there was an item on the Internet about a woman

who said she hesitated to eat a ham sandwich because she had heard that a pig is as smart as a toddler.

Classifying competent nonhuman animals together with vulnerable humans, in order to gain legal recognition and protection of these animals' rights, which they cannot assert on their own behalf, is a necessary and just undertaking. As G. A. Bradshaw and Monica Engebretson urge in "Parrot Breeding and Keeping: The Impact of Capture and Captivity": "Science dictates that standards and criteria to assess and protect human well-being accurately extend to parrots and other animals" (2013, 1). On these grounds, they argue that "a single unitary model of welfare and legal protection" would rightly include both human and nonhuman animals.

I agree with this argument, but contend that the effort to classify competent nonhumans with incompetent humans is misguided insofar as it exceeds the goal of equal legal protections for all vulnerable beings to foster the fallacy of an inherent equivalency between these two groups' actual mental development and functioning. Mature, unimpaired nonhuman animals are not tantamount to mentally defective and underdeveloped humans. Neither chimpanzees nor any other animals could survive let alone thrive in a complex social and natural environment if they could think and function only like toddlers. Children and mentally defective humans do not create and sustain stable societies. Let us ask: what does a mentally impaired adult human being who cannot live autonomously in human society have in common, neurologically and experientially, with a fully developed adult cockatoo carrying out complex ecological, social, and parental responsibilities in her forest home? What does a two-year-old child have in common with a mentally healthy adult horse? As the eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham observed, paradigmatically: "a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month old" (Singer 1990, 7).

Having run a sanctuary for chickens for over thirty years, I am sometimes asked if I think the chickens see me as their mother and if I consider them my "babies." In fact, I do not regard adult chickens as babies. As

I explain in my essay, "The Social Life of Chickens," I see the ability of chickens to bond with me and be companionable as an extension of their ability to adapt their native intelligence to habitats and human-created environments that stimulate their natural ability to perceive analogies and to fit what they find where they happen to be to the fulfillment of their own desires and needs (Davis 2012, 20).

The inherently social nature of chickens enables them to socialize successfully with a variety of other species and to form bonds of interspecies affection and communication. But they are not humanoids. They are not phylogenetic fetuses awaiting human contact to stimulate their cognitive potential. They are neither failed nor inferior humans. An adult hen raising her chicks does not think like a six-year old. She thinks like a mother hen, in which respect she shares commonality and continuity with all attentive and doting mothers of all species.

Ranking animals according to a cognitive scale of mental and emotional development risks making excuses to violate any animals that scientists wish to tinker with, not only the supposedly "lesser" species, but also those regarded as "higher up" yet inferior to humans in their genetic endowment. At the 2013 Personhood Beyond the Human conference at Yale University (see IEET et al. 2013), some presenters suggested that scientists might "engineer" animals genetically to be more intelligent than they already are, whereas others suggested that certain technological inventions of ours—the artificial intelligences—might eventually qualify for moral considerateness and even the status of "personhood." Considering that we know almost nothing about the ways in which other animals' intelligences relate to the totality of their being, including their own well-being and sense of self, and considering that we are nowhere near to granting legal or moral considerateness or even a modicum of compassionate treatment, let alone "personhood," to billions of sensitive and intelligent birds and other creatures suffering in laboratories and on factory farms, these prospects prompt a legitimate concern.

In that an animal's brain is an integral part of an animal's body, the idea of genetically engineering other animals' brains to "enhance" their

cognitive capacities seems more like anthropomorphic arrogance than an advancement of ethics or empathy. The idea contradicts and subverts the Nonhuman Rights Project's goal of obtaining legal recognition and protection of an animal's fundamental right of bodily integrity and liberty.

The notion of a brain disconnected from the animal in whom it is situated is implicit in proposals to "enhance" the mental capabilities of other creatures via surgical or genetic manipulation. In "Brains, Bodies, and Minds: Against a Hierarchy of Animal Faculties," David Dillard-Wright rejects the "decapitation" theory of consciousness as "a static entity or essence in-residence," observing, rather, the intricate processes and intelligences of the body and the continuity of body and brain, the brain itself being a body part as much as our blood, lungs, and kidneys are (2012, 204). The biological situation of brains within and as constituents of bodies, which are themselves environmentally situated and interactive with their surroundings, integrates with all of the evidence we have of evolutionary continuity among animal species and a reasoned belief that other animals' minds are not mere "precursors" of human ways of knowing but "parallel" ways of being mentally active and alive in the world (207).

It might seem that proposals to enhance the cognition of nonhuman animals are in opposition to proposals to expunge their cognition in order to fit them "more humanely" into our abusive systems. Philosopher Peter Singer, agribusiness philosopher Paul Thompson, and architecture student Andre Ford are among those who have variously supported "welfare" measures that they claim would reduce the suffering of industrially raised chickens by inflicting injuries that include de-winging, debeaking, blinding, and de-braining them (Broudy 2006, Thompson 2007, Solon 2012). Proposals to enhance or expunge animal consciousness actually have much in common. Both proceed from presumptions of human entitlement to reconfigure the bodies and psyches of other creatures to fit our schemes and satisfy our lust for manipulating life to reflect our will. Both involve rationalizations that the animals targeted for these procedures are not victims but beneficiaries of the suffering (the

injury, wound, harm, trauma) that our species sees fit to impose on them "for their own good."

It is not unreasonable to worry that robots could be granted a status of legal and ethical "personhood" long before, if ever, chickens and the majority of nonhuman animals are so elevated. The problem includes but goes beyond the quandary of nonhuman animal diversity in anatomy and physiology. The minds and personalities of chickens, chimpanzees, and other nonhuman animals will never be able to compete against the dazzle of computers and digital wonders that intoxicate so many of the kinds of people whose power and ambition are charting the course of the planet. How can nonhuman animals, whose intelligences however "high" are deemed inferior to ours, even by many of their so-called defenders, compete with machines that so many enthusiasts tout as even "smarter" than we are?

At the same time as these worries loom over nonhuman animals, there are signs pointing in a different direction that could lead to a different conclusion. In "According Animals Dignity," published in *The New York Times*, op-ed columnist Frank Bruni draws attention to what he sees as "a broadening, deepening concern about animals that's no longer sufficiently captured by the phrase 'animal welfare'" (2014, A27). Citing examples, including the Nonhuman Rights Project, Bruni argues that we are entering an era of "animal dignity" in modern society. The signs of this era, he says, are "everywhere." The attribution of dignity to nonhuman animals by a respected writer in a prestigious, internationally read newspaper is encouraging. It is one of the promising signs of which Bruni speaks, and I hope that his words are prophetic.

7

Ancestral Memories in a "Broiler" Chicken House

This reflection is the prologue to a new edition of my book *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry* published by the Book Publishing Company in 2009.

He woke up on the floor of the "broiler" shed with 30,000 other bewildered young chickens under the electric lights, with the familiar pain in his throat and a burning sensation deep inside his eyes. . . .

> He saw green leaves shining through flashes of sunlight, as he peeked through his mother's feathers and heard the soft awakening cheeps of his brothers and sisters, and felt his mother's heart beating next to his own through her big warm body surrounding him, which was his world.
>
> A crow cried out, and another cried out again.
>
> He started—the spry, young jungle fowl was ready for the day, ready to begin scratching the soil which he had known by heart ever since way back when chickenhood first arose in the tropical magic mornings of the early world. In the jungle forest, the delicious seeds of bamboo that are hidden beneath the leaves on the ground are treasured in the heart of the chicken. The rooster called out excitedly: "Family, come see what food I've found for you this morning!" . . .

His aching legs—they brought him back to reality as he closed his eyes stinging with ammonia burn—could not move. They could no longer bear the weight of flesh that bore down upon them, which was definitely not the body of a mother hen. A mother hen, an ancestral memory kept telling him, had once shushed and lulled him to sleep, pressed against her body nestled deep inside her wings fluffed over him when he was a chick. That was a long time ago, long before he was a "broiler" chicken, crippled and encased in these cells of fat and skeletal pain. He was turning purple. His lungs filled slowly with fluid, leaking from his vessels backward through the valves of his heart, as he stretched out on the filthy floor in a final spasm of agony, and died.

8

The Life of One Battery Hen

This essay appears as chapter three in my book *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities* published by Lantern Books in 2005. It was first published by the American Anti-Vivisection Society in the Summer 2004 issue of *AV Magazine*.

Prologue

Sound of a Battery Hen
You can tell me: if you come by the north door,
I am in the twelfth cage
on the left-hand side of the third row
from the floor; and in that cage
I am usually the middle one of eight or six or three.
But even without directions, you'd
discover me. We have the same pale
comb, clipped yellow beak and white or auburn
feathers, but as the door opens and you
hear above the electric fan a kind of
one-word wail, I am the one
who sounds loudest in my head.
—Anonymous

The Incubator

Deep inside an industrial incubator filled with thousands of chick embryos, a baby hen is growing inside an egg. During the first 24 hours after her egg was laid, the chick's tiny heart started beating, and blood vessels formed that joined her to the yolk which feeds her as she floats and grows in the fluid of her encapsulated world. The baby hen has had feelings since her twenty-first hour of life inside the incubator, and since her twenty-fourth hour of being there, she has had eyes. By the fourth day, all of her body organs are developed, and by the sixth day, she has the face of a little bird. Her beak has grown, and with it the egg tooth she will use to break out of her shell—the shell that was formed by her mother hen's body, in a breeding facility somewhere—to protect her from harm.

The baby hen has comforting exchanges with the other embryos in the incubator, but a forlornness is felt inside each bird that passes from shell to shell.

The two-way communication between themselves and a mother hen—the continuous interaction which they are genetically endowed to expect, and which they need—has not occurred. The mother hen's heartbeat is missing, and she does not respond to the embryos' calls of distress or comfort them with her soft clucks. The reverberation of something continuously running outside the eggs does not spark meaningful associations, as, for example, the crow of a rooster or the sensation of the hen shifting her eggs with her breast and her beak would comfortingly do.

Still, by the twentieth day, the baby hen occupies all of her egg, except for the air cell, which she now begins to penetrate with her beak, inhaling air through her lungs for the first time. The air isn't fresh, and the baby hen rests for several hours. Then, with renewed energy, she cuts a circular line counterclockwise around the shell by striking it with her egg tooth near the large end of the egg. With this tooth, which disappears after hatching, she saws her way out of the shell. Twelve hours later, wet and exhausted, she emerges to face the life ahead.

"As each chick emerges from its shell in the dark cave of feathers underneath its mother . . ." But this is not the baby hen's birth experience. Start

over: *"As the mother hen picks the last pieces of shell gently from her chick's soft down . . ."* But this is not part of the baby hen's story, either. Try again: *"As soon as all the eggs are hatched, the hungry mother hen and her brood go forth to eat, drink, scratch, and explore, the baby hen running eagerly within sight and sound of her mother, surrounded by her brothers and sisters."* In reality, none of this happens, except in memories that arise in the baby hen's dreams as she grows and stares through the bars, in the cages that await her arrival.

The "Servicing" Area

The baby hen and her fluffy yellow companions are being wheeled down the hall in the incubator cart. When it stops, three workers remove each tray of newly hatched chicks. They toss, sort, and dump the discarded shells, the half-hatched chicks, the deformed chicks, and the male chicks into the trash. They smoke cigarettes between the arrival of each cart, and the tobacco fumes along with other odors and gases produce a sickish, burning sensation in the baby hen's eyes, chest, and stomach. One of her companions hops onto the edge of the tray and falls to the floor. High-pitched screeches occur as the carts, which now include hers, wheel into the next room, crushing and half crushing the fallen ones, plastering them in blood on the floor.

One by one, each chick in the tray is grabbed by a hand and pushed up against a machine blade. Now it's the baby hen's turn, and as her face is pushed against the blade, an agonizing crunch and pain shoots through her beak and her body causing her to flap her wings, cry out, and lose her bowels. Smoke and stench mingle, as the traumatized chicks, each with a stumped red hole in front of her face, are sprayed with something chemical, and the baby hen blanks out. She jerks awake upon feeling herself being grabbed and jammed in a cage in a dark place.

The Pullet House

Throbbing pain in her head and her beak, jostling of others around her, wires hurting her feet, air that makes her sick. The hen can never get

comfortable. She cannot obey her impulse to walk and run. She is in a cage in the "pullet" house, where she and the other young hens, thousands of them, will eat mash from the trough, excrete into the manure piles, and grow until, five months later, they are moved to the layer house and into the smaller egg-laying cages. The hen and rooster who created her in the breeding facility were slaughtered while she was still in the incubator. Her brothers were suffocated at the hatchery, and she has sisters somewhere, perhaps in the same building she's living in.

She suffers excruciating pain when she accidentally bumps her wounded beak several times against the metal trough when she tries to eat the mash. Her body aches, her heart beats in fear, her face is disfigured, things crawl on her skin. There is no earth to bathe in. Healing, her beak develops small bulbs, called neuromas, and in time the pain almost stops, just a dull ache there, but the young hen can never preen herself properly, or eat right, although she tries, and when she and some other hens appear in a magazine picture, people who never knew her think that she and her sad companions are ugly by nature.

The Layer House

One night a hand flings her out of the pullet cage, into another cage, and wheels her to another cage. Feelings pass between herself and the other hens pressing against her, as their combs grow white and lumpy, and hang over their eyes like dough, but no words exist for these feelings, just as there is nothing in the natural evolution of hens to prepare them for this situation. When a cagemate dies and rots, the hen stands on top of her to get off the wires. Her cage is somewhere among stacks and rows of cages. She is in a universe of cages. Eggs form in her body, are expelled with difficulty, and roll away. Rats whisk through the troughs leaving pellets in the mash. They whisk in and out of the cage bars, even brush through her feathers, which are mostly broken spines now. Flies suck stray yolks in the aisle in front of her cage, and one day the troughs are empty.

The End

Somehow the hen has managed to get her head and one spiny wing stuck between the bars of her cage, and she can't free herself. Ignorant people say that a chicken doesn't know she is going to die, but the hen knows that she is going to die. When a hand—the most brutal, cruel thing she knows—opens the cage door and pulls her backward from inside, yanking her almost in two, she shrieks as she is dropped into the bucket where other hens, oozing eggs, pieces of shells, and blood await her. They absorb her into themselves, as something heavy and soft plops on top of her that moves just a little, or so she feels, in being carried away.

9

The Mental Life of Chickens as Observed through Their Social Relationships

This essay grew out of the Minds of Animals Conference, August 12–13, 2008, University of Toronto, Ontario.

> "I looked at the Chicken endlessly, and I wondered. What lay behind the veil of animal secrecy?"—**William Grimes**

In this essay I discuss the social life of chickens and the mental states that I believe they have and need in order to participate in the social relationships that I have observed in them. What follows is a personalized, candid discussion of what I know, what I think I know, and what I am unsure of but have observed relevant to the minds of chickens in their relationships with each other and with other species and with me.

Chickens evolved in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains and the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, where they have lived and raised their families for thousands of years. Most people I talk to have no idea that chickens are natives of a rugged, forested habitat filled with vibrant tropical colors and sounds. Similarly surprising to many is the fact that chickens are endowed with memory and emotions, and that they have a keenly developed consciousness of one another and of their surroundings.

A newspaper reporter who visited our sanctuary was surprised to learn that chickens recognize each other as individuals, especially after they've been separated. A friend and I had recently rescued a hen and a rooster in a patch of woods alongside a road in rural Virginia on the Eastern Shore. The first night we managed to get the hen out of the tree, but the rooster got away. The following night after hours of playing hide and seek with him in the rain, we succeeded in netting the rooster, and the two were reunited at our sanctuary. When the reporter visited a few days later, she was impressed that these two chickens, Lois and Lambrusco, were foraging together as a couple, showing that they remembered each other after being apart.

Chickens form memories that influence their social behavior from the time they are embryos, and they update their memories over the course of their lives. I've observed their memories in action at our sanctuary. For instance, if I have to remove a hen from the flock for two or three weeks in order to treat an infection, when I put her outside again she moves easily back into the flock, which accepts her as if she had never been away. There may be a little showdown, a tiff instigated by another hen, but the challenge is quickly resolved. Best of all, I've watched many a returning hen be greeted by her own flock members led by the rooster walking over and gathering around her conversably, as if they were saying to her, "Where have you been?" and "How are you?" and "We're glad you're back."

My Experience with Mother Hens and Their Families

> "We have before our eyes every day the manner in which hens care for their brood, drooping their wings for some to creep under, and receiving with joyous and affectionate clucks others that mount upon their backs or run up to them from every direction; and though they flee from dogs and snakes if they are frightened only for themselves, if their fright is for their children, they stand their ground and fight it out beyond their strength."—**Plutarch** 1939 [AD 70]: 341

The purpose of our sanctuary on the Virginia Eastern Shore is to provide a home for chickens who already exist, rather than adding to the population and thus diminishing our capacity to adopt more birds. For this reason we do not allow our hens to hatch their eggs in the spring and early summer as they would otherwise do, given their association with the roosters in our yard. All of our birds have been adopted from situations of abandonment or abuse, or else they were no longer wanted or able to be cared for by their previous owners.

