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**CONSCIOUS REBELLION: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL CROSS-  
FERTILIZATION IN THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

**By**

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**Maxwell Dervin Schnurer  
University of Pittsburgh, 2002**

The animal rights movement is a rapidly growing and complicated social movement, whose interests lie in radically transforming our society. While sociologists and rhetorical scholars have analyzed the movement before, the baggage of methodological determinism has plagued preceding research, limiting understanding of this social movement.

Using activist research methods and drawing from New Social Movement theory, this dissertation challenges many prevailing assumptions about the animal rights movement. From the unique standpoint of a participant, cross-movement dialogue, movement success and the process of change are interrogated and reformulated. This unique approach enables the exploration of facets of the animal rights movement that might otherwise be ignored.

Three chapters of analysis provide the foundation for this research. Chapter two examines the increasing connections between punk rock and the animal rights movement. This analysis focuses on how the punk community uses ritual and friendship networks to spread a unique variant of animal rights philosophy. Chapter three looks at the question of social movement success and challenges the idea that diverse tactics within a movement undercut the persuasive power of that movement. Four different strategic approaches are contrasted in an effort to draw out how the layered nature of knowledge interacts to create social change. Chapter four uses the feminist challenge to the animal rights movement in order to question the urge toward purity that puts the goals of the

animal rights movement at risk. Introductory and concluding chapters surround these case studies. Chapter one provides background and lays out the conceptual categories guiding the study. Chapter five concludes the project with reflections on activism, academia, and a fictitious former Governor named Skink.

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## ***Chapter 1***

### ***Conscious Rebellion: A Rhetorical Analysis of Political Cross-Fertilization in the Animal Rights Movement***

In November 1999 a group calling itself the Justice Department mailed dozens of letters to researchers who experiment on animals. These letters included threatening notes promising violence if the researchers did not stop their animal experimentation. Also included in the letters were razor blades intended to warn or perhaps slice the fingers of the experimenters. This shot across the bow of the medical research institution did not go unnoticed, inspiring a front-page story in *USA Today*, the largest newspaper in the United States (Friend 1A). The public and media interest surrounding the razor-blade campaign indicates the substantial impact that animal rights protest activities have had on public consciousness. It also represents one example of activism by an increasingly complex social movement whose membership has been growing.

The animal rights movement is a complicated new social movement that transcends traditional analysis, stretching the boundaries of social movement scholarship. The members of animal rights movement are fluid multi-tasking agents who are as likely to be at an environmental protest or a punk rock concert as a vivisection protest. Movement activity involves cross-fertilization with other movements. Since communication among activists about organization, goals and strategy are part of social movement rhetoric, these communications are difficult to study from the outside of a movement.

The animal rights movement deserves attention because the movement brings radical ideas to bear on our society and the stakes of this movements' agitation are significant. The animal rights movement places the oppression of animals at the root of larger social issues including violence against women, racism, and the environment. As a movement that counters entwined oppressions and challenges the largest problems that plague our society, the animal rights struggle is animated by a search for what French sociologist Alain Touraine calls the "highest possible meaning" of protest activity ("anti-nuclear).

Study of the animal rights movement represents an opportunity to investigate the cross cutting nature of social movements. As the movement explores the ties between layers of oppressions, the make-up of the movement mimics the entwined nature of its ideology. The animal rights movement is constituted and sustained by a wide variety of players. For example, incorporation of feminist ideology with the animal rights movement has made an important mark in the ideology of the movement as movement participants explore gender roles in their own lives and attempt to connect the oppression of women to the oppression of animals. Animal rights movement participants are also sustained and influenced by a culture industry of music that maintains a consistent animal rights message. Primarily punk and independent rock, this sub-genre of music influences many to become involved and through concerts and magazines maintains a constant energy source for the animal rights movement. In a movement where membership is as likely to be signified by a pierced nose as dues paid to a group, the aesthetic and political valence of such symbols move to the forefront of the movements' considerations in questions of organizing and strategizing. Importantly, there is extreme diversity within

the movement. Some sections of the animal rights movement sponsor paramilitary style direct action against those who oppress animals, while others engage in comparatively conservative education efforts. These diverse tactics create a layered sense of meaning both for the participants and the audiences of the movement. All of these aspects of the animal rights movement make it extremely valuable to study, yet very difficult to clearly analyze.