Our two-acre sanctuary is a predator-proof yard that shades into tangled wooded areas filled with trees, bushes, vines, undergrowth, and the soil chickens love to scratch in all year round. It also includes several smaller fenced enclosures with chicken-wire roofs, each with its own predator-proof house, for those chickens who—before we turned the entire sanctuary into a predator-proof outdoor aviary—were inclined to fly over fences during chick-hatching season, and thus be vulnerable to the raccoons, foxes, owls, possums, and other predators inhabiting the woods and fields around us.

I learned the hard way about the vulnerability of chickens to predators. Once, a hen named Eva, who had jumped the fence and been missing for several weeks, reappeared in early June with a brood of eight fluffy chicks. This gave me a chance to observe directly some of the maternal behavior I had read so much about. We had adopted Eva into our sanctuary along with several other hens and a rooster confiscated during a cockfighting raid in Alabama. Watching Eva travel around the yard outside the sanctuary fence, with her tiny brood close behind her, was like watching a family of wild birds whose dark and golden feathers blended perfectly with the woods and foliage they melted in and out of during the day. Periodically, at the edge of the woods, Eva would squat down with her feathers puffed out, and her peeping chicks would all run under her wings for comfort and warmth. A few minutes later, the family was on the move again.

Throughout history, hens have been praised for their ability to defend their young from an attacker. I watched Eva do exactly this one day when a large dog wandered in front of the magnolia tree where she and her chicks

were foraging. With her wings outspread and curved menacingly toward the dog, she rushed at him over and over, cackling loudly, all the while continuing to push her chicks behind herself with her wings. The dog stood stock still before the excited mother hen, and soon ambled away; but Eva maintained her aggressive posture of self-defense, her sharp, repetitive cackle, and attentive lookout for several minutes after he was gone.

Eva's behavior toward the dog differed radically from her behavior toward me, demonstrating her ability to distinguish between a likely predator and someone she perceived as presenting no dire threat to her and her chicks. She already knew me from the sanctuary yard, and though I had never handled her apart from lifting her out of the crate she'd arrived in from Alabama several months earlier, when I started discreetly stalking her and her family, to get the closest possible view of them, the most she did when she saw me coming was dissolve with her brood into the woods or disappear under the magnolia tree. Although she didn't see me as particularly dangerous, she nevertheless maintained a wary distance that, over time, diminished to where she increasingly brought her brood right up to the sanctuary fence, approaching the front steps of our house, and ever closer to me—but not too close just yet. When she and her chicks were out and about, and I called to her, "Hey, Eva," she'd quickly look up at me, poised and alert for several seconds, before resuming her occupation.

One morning, I looked outside expecting to see the little group in the dewy grass, but they were not there. Knowing that mother raccoons prowled nightly looking for food for their own youngsters in the summer, I sadly surmised they were the likely reason that I never saw my dear Eva and her chicks again.

Inside the sanctuary, I broke the no chick-hatching rule just once. Upon returning from a trip of several days, I discovered that Daffodil, a soft white hen with a sweet face and quiet manner, was nestled deep in the corner of her house in a nest she'd pulled together from the straw bedding on the dirt floor. Seeing there were only two eggs under her, and fearing they might contain embryos mature enough to have

well-developed nervous systems by then, I left her alone. A few weeks later on a warm day in June, I was scattering fresh straw in the house next to hers, when all of a sudden I heard the tiniest peeps. Thinking a sparrow was caught inside, I ran to guide the bird out. But those peeps were not from a sparrow; they arose from Daffodil's corner. Adjusting my eyes, I peered down into the dark place where Daffodil was, and there I beheld the source of the tiny voice—a little yellow face with dark bright eyes was peeking out of her feathers.

I kneeled down and stared into the face of the chick who looked intently back at me, before it hid itself, then peeked out again. I looked closely into Daffodil's face as well, knowing from experience that making direct eye contact with chickens is crucial to forming a trusting, friendly relationship with them. If chickens see people only from the standpoint of boots and shoes, and people don't look them in the eye and talk to them, no bond of friendship will be formed between human and bird.

I've seen this difference expressed between hens we've adopted into our sanctuary from an egg production facility, for example, and chickens brought to us as young birds or as someone's former pet. Former egg-industry hens tend to look back at me, not with that sharp, bright, direct focus of a fully confident chicken, but with a watchful opacity that no doubt in part reflects their having spent their entire previous lives in cages or on crowded floors in dark, polluted buildings that permanently affected their eyes before coming to our sanctuary. Psychologically, it's as if they've pulled down a little curtain between themselves and human beings that does not prevent friendship but infuses their recovery with a settled strain of fear. I'll say more about these hens presently.

From the very first, a large red rooster named Francis regularly visited Daffodil and her chick in their nesting place, and Daffodil acted happy and content to have him there. Frequently, I found him quietly sitting with her and the little chick, who scrambled around both of them, in and out of their feathers. Though roosters will mate with more than one hen in the flock, a rooster and a hen will also form bonds so strong that they will refuse to mate with anyone else. Could it be that Francis was the father of

this chick and that he and Daffodil knew it? He certainly was uniquely and intimately involved with the pair, and it wasn't as though he was the head of the flock, the one who oversaw all of the hens and the other roosters and was thus fulfilling his duty in that role. Rather, Francis seemed simply to be a member of this particular family. For the rest of the summer, Daffodil and her chick formed a kind of enchanted circle with an inviolable space all around themselves, as they roamed together in the yard, undisturbed by the other chickens. Not once did I see Francis or any of the other roosters try to mate with Daffodil during the time she was raising her frisky chick—the little one I named Daisy who grew up to be Sir Daisy, a large, handsome rooster with white and golden-brown feathers.

My Relationship with the Hens in Our Sanctuary

> "The industry must convey the message that hens are distinct from companion species to defuse the misperceptions."—**Simon M. Shane**

The poultry industry represents chickens bred for food as mentally vacuous, eviscerated organisms. Hens bred for commercial egg production are said to be suited to a caged environment, with no need for personal space or normal foraging and social activity. They are characterized as aggressive cannibals who, notwithstanding their otherwise mindless passivity and affinity for cages, cannot live together in a cage without first having a portion of their sensitive beaks burned off—otherwise, it is said, they will tear each other up. Similarly, the instinct to tend and fuss over her eggs and be a mother has been rooted out of these hens (so it is claimed), and the idea of one's having a social relationship with such hens is dismissed as silly sentimentalism. I confess I have yet to meet a single example of these so-called cannibalistic cage-loving birds.

Over the years, we've adopted hundreds of "egg-type" hens into our sanctuary straight from the cage environment, which is all they ever knew until they were rescued and placed gently on the ground where they felt the earth next to their bodies for the first time in their lives.

To watch a little group of nearly featherless hens with naked necks and mutilated beaks respond to this experience is deeply moving. Because their bones have never been properly exercised and their toenails are long and spindly for never having scratched vigorously in the ground, some hens take a few days or longer learning to walk normally and fly up to a perch and settle on it securely, but their desire to do these things is evident from the time they arrive.

Chickens released from a long siege in a cage and placed on the ground almost invariably start making the tentative, increasingly vigorous gestures of taking a dustbath. They paddle and fling the dirt with their claws, rake in particles of earth with their beaks, fluff up their feathers, roll on their sides, pause from time to time with their eyes closed, and stretch out their legs in obvious relish at being able to bask luxuriously and satisfy their urge to clean themselves and to be clean.

Carefully lifting a battered hen, who has never known anything before but brutal handling, out of a transport carrier and placing her on the ground to begin taking her first real dustbath (as opposed to the "vacuum" dustbaths hens try to perform in a cage) is a gesture from which a trusting relationship between human and bird grows. If hens were flowers, it would be like watching a flower unfold, or in the case of a little flock of hens set carefully on the ground together, a little field of flowers transforming themselves from withered stalks into blossoms. For chickens, dustbathing is not only a cleansing activity; it is also a social gathering. Typically, one hen begins the process and is quickly joined by other hens and maybe one or two roosters. Soon the birds are buried so deep in their dustbowls that only the moving tail of a rooster or an outspread wing can be seen a few feet away. Eventually, one by one, the little flock emerges from their ritual entrancement all refreshed. Each bird stands up, vigorously shakes the dirt particles out of his or her feathers, creating a fierce little dust storm before running off to the next engaging activity.

Early on as I began forming our sanctuary and organization in the 1980s, I drove one day from Maryland to New York to pick up seven former battery-caged hens. Instead of crating them in the car, I allowed

them to sit together in the back seat on towels, so they wouldn't be cramped yet again in a dark enclosure, unable to see out the windows or to see me. Also, I wanted to watch them through my rearview mirror and talk to them.

Once their flutter of anxiety and fear had subsided, the hens sat quietly in the car, occasionally standing up to stretch a leg or a wing, all the while peering out from under their pale and pendulous combs (the bright red crest on top of chickens' heads grows abnormally long, flaccid, and yellowish-white in the cage environment) as I drove and spoke to them of the life awaiting. Then an astonishing thing happened. The most naked and pitiful looking hen began making her way slowly from the back seat, across the passenger seat separator, toward me. She crawled onto my knee and settled herself in my lap for the remainder of the trip.

The question has been asked whether chickens can form intentions. Do they have "intentionality"? Do they consciously formulate purposes and carry them out? In the rearview mirror I watched Bonnie, that ravaged little hen, make a difficult yet beeline trip from the backseat of the car into my lap. Reliving the scene in my mind, I see her journey as her intention to reach me. Once she obtained her objective, she rested without further incident.

Intentionality in chickens is shown in many ways. An example is a hen's desire not only to lay an egg, but to lay her egg in a particular place with a particular group of hens, or in a secluded spot she has chosen—and she has definitely *chosen* it. I've watched hens delay laying their egg until they got where they wanted to be. Conscious or not at the outset, once the intention has been formed, the hen is consciously and emotionally committed to accomplishing it. No other interpretation of her behavior makes sense by comparison.

Sarah, for example, a white leghorn hen from a battery-cage egg-laying operation who came to our sanctuary with osteoporosis and a broken leg, was determined, as she grew stronger, to climb the front stairs of our house, one laborious step at a time, just so she could lay her egg behind the toilet in the bathroom next to the second floor landing. This

was a hen, remember, who had never known anything before in her life but a crowded metal cage among thousands of cages in a windowless building. I was Sarah's friendly facilitator. I cheered her on, and the interest I showed in her and her wishes and successes was a critical part of her recovery, both physical and mental.

These days in the morning when I unhook the door of the little house in which eight hens and Sir Valery Valentine the rooster spend the night, brown Josephine runs alongside me and dashes ahead down to the Big House where she waits in a state of eager anticipation while I unlatch the door to let the birds who are eagerly assembled on the other side of that door out into the yard. Out they rush, and in goes Josephine, straight to the favorite spot shaped by herself and her friends into a comfy nest atop three stacked bales of straw that, envisioned in her mind's eye, she was determined to get to. Why else, unless she remembered the place and her experience in it with anticipatory pleasure, would she be determined day after day to repeat the episode?

In her mind's eye as well is my own role in her morning ritual. I hold the keys to the little straw kingdom Josephine is eager to reenter, and she accompanies me trustingly and expectantly as we make our way toward it. Likewise, our hen Charity knew that I held the keys to the cellar where she laid her eggs for years in a pile of books in a cabinet beside a table I worked at. Unlike Josephine, Charity wanted to lay her egg in a private place, free of the fussing of hens gathered together and sharing their nest, often accompanied by a rooster boisterously crowing the egg-laying news amid the cacophony of cackles. Charity didn't mind my presence in the cellar. She seemed to like me sitting there, each of us intent on our silent endeavor. If the cellar door was closed, blocking her way to the basement when she was ready to lay her egg, she would pace back and forth in front of the window on the opposite side of the house where I sat at my desk facing the window. If I didn't respond quickly enough, she'd start pecking at the window with an increasing bang to get me to move. By the time I ran up the steps and opened the cellar door, she'd already be standing there, having raced around the house as soon as she saw me get up. Down the

cellar steps she'd trip, jump into the cabinet, and settle as still as a statue in her book nook. After she had laid her egg and spent a little time with it, she let me know she was ready to go back outside, running up the steps to the landing where she waited until I opened the door, and out she went.

Do events like these suggest that the chickens regard me as a chicken like themselves? I don't really think so, other than perhaps when they are motherless chicks and I am their sole provider and protector, similar to the way children raised by wolves imprint on and behave like wolves. I see the ability of chickens to bond with me and be endearingly companionable as an extension of their ability to adapt their native instincts to habitats and human-created environments that stimulate their natural ability to perceive analogies and fit what they find where they happen to be to the fulfillment of their own needs and desires.

The inherently social nature of chickens enables them to socialize successfully with a variety of other species and to form bonds of interspecies affection. Having adopted into our sanctuary many incapacitated young chickens from the "broiler" chicken (meat) industry, I know how quickly they learn to recognize me and my voice and their own names. They twitter and chirp when I talk to them, and they turn their heads to watch me moving about or away from them. Living in the house until they are well enough to go outside if they ever can, they quickly learn the cues I provide that signify their comfort and care and establish their personal identity.

This is not to suggest that chickens are unlimitedly malleable. Mother hens and their embryos have a genetic repertoire of communications that are too subtle for humans to decipher entirely, let alone imitate. Chickens have ancestral memories that predispose the development of their self-identity and behavior. Even chickens incubated in mechanical hatcheries and deprived of parental influence—virtually all of the birds at our sanctuary—behave like chickens in essential ways. For instance, they all follow the sun around the yard. They all sunbathe, dropping to the ground and lying on their sides with one wing outspread, then turning over and spreading out the other wing while raising their neck feathers to allow the warm sunlight and vitamin D to penetrate their skin. Similar

to dustbathing, sunbathing is a social as well as a healthful activity for chickens, where you see one bird drop to the ground where the sun is shining, followed by another and then another, and if you don't know what they are doing, you will think they had died the way they lie still with their eyes closed, flopped like mops under the sun.

I'm aware when I am in the yard with them that the chickens are constantly sending, receiving, and responding to many signals that elude me. They also exhibit a clear sense of distinction between themselves, as chickens, and the three ducks, two turkeys, and peacock Frankincense who share their sanctuary space. And they definitely know the difference between themselves and their predators, such as foxes and hawks, whose proximity raises a sustained alarm through the entire flock. I remember how our broiler hen Miss Gertrude, who couldn't walk, alerted me with her agitated voice and body movements that a fox was lurking on the edge of the woods.

Whereas all of our sanctuary birds mingle together amiably, typically the ducks potter about as a trio, and Frankincense the peacock displays his plumage before the hens, who view him for the most part impassively. The closest interspecies relationship I've observed among our birds is between the chickens and the turkeys.

A few years ago, our hen Muffie bonded in true friendship with our adopted turkey Mila, after Muffie's friend Fluffie (possibly her actual sister) died suddenly and left her bereft. Right from the start, Muffie and Mila shared a quiet affection, foraging together and sometimes preening each other very delicately. One of their favorite rituals was in the evenings when I changed their water and ran the hose in their bowls. Together, Muffie and Mila would follow the tiny rivulets along the ground, drinking as they went, Muffie darting and drinking like a brisk brown fairy, Mila dreamily swaying and sipping, piping her intermittent flute notes.

Notwithstanding, I don't think Muffie ever thought of herself as a "turkey" in her relationship with Mila, and I doubt very much that chickens bonded with humans experience themselves as "human," particularly when other chickens are nearby—out of sight maybe, but not out

of earshot. (Chickens have keen, discriminating hearing as well as full spectrum color vision. Chick embryos have been shown to distinguish the crow of a rooster from other sounds from inside their shells.)

Chickens in my experience have a core identity and sense of themselves as chickens. An example is a chick I named Fred, sole survivor of a classroom hatching project in which embryos were mechanically incubated. Fred was so large, loud, and demanding from the moment he set foot in our kitchen, I assumed he'd grow up to be a rooster. He raced up and down the hallway, hopped up on my shoulder, leapt to the top of my head, ran across my back, down my arm, and onto the floor when I was at the computer, and was generally what you'd call "pushy," but adorably so. I remember one day putting Fred outdoors in an enclosure with a few adult hens on the ground, and he flew straight up the tree to a branch, peeping loudly, apparently wanting no part of them.

"Fred" grew into a lustrously beautiful black hen whom I renamed Freddaflower. Often we'd sit on the sofa together at night while I watched television or read. Even by herself, Freddaflower liked to perch on the arm of the sofa in front of the TV when it was on, suggesting she liked to be there because it was our special place. She ran up and down the stairs to the second floor as she pleased, and often I would find her in the guestroom standing prettily in front of the full-length mirror preening her feathers and observing herself. She appeared to be fully aware that it was she herself she was looking at in the mirror. I'd say to her, "Look, Freddaflower—that's you! Look how pretty you are!" And she seemed already to know that.

Freddaflower loved for me to hold her and pet her. She demanded to be picked up. She would close her eyes and purr while I stroked her feathers and kissed her face. From time to time, I placed her outside in the chicken yard, and sometimes she ventured out on her own, but she always came back. Eventually, I noticed she was returning to me less and less, and for shorter periods. One night she elected to remain in the chicken house with the flock. From then on until she died of ovarian cancer in my arms two years later, Freddaflower expressed her

ambivalence of wanting to be with me but also wanting to be with the other hens, to socialize and nest with them and participate in their world and the reliving of ancestral experiences that she carried within herself.

My Relationship with the Roosters in Our Sanctuary

A less happy ambivalence appeared in a soft-colored gray and white rooster I named Ruby when he was brought to our sanctuary as a young bird by a girl who swore he was a hen. Following me about the house on his brisk little legs, even sleeping beside me on my pillow at night, Ruby grew up to be a rooster. In spite of our close relationship during his first months of life, once he became sexually mature, Ruby's attitude toward me changed. In the yard with the other chickens, he showed no disposition to fight. He didn't attack other birds or provoke antagonisms. He fit in with the existing flock of hens and roosters, but toward me and other people he became compulsively aggressive. As soon as I (or anyone) appeared in the yard, Ruby ran from wherever he was and physically attacked us. Having to work in the yard under his vigilant eye, I took to carrying a bottomless birdcage and placing it over him while I worked. When finished I would lift it off him and walk backward toward the gate with the birdcage in front of me as a shield.

What I saw taking place in Ruby was a conflict he couldn't control, and from which he suffered emotionally, between an autonomous genetic impulse on the one hand and his personal desire on the other to be friendly with me. He got to where when he saw me coming with the birdcage, he would walk right up and let me place it over him, as if grateful for my protection against a behavior he didn't want to carry out. Even more tellingly, he developed a syndrome of coughs and sneezes whenever I approached, symptomatic, I believed, of his inner turmoil. He didn't have a respiratory infection, and despite his antagonism toward me, I never felt that he hated me but rather that he suffered from his dilemma, including his inability to manage it.

My personal experience with our sanctuary roosters confirms the literature I've read about wild and feral chickens, documenting that

the majority of roosters do not physically and compulsively attack one another. Chickens maintain a social order in which every member of the flock has a place and finds a place. During the day our roosters and hens break up into small, fluctuating groups that are somewhat, but by no means rigidly, territorial. Antagonisms between roosters are resolved with bloodless showdowns and face-offs. The most notable exception is when a new rooster is introduced into an existing flock, which may provoke a temporary flare up, but even then, there is no predicting.

One year I placed newcomer Benjamin in a yard already occupied by two other roosters, Rhubarb and Oliver, and their twenty or so hens, and he fit in right away. Ruby won immediate acceptance when I put him outside in the chicken yard after living in the house with me for almost six months. In dealing with Ruby I found an unexpected ally in our large red rooster Pola, who was so attentive to me all I had to do was call him, and he bolted over from his hens and let me pick him up and hold him. I have a greeting card photograph of Pola and me "crowing" together, my one hand clasped over his swelled-out chest, my other hand holding his claw, in a duet I captioned "With Heart and Voice."

Playfully, I got into the habit of yelling "Pola, Help!" whenever Ruby acted like he was ready to come after me, which worked as well as the birdcage. Hearing my call, Pola would perk up, race over to where Ruby was about to charge, and run him off with such cheerful alacrity it was as if he knew this was our little game together. I'd always say, "Thank you, Pola, thank you!" and he acted very pleased with his performance and the praise I lavished on him for "saving" me. He stuck out his chest, stretched up his neck, flapped his wings vigorously, and crowed triumphantly a few times.

Roosters crow to announce their accomplishments. Even after losing a skirmish, a rooster will often crow as if to compensate for his loss or deny its importance or call it a draw. Once as I sat reading outside with the chickens, I was diverted by our two head roosters, Rhubarb and Sir Valery Valentine, crowing back and forth at each other in their respective yards just a few feet apart. It looked like Sir Valery was intentionally crossing a little too far into Rhubarb's territory, and Rhubarb kept

dashing at him to reinforce the boundary. There was not a hint of hostility between them; rather the contest, I decided as I watched them go at it, was being carried out as a kind of spirited mock ritual, in which each rooster rushed at the other, only to halt abruptly on his own side of the invisible buffer zone they apparently had agreed upon. At that point, each rooster paced up and down on his own side, steadily eyeing the other bird and crowing at him across the divide. After ten minutes or so, they each backed off and were soon engrossed in other activities.

Roosters are so energetic and solicitous toward their hens, so intensely focused on every aspect of their social life together, that one of the saddest things to see is a rooster in a state of decline due to age, illness, or both. An aging or ailing rooster who can no longer hold his own in the flock suffers severely. He droops, and I have even heard a rooster cry over his loss of place and prestige within his flock. This is what happened to our rooster Jules—"Gentleman Jules," as my husband fondly named him—who came to our sanctuary in the following way.

One day I received a phone call from the resident of an apartment building outside Washington, DC, saying that a rooster was loose in the complex and was being chased by children who were throwing stones at him. After two weeks of trying, she managed to lure the rooster into the laundry room and called me to come get him. Expecting to find a cowering and emaciated creature needing to be carefully lifted out of a corner, I discovered instead a bright-eyed perky, chatty little fellow with glossy black feathers like Freddaflower. I drove him to our sanctuary and set him outside with the flock, which at the time included our large white broiler rooster Henry, and our feisty bantam rooster Bantu, who loved nothing better than sitting in the breeze under the trees with his two favorite large brown hens, Nadia and Nadine.

Jules was a sweet-natured rooster, warm and affectionate to the core. He was a natural leader, and the hens loved him. Our dusky brown hen Petal, whom we'd adopted from another sanctuary, was especially devoted to Jules. Petal had curled gnarly toes, which didn't stop her from whisking away from anyone she didn't want to come near her; otherwise,

she sat still watching everything, especially Jules. Petal never made a sound; she didn't cluck like most hens—except when Jules left her side a little too long. Then all of a sudden, the silent and immobile hen with the watchful eye let out a raucous SQUAWK, SQUAWK, SQUAWK, that didn't stop until Jules had lifted his head up from whatever he was doing, and muttering to himself, ran over to comfort his friend.

Two years after coming to live with us, Jules developed a respiratory infection that with treatment seemed to go away, but left him weak and vulnerable. He returned to the chicken yard only to find himself supplanted by Glippie, with whom he had used to be cordial, but was now dueling, and he didn't have the heart or strength for it. His exuberance ebbed from him and he became sad; there is no other word for the total condition of mournfulness he showed. His voice, which had always been cheerful, changed to moaning tones of woe. He banished himself to the outer edges of the chicken yard where he paced up and down, bawling so loudly I could hear him crying from inside the house.

I brought him in with me and sought to comfort my beloved bird, who showed by his whole demeanor that he knew he was dying and was hurt through and through by what he had become. Jules developed an abdominal tumor. One morning our veterinarian placed him gently on the floor of his office after a final and futile overnight stay. Jules looked up at me from the floor and let out a low groan of "ooooohh" so broken that it pierced me through. I am pierced by it now, remembering the sorrow expressed by this dear sweet creature, "Gentleman Jules," who had loved his life and his hens and was leaving it all behind.

My Experience of Empathy and Affection in Chickens

> "I perceive in your literature the proposal that chickens be treated as pets. . . . I have been involved with many thousands of chickens and turkeys and I don't think they are good pets, although it is evident that almost any vertebrate may be trained to come for food."
>
> **—Thomas Jukes**, Personal Communication, September 4, 1992

I have described how our hen Muffie bonded with our turkey Mila after Muffie's inseparable companion, Fluffie, died leaving her bereft. Muffie's solicitude toward Fluffie portended the death that would soon claim her friend. Like Jules, Fluffie developed an infection that treatment had seemed to heal, but she never fully recovered. One day, I looked out the kitchen window and saw Muffie straddled on top of Fluffie with her wings extended over her. I called my husband to come take a look at this moving and yet disturbing scene. We saw it repeated several times over the next few days.

On a late afternoon, I went outside to put Muffie and Fluffie in for the night but found them already in their house in the straw. Fluffie stood drooping with her head and tail curved toward the ground and Muffie stood motionless beside her. I rushed Fluffie to the veterinarian and brought her home with medicine, but she died that same night in the small bedroom where she and Muffie had liked to perch on top of the bookcase in front of the big window overlooking the yard.

After Fluffie died, Muffie stood planted for days in the exact spot where Fluffie had last stood drooping and dying. Now, Muffie drooped in her place. She no longer scampered into the woods or came bursting into the kitchen to jump up on the sink and peck holes in the sponge floating on top of the dishwater. She was not interested in me or the other chickens. Two weeks of this dejection and I said, "We must get Muffie a new sister." That is how Petal, who had loved Jules, came to live in our sanctuary. The minute Petal appeared, Muffie lost her torpor and became a bustling "police miss," picking on Petal and patrolling everything Petal did until finally the two hens became amiable, but they were never pals.

Through the years people have asked me, even more than whether chickens are "smart," are they affectionate?—toward people, they particularly want to know. In this chapter I have sought to show the affectionate nature of chickens toward me. Because I don't just feed them but I also talk to them and look them in the eye and express my feelings for them, the birds at our sanctuary gather around me and stand there serenely preening themselves or sit quietly on the ground next to my chair while I read and chat with them.

Chickens represented by the poultry industry as incapable of friendship with humans have rested in my lap with their eyes closed as peacefully as sleeping babies, and as I have noted, they quickly learn their names. A little white hen from the egg industry named Karla became so friendly that all I had to do was call out "Karla!" and she would break through the other hens and head straight toward me, knowing she'd be scooped off the ground and kissed on her sweet face and over her closed eyes. And I can still see Vicky, our large white hen from a "broiler breeder" operation, whose right eye had been knocked out, peeking around the corner of her house each time I shouted, "Vicky, what are you doing in there?" And there was Henry, likewise from a broiler breeder operation, who came to our sanctuary dirty and angry after falling out of a truck on the way to a slaughter plant. Lavished with my attention, Henry, who at first couldn't bear to be touched, became as pliant and lovable as a big shaggy dog. I couldn't resist wrestling him to the ground with bearish hugs, and his joy at being placed in a garden where he could eat all the tomatoes he wanted was expressed in groans of ecstasy. He was like, "Are all these riches of food and affection really for me?"

One of my most poignant memories is of a large black, beautiful hen I named Mavis. Mavis had been dropped off at a shelter by a man who'd exhibited her at agricultural fairs. She must have spent her whole life immobilized on the floor of a cage with a keeper who treated her like an object. During her first two weeks at our sanctuary, Mavis could not even stand up without crumbling to the ground, and she was deeply shy and inexpressive. In the chicken yard she sat alone by the fence and poked around a little by herself without showing or attracting interest. I saw no sign that she was ever going to recover from the emotional and sensory deprivation of her previous life.

During this time, we had three adult broiler hens—Bella Mae, Alice, and Florence. They were the opposite of Mavis. All I had to do was crouch down in the yard, and there would come one of my Three Graces, as I called them: Bella Mae, for example, bumping up against me with her ample breast for an embrace. Immediately, Alice and Florence would

hastily plod over on their heavy feet to participate in the embracement ceremony. Assertively but with no aggression whatever, they would vie with one another, bumping against each other's chests to maneuver toward the closest possible contact with me, and I would encircle all three of them with my arms. One day as we were doing this, I looked up and saw Mavis just a few feet away, staring at us. The next time, the same thing happened. There was Mavis with her melancholy eyes watching me hugging the three white hens. And then it struck me—Mavis wants to be hugged. I withdrew from the hens, walked over and knelt beside Mavis and pulled her gently toward me. It didn't take much. She rested against me in a completeness of comfort that seemed to include her gratitude that her shy desire had been understood.

In my first years of keeping chickens there were no predators, until a fox found us, and we built our fences—but only after eleven chickens disappeared rapidly under our nose. The fox would sneak up in broad daylight, raising a clamor among the birds. Running out of the house I'd see no stalker, just sometimes a soul-stabbing bunch of feathers on the ground in the midst of panic. When our bantam rooster Josie was taken, his companion Alexandra ran shrieking through the kitchen, jumped up on a table and could not stop shrieking and was never the same afterward. The fox killed Pola, our big red rooster who had so gallantly responded to my calls begging him to "save" me from Ruby. I am sure he was attacked while trying to protect his hens the day he disappeared, while I sat obliviously at the computer. It was too much. I sat on the kitchen floor crying and screaming.

At the time, I was caring for Sonja, a big white warm-natured, bouncy hen I was treating for wounds she'd received before I rescued her. As I sat on the floor exploding with grief and guilt, Sonja walked over to where I sat weeping. She nestled her face next to mine and began purring with the ineffable soft purr that is also a trill in chickens. She comforted me even as her gesture deepened the heartache I was feeling in that moment about the painful mystery of Pola and the mystery of all chickens. Did Sonja know why I was crying? I doubt it, but maybe she did. Did she

know that I was terribly sad and distressed? There is no question in my mind about that. She responded to my grief with an expression of empathy that I have carried emotionally ever since.

It is experiences such as this and others I have described in this chapter that have made me a passionate advocate for chickens. I do not seek to sentimentalize chickens but to characterize them as best I can within the purview of my own observations and relationships with them. In the 1980s, I wrote an essay about an abandoned crippled broiler hen named Viva who, more than any other single cause, led me to found United Poultry Concerns in 1990. It is hard for me to evoke in words how expressive she was in spite of her handicap, and despite the miserable life she had had before I lifted her out of her misery and brought her home with me.

My experience with chickens for three decades has shown me that chickens are conscious and emotional beings with adaptable sociability and a range of intentions and personalities. If there is one trait above all that leaps to my mind in thinking about chickens when they are enjoying their lives and pursuing their own interests, it is cheerfulness. Chickens are cheerful birds, quite vocally so, and when they are dispirited and oppressed their entire being expresses this state of affairs as well. The fact that chickens become lethargic in continuously barren environments, instead of proving that they are stupid or impassive by nature, shows how sensitive these birds are to their surroundings, deprivations, and prospects. Likewise, when chickens are happy, their sense of wellbeing resonates unmistakably.

10

The Disengagement of Journalistic Discourse about Nonhuman Animals

An Analysis

In recent years, mainstream journalists have covered more frequently than they used to the plight of animals whose lives are largely invisible to the public eye. As a result, people are better informed about the suffering of billions of animals behind closed doors. Even so, it is difficult for most people to make a conscious and consistent connection between the products they buy and see advertised—the glittering array of pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, convenience foods, and more—and the process by which these products end up in retail outlets without a hint of the suffering they contain.

It would seem that of all the products on display, the sight of meat would arouse a distressing awareness in people of the fact that a sentient being recently occupied that body of flesh before it was a corpse. Yet this most visible sign of human violence toward beings who suffered in being converted from life to death is, in a sense, and paradoxically, the most invisible of all revelations, precisely because it is visible, yet unperceived. Donald Barnes, a former animal researcher for the United States Air Force, writing from personal experience as a child who grew up on a family farm in Southern California in the 1940s, called this phenomenon "conditioned ethical blindness" (1985, 160, 162); but no phrase or probe fully illuminates the places within ourselves where we "know" there is animal suffering embedded in our products, but do not care or care deeply enough.

The journalist B. R. Myers once wrote that research could prove "that cows love Jesus, and the line at the McDonald's drive-through wouldn't be one sagging carload shorter the next day" (Myers 2004). An ethical vegetarian himself, Myers did not find this funny but invoked it as a parody of a reality that has to be reckoned with by those of us who are trying to understand the psychology of disengagement in people in order to change the way things are in "a world that often acts as if it doesn't want to be saved," as journalist Tom Horton wrote about the effort of my organization, United Poultry Concerns (UPC), to get people to care about chickens and turkeys and be vegan. "A long slog," he called our effort, but not disrespectfully (Horton 2014).

Journalists writing about farmed animal issues are by no means all alike. UPC has received sympathetic and informative media coverage over the past twenty-seven years including the Ark Trust Genesis award-winning profile of me and my work in *The Washington Post*, "For the Birds" (Jones 1999), and the Virginia Press Association's award for a front-page story about me and UPC in *The Daily Times*, *Eastern Shore News*, and *USA Today*, "Turkey for Thanksgiving? Bird Sanctuary Owner Says No" (Cording 2014). I value and am permanently indebted to the many journalists who have helped get the stories I want to tell about the plight—and the delight—of domestic fowl into the public domain. And I know for a fact that many journalists I have spoken with share my feelings for animals and that some are themselves vegetarians and vegans. At the same time, if they are employed by a news organization, they have to tell the story of animals within bounds set by publishers, editors, and producers who are similarly constrained but who, like journalists on the beat, have plenty of leeway in choosing their words and shaping the discourse sympathetically or otherwise.

Humane Euphemisms

Not only are the words journalists choose important. Here are two examples of how quotation marks may be used to influence public perception of farmed animals. On June 9, 2015, a Reuters brief appeared in the

Business Day section of *The New York Times*. "'Inhumane' Conditions Found at Egg Supplier for Costco" starts out: "An undercover investigation by the Humane Society of the United States found unsanitary and 'inhumane' conditions at a Gettysburg, Pa., farm that supplies eggs to Costco, the animal welfare group said on Tuesday."

Notice the difference between the portrayal of unsanitary versus inhumane. Placing the word *inhumane* in quotation marks, but not the word *unsanitary*, suggests that whereas the filth documented by the investigator at this battery-caged hen facility is an indisputable fact, the suffering of the hens in the wire cages, surrounded by mummified corpses in a sea of toxic waste, is of lesser importance and is not necessarily a fact but rather a *claim* by an animal welfare group that is open to question. The word *unsanitary* evokes a food safety issue: are these eggs safe for people to eat? The word *inhumane* is about creatures who most people can barely imagine and whose experience of living in hell does not rise to the level of importance in humanity's everyday life. Putting *inhumane* in quotation marks facilitates the public's perceptual distance from the birds and *their* ordeal.