One key moment in the history of the animal rights movement has been the publication of Carol J. Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, a feminist-vegetarian treatise that joins the struggles of women to that of animals. With this book, Adams brought the issue of gender to the animal rights movement and expanded the vision of many animal rights activists. Many animal rights activists now argue that much of the discussions about animals in our society are critically gendered. From meat preparation, to compassion over animals, Adams argues that violence against animals is integrally tied up with a system of violence that commits violence against women. Adams provides a new ideological move that has catalyzed parts of the animal rights movement to struggle over gender issues.

Similarly, the importance of music to the animal rights movement can not be understated. At a meeting of the animal rights group of the University of Pittsburgh, I polled the 32 activists present to ask how many of them had become involved in animal rights because of punk music and all but two raised their hands. The impact that the animal rights movement has had on the punk rock music community (and vice versa) can not be ignored because protests are announced at concerts, leaflets are included in albums, and music enables activists to meet and share experiences via the music.

The question of strategy often grips the animal rights community. Although the movement is united behind a common philosophy, there is a wide divergence of opinion on how to persuade people to stop hurting animals. Some groups like Farm Sanctuary, an organization that educates about farm animals by exposing people to actual farm animals, pursue an educational/documentary approach. Others like the Animal Liberation Front and the Justice Department use direct action to liberate animals and do as much damage as possible to the industries that profit from animal suffering. Within the social movement there is debate and argument about the fundamental question of success – what the criteria for success are and what tactics work. Within the animal rights movement, it is not uncommon to find activists criticizing the actions of other elements of the movement. New tactics and new ideas require that an analysis of the animal rights movement incorporate new understandings of social movement success.

The tools of traditional movement analysis can only take a scholar seeking to examine the rhetoric of Mohawked animal rights activists only so far. The new lens inspired by Adams' perspective, the role of music in mobilizing and sustaining movement activists, and the complex nature of animal rights campaigns all point to the need for a new frame with which to examine the animal rights movement. This chapter contains the foundation for a comprehensive study that examines the movement in all of the complexity that it deserves. The first section provides a brief background of the animal rights movement. The second section suggests the flaws in the previous methods of rhetorical movement analysis, and proposes changes necessary to redeem rhetoric in a movement study of the animal rights movement. The third section provides the thesis

questions and method of study that will be used to pursue investigation of those questions.

### **Background of the Animal Rights Movement**

The animal rights movement in the United States is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although historical threads of the movement go back to the turn of the century, the process of self-definition as a movement began much more recently. In the mid 1970s, radical activists founded People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and In Defense of Animals (IDA), two of the largest animal rights groups in this country (Jaspers and Nelkin 6). Founded primarily to campaign against the use of animals in research, PETA and IDA quickly found themselves immersed in firestorms of protest.<sup>1</sup> They expanded their agendas to include fur and animal cruelty and became major financial players in the non-profit game (Jaspers and Nelkin 8). PETA in particular became famous for its fur protests and flamboyant advertising campaigns.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the founding of PETA and IDA, America faced the import of a British group of animal rights activists who had previously been known as the Band of Mercy but later changed their name to the animal liberation front (ALF). Putting its most radical and famous face on the animal rights movement, the ALF hit the United States with a storm. The ALF's goals include:

To liberate animals from places of abuse, i.e. fur farms, laboratories, factory farms, etc. and place them in good homes where they may live out their natural lives free from suffering. To inflict economic damage to those

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<sup>1</sup> The deans of thirteen of the most powerful medical schools in New York issued a statement that called the Justice Department strategies "tactics of intimidation and violence which undermine our democratic traditions and threaten the principle of free scientific inquiry" (Jasper and Nelkin 124).

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps most famous is PETA's campaign "I'd rather go naked than wear fur." When PETA used scantily clad female models to carry the message, the campaign garnered many converts and feminist critics.



who profit from the misery and exploitation of animals; and to reveal the horror and atrocities committed against animals behind locked doors by performing non-violent direct actions and liberations (@nu 1).

Along with PETA, the ALF continues to represent the popular image of animal rights activists. While PETA presents the more palatable perspective of anti-fur and vegetarianism campaigns, the ALF undertakes to free animals from their bondage in direct actions. There has been a significant increase in the activities of ALF and splinter groups that espouse direct action against animal experimenters and farmers. ALF spokesperson David Barbarash notes that this is primarily because of the rising interest in compassion for animals and the poor record of law-enforcement officials. "People aren't scared of being arrested anymore," he explained in an article in *USA Today* (Friend A2). Organized into small cells without any clear link to other activists, most ALF-style groups are hard to identify and even harder to stop.