By contrast, the mass killing of millions of chickens, turkeys, and ducks by the poultry industry in response to disease outbreaks and other disasters affecting the incarcerated flocks is described by journalists in industry terms as "euthanasia"—but without the quotation marks. An article about the discovery of 50,000 caged hens abandoned by their owner in 2012 in the *Turlock Journal* in California states that "more than 20,000 were dead of starvation or drowned in the manure pits under the cages. Another 25,000 were euthanized in the days following the discovery because their bodies were already in organ failure" (Stafford 2015). These hens were put out of their misery by being gassed to death with carbon dioxide—a method of killing that is *not* euthanasia.

In another example, between December 2014 and June 2015 more than 33 million birds were suffocated to death with firefighting foam and carbon dioxide in the Midwestern states of Iowa, Minnesota, and elsewhere in response to the avian influenza epidemic that began on poultry farms in 2014. Media accounts referred to the horrific killing of these

birds as euthanasia, without quotation marks—that is, without irony. In an unpublished letter to *The New York Times*, I objected to the reporter's use of the term *euthanasia* in "What Do You Do With 33 Million Dead Birds?" (Strom 2015, A1). Euthanasia means "a good death." It means a death that is merciful, peaceful, kind, compassionate, and humane—the opposite of being attacked by death squads, shoved into gas-filled "kill carts," and suffocated under rolling waves of firefighting foam.

For a newspaper like *The New York Times* to use the term *euthanasia* to describe—no, disguise—the reign of terror to which millions of birds were subjected in these mass killings suggests that journalists do not always feel obligated to adhere to standards of precise language where farmed animals are concerned. In the case of the bird flu crisis, *The New York Times* coverage was about farmers being "forced to euthanize their own live inventory." It was about whether consumers had to worry that the price of mayonnaise could be affected. Although a shadowland of horrible images loomed behind these topics, how those images affected the reader's imagination of the birds is anyone's guess:

> Mounds and mounds of carcasses piled up in vast barns . . . disposal of vast numbers of flocks . . . workers wearing masks and protective gear . . . burying dead birds in hurriedly dug trenches . . . officials weighing using landfills and mobile incinerators . . . barns housing up to half a million birds in cages stacked to the rafters. (Strom 2015)

Children's Stories

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. I thought of this adage years ago while watching the public television program for children "Chickens Aren't the Only Ones" (Lancit Media Productions 1987). Based on a book by Ruth Heller, it's about the fact that other kinds of animals besides chickens lay eggs. However, chickens are the only ones in the program who are represented in barren surroundings without a parent or a blade of grass. One heartless scene shows a chick struggling out of its egg alone on a bare table, while ugly music blares, "I'm breaking out."

Another popular public television program for children in the 1980s was the *3-2-1 Contact* show "Pignews: Chickens and Pigs" (Public Broadcasting Service 1985–1986). Promoting the agribusiness theme of "changing nature to get the food we eat," it shows hatchery footage of newborn chicks being hurled down stainless steel conveyers, tumbling in revolving sexing carousels, flung down dark holes, and brutally handled by chicken sexers who grab them, toss them, and hold them by one wing while asserting that none of this hurts them at all. These scenes alternate with rapid-sequence images of mass-produced fruits and vegetables tumbling down conveyers in a similar fashion. Children are told that "farmers are changing how we grow 100 million baby chicks a week, 3 million pounds of tomatoes, 36 billion pounds of potatoes." Chickens are described as a "monocrop" suited to the "conveyer belt and assembly line, as in a factory."

The visual images of animal cruelty are undercut by a verbal narrative and musical accompaniment that proclaim victory. The producers in collaboration with Perdue Farms and others involved in the making of this "documentary" for children—of all ages—present the truth, not by hiding images of industrialized abuse of newborn chicks, but by exhibiting them proudly through a jubilant voice tuned to musical jingles. Yellow chicks "popping" out of their shells in a mechanical incubator are depicted as the equivalent of corn popping in an oven. A question is whether the images of animal cruelty featured in this media context "speak louder" to most children than the blaring narrative of triumph over nature.

Sabotaging the Evidence

A type of disengagement that is shown by some journalists covering disclosures of farmed animal abuse is to acknowledge, but then sabotage, the evidence by pitting the disclosure against another atrocity in a way that diminishes the significance of the one being discussed. Tom Philpott, in an article for *Mother Jones* in 2015, discusses an investigation by the animal rights group Direct Action Everywhere of a Petaluma Farms operation in California that supplies "organic" and "cage-free"

eggs to Whole Foods Market and Organic Valley. In "What Does 'Cage-Free' Even Mean?" Philpott does not question the truth of the conditions documented by the investigators; however, he concludes with the remark that "compared to the vast Iowa facilities that triggered a half-billion-egg salmonella recall in 2010 . . . the Petaluma houses captured on tape by Direct Action Everywhere actually look pretty good."

Just a few paragraphs earlier, Philpott had described the houses that he says comparatively speaking look pretty good: "Lots of birds wallowing tightly together, often amidst what looks like significant buildup of their own waste . . . birds with blisters, missing feathers, one clearly caked with shit—along with birds that appear to be in decent shape." I don't know which birds in the video appear to be in what he calls "decent shape." I can only urge people to watch the video and see if they can identify these birds and wonder why he chooses the word "wallowing," which though technically correct suggests that the birds are more disgusting for being trapped in the muck than their abusers are for making them live in it.

Many animal advocates feel that *The New York Times* op-ed columnists Mark Bittman and Nicholas Kristof are doing farmed animals a favor in their coverage of exposures of farmed animal abuse. Maybe so, but I'm skeptical. This is because the attitude of both columnists toward the information they present is shallow, hedonistic, and presented in a way that undercuts the emotional impact of animal suffering, encouraging readers to focus instead on the fact that "we" love eating animals regardless of how they are treated, and that if you, dear reader, are troubled by the cruelty, try to reduce your consumption of "factory farmed" products.

Bittman published a column in 2015 about the lifting of a ban enacted in 2012 on selling foie gras in California. Foie gras is an appetizer obtained from ducks and geese by shoving metal funnels down their throats for several weeks until their livers are gorged, and then they are slaughtered. In "Let Them Eat Foie Gras," Bittman scolds not those who supply and demand foie gras, but those who oppose it: "To single out the tiniest fraction of meat production and label it 'cruel' is to miss the big picture, and the big picture is this: Almost all meat production in the

United States is cruel." As if animal rights advocates didn't know this already and were ignoring "the big picture" by focusing on particular instances of farmed animal cruelty in a vacuum. Foie gras, Bittman says, may be "cruel"—a concession he undermines by placing the word cruel in quotation marks, adding that although the force-feeding process may be "unnatural," it is not necessarily "torture," because ducks and geese "will stuff themselves anyway." This slur presumably alludes to the fact that wild waterfowl eat extra large quantities of food to prepare for their long-distance flights. They eat for the energy these flights require, not because they are gluttons.

"This is not to say a few thousand ducks and geese don't matter," Bittman says, though the tone of his column says he thinks otherwise. Like Philpott, he blunts the effect of the abusive situation he's discussing by pitting it against other abuses so that by the time all the misery is massed together amid playful mini-commentaries on the prices and pleasures of specialty meats and other dainty observations, Bittman has succeeded in rendering the reader morally impotent and stupefied by the mélange. Observing that more chickens are killed in an hour in the U.S. than ducks and geese are killed for foie gras in a year, he says: "If you allow that the same is true of most animals raised in the United States . . . you are looking at an industry that produces cruelty on a scale that's so big and overwhelming few of us can consider it rationally or regularly."

I wonder if this is the condition Bittman wants people to be in by the time he is through. He gives no indication that he himself is doing anything in particular to help the chickens, cows, and other animals whose "big picture" misery he flashes before us. He doesn't seem to be asking the reader to, either. What he says about foie gras in his final sentence may extend to the plight of all of them, that for him, it "just isn't that important."

The New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof is even more damaging to farmed animals in my opinion. Like Bittman, Kristof covers exposures of farmed animal cruelty documented by investigative organizations like Mercy For Animals. But in discussing the conditions revealed, he always

makes a point of denigrating the animals and boasting ad nauseam how much he enjoys eating them. Formulaically, he writes that he's "an old farm boy," impressing the reader with his bona fides.

In "A Farm Boy Reflects," in 2008, Kristof wrote with his usual jokiness that maybe in a century or two our descendants "will look back on our factory farms with uncomprehending revulsion. But in the meantime, I love a good burger." He describes growing up on the family farm, raising and slaughtering animals, terrorizing geese and doing terrible things even to the "intelligent" animals, but says, "I draw the line about animals being raised in cruel conditions"—a point he undermines a couple of lines later by saying that cruelty is "extraordinarily difficult" to define. Kristof seems positively to enjoy recounting the efforts of the family farm geese to protect themselves and *their* families from the slaughter apparently performed in plain sight and sound of them. Of a gander begging for his mate to be spared, Kristof recounts the scene, reducing the frantic bird to an "it," and mocking the bird's courage and agony as if relaying the cute antic of an infant: "It would be frightened out of its wits, but still determined to stand with and comfort its lover."

If we wonder where the mentality and brutality of factory farming come from, we need look no further than where Kristof writes: "Our cattle, sheep, chickens and goats certainly had individual personalities, but not such interesting ones that it bothered me that they might end up in a stew. Pigs were more troubling because of their unforgettable characters and obvious intelligence. To this day, when tucking into a pork chop, I always feel as if it is my intellectual equal."

Kristof seems especially to enjoy hurting chickens in his columns. In a 2015 piece, "To Kill a Chicken," about a Mercy For Animals investigation documenting workers torturing chickens at a slaughter plant in North Carolina operated by Wayne Farms, he writes: "I raised chickens as a farmboy. They're not as smart as pigs or as loyal as dogs, but they make great moms, can count and have distinct personalities. They are not widgets." An alert reader might ask why he inserts into his discussion

of chickens being tortured a gratuitous slur on their comparative intelligence and "loyalty."

In "Is an Egg for Breakfast Worth This?" published in 2012, Kristof discusses an investigation by The Humane Society of the United States of Kreider Farms, a battery-caged hen operation in Pennsylvania. In the middle of the revelations, he pauses:

> Like many readers, I don't particularly empathize with chickens. It's their misfortune that they lack big eyes. As a farmboy from Yamhill, Ore., I found our pigs to be razor smart, while our geese mated for life and our sheep and cattle had distinct personalities. The chickens were the least individualistic of the animals we raised. (I'll get letters from indignant chicken-lovers, I know!)

I will go so far as to say that I believe Kristof finds pleasure in the helpless suffering of the animals he writes about, as well as in taunting readers who genuinely care about these animals and grieve over their plight. I think that he uses his perch at *The New York Times* to twist little knives in farmed animals and their advocates, and that contrary to the notion that being a farmer puts one humanely in touch with "one's" animals, his attitude shows the opposite. What if instead of chickens, Kristof were discussing the plight of poultry slaughterhouse workers from diverse backgrounds, and he interrupted the narrative to say: "Like most readers, I don't particularly empathize with Latinos. It's their misfortune that they lack blue eyes. (I'll get letters from indignant Latino lovers, I know!)"? He couldn't get away with this writing about people, but because the victims are "just chickens," hardly more than widgets to him, he can.

Stabbing Chickens

I turn now to a writer who told me in an e-mail that he did not regard truth and accuracy to be critically important in writing about chickens. In his 2005 book *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*, Steve Striffler, an anthropology professor at the University of Arkansas, looks at the U.S. poultry industry focusing on Mexican

workers in previously all white and black regions and slaughterhouses of the American south. To observe the life of these workers firsthand, Striffler took a job for two summers at a Tyson plant where, conversing about working for Tyson, he wrote, "we sat eating the chicken together" (Striffler 2005, 124).

Striffler's subject is the workers, not the chickens, and I do not fault him for focusing attention on those who are mired in a miserable occupation. Moreover, he does not ignore the chickens. In his Preface he observes, for example, that the chickens are "terrified" as the transport trucks dump them down a chute into a bin where the workers grab and hang them upside down on the conveyer belt in the "nearly pitch black." He evokes the connection between the workers and the birds in his description of the "live hang" area of the plant, where the workers' motions, he says, "are so rehearsed that each worker is able to grab two frantic chickens (one in each hand), hang them on the line, smoke a cigarette (without their hands), and heckle the new recruits as they watch in amazement" (108).

Striffler characterizes a Mexican worker he calls Javier. Covered "from head to toe in protective clothing that is itself coated with blood, shit, and feathers," Javier, he says, sits for eight hours a day "on a stool, knife in hand, and stabs the few chickens that have managed to hold onto life." As he tells it, by the time they reach Javier, the chickens "have already passed through scalding hot water and have been electrocuted, a process designed to both kill the bird and begin the cleaning" (vii).

This strange account led me to contact Striffler. Was he saying that some birds actually emerge from the scald tank alive, and that the number of these birds is so high that Tyson pays a guy to sit on a stool for eight hours stabbing the chickens to death? Instead of the scald tank (which is *not* electrified), was he not referring to the pre-slaughter electrified water-bath "stun" cabinet from which the conscious birds emerge paralyzed and semi-paralyzed to be met by a mechanical and/or manual neck cutter? Striffler e-mailed me back on December 6, 2005: "My understanding is that the water contains an electrical current and that some birds do

manage to make it through the process alive—indeed, they looked alive and were moving, and Javier was there to finish the killing process. . . . He was stabbing the chickens. . . . He was not slicing their necks."

Stumped by this account, I contacted former Tyson chicken slaughter plant worker Virgil Butler and animal scientist Temple Grandin. Both confirmed that it is not possible for chickens to emerge from the scald tank alive. The scald tank is the final phase of the slaughter process that begins with hanging the live birds on a conveyer belt followed by dragging them up to their shoulders, face down, through cold, salted, electrified water. The electrified water is intended *not* to *electrocute* the birds, i.e., kill them, or to render them pain-free or unconscious, but to paralyze the muscles of their feather follicles so that their feathers will come out more easily after they are dead.

What does happen is that many birds are still alive following the bleed-out phase after throat-cutting; Striffler suggests one out of every twenty. These birds are plunged into the scald tanks along with the dead birds. In an affidavit signed on January 30, 2003, Virgil Butler wrote that when chickens are scalded alive, they "flop, scream, kick, and their eyeballs pop out of their heads. They often come out of the other end with broken bones and disfigured and missing body parts because they've struggled so much in the tank" (Butler 2003). This is *after* they have been dragged through the electrified water, mechanically throat-cut, manually stabbed, and hung for ninety seconds in the bleed-out tunnel.

In his Preface, which Striffler defended to me as "not [intended] to educate readers about the technical details of killing a chicken" (so it's okay to bungle the facts?), he writes: "I do not feel sorry for Javier or the chickens. I have worked in a plant before, and stabbing chickens is a relatively easy job. Many workers would be glad to trade places. And the chickens are there to die" (viii).

Granted, a job where you get to sit on a stool and stick "sitting ducks" for eight hours beats most other jobs at the plant, where the majority of workers, a third of them women, are forced to stand on their feet for eight hours performing ruinous physical labor. As for invoking the fact that the

chickens are "there to die" to justify a lack of pity for them, ask yourself how this logic works for terminal cancer-ward or nursing-home patients: "I don't feel sorry for these people because they are there to die."

Responding to my inquiry, Striffler wrote back via e-mail: "What I meant by that statement was that I didn't feel sorry for the chickens at that point. . . . Sympathy seemed a little misplaced in the sense that there was nothing I could do, their death was inevitable at that point. . . . In the larger sense, I of course feel sorry for the chickens, which is why in the final chapter I advocate for more humane treatment of the birds."

The final chapter, "Toward a Friendlier Chicken," promotes a company called Bay Friendly Chicken, incorporated in 2004 on the Delmarva Peninsula (comprising the Eastern Shore of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) on the Chesapeake Bay. The chapter contains vague rhetoric about better living conditions for the chickens, but the focus is on worker welfare and empowerment. There is nothing in the chapter about this company's chicken slaughter process being any different from Tyson's. Most likely the Bay Friendly Chicken chickens would simply be trucked to the nearest Tyson or Perdue plant for slaughter.

Closer to reality is Striffler's account in an earlier chapter of a failed attempt by some chicken farmers, known as "growers," to convert a few empty chicken houses to a "free-range friendly" environment for Kentucky-based Wilson Fields Farms. The farmers were happy until the company stopped feeding the chickens, who were left to starve. Striffler quotes a farmer who explains that they could not afford to feed 25,000 chickens who couldn't be sold, and besides, "chickens aren't pets." The farmer said he could not understand why not feeding the chickens was considered cruel by animal rights activists: "We're raising them to be processed into nuggets so these people can eat them [*sic*] and they say we are being cruel" (88).

Striffler's account of Wilson Fields Farms gives a more accurate picture of chicken production than any rhetoric about "humane treatment." Striffler writes that under the current system, the workers are "oddly incidental" to the food they produce (71). Whether their fate ever

changes, this will never happen for the chickens who, until people stop eating them, are fated to be the food itself.

Conquering Chickens

On September 30, 2013 I received an e-mail from Andrew Lawler, a freelance journalist, who explained that he was writing a book about the history and archaeology of the chicken and wanted his book to cover "the current state of the chicken" including the growth of the chicken industry in China and "controversies surrounding their care." He requested any advice or contacts I might have and asked how he could visit a poultry plant, imagining that "the industry is fearful of opening their doors to journalists."

Lawler's e-mail included a link to an article he coauthored with Jerry Adler in the June 2012 issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* called "How the Chicken Conquered the World." Having read it, I knew instantly what kind of a journalist for chickens he was. "How the Chicken Conquered the World" celebrates global chicken production and consumption and features cartoons of the "Chicken Conqueror" dressed as Napoleon, Einstein, and other historical figures. From any standpoint of moral feeling or empathy, the article is blatant propaganda for the chicken industry and a gut-punch to chickens.

Recalling our initial encounter in *Why Did the Chicken Cross the World? The Epic Saga of the Bird that Powers Civilization*, published in 2014, Lawler says he was apprehensive about meeting me at our headquarters and chicken sanctuary in Machipongo, Virginia in October 2013. The reason was that my response to his e-mail about the *Smithsonian* article was that it was "despicable" and that he needed "a whole different perspective, spirit, and attitude toward chickens" (225). He said he was surprised when, instead of being greeted with a lecture, he was invited outdoors to meet our chickens, of whom he writes: "After the numbing uniformity inside the Delaware broiler shed, the individuality of each of Davis's birds is startling and unnerving" (226).

Lawler states inaccurately that I agreed with him that my stance on behalf of chickens is "impractical," my actions "ineffectual," and my views "wildly anthropomorphic" (228). The latter claim is especially absurd given that his own writing shows that the various uses of the chickens he describes are all about "the human," not chickens, who are simply extensions of their owners' anthropomorphic desires, virtually all of them violent. And what could be more anthropomorphic than calling chickens our "companion" in the story of our triumph and their defeat? Those of us who want chickens to live sanely as chickens—instead of as what Lawler calls a sanctuary's "fowl flotsam" and "misfit poultry"—are not the anthropomorphic ones. The abusers and their allies are. He does represent me accurately, where I am quoted:

> I think chickens are in hell and they are not going to get out. They already are in hell and there are just going to be more of them. As long as people want billions of eggs and millions of pounds of flesh, how can all these animal products be delivered to the millions? There will be crowding and cruelty—it is just built into the situation. You can't get away from it. And we are ingesting their misery. (227–8)

Yes, I said that, but pessimism about the outcome of an atrocity is not the same as feeling or being "ineffectual" in one's commitment to alleviating the atrocity. Nor is it an assessment or an equivalent of one's (or one's organization's) ability or accomplishment confronting the atrocity. The fact that a situation may be beyond one's control does not make one's opposition to it, *per se*, "ineffectual." I believe Lawler's book, and maybe his conscience, benefited from his visit to our sanctuary in Virginia as well as from my book, *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry* (Davis 2009). He told me during our interview that until he encountered the idea (in *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs*) that by eating chickens we are eating their misery, it had never occurred to him.

Despite this and other admissions, such as noting the cognitive science showing that chickens have "a deep intelligence" and "see the world in far greater depth and detail than we do" (241), Lawler does

not appear to be morally or personally engaged with these birds. As an exemplar of disengaged attitudes toward animal victims, he bonds with readers by observing that he eats animals no matter what, and he dismisses the wealth of animal-free foods that are increasingly available as mostly unworthy items that merely "mimic the bland taste of industrial chicken." Instead, he floats the fantasy that "more humane genetics, treatment, and living conditions could roll back the worst abuses against our companion species without unduly interfering with the flow of cheap animal protein to our cities" (258–9).

That statement exemplifies how irresponsible, careless, and downright silly a journalist writing about farmed animals can get away with being. It reminded me of a *New York Times* editorial on July 11, 2010, "A Humane Egg," in which the editors praise some possible welfare reforms on industrial farms in California and Ohio. Observing that chickens and other farmed animals with more living space are "healthier" and "no less productive," they state that, in fact, "there is no justification, economic or otherwise, for the abusive practice of confining animals in spaces barely larger than the volume of their bodies." The editorial concludes that industrial confinement is "cruel and senseless and will turn out to be, we hope, a relatively short-lived anomaly in modern farming."

Such sentiments show no recognition of the fact that industrial animal farming is part of a global assembly-line system of mass producing unlimited supplies of cheap products for mass consumption. Industrial animal farming is cruel, but it is no more "senseless" than sweatshops or any other mass-production system for producing toys, drugs, smartphones, and you name it for the global marketplace. Given that the human population is predicted to grow from 7.4 billion in 2017 to 9 billion people by 2050, and that the number of land animals raised for food is expected to double by then to meet a desire for cheap animal products, ask yourself how, short of a mass consumer migration from animal products to animal-free foods, industrial farming could possibly turn out to be "a relatively short-lived anomaly."

Lawler calls the modern "engineered" pure white debilitated chicken "a poster child for all that is sad and nightmarish about our industrial agriculture." He quotes the writer J. M. Coetzee's character Elizabeth Costello, who declares that "we are surrounded by an enterprise of degradation, cruelty and killing which rivals anything that the Third Reich was capable of, indeed dwarfs it, in that ours is an enterprise without end, self-regenerating, bringing rabbits, rats, poultry, livestock ceaselessly into the world for the purpose of killing them" (Lawler, 228).

Paraphrasing Coetzee/Costello's opinion that miserable and tortured animals "will not in the long run make for a happier humanity and a better world," Lawler speculates that humanity may someday be as appalled by how we treat chickens in our own century as we are to learn about various ancient atrocities toward pigs and other farmed animals, presumably no longer practiced. Without question, what is done to chickens and other animals in the name of food in our era rivals—and in terms of the number of animals surpasses—the horrors of the past, in which today's atrocities are rooted.

Lawler concludes his saga by recounting his travels to the tropical forests and mountain tops of Southeast Asia, where the families of red junglefowl—the ancestors and contemporary relatives of domesticated chickens—live shy of humans, but from whose predations and depredations they cannot escape. These hardy birds and their forest habitat are being destroyed by human activity: the locals catch them and use them as bait to lure their companions into captivity for food, cockfighting, breeding laboratories, zoos, and whatever else humans have a mind to do with them. Meanwhile, the destruction of global rainforests by agribusiness is exemplified in the fact that in 2004–2005 alone more than 2.9 million acres of Amazon rainforest were destroyed "primarily to grow crops for chickens used by Kentucky Fried Chicken" (Oppenlander 2011, 22–3).

A village farmhand explains that the "smart and secretive [jungle fowl] can swiftly die if caged by rushing the bars and breaking its neck" (Lawler, 262–3). No matter. Lawler enthuses over the infliction of trauma

on these birds, including noosing them, which he describes without any show of sorrow or pity. Separating mates from one another, dismembering the families and societies of these vibrant, unoffending forest dwellers: I don't think the effect of the experience on the birds even occurs to him; or if it does, he doesn't care. His account is all about the exciting *human* adventure of capturing wild chickens and breeding them in laboratories supposedly to restore them to their native forests that are being eroded. Restocking the remnant forests with genetically preserved junglefowl would, he says paraphrasing a proponent, "pay homage to an animal that has proven itself as our most steadfast and versatile companion." *Why Did the Chicken Cross the World?* concludes with a sentimental portrait of a retired employee in a nuclear weapons laboratory who is working to save the bird's "pure stuff." The project is this man's way of telling the wild junglefowl, Lawler writes without irony, "thank you" (264).

Pardoning Turkeys

> Once again, President Obama has pardoned two turkeys using "executive action" (ha-ha) on Thanksgiving eve, ensuring that neither will be the centerpiece on anyone's holiday table. The White House asked Twitter followers to vote on which of the turkeys with incredibly cute names (Mac and Cheese) should get the title of officially pardoned bird."—**Carla Hall**, *Los Angeles Times*, November 26, 2014

The Presidential Turkey Pardoning ceremony is an annual event that is held in the White House Rose Garden during the week of Thanksgiving. Made "official" in 1989 by President George H. W. Bush after decades of turkey presentations to U.S. presidents since the 1940s, it consists of a turkey breeding company presenting the President of the United States with a live turkey to be "pardoned" from slaughter amid presidential jokes and a mocking chorus of Press Corp journalists. For the journalists the occasion provides an opportunity to poke fun at the "turkeys"—the politicians—in Washington. Following the ceremony, the turkey and his back-up are sent to a petting farm to die soon after of heart attacks resulting from

genetically induced stress and the entire ordeal to which these fragile, overweight birds are subjected. Reports on the death or "disappearance" of the turkey and his back-up round out this media event designed by the turkey industry and the government to reduce turkeys to ignominious figures of fun and the focal point of Thanksgiving dinner.

As the holiday's designated blood sacrifice, the Thanksgiving turkey functions to unify the nation. Philosopher Brian Luke explains, "It is the community all partaking in the flesh that unites everyone, from the indigent to the institutionalized." By selecting a turkey to be "pardoned," the president displays his power over life and death, adding sinister levity to the solemnity that citizens are supposed to feel about the country and its founding. "By pardoning one turkey it becomes obvious that all those other millions of turkeys Americans are eating were not pardoned," Luke explains (quoted in Davis 2001, 120). According to Julie DeYoung, a former spokesperson for the National Turkey Federation, the purpose of the presidential pardoning ceremony is "to celebrate the holiday and heighten the visibility of the industry to the American public. It gives the White House an opportunity to give a positive message to the public. It's a nice photo opportunity" (quoted in Davis 2001, 113).

The presidential turkey pardoning ceremony inspired me to write my book *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality*. The holiday portrayal of the turkey as an object of ridicule captured, I believed, something of the spirit and values of a country that ritually constitutes itself by consuming an animal it despises and mocks in a celebration proclaiming the wholesome virtues of American family life and the triumph of the nation. The ritual taunting of the turkey at Thanksgiving is exemplified by a November 1990 *Washington Post Magazine* article joking about the fate of one of the "pardoned" turkeys following the White House ceremony: "Bob Johnson, owner of Pet Farm Park in Vienna [Virginia], vaguely remembers taking in R. J. (short for Robust Juicy) after his 1984 White House visit. 'He was robust all right. He was so fat that he couldn't even walk. He died before Christmas. I mean, he was really a chunko!'" (Yorke 1990, 13).

Mikhail Bakhtin, in his classic study *Rabelais and His World*, describes a human behavior pattern that is relevant to our understanding of the role of the turkey at Thanksgiving. It consists of an interplay between piety on the one hand and impiety on the other—solemn sentiments about the Founding Fathers and Plymouth Rock versus a carnivalesque orgy of scorn heaped on a scapegoat. The Thanksgiving turkey is the bearer of impious sentiments deflected from their true causes, such as the obligation to be thankful, whether one has reason to be thankful or not. Opposite the sanctimony, the carnivalesque spirit emphasizes sarcasm, revelry, the banquet, and a grotesque concept of the body. "The theme of mockery and abuse," Bakhtin writes, "is almost entirely bodily and grotesque" (1967, 319).

Though they may seem to be in conflict, the spirit of carnival and the spirit of piety that play off against each other at Thanksgiving are more of a chiaroscuro display of humanity's need to feel powerful and to show its power by choosing a victim to pick on. Tormenting and ridiculing others are age-old ways of gratifying the will to power and the desire to dominate while subduing one's visceral fear of vulnerability to the hazards of fate and the sinister power of humanity. Analyzing the carnivalesque tradition of the Harvest Festival forerunner of the modern Thanksgiving, Bakhtin offers a perspective on the cravings that are ritualistically gratified in a context of socially permissible outlets for cruelty and violence: "The victorious body receives the defeated world and is renewed by the very taste of the defeated world. Man triumphs over the world, devours it without being devoured himself" (285).

The turkey in the role of carnivalesque victim symbolizes the "devoured and defeated world." So does Andrew Lawler's Chicken Conqueror of the World dressed as Napoleon. Nicholas Kristof's joke about viewing his pork chop as his "intellectual equal" strikes a similar note of carnivalesque humor through a journalistic tradition that satirizes the established order by participating in it and upholding it. This type of journalism was displayed by *The Washington Post* columnist Jonathan Yardley, whose curmudgeonly "Gobble Squabble" blamed the

"interminable festive season" of Thanksgiving ironically on the turkey, who, he said, has "neither feelings nor taste" (1995, D2).

As I said at the beginning, not all journalists are alike. In "Why I Hate Christmas," published in *The New Republic* in 1990, James S. Henry described his feelings of sadness about the suffering of turkeys slaughtered for the holidays: "To anyone who has ever been to a turkey farm, Christmas and Thanksgiving take on a new and somewhat less cheerful meaning," he wrote. On November 27, 1997, *The Washington Times* published a sympathetic cover article about United Poultry Concerns in its *Weekend* edition. "Living at Thanksgiving" features a full-page color photograph of our friend's adopted turkey, Abigail, standing sweetly in our kitchen doorway. Journalist Bradley Marshall writes favorably about our All-Vegetarian Gourmet Potluck Feast and quotes my observation that "Chickens and turkeys are earthy, enchanting creatures, interested in everything they're doing. To me, they are the epitome of the vulnerable life that we all share."

A surprisingly happy turn took place when Ira Glass, the creator and popular host of the National Public Radio show *This American Life*, which in the 1990s featured a "Poultry Slam" between Thanksgiving and Christmas each year, visited our chicken sanctuary at my request and ended up telling millions of viewers on *Late Night With David Letterman* in 2007 that meeting our chickens caused him to become a vegetarian. The audience was confounded since no one expected Ira Glass to confess in a comic routine that our sanctuary chickens moved him so much that he quit eating animals.

Dominance through Mentioning

This being said, I think that what I wrote in *More Than a Meal* in 2001 remains fairly true, although the media's coverage of farmed animal issues may be slightly better overall; it's hard to say. Regardless, the vegan animal rights message is still part of a process that has been aptly described as "dominance through mentioning." In dominance through mentioning, disturbing truths and iconoclastic viewpoints are "mentioned" so that

the opinion makers cannot be accused of omitting them, and to spice up otherwise dull fare—what *The Washington Post* journalist Tamara Jones called putting "a beak in the monotony" in her article, "The Stuffing of Scandal In Which We Find Juicy Tidbits About the National Turkey" (1996, B1–2, B17).

More than anything else, as sociologist James Loewen writes in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, it is the *attitude* toward the information presented that constitutes the "dominance" (1995, 85–6). For example, he says that his students seldom or never recall the European plague that destroyed the Wampanoag town of Patuxet that enabled the Pilgrims to take over this Native American town and rename it Plymouth (Massachusetts). He attributes their ignorance to the fact that American textbook writers have traditionally ignored the plague or buried it in a few bland phrases surrounded by glorification of the Pilgrims.

The strategy of dominance by mentioning is evident in the Canadian filmmaker John Kastner's documentary *Chickens Are People Too*, which aired on the Canadian Broadcasting Company's weekly television show *Witness* on November 14, 2000. Kastner and his crew spent three days filming at our chicken sanctuary in Virginia for the purpose of creating a "dialogue" between our perspective and sanctuary setting versus the point of view and violence of the poultry and egg industries. Hatchery operators, chicken farmers, and chicken catchers freely acknowledge their lack of compassion for the birds. A Mennonite farmer tells Kastner that "God gave Man mastery over the animals," a view that is illustrated in the footage of chicken catching at his farm in Ontario.

Despite showing scenes of horrific cruelty to the chickens along with images of the chickens at our sanctuary, Kastner manipulates the "dialogue" by gorging on chicken and eggs in practically every scene he appears in. The documentary ends with him sitting in a tree with a bucket of fried chicken, listening in his head to our slogan, "Don't just switch from beef to chicken—get the slaughterhouse out of your kitchen." The shape of the show is a journey that circles back to the beginning without any change of heart or behavior in the investigator, whose mockery

dominates the "mentioning" of the chickens and compassion for them. In his review, television critic Tony Atherton mimics the narrative arc and mocking tone of this "self-styled black comedy about the chicken industry." Kastner, he concludes, "forces inveterate chicken eaters, like himself, to at least consider the sad life history of Sunday dinner before tucking in" (Atherton 2000, D11).

A typical example of dominance through mentioning appears in a sympathetic opinion piece published in the *Los Angeles Times* on November 26, 2015. "Obama's pardoned turkeys aren't the only ones deserving of a more humane Thanksgiving" ridicules not the "pardoned" turkey but the pardoning ceremony, while condemning factory farming. The article is accompanied by a beautiful photograph of vegan animal rights advocate Karen Dawn holding a rescued turkey in her Pacific Palisades home, but concludes conventionally that while "[m]ost of us won't go as far as Dawn does," people could eat less meat, and just because an animal "is destined to be food on your plate does not excuse torturing the animal before it gets to your plate" (Hall).

Agreed, but how does this destination get disentangled from torturing the animal? A sharper look at the link between "your plate" and the animals who end up on it is provided by Abigail Geer in an article on *Care2* on the Internet. In "32 Million Birds Killed, Yet Thanksgiving Dinner is the Media's Biggest Concern," Geer decries the fact that most people are so desensitized to the suffering of "food" animals that the widely reported extermination of millions of turkeys and chickens by the U.S. poultry industry in 2015 to combat bird flu doesn't seem to bother anyone. She blames the news media for facilitating the public's indifference: "Mainstream coverage of the bird flu outbreak is not centered around the horrific and terrifying ordeal which the birds are now having to endure, but instead concentrates on the price increases which egg consumers face, and the potential meat shortage which could come in the months to follow." The *Guardian*, she points out, chose to lead with a story about "how consumers need not worry, there would be no shortage of turkeys for Thanksgiving" (Geer 2015).