The animal rights movement pursues a number of popular causes that are often divided among a variety of groups. For the purposes of clarity, they are presented below:

- Promotion of vegetarianism/veganism is a popular and shared campaign among almost all animal rights groups.
- Opposition to fur and leather is a public opinion campaign that many argue has been the most successful in the movement. Closely related are the struggles to document and close fur and leather farms.
- The documentation and regulation of factory farms is a growing campaign.

Many believe that this is the most important project because most animals die to provide food for humans.

- The support or participation in direct action (animal liberation, vandalism, destruction of property) and public opinion campaigns.
- Abolition of animal testing of products to ensure consumer safety.
- Calling for an end of the suffering of circus animals and animals in television/movies/entertainment.
- Protest to encourage schools to eliminate or provide choice policies for dissection in classrooms.

The variety of the campaigns and the specific strategies pursued by animal rights movement activists are all animated by the general goal of raising the status of animals from the position of property to creatures deserving the same recognition and respect as humans.

It is important to recognize that these goals are distinct from the perspective of animal welfare. Animal welfarists believe that animals should not suffer unnecessarily. As a result they often focus on similar campaigns but pursue different goals. In the area of product testing, an animal rightist would want total abolition, while the animal welfarist would want to minimize animal testing. This distinction has an important bearing in debates over the campaigns and strategies that animal rights organizers undertake.<sup>3</sup>

These differences play out along a classic radical-reformist continuum for social movements. Animal welfarists participate in many of the same protest activities as animal rightists, but they want incremental change by way of contrast, animal rightists call for complete abolishment of any system that harms animals. These two perspectives diverge

on most animal-related issues: a good example is animal experimentation. The animal welfarist perspective is represented in the move to make laboratories more humane while animal rightists argue that the entire concept of animal experimentation is bankrupt. Behind the policy level split is a fundamental ideological difference rooted in the relationship between animals and humans. Animal welfarists believe that humans are responsible for animals because they are superior – the relationship is one of stewardship. Animal rightists believe that humans and animals are fundamental equals, while the separation of animals from humans is the primary cause of injustice to animals.<sup>4</sup>

In its current incarnation the animal rights movement represents a fast growing movement with an ideology of purity (as compared to either a disinterested public or moderate/welfarist groups) that at its extreme is represented by the ALF. This ideology of animal rights influences the strategic goals that movement groups undertake. Almost without fail this modern animal rights movement attempts to agitate for change in public opinion, sue in courts, or undertake direct action. Although there are exceptions most often the goals of the animal rights movement can not be legislated, instead they require mindset shifts. Implication of this commitment to purity will be explored more fully in Chapter four.

The stakes are extremely high for animal rights activists who place the oppression of animals at the root of other oppressions. One of the most fundamental mindset shifts

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<sup>3</sup> Although members of the animal rights movement have made it very clear that they wish to remain separate from animal welfarists, there is a pragmatic understanding that animal welfarists make valuable allies. For more on this see Cha.

<sup>4</sup> Animal rights activists do participate in animal welfarist campaigns. Often inspired by their compassionate stances, animal rights protesters can often be seen volunteering at animal shelters, or supporting human slaughter laws. Animal welfare activists on the other hand, seldom have any interest in animal rights. The chief distinction is not in term of the campaigns that they participate in, but rather in their end-goals. For animal welfarists, the alleviation of suffering is the penultimate goal, whereas the animal rightist desires a total abolition of the system of animal suffering.

that movement activists seek involves erasure of the cultural demarcation between animals and people. According to Adams, this demarcation is a key cultural premise that enables violence against animals. By allowing humans to conceive of animals as “absent referents,” this detachment not only equips humans with the rhetorical resources to accept uncritically and rationalize violence against animals; it also underwrites the human oppression of *other* humans who are imputed to have animal or “beastlike” characteristics.

The interaction between physical oppression and the dependence on metaphors that rely on the absent referent indicates that we distance ourselves from whatever is different by equating it with something we have already objectified. For instance, the demarcation between animals and people was invoked during the early modern period to emphasize social distancing. According to Keith Thomas, infants, young, the poor, blacks, Irish, insane people, and women were considered beastlike. ‘once perceived as beasts, people were liable to be treated accordingly. The ethic of human domination removed animals from the sphere of human concern. But it also legitimized the ill-treatment of those humans who were in a supposedly animal condition (Adams 44).