Even the esteemed late journalist Christopher Hitchens fell short when it came to animals and vegetarianism. In an essay on Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, Hitchens mentions the part where Franklin (1706–1790) talks about the event that he says caused him to stop being a vegetarian: "Hitherto I had stuck to my resolution of not eating animal food, and on this occasion I considered . . . the taking every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had, or ever could do us any injury that might justify the slaughter." As Hitchens tells it, seeing the larger fish being gutted and revealing smaller fish inside them resulted in "Franklin's disavowal of the vegetarian idea" (2011, 23).

However, Franklin doesn't say that he disavowed the vegetarian idea. Rather, he says that on that occasion the smell of frying fish was so powerful that it caused him to surrender "principle" to "inclination." He says that he used the sight of bigger fish filled with smaller fish to rationalize the desire of his senses to eat the fish: "So convenient a thing it is to be a *reasonable creature*, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do" (Franklin 1982, 32).

The End of Chicken

Franklin's account of his surrender to temptation is as relevant today as ever. But times have changed since the eighteenth century. Industrial-scale animal farming is under attack for its massive contribution to global warming, environmental depletion, human and nonhuman animal diseases, and animal cruelty. Whereas mainstream journalists have been slow to make the connections, an undercurrent of Internet coverage has started to surface and spread. Unlike in Franklin's time, not only is the entire planet in trouble in our era, but an industry based on the development and successful marketing of vegan food products is gaining traction and financial support.

Mainstream journalists acknowledge that factory farming is cruel and unsustainable, but along with the growth of vegetarianism and veganism, a movement inspired by Michael Pollan and other "locavores" has created a following for Do It Yourself killing and "humane" animal slaughter, in

which food is fetishized, veganism is satirized, and animals are treated unkindly. Pollan acknowledges his lack of empathy for animals and how killing and watching them die doesn't affect him. He seems pretty proud of his lack of affect and of the many opportunities he has in which to share his attitude (Reichl 2013, 11).

Since every day brings media stories replete with reasons for hope and despair, I will end this discussion on the note of cautious optimism expressed by Michele Simon, a public health lawyer, and Jamie Berger, media campaigns coordinator for Mercy For Animals. In "The End of Chicken," published in 2015 in *Aljazeera America*, they describe the planetary devastation, animal misery, economic havoc, and food system vulnerability to avian influenza and bacterial diseases that animal agriculture and particularly industrial poultry farms are causing. Yet for these very reasons, Simon and Berger point to the growing enthusiasm of investors and consumers for plant foods "that mimic the taste, texture and cooking properties of eggs and chicken." On the basis of the encouraging evidence, they predict the possibility of "an animal-free future" for food.

Dare we anticipate with these writers that "breeding animals for food on a massive scale will soon be obsolete," and that already taking its place are "smarter, cleaner and more economical approaches to food production" that are truly animal-free? If so, then we may look forward with tentative hopefulness to a more compassionately engaged media on behalf of the chickens and other animals journalists write about. Perhaps the day will finally come when no journalist will ever again write unfazed about a fire in which 50,000 chickens burned and suffocated to death and quote the farmer, without question or irony, that it was "devastating to lose the birds, but we are grateful no one was hurt" (Moore and Heath 2015).

11

The Thanksgiving Turkey as Ritual Scapegoat in the Carnivalesque Tradition

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Empathy versus Animus Toward Animals and Animality

Human radical abuse of "food" animals cannot be explained on grounds of economic efficiency alone. It is also an outgrowth of attitudes humans have had toward nonhuman animals through the ages, rooted in our resentment at being animals, which we project onto them. In his book *An Unnatural Order*, Jim Mason calls this mentality "misothery," a term in which he combines the Greek words for "hatred" or "contempt," and "animal."

But while many people harbor cultural or personal misothery toward nonhuman animals and the "degrading" condition of animality, we are ambivalent about our own attitudes. We *are* animals, after all, whose knowledge of our animal kinship is encoded in our genes.

A basis for some hope, in this time of surpassing cruelty to billions of farmed animals and others on the planet, is the empathy many people feel toward animals, which may be gaining ground on the animus that has defiled so much of our relationship with other species and the natural world.

Meanwhile, our treatment of turkeys remains a conspicuous example of "misothery." Because of the turkey's mythic role in American history, the turkey comes loaded with all the ambiguity this role implies. Just as the wild bird and the domestic bird are joined ambiguously in the public image and the DNA of the "Thanksgiving Turkey," so the turkey appears, if marginally thus far, in the role of an ambassador for a kinder, more generous experience of Thanksgiving.

By adopting turkeys and having them as guests at the Thanksgiving table, farmed animal sanctuaries show through a different set of symbols that there are other ways of saying *thank you* than by cynically thanking the turkey for "giving itself" to us. But this is a long way from the mainstream perspective, in which the charm of a turkey consists in "taste" while providing the easiest way to feel part of a community by eating and saying what everyone else does.

Conventionally, the turkey has been cast as a creature addicted to filth and infected with harmful bacteria. The turkey magically becomes clean only by being killed, soaked in slaughterhouse acid, cooked, and consumed.

Often characterized as "dirty" and "stupid," though turkeys are neither, the turkey figures in the seemingly incompatible role of a sacrifice (a pure, precious offering), while serving as a scapegoat under the collective idea that heaping society's impurities onto a symbolic creature and "banishing" or slaughtering that creature can somehow bring purification.

The "purification" ritual at Thanksgiving is equated with patriotism.

Scapegoats Are *Innocent* Victims

Scapegoats are not just victims; they are *innocent* victims who are blamed and punished for things they are not responsible for. In the Mosaic ritual of the Day of Atonement, as described in Leviticus 16, the scapegoat was one of two goats chosen by lot to be sent into the wilderness, the sins of the people having been symbolically laid upon it; the other goat was chosen for sacrifice.

In Christianity, Jesus is not only the shepherd. He is the innocent lamb who bears away the sins of the world and sheds his blood for human salvation.

In ancient Greek religion, a *pharmakos* was the ritual sacrifice or exile of a human scapegoat or victim. A slave, a cripple, or a criminal was chosen and ousted from the community in times of disaster such as famine, invasion, or plague, in the belief that this action would restore purification to the people.

Scapegoats are not always seen as such by scapegoaters, because scapegoating is not about evidence but about transferring blame. People often do not fully recognize—or understand—what they are doing when they participate in scapegoating. The scorn heaped on the turkey at Thanksgiving suggests an awareness of scapegoating on the part of those who practice it. But such awareness, if it exists, does not necessarily inspire caring or change. On the contrary, it may be self-enforcing.

The idea of the Thanksgiving turkey as a scapegoat may seem like a parody of scapegoating. Yet what is the scapegoat phenomenon but a parody of reason and justice? The scapegoat, after all, is a goat.

Animals have been scapegoated in storytelling, myth, and history since time immemorial. In "Generative Scapegoating," in *Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation*, French social scientist René Girard explains how, throughout the world, "all animals with gregarious habits, even if completely harmless to each other and to man," have been vilified.

Under European penal codes from the twelfth to the middle of the eighteenth century, for instance, "guilty" animals were subjected to everything from being buried alive to being hanged, often after mangling and other tortures were inflicted. Animals were put to the rack to extort confessions, and in classic scapegoat fashion, they were banished from the place of their alleged crime.

"Buggery"—sexual intercourse—in which turkeys and other farmed animals were assaulted by men and boys in Pilgrim society—"was uniformly punished by putting to death both parties implicated,

and usually by burning them alive," writes E. P. Evans in *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*. Occasionally, he says, "an appeal led to the acquittal of the accused."

Considering this history, it isn't farfetched to see the annual White House turkey "pardoning" ceremony by the President of the United States on the eve of Thanksgiving as an inverted scapegoat ritual, a parody of a parody burlesquing "the acquittal of the accused."

Blame the Turkey

So how does the turkey fit the scapegoat pattern? Consider that not everyone is as happy at Thanksgiving or Christmas as we're supposed to be. Two cultures coincide during the holidays: the official, "pious" culture epitomized by Plymouth Rock and the like, versus a miscellany of dissident, unhappy, irreverent, marginalized individuals and groups. If a citizen wishes to express discontent with the holiday, "blaming" the turkey allows a certain amount of criticism and resentment to seep derisively into a celebration that makes serious criticism or reflection taboo.

The turkey thus functions as a bearer of impious sentiments deflected from their true causes, like the obligation to be thankful whether one is thankful or not. Sorrow and injustice are not the fault of the bird whose fate, after all, is to be murdered for the meal, which makes many people deeply unhappy while ordinary citizens rejoice.

As a scapegoat bearing a burden of derision, the turkey is in the carnivalesque tradition of taunting and torment, wherein "all that was terrifying becomes grotesque," writes Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World*. Opposite the sanctimony of pious occasions, the carnivalesque spirit emphasizes sarcasm, indecent abuse, a comically repulsive concept of the body, and the gargantuan banquet ending a period of ritual abstinence such as Lent, or the Harvest Festival celebrating the harvest, of which the American Thanksgiving is an offshoot. The basic content of the carnivalesque spirit is "free play with the sacred," which seeks to defeat fear in a "droll and monstrous form."

Bakhtin stresses that the carnivalesque spirit of mockery and abuse "is almost entirely bodily and grotesque." Only the eyes, he says, "have no part in these comic images," because eyes "express an individual, so to speak."

Prurient Underside of Thanksgiving

Nobody laughs at the eagle. For impiety you have the turkey. The turkey functions as the butt of marketplace humor opposite the sanctimony of Thanksgiving. In media coverage, the turkey has been called a "humongous mutant" and many other derisive epithets designed to tickle people's fancy and distance them morally from the bird. The turkey, in carnivalesque fashion, is likened to bloated sex symbols and caricatured in cartoons of little boys crawling into the turkey's vent at the Thanksgiving dinner table—"Send in small boy with a knife and instructions to find his way out again."

Thus is revealed the prurient underside of Thanksgiving.

The modern "industrialized" turkey's swollen body, distorted physical shape, and inability to mate naturally are the result of the farming industry's violent genetic assault on the body of a bird who evolved in nature to be strong, fit, and vigorous, reminding us not only of the cruel arbitrariness of fate, but of the sinister power of humanity.

The carnivalization of the turkey functions as a magic formula for conquering the human fear of being a "turkey." We poke so as not to be poked at. By devouring another, we master our fear of being devoured. Fear of our own potential for gluttony, of being helplessly manipulated by the cosmic scheme, our fellow human beings, and our own folly is transposed to the comic monster we are about to consume.

Purification Consists in Devouring and Being Devoured

The bird, so conceived, becomes purified and redeemed only by being absorbed back into the bowels of Man. *Theriomorphy*, a term meaning a circumstance in which a human and a nonhuman animal come together in one body, takes place under these circumstances in a consummation

in which an innocent creature otherwise maledicted as dirty and stupid undergoes transmutation. The "profane" animal becomes the sacred feast.

Such is the carnivalesque universe epitomized in Bakhtin's summation of the psychology of this universe: "The victorious body receives the defeated world and is renewed by the very taste of the defeated world. Man triumphs over the world, devours it without being devoured himself."

The Thanksgiving turkey ritual has all the trappings, including the "happy ending," of the traditional scapegoat ritual, in which a "culprit" is transformed into a "benefit" to society.

Donald Trump's Favorite Feast

The psychology of the carnivalesque enterprise is currently on display at the U.S. presidential level, where the "pious solemnity" of the presidency has been invaded and upended by the carnivalesque impudence of Donald Trump, whose favorite "food," one might say, is "the taste of the defeated world."

Tragically for Earth and its creatures, Donald Trump is not an anomaly, and the ritual of traditional Thanksgiving is in essence a daily exercise in need of radical transformation.

12

Are Feminists Right to Resist Comparison with the Females of Other Species?

This article was first published June 9, 2018 on *Animals 24-7.*

A woman employed on a chicken "breeder" farm in Maryland wrote a letter to the local newspaper berating the defenders of chickens for trying to make her lose her job, threatening her ability to support herself and her daughter. For her, "breeder" hens were "mean" birds who "peck your arm when you are trying to collect the eggs." In her defense of her life and her daughter's life, she failed to see the comparison between her motherly protection of her child and the exploited hen's effort to protect her own children—for the hen a losing battle.

Animal farming erects an unbridgeable boundary between humans and "animals," especially farmed animals. The "them" versus "us" pervades industrial farming, which is rooted in traditional farming. The poultry industry takes pains to ensure that producers convey "the message that hens are distinct from companion species to defuse the misperceptions." It isn't that agribusiness elevates "companion species" particularly, but that dogs and cats are the basis of the $30 billion pet food industry that serves as a dumping ground for millions of newborn male chicks ("hatchery debris") and slaughterhouse "refuse."

The idea that humans are a vastly superior order of being, distinct from the rest of creation, pervades society, despite Charles Darwin's demonstration of the evolutionary continuity of living creatures. Even among "progressives," interference with the presumption of human superiority and exceptionalism can ruffle feathers. Hostility among human groups is an integral part of human history, but just as bickering individuals and nations come together against a common enemy, so most people are united in defense of human supremacy over, and radical separation from, all other forms of life.

This prejudice can be seen in the resentment of some core feminists toward any suggestion that their suffering and other experiences are comparable to those of nonhuman females. An article I wrote about the hen as a symbol of motherhood was rejected by a progressive publication in 2018 for implying similarities between human mothers and chicken mothers. The editors considered the comparison "a sexist slur" against women, though how trans-species comparisons of expressions of motherhood constitute sexism eludes me. The rejection is a *speciesist* slur.

Although some women may wince at comparison with their female counterparts—their sisters—in nature or captivity, men, on the other hand, relish linking themselves to "wild" animals, by which they mean powerful *male* predators—jaguars, pumas, wolves, and the like, whom they iconize as masculine. What man chafes at being likened to a Big Cat?

Feminists who resent comparisons with nonhuman female animals whose behavior is similar in all relevant respects are not liberated in my view. In an article published in 1980, an environmentalist named J. Baird Callicott dismissed all farmed animals categorically as having been bred to "docility, tractability, stupidity, and dependency. It is literally meaningless to suggest they be liberated," he wrote. This sounds a lot like a stereotypical Victorian man's view of women—and it is every bit as factitious. Yet even today, some feminists are battling a demeaning image

of themselves as the equivalent of a mere "farm animal," which is itself a demeaning and ignorant caricature.

Though science remains speciesist, the fields of cognitive ethology and evolutionary biology are expanding our understanding of how intimately we are connected to the other animals on the planet. In "The Chicken Challenge," Carolynn L. Smith and Jane Johnson present the science showing that chickens demonstrate complex cognitive abilities:

> The science outlined in this paper challenges common thinking about chickens. Chickens are not mere automata; instead they have been shown to possess sophisticated cognitive abilities. Their communication is not simply reflexive, but is responsive to relevant social and environmental factors. Chickens demonstrate an awareness of themselves as separate from others; can recognize particular individuals and appreciate their standing with respect to those individuals; and show an awareness of the attentional states of their fellow fowl. Further, chickens have been shown to engage in reasoning through performing abstract and social transitive inferences. This growing body of scientific data could inform a rethinking about the treatment of these animals. (Smith and Johnson 2012, 89–90)

In May 2018, Marc Bekoff, Ph.D., professor emeritus of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, published a Mother's Day plea for mother cows on the *Psychology Today* website. In "What Would a Mother 'Food' Cow Tell Us about Her Children?" he writes that he is "freely using the word 'children' rather than 'offspring' or 'young' that are usually used when writing about young nonhumans. These youngsters are, of course, their children, and many behavioral patterns have evolved so that they receive the best parental care possible."

To deny our kinship with creatures who are other-than-human risks estrangement from the living world to a pathological degree. To feel slighted that a hen or a cow or a sow could love her children as a woman loves hers is petty and dissociated from reality. I agree with animal rights author and attorney Jim Mason, who in an interview advises against

"separation from our kindred animals." He urges us to "practice a sense of kinship by seeing behaviors that we share with other animals . . . and see these as your own experiences. Dwell on that—emotionally and spiritually. Feel that sense of the things we have in common with these others" (Mason 2018).

I hope that any feminist or anyone at all who relates to the attitude of a male farmer who snorted, "Who the hell knows or cares what a hen wants?" will reconsider. Such sentiments of alienation will not make the world a more just place for any sentient being.

13

Moving Beyond the Rhetoric of Apology in Animal Rights

Some Points to Consider

I introduced this concept in a presentation at the National Alliance for Animals Symposium in Washington DC in July 1994.

If we find ourselves "apologizing" for other animals and our advocacy on their behalf, we need to ask ourselves why. Is it an expression of self-doubt? A deliberate strategy?

Early in my career I published an article in *Between the Species: A Journal of Ethics* called "The Otherness of Animals." In it, I urged that in order to avoid contributing to some of the very attitudes toward other animals that we seek to change, we need to raise fundamental questions about the way that we, as advocates for animals, actually conceive of them. One question concerns our tendency to deprecate ourselves, the animals, and our goals when speaking before the public and the press. Often we "apologize" for animals and our feelings for them:

> Anxious not to alienate others from our cause, half doubtful of our own minds at times in a world that often views other animals so much differently than we do, we are liable to find ourselves presenting them

> apologetically at Court, spiffed up to seem more human, capable ladies and gentlemen, of performing Ameslan (American sign language) in six languages. . . .

We apologize in many different ways. More than once, I've been warned by an animal protectionist that the public will never care about chickens, and that the only way to get people to stop eating chickens is to concentrate on things like health and the environment. However, to take this defeatist view is to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the spokespersons for animals decide in advance that no one will ever really care about them, or aren't "ready" for them, this negative message will be conveyed to the public.

The apologetic mode of discourse in animal rights is epitomized by the "I know I sound crazy, but . . ." approach to the public. If we find ourselves "apologizing" for other animals and our advocacy on their behalf, we need to ask ourselves why. Is it an expression of self-doubt? A deliberate strategy? Either way, I think the rhetoric of apology harms our movement tremendously. Following are some examples of what I mean.

Reassuring the public, "Don't worry. Vegetarianism isn't going to come overnight."

We should ask ourselves: "If I were fighting to end human slavery, child abuse, or some other human-created oppression, would I seek to placate the public or the offenders by reassuring them that the abuse will still go on for a long time and that we are only trying to phase it out gradually?" Why, instead of defending a vegan diet, are we not *affirming* it?

Patronizing animals: "Of course they're only animals, but . . ."

"Of course they can't reason the way we do. Of course they can't appreciate a symphony or paint a great work of art or go to law school, but. . . ." In fact, few people live their lives according to "reason," or appreciate symphonies or paint works of art. As human beings, we do not know what it feels like to have wings or to take flight from within our own bodies or to live naturally within the sea. Our species represents a

smidgeon of the world's experience, yet we patronize everything outside our domain.

Comparing the competent, adult members of other animal species with human infants and cognitively impaired humans.

Do we really believe that all of the other animals in this world have a mental life and range of experience comparable to diminished human capacity and the sensations of human infants? Except within the legal system, where all forms of life that are helpless against human assault should be classed together and defended on similar grounds, this analogy is both arrogant and absurd.

Starting a sentence with, "I know these animals aren't as cute as other animals, but . . ."

Would you tell a child, "I know Billy isn't as cute as Tom, but you still have to play with him"? Why put a foregone conclusion in people's minds? Why even suggest that physical appearance and conventionalized notions of attractiveness are relevant to how someone should be treated?

Letting ourselves be intimidated by "science says," "producers know best," and charges of "anthropomorphism."

We are related to other animals through evolution. Our empathic judgments reflect this fact. It doesn't take special credentials to know, for example, that a hen confined in a wire cage is suffering, or to imagine what her feelings must be compared with those of a hen ranging outside in the grass. We're told that humans are capable of knowing just about anything we want to know—except what it feels like to be one of our victims. Intellectual confidence is needed here, not submission to the epistemological deficiencies, cynicism, and intimidation tactics of profiteers.

Letting others identify and define who we are.

I once heard a demonstrator tell a member of the press at a chicken slaughterhouse protest, "I'm sure Perdue thinks we're all a bunch of

kooks for caring about chickens, but. . . ." Ask yourself: Does it matter what the Tysons and Perdues of this world "think" about anything? Can you imagine Jim Perdue standing in front of a camera, saying, "I know the animal rights people think I'm a kook, but . . ."?

Needing to "prove" that we care about people, too.

The next time someone challenges you about not caring about people, politely ask them what they're working on. Whatever they say, say, "But why aren't you working on _____?" "Don't you care about _____?"

We care deeply about many things, but we cannot devote our primary time and energy to all of them. We must focus our attention and direct our resources. Moreover, to seek to enlarge the human capacity for justice and compassion *is* to care about and work for the betterment of people.

Needing to pad, bolster, and disguise our concerns about animals and animal abuse.

An example is: "Even if you don't care about roosters, you should still be concerned about gambling" in arguments against cockfighting. Is animal advocacy consistent with reassuring people that it's okay not to *care* about the animals involved in animal abusing activities? That the animals themselves are "mere emblems for more pressing matters"? Instead, how about saying: "In addition to the horrible suffering of the roosters, there is also the gambling to consider." Expanding the context of concern is legitimate. Diminishing the animals and their plight to gain favor isn't.

In acknowledging the seriousness of other societal concerns, it is imperative to recognize that the abuse of animals is a human problem as serious as any other. Unfortunately, the victims of *homo sapiens* are legion. As individuals and groups, we cannot give equal time to every category of abuse. We must go where our heartstrings pull us the most, and do the best that we can with the confidence needed to change the world.

Be Affirmative, Not Apologetic

The rhetoric of apology in animal rights is an extension of the "unconscious contributions to one's undoing" described by the child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim. He pointed out that human victims will often collaborate unconsciously with an oppressor in the vain hope of winning favor. An example in the animal rights movement is reassuring people you're trying to influence that you still eat meat, or don't oppose hunting, as a "bonding" strategy to get them to support a ban on, say, animal testing. Ask yourself if using one group of exploited animals as bait to win favor for another really advances our cause.

In fighting for animals and animal rights—"rights" meaning the claims of other animals upon us as fellow creatures with feelings, lives, and interests of their own—against the collective human oppressor, we assume the role of vicarious victims. To "apologize" in this role is to betray "ourselves" profoundly. We need to understand why and how this can happen. As Bettelheim wrote, "But at the same time, understanding the possibility of such unconscious contributions to one's undoing also opens the way for doing something *about* the experience—namely, preparing oneself better to fight in the external world against conditions which might induce one unconsciously to facilitate the work of the destroyer" (Bettelheim 1980).

We must prepare ourselves in this way. If we feel that we must apologize, let us apologize *to* the animals, not *for* them.

14

The Ethical Deviant

I introduced this concept on a panel convened to discuss "Where Did Our Compassion Go? Children, Adults, and the Loss of the Human–Animal Bond" at The City College of New York on December 2, 2014.

Psyche and socialization are complicated, but let us assume that there is a compassionate "child"—a primal sympathy for animals in most of us. One of the saddest ironies in life, I believe, is that there are adults in every community who love and empathize with animals, only they don't know that there are others among them who feel the same way, because everyone keeps quiet about it. Fear of ridicule and rejection, isolation and ostracism, enables people to bully one another into silence and submission. Ethical deviance challenges the tyranny of custom and compliance.

Ethical deviance is the element in society that prevents socialization from becoming sclerotic. The ethical deviant opens the window a crack to let in fresh air, fresh ideas, and perceptions. The ethical deviant may be thought of as the "child" within a society who, lucky for that society, will not grow up to be just another replica. The ethical deviant reassures people whose sensibilities have not gone totally underground or been beaten to death that they are not "crazy" for caring about a chicken. The ethical deviant refuses to be bullied into becoming a slave or a clone in order to belong. The ethical deviant provides a social service.

In a very valuable sense, then, the "child" a.k.a ethical deviant is a grownup. In his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," the poet William Wordsworth contrasts his instinctual, unreflecting passion for Nature as a child with the "years that bring the philosophic mind." The ethical deviant's primal sympathy with and insight into the life of things matures to become the conscious sensibility, awareness, and purposefulness of the adult. This person is the poet, the peacemaker, the social justice activist, the animal rights advocate—the "outsider" who keeps the consciousness and conscience of society alive and growing.

The struggle between conscience and callousness isn't just between the self "in here" and society "out there"; the struggle takes place among conflicting impulses within our nature in response to situations we find or put ourselves in. Running a sanctuary for chickens, I can tell you that whereas I like mice and raccoons ontologically, I am not fond of them situationally. There is an ethical struggle among competing forces, feelings, and obligations even within a sanctuary and a sanctuary provider. For some people, it may be that being or becoming vegan changes them to feel more peaceful inside, but as I once wrote, this hasn't been my experience. Rather:

> Veganism has made me more conscious of behavior patterns that are not consistent with my adherence to philosophic veganism. Being vegan has not made my personality more peaceful, as by some sort of physiological or mystical transformation or holistic purification; however, it has made me intellectually more aware of my feelings and behavior and less able to rationalize and do certain things that I might otherwise overlook.

An important point is that we must never take for granted that people "over 25" are unreachable, unteachable, or dispensable in our quest to make compassion for animals part of the socialization process. Not only is this assumption wrong, but children who are surrounded by adults who don't support their compassionate feelings suffer in lonely isolation and

confusion and will often turn against themselves, and against animals, violently for having feelings that no one they looked up to when they were little seemed to share or understand. Our best hope for the future isn't five-year-olds. Our best hope is five-year-olds supported by adults who have nurtured their own primal sympathies to maturity.

15

Open Rescues

Putting a Face on the Rescuers and on the Rescued

> "Using darkness as a cover and compassion as their guide, five members of Mercy For Animals (MFA) covertly entered sheds at Ohio's two largest egg producers . . . following criteria for a recently documented technique known as open rescue."
> **—Rachelle Detweiler**, "Mission of Mercy," *The Animals' Agenda*

When I first started writing this essay, I thought I would discuss the practice of concealment versus disclosure of personal identity as a strategy for achieving animal liberation through appeals to public perception and public conscience. But as I sifted through my files looking at the faces of animal liberators both masked and unmasked, as well as at undercover rescue scenes in both video format and verbal evocation, I decided that, important as the mask question may be from the standpoint of public perception, of equal and perhaps more fundamental importance is that of the rescuers' overall body language and the expression of their hands in a videotaped rescue intended for general audiences. When it comes to faces, the most important ones to be shown in a rescue operation taped for public viewing are the faces of the animals themselves. Those faces tell the story of the suffering they've endured.

The "Disappearance" of Animals in Western Culture

Attention to the plight of animals raised for food was still new in the United States back in 1987 when the first action by the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), at the Beltsville Maryland Agricultural Research Center, was conducted. ALF activists who used the term "animal rights," said Ingrid Newkirk in *Free the Animals*, "had not yet incorporated the systematized abuse of 'farm animals' into their agendas, couldn't 'see' an attack on the farm industry at all" (Newkirk 1992, 336).

One reason they couldn't envision such an attack was that they didn't yet "see" the animals entombed within the industry. In his essay "Why Look at Animals?" John Berger discusses the disappearance of nonhuman animals into institutionalized anonymity in Western society, a process that he says began in the nineteenth century and was completed in the twentieth century as an enterprise of corporate capitalism (Berger 1985). Berger's observations about animals in zoos, which to him symbolize what our culture has done to animals as part of our overall rupture of the natural world, are equally applicable to factory-farmed animals. By extension, he includes them in his analysis of the cultural marginalization and disappearance of animal life, with the difference that nobody is expected even to pretend to look at a factory-farmed animal, or to remember that factory-farmed animals were ever "wild" and free, and could be again. "The space which modern, institutionalized animals inhabit," Berger says of zoos, "is artificial":

> In some cages the light is equally artificial. In all cases the environment is illusory. Nothing surrounds them except their own lethargy or hyperactivity. They have nothing to act upon—except, briefly, supplied food and—very occasionally—a supplied mate. (Hence their perennial actions become marginal actions without an object.) Lastly, their dependence and isolation have so conditioned their responses that they treat any event which takes place around them—usually it is in front of them, where the public is—as marginal. (Hence their assumption of an

> otherwise exclusively human attitude—indifference.) . . . At the most, the animal's gaze flickers and passes on. They look sideways. They look blindly beyond. They scan mechanically. They have been immunized to encounter, because nothing can any more occupy a *central* place in their attention. (286–7)

This condition—of blind, and blinding, encounters between a potential human audience and the animals involved in a rescue operation—is what the ALF and open rescue teams, insofar as their purpose is winning public sympathy, have to overcome, because as Berger says about animals at the zoo, they "disappoint" the public, especially the children—"What is he? Why doesn't he move? Is he dead?"

The human onlookers adjust. After all, it isn't their fate they are seeing, even if, in some essential way, that is what they are looking at. They go to the zoo almost the same as they go out to eat—to entertain themselves and their children, like a trip to Disneyland, which succeeds where zoos fail, because, like hamburgers and chicken nuggets, "animated" creatures are more prized by our culture than living animals are.

As for the animals, they are imprisoned in an impoverished world imposed on them that their psyches did not emanate and that they do not understand. Factory-farmed animals are imprisoned in total confinement buildings within global systems of confinement, and thus they are separated from the natural world in which they evolved, including their family life. They are imprisoned in alien bodies manipulated for food traits alone, bodies that in many cases have been surgically mutilated, creating a disfigured appearance: they are debeaked, detoed, dehorned, ear-cropped, tail-docked, on and on. Factory-farmed animals are imprisoned in a belittling concept of who they are. Outside the animal rights community and the intimate confines of their own lives, these animals are unreal to almost everyone. They are not only prisoners but, in a real sense, they are the living dead. The entire life of these animals is a series of overlapping burials.

Factory-farmed animals go from being in wombs and eggs in factory hatcheries and breeding facilities to being locked up (until they go to slaughter, unless they die first) in CAFOs—Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. They are thus buried in a rhetoric of exploitation equivalent to the layers of material cover-up in which their "silent" suffering goes on. The purpose of their existence is to be buried in the gastrointestinal tract of a human being.

In the United States and everywhere else in the world, hens deemed no longer fit for commercial egg production are buried alive in landfills, shoved into metal gassing containers, or trucked to slaughterhouses after being entombed for a year or more in metal cages, or in so-called cage-free operations inside the walls of windowless buildings (Clifton 2000).[1] Australian activist Patty Mark explains that when the manure pits are bulldozed at the end of a laying cycle, "any live and/or debilitated hens still stuck in the manure are simply scooped up with the waste and buried alive on the trucks" (Mark 2001). In *The New Yorker*, Michael Specter describes watching a chicken farmer dump a live, six-week-old "meat-type" chicken with crushed bones and a mangled head into a dumpster along with the dirt load in Maryland. The chicken's "vastly oversized chest was heaving up and down, and its beak dug slowly into the dirt" (2003, 63).

The Animal Liberation Front

The ALF seeks to expose our society's enormous cruelty to nonhuman animals. The ALF was set up to rescue individual animals from specific situations of abuse, with a view to wreaking economic havoc on animal exploiters with the goal of making it hard, and ultimately impossible, for them to continue doing business. The ALF supports property damage on moral grounds: "[W]hen certain buildings, tools and other property are being used to commit violence," ALF spokesperson David Barbarash explained, "the ALF believes that the destruction of property is justified" (Vaughan 2002a).

In considering these goals, I'm reminded of what Aristotle said in the *Poetics* about the goals of tragic drama. He said tragic drama should arouse pity and fear in the audience: pity and compassion for the victims, fear and horror directed at the cause of the victims' suffering. Similarly, the ALF seeks to arouse pity and compassion for the animal victims (the audience in this case is the general public, including the news media and the exploiters themselves), and to instill fear of economic destruction—loss of livelihood, funding, business, and credibility—in those who profit from animal abuse. "[I]n the end, make sure it's the animals' abusers who really pay," says the ALF (Harper's 2002).

Since the public at large is the ultimate cause of the animal abuse being exposed, it is strategically appropriate and necessary to instill a "fear of oneself" in all audiences for having passively or actively contributed to the suffering and abuse taking place behind the scenes. All of us, in our conscience at least, should have to "really pay" more than a mere token of regret. In the brief discussion that follows, I concentrate only on the "pity" aspect of what many of us regard as the greatest tragedy on Earth—our species' smug and evil treatment of the other animals who share this planet, including their homes and families. How do we get audiences to identify compassionately with the animal victims and their rescuers?

United Poultry Concerns' Historic Forum on Direct Action for Animals

At a small conference on direct action in 1999, Australian activist Patty Mark introduced many U.S. activists to the concept of open rescues. Most participants in the conference were accustomed to the "traditional" notion that people who rescue animals ought to act clandestinely so they can avoid detection and arrest and continue to free as many animals as possible. So when confronted with the idea that people can freely admit to rescuing animals, many—if not most—of the conference participants seemed somewhat skeptical (Shapiro 2001).

On June 26–27, 1999, my organization, United Poultry Concerns, held a historic—the first ever—forum on direct action for animals. Speakers included Katie Fedor, founder of the Animal Liberation Front Press Office in Minneapolis; Freeman Wicklund, an ALF advocate and founder of the ALF magazine *No Compromise*; and Patty Mark, founder of Animal Liberation Victoria, editor of *Action Magazine*, and Coordinator of the Action Animal Rescue Team, which conducts nonviolent rescues inside Australian factory farms. The forum, which I conceived and organized, was inspired in part by philosopher Tom Regan in his essay on "Civil Disobedience" in *The Struggle for Animal Rights*. Instead of concealment, Regan wrote, "What I think is right strategy and right psychology is for the people who liberate animals to come forth and identify themselves as the people who did it" (Regan 1987, 182).

At the forum, the question of concealment versus open acknowledgment of one's identity in conducting illegal direct actions for animals expanded into a wider range of issues surrounding this question. The larger focus resulted from the showing of two different videos of recent animal rescues: an ALF raid at the University of Minnesota, and a battery-caged hen rescue at an egg facility in Australia.[2] The Australian video shows the Action Animal Rescue Team's well-planned rescue of several hens. It documents the condition in which the hens lived inside the battery shed. We see the hens' suffering faces up close. We watch and hear a hen scream as she is being lifted out of the molasses-like manure in which she is trapped in the pits beneath the cages. The video captures not only the terrible suffering of the hens being rescued, but the gentleness and firmness of the rescue team (as expressed, for example, by their hands). As an integral part of their videotaped operations, the rescue team contact the police, get arrested, and explain their mission with the intention of putting battery-hen farming visibly on trial before the public and in the courtroom during their own trial for trespassing and theft.