This position elucidates one of the highest political stakes implicated by animal rights movement protest. Exploring the intersection between the cultural bias of anthropocentrism and the symbolic cues that enable violence against humans promises rich subject matter for scholarship. This kind of study can explore how the “absent referent” justifies oppression. Such a strategy can bring out the complicated mess of symbols that create the “absent referent” and the strategic methods of persuasion that the animal rights movement engages in to challenge this social norm. The next section shows how the study of rhetoric can help explain this “absent referent” phenomenon and yield better understanding of the animal rights movement.

## **Social Movements as Rhetorical Phenomena**

Social movement study began in rhetoric with the work of Leland Griffin who followed early rhetorical scholars analyzing public address as a fertile space for analysis of rhetorical artifacts. Griffin offered the foundation of movement studies in rhetoric, authoring several key articles where he not only put movement studies on the critical agenda, but also suggested how to study social movement with a rhetorical lens (“The Rhetoric,” “On Studying” ).

Unfortunately, the legacy of public address scholarship and the focus on single movement case studies constrains the flexibility of Griffin’s approach to social movement studies.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that Griffin’s social movement model was touted as a methodology that enabled scholars to escape the “great orator” model of movement studies, it retained some of the essential structure of public address criticism. The “great orator” model quickly became a tradition of only focusing on a single social movement and the exclusive attention given to the persuasive dimension of movement activity came to obscure other kinds of movement rhetoric. Protest rhetoric, one of the most fertile rhetorical dimensions to movement activities, is obscured by the focus on leader-centered persuasion of audiences.

Griffin brought Burke to bear in the rhetorical study of social movements, opening up new spaces for scholars and unfortunately, also introducing a certain amount of myopia. As Griffin suggested, “We may come closer to discovering the degree of validity in our fundamental assumption: that rhetoric has had and does have a vital function as a shaping agent in human affairs” (“The Rhetoric” 371).

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<sup>5</sup> For examples of landmark essays in rhetorical movement studies that take the single-movement case study approach when analyzing social movements, see Cathcart, Zarefsky, and Medhurst.

The essential function of rhetoric, according to Griffin, was to influence the public. The subject studied was the process of oratory – the speeches and arguments put forward by great movement orators who did the influencing. This concept included a move to compartmentalize movements into stages of growth and development. Notions of a static model for stage progression obscure the impact of the study itself on movement evolution.<sup>6</sup> Griffin's drive for definition led to the explosion of meta-theory in the communication discipline. This movement led to the attempt to graft concepts fundamental to public address onto single movements. Like using a cookie cutter on too much dough, Griffin's definitions of movements had to chop certain ideas out of the studies in exchange for firm notions of audience, oratory, and agency.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Limitations of Early Rhetorical Approaches to Movement Study*

Rhetoricians who wanted to study social movements were in an awkward position – they did not just want to analyze the equivalent of presidential rhetoric, but instead wanted to open up the formulas of public address analysis to create new tools to examine social movements. Griffin was at the forefront of this new kind of analysis by suggesting

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<sup>6</sup> The impact on social movement studies continues to this day. Simons Mechling and Schreier continue a similar argument when they analyze Griffin. They write: "Cathcart (1972) seized on this fact, as did Wilkinson (1976) in their efforts to mark off movement rhetoric as a distinctive scholarly domain" (805). Their work continues this line of analysis. In the table 13:1 titled: "Attribution of Reasons for Success and Failures: Leader-Centered Case Studies of Movement Rhetoric (1967-1977)" we are able to see a lot of these ideas at work. These scholars are able to categorize almost all the research on social movements from 1967-1977 as leader centered and as simplistic success or failure valence. These deterministic frames of leadership and success/failure grip tightly onto the new studies of movements and exemplify the criticisms that I am making in this section.

<sup>7</sup> The influence of Gustav LeBon can be detected on Griffin's work. Scholars like Oberschall and Eyerman and Jamieson use LeBon as their jumping off point. LeBon studied mob mentality and argued that when groups of people gather their inhibitions become released because of the crowd mentality. As a result, they are often willing to riot and fight. LeBon ushered in years of group analysis that centered on how to prevent the subjects of the study from gathering and causing trouble. Similarly, Griffin's focus on the audience in the Anti-Masonic movement focuses on the dangerous situation that movement orators are able to conjure up.

that the nature of movement addresses, coupled with historical analysis might reveal a kind of rhetoric unique to social movements.