By contrast, the video of the ALF break-in and rescue of animals at the University of Minnesota shows rescuers dressed in black, Batman-like outfits wearing black masks. All rescues are shot at long-distance

angles. The rescuers look and act like remote, stylized figures rather than flesh-and-blood people, and the animals, including birds and fish, are so far away that it isn't clear what kinds of birds are being pulled from the cages. Where the Australian direct action shows suffering, compassion, a trained team, and the highly skilled use of a camera, the ALF video shows a posturing, "choreographed" rescue in which empathy for the victims, however *felt*, is *visibly* lacking. Significantly, there is no involvement between the ALF rescuers and the animals they are liberating, as there is between the rescuers and the hens in the Australian video.

The forum overwhelmingly chose the Australian operation and style of direct action over the methods depicted in this particular ALF operation. Attendees felt the Australian video showed the kind of activism that, when aired, would move and educate viewers, whereas the ALF video we looked at (part of which was televised in Minneapolis-St. Paul), with its focus on the masked and posturing rescuers rather than on the animals, and without any show of sensitivity toward them, would have a negative effect, or no effect, on most viewers. Another critical difference was in the settings: on the one hand you see the filthy battery-cage facility; on the other hand you see an antiseptic-looking laboratory at the University of Minnesota in which the suffering and cruelty are harder to convey.

Battery-Caged Hen Investigations Inspired by Our Forum

Inspired by the Australian model, three undercover investigations of battery-caged hen facilities were conducted in the United States in 2001. In January, members of Compassionate Action for Animals openly recued 11 hens from a Michael Foods egg complex in Minnesota; in May, members of Compassion Over Killing openly rescued eight hens from ISE-America in Maryland; and in August and September, Mercy For Animals openly rescued 34 hens from DayLay and Buckeye egg farms in Ohio. All three groups took powerful documentary photographs. In addition, Compassion Over Killing and Mercy For Animals produced high-quality videos inside the houses: COK's *Hope for the Hopeless* and

MFA's *Silent Suffering.* Both groups published news releases and held well-attended press conferences that resulted in significant news coverage by *The Washington Post* and other media.

COK's investigation was not ISE's first run-in with animal advocates. On October 17, 2000, ISE was found guilty on two counts of animal cruelty in New Jersey. The case involved two live hens who were found tossed in a garbage can filled with dead hens.[3]

The Drama of Open Rescue

Mirroring the group's investigative procedure, COK's news release explained the investigation and provided information about the company, ISE-America. Veterinary validation of their animal cruelty charges (their press packet contained several letters from veterinarians), and *Hope for the Hopeless* combined the professionalism of the rescue with the pathos of the hens. A fundamental difficulty in drawing public attention to the plight of factory-farmed animals is the lack of drama. But when a rescue is visually crafted and deftly narrated, then you have the drama, the dramatis personae, the tension, a storyline, and a "resolution," in what must otherwise appear to be, as in reality it is, a limitless expanse of animal suffering and horror.

Otherwise, except for the "veal" calf, whose solitary confinement stall and large sad mammalian eyes draw attention to himself or herself as a desolate individual, all most people see in animal factories are endless rows of battery-caged hens, masses of "cage-free" hens, wall-to-wall turkeys, and thousands of chickens or pigs—a "sea of stationary grey objects" as a reporter once described the inside of a "broiler" chicken shed. What they hear is deathly silence or indistinguishable "noise." They see a brownish sea of bodies without conflict, plot, or endpoint. There is no "one-on-one"—no man beating a dog, say, on which to focus one's outrage. To the public eye, the sheer number and expanse of animals surrounded by metal, wires, dung, dander, and dust render all of them invisible and unpersonable. There are no "individuals." Instead, there is a scene of pure suffering—worse, suffering that isn't even grasped by most

viewers, who are more or less consensually programmed not to perceive "food" animals as individuals with feelings, let alone as creatures with projects of their own of which they have been stripped.

Open the Cages

> Each individual life we save means the world to us and to them. Pure bliss is watching a withered, featherless, debilitated, and naked little hen look up at the sky for the first time in her life, stretch her frail limbs, and then do what all hens adore: take a dust bath!—**Patty Mark**, "To Free a Hen," *The Animals' Agenda*

Revealing the faces of these birds and other animals as they are being compassionately lifted from the dead piles onto which they were thrown, the cages surrounding them or the manure pits into which they fell, showing them responding to a little cup of water in a close-up after all they have been through—this is what the animal liberation movement as a whole, masked or otherwise, must seek to accomplish. The emphasis of the story must be on the animals, getting them out safe and getting them seen. The moment of rescue is their moment. It is their "role," and their right, at that moment to be in the spotlight, and thus also to shed a light on all of their sisters and brothers who, together with them, deserved and would have chosen to be freed, and to be free.

Afterword

pattrice jones

The Delmarva Chicken Festival was an annual event at which children petted baby chicks and then watched bird body parts sizzling in a giant frying pan, all under the guise of family fun. Karen Davis and United Poultry Concerns often showed up at those celebrations of cruelty, hoping to prompt festival-goers to truly ***see*** the birds as well as the violence visited upon them. Sometimes I tagged along.

One year, at a public park in Delaware, we protestors spread out with our signs and brochures. I positioned myself by the giant frying pan, silently holding a UPC placard that I hoped would inspire empathy. I tolerated the subsequent taunting until my tormentors summoned the police, at which point I went looking for the rest of the gang.

And so it came to be that I happened upon a scene I will never forget: a grown man literally fleeing from Karen Davis as she gave chase in low-heeled sandals and flowered dress, waving her leaflets in the air. "Scared of a brochure! Scared of a brochure!" Karen shouted so that all would hear. "This man is scared of a brochure!" She was right. He was. Perhaps he sensed, accurately, that Karen wanted to shake the very foundations of his identity as a male human at the apex of a hierarchy of hubris.

I have known Karen Davis since 2000, when she generously extended encouragement and assistance to what was then the new Eastern Shore Chicken Sanctuary and is now VINE Sanctuary. During the nine years before we relocated from Maryland to Vermont, I spent countless hours in conversation with Karen, frequently visited her at UPC, and sometimes participated in UPC events. We've been in less frequent contact in the

years since but have continued to correspond and to see each other at events. I draw upon that rich relationship to write this Afterword. I know that Karen would want you to evaluate her essays for yourself, so what I aim to do is to help you better understand their context.

Karen broke her own rules about leafleting that day in Delaware, but I'm glad she did because that moment encapsulates so much of what I appreciate about her. Karen insists that people see and think about the violence and indignity inflicted on chickens, and she sometimes persists in that insistence past the point of politeness. She does so while not merely female but unabashedly feminine, which is why I mentioned what she was wearing that day. She has paid the price for this, sometimes enduring indignities herself, yet she continues to "stick up for chickens" whenever and however she can.

In so doing, Karen has stood at the confluence of two rivers of disregard: disrespect for chickens and contempt for the feminine. Karen thus has been particularly well situated to glimpse the consanguinity of speciesism and sexism. As she explains, even environmentalists who champion other animals tend to dismiss the interests of farmed animals, whose 'domestication' lumps them into the category of the feminine. Karen has advocated for chickens within a culture in which women and farmed animals often are slurred by the same stereotypes, never ceding their dignity or her own.

The feminist proposition known as Standpoint Theory argues, accurately, that what we can see depends on where we stand. Since she met Viva the hen in 1985, Karen Davis has stood with chickens, doing her level best to simultaneously see the world from their perspectives and articulate what she sees from her own. Since founding United Poultry Concerns in 1990, she has done that from the grounds of a sanctuary located in a region dominated by the poultry industry, caring for chickens while forcing herself to see and contemplate and then try to find words to describe and analyze the unspeakable violence done to them.

In her germinal essay "Thinking Like a Chicken," Karen Davis tells us that chickens became "the center of my personal and professional life"

after getting to know two hens during a period of intense reflection. To truly understand the context of Karen's thinking and writing, you must understand that is not a hyperbolic statement. Chickens ***have been*** at the very heart of Karen's professional ***and*** personal life for all these years. She wakes up every morning and takes care of chickens; spends the day researching and writing or planning for some event, periodically going out to check on the chickens; and then takes care of chickens each evening.

Many of those chickens are the large white birds called "broilers" by the poultry industry, who Karen warned me in our very first conversation will "break your heart" because they die so young no matter what you do. If you really want to put Karen's thinking and writing into context, then you must also try to imagine what it is like to love and lose a beloved bird over and over again more times than you can count, often wrapping your arms around them as they die, holding on tight through the death throes, but just as often turning a corner to find the dead body of a friend.

But in fact you cannot imagine this. I can ***kinda*** feel where Karen's coming from, because I spent years on the Delmarva Peninsula, where the local poultry industry kills and cuts up more than a million chickens every day. Like Karen, I cared for the vulnerable escapees of that violence, trying my best to give each one as many good days as possible. For a couple of years, like Karen, I lived alone while doing so. It nearly wrecked me. I sincerely do not know how she is still standing.

Sanctuary folk know sorrow, know compounded grief and impacted rage and how to soothe an agitated bird while feeling completely frazzled yourself. We all have faced the terrible reckoning of the realization that something you did or didn't do hastened someone's death. We know the literally deadly mistakes we ourselves have made, and so we do not expect people to be perfect. Maybe that's why we are usually able to extend solidarity to each other even when we disagree.

The first time Karen Davis visited our then very new sanctuary, Miriam Jones and I were nervous. "It's not an inspection," Karen kept reassuring us, but we all knew it was. We passed! Karen became our biggest booster, even going so far as to ask one of her own donors to

buy us a barn. Karen also used her clout in the movement to open up speaking and writing opportunities for me. She did this even though she did not always agree with me. Similarly, Karen has often invited people who disagree with her, and with each other, to share their views at UPC conferences. In so doing, she has done something it seems to be increasingly difficult to do: provoke people to consider perspectives other than their own. Now more than ever, when we are called upon to devise collective solutions to devilishly difficult problems, that's vital.

The problems faced by chickens in this world are as old as the first weapons used to kill them and as new as genetic engineering. Karen doesn't have all the answers. None of us do, none of us could. What Karen has done consistently, as evidenced by these essays, is to generate ideas and analyses rooted in what she sees from her heartfelt hen-centric standpoint. Whether I agree or disagree, I always find it useful to think about what she has to say. So, the next time you see Karen coming, waving her latest essay, don't be scared of a brochure.

pattrice jones is a cofounder of VINE Sanctuary, an LGBTQ-led refuge for farmed animals. She is the author of *Aftershock: Confronting Trauma in a Violent World: A Guide for Activists and Their Allies* and *The Oxen at the Intersection: A Collision*, both published by Lantern Books.

Notes

1. From Hunting Grounds to Chicken Rights: My Story in an Eggshell

1. I developed these perceptions into the argument of my book *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities* (New York: Lantern Books, 2005).
2. Tamara Jones. 1999. "For the Birds." *The Washington Post*, November 14: F1, F4–F5. This article about me and United Poultry Concerns won the Ark Trust Genesis Award for Outstanding Newspaper Feature about animals in 1999.
3. "Slaughterhouse Worker Turned Activist: UPC Talks With Virgil Butler and Laura Alexander." *Poultry Press* (Fall 2004). Virgil Butler died December 15, 2006. See Virgil Butler, "Ex-Tyson Slaughterhouse Voice for Chickens, Has Died." *Poultry Press* (Winter 2006–2007).
4. Tolstoy's essay "The First Step," on animal slaughter and vegetarianism, was written in 1892 as a preface to the Russian edition of Howard Williams's *The Ethics of Diet* (1883). "The First Step" is excerpted and discussed on "Tolstoy's Ghost," February 26, 2014 <http://tolstoysays.blogspot.com/2014/02/the-first-step.html>.
5. For many years Colman McCarthy was a featured columnist with *The Washington Post*, where he wrote outstanding columns exposing institutionalized animal abuse and promoting animal rights.

3. Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection

1. See note 5 above. Williams's book is a biographical history of philosophic vegetarianism from antiquity through the early nineteenth century.

2. See Callicott. "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," p. 315: Toward the "urgent concern of animal liberationists for the suffering of domestic animals, Leopold manifests an attitude which can only be described as indifference."
3. In *Lord of the Flies*, see Chapter 8, "Gift for the Darkness."
4. Leopold says on p. 137, "Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf."
5. By contrast see, Ursula K. Le Guin, "She Unnames Them," January 21, 1985: 27. "Cattle, sheep, swine, asses, mules, and goats, along with chickens, geese, and turkeys, all agreed enthusiastically to give their names back to the people to whom—as they put it—they belonged."
6. "Abandon all hope, you who enter here." The inscription on the entrance to hell in Dante's *Inferno,* III, 9.
7. In Pacelle, "The Foreman of Radical Environmentalism," David Foreman of Earth First! says on p. 8, "I see individual lives as momentary energy blips on a grid."
8. In "The Rights Stuff," Knox concludes on p. 37: "Those who would fight the earth's battles can't help but make common cause with animal rights activists where their interests coincide—but carefully, lest the ever-elusive big picture doesn't get miniaturized into portraits of battered puppy dogs."
9. The 1994 report on Laying Hens by the Swiss Society for the Protection of Animals upholds this claim, noting on p. 11, "Neither thousands of years of domestication nor the recent extreme selective breeding for productivity have fundamentally altered the behaviour of chickens. The frequently expressed view that the brooding instinct has been bred out of present-day hybrid birds has been proved wrong. Hens repeatedly become broody even under intensive production conditions." My personal experience with domesticated chickens since the 1980s supports these observations.

4. Procrustean Solutions to Animal Identity and Welfare Problems

1. Andrew A. Olkowski, DVM, and his colleagues state in "Trends in Developmental Anomalies in Contemporary Broiler Chickens" that chickens with extra legs and wings, missing eyes and beak deformities "can be found in practically every broiler flock," where "a variety of health problems involving muscular, digestive, cardiovascular, integumentary, skeletal, and immune systems" form a complex of debilitating diseases. Poultry personnel, they say, provide "solid evidence that anatomical anomalies have become deep-rooted in the phenotype of contemporary broiler chickens" <http://www.positiveaction.info/pdfs/articles/hp28.1p7.pdf>.
2. Field studies of wild, feral, and domestic chickens show a complex social life with virtually no fighting. "No serious fights were observed," according to a thirteen-month study of feral chickens on Northwest Island off the coast of Queensland, Australia (McBride, et al., 1969, 135). Describing a serious fight that broke out between roosters penned up together, McBride, et al. state: "A fight of this type was never seen in the wild. Its fatal end was due possibly to the restriction of movements in the pen, as well as to the inability of a defeated bird to escape by flying into a tree" (158).

5. Interspecies Sexual Assault: A Moral Perspective

1. See, e.g., National Public Radio, "Temple Grandin: The Woman Who Talks to Animals," *Fresh Air*, February 5, 2010 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123383699>.
2. Beirne introduced the term "interspecies sexual assault" in order to challenge both the pejorative anthropocentricism and the pseudo-liberal tolerance implicit in the term "bestiality," and to focus attention more accurately and justly on the animal victims of interspecies

sexual encounters with humans <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1362480697001003003>.

3. Karen Davis, *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (13–4). Source: Bradford, William, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620–1647*, New York: Modern Library College Editions, 1981, 356. Originally published in 1856 under the title, *History of Plymouth Plantation*.
4. Singer subsequently backed away from supporting "consensual" interspecies sex, under pressure from the animal advocacy community and other critics.
5. Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* was made into a television series that premiered April 26, 2017.
6. Jim Mason first published this account anonymously as "Frank Observer" under the title, "In the Turkey Breeding Factory," *Poultry Press*, Fall–Winter, 1994 <https://www.upc-online.org/fall94/breeding.html>.

15. Open Rescues: Putting a Face on the Rescuers and on the Rescued

1. "The simplest method of disposal is to pack the birds, alive, into containers, and bulldoze them into the ground. Euphemistically called 'composting,' it still amounts to being buried alive," according to Canadian Farm Animal Care Trust President Tom Hughes, quoted in Merritt Clifton, "Starving the hen is 'standard.'" *Animal People: News for People Who Care about Animals*, May 2000.
2. The ALF raid took place in the pre-dawn hours of April 5, 1999. See Erin Geoghegan, "Minnesota ALF Raid Stirs Debate," *The Animals' Agenda*, Vol. 19, No. 3, May–June 1999, 12, 18. The Action Animal Rescue Team video was a 37-minute segment edited from a compilation tape called *Pigs, Broiler Chickens, & Battery Hens—1995–99*.
3. COK's investigation goes back to a phone call to UPC in December 1993 from a volunteer fireman whose crew had been sent to put out a fire at an ISE-America complex in Maryland. (ISE stands for International Standards of Excellence.) He told me he had never

dreamed such a horrible place existed and that he would never eat another egg. In 1995 my then office assistant, Jim Sicard, and I paid a midnight visit to ISE-America, where we took photos and removed 10 hens. When COK's codirector at the time, Paul Shapiro, asked me in 2001 about battery-hen complexes near Washington, DC, I told him about ISE-America and how to get there. For the story of Jim Sicard's and my rescue at ISE-America, see Jim Sicard, "Take the Chickens and Run! How 10 battery-caged hens came to live at UPC," *Poultry Press*, Summer 1996 <http://www.upc-online.org/upcnewssu96.html>.

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