Unfortunately, the positioning of social movements within public address brought a significant amount of ideological baggage with it. There were three prevailing concepts of public address that permeated early social movement analysis, shaping the studies that were soon to come. First was a strong notion of rhetorical determinism, suggesting that a single orator drives the changes in the audience. This assumption obviates the possible interaction between audiences, and fixates the study of social movement rhetoric on the successful (or failed) orations of movement leaders.<sup>8</sup> The second thing left out of early public address-oriented movement studies was any recognition of cross-fertilization, or the rhetorical interactions between social movements.<sup>9</sup>

The ease and success of public-address style social movements analysis made the use of the methods developed by early scholars even more influential. Social movements could usually be fit into stages, and the leaders often had exciting and unique kinds of oratory. But these benefits came with the price of importing a method that came to define the subject being studied. Elements of social movements that didn't fit the public address model became epiphenomena. The constitutive function of the audience and the

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<sup>8</sup> One could argue that Cathcart's notion of dialectic enjoinder might fulfill my need for reciprocal dialogue. But Cathcart is talking about dialectic between movement leaders and establishment political leaders. Under Cathcart's framework, the same deterministic lens of Griffin and LeBon is at work. According to Cathcart, the movement leader agitates people who join the movement and give the social movement more power. The people who support the movement goals become subject to movement leader negotiation, poker chips in the gamble for social change. Fundamentally Cathcart can not recognize the input of movement participants because his frame of dialectical enjoinder would be broadened beyond the scope of his research.

<sup>9</sup> It is important to remember that there were some strains of the tradition that were amenable to cross-fertilization such as Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's study of the women's movement.

interactions between movements slid further away from the lens that pointed at the great speeches given by leaders of movements.<sup>10</sup>

The third limitation that Griffin handed down to rhetorical movement scholars was an overzealous focus on the *success* of social movements as the central dimension of analysis. Griffin quantified the success of social movements based on the success or failure of their oratory.<sup>11</sup> In criticism of the Anti-Masonic movement essay he argued that the Masons failed to orate successfully to the public and thus became scapegoats in a backlash. Thus according to Griffin, the Masonic movement failed. Resource Mobilization theory (RM) in sociology and political science offers a similar approach. Resource Mobilization evaluates social movements on their ability to gather and control resources (such as finances and political capital).<sup>12</sup> The flaw of this focus on the success of the movement ignores what Simons *et. al.* describe as “reformist” movements. Movements whose focus is not on the earth-shattering political goals, but instead on attempts to change the society via a pragmatic approach – often succeed without the fire

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<sup>10</sup> This is not always the case. Consider Griffin’s commitment to include a historical analysis of the creation of the Anti-Masonic movement. Yet even as scholars looked for connections, the old patterns often took hold. Consider Martin Medhurst’s participant observer analysis of the resistance to a hate speech code. The turning point of Medhurst’s analysis comes when he makes a series of powerful appeals in a series of speeches. Regardless of the unique viewpoint that his presence within the struggle might provide, he returns to a deterministic frame when the action of the movement is considered – his speeches bring about a change in people’s viewpoints.

<sup>11</sup> The success of this viewpoint can be seen by its proliferation in the early social movement frameworks. When Simons *et. al.* summarize social movements, they provide a long chart that evaluates every social movement studied in communication. The title of their chart is “Attributions of Reasons for Successes and Failure: Leader-Centered Case Studies of Movement Rhetoric” (846-849). Again, this chart becomes emblematic of the baggage of persuasion in the legacy of public address. Where scholars are supposed to evaluate the persuasive “power” of a movement in order to evaluate its’ virility. This kind of thinking leads to an overly deterministic model where movements succeed or fail based on their persuasive capital rather than their ability to call into question ideas and lay the groundwork for long-term change. I am not arguing that persuasion isn’t a valuable tool in analyzing social movements, but that the immediate attitude change that a movement orator can achieve is not the only means of evaluating a movements power.

<sup>12</sup> Focusing on the “rationality” of social movements, resource mobilization studies the mechanisms through which movements recruit their members and the organizational forms through which mobilizations of both human and social resources takes place (Eyerman and Jamieson 24-5). For more on this see McCarthy and Zald.



and brimstone rhetoric of 'agitator' movements (805). Some scholars like sociologist Anthony Oberschall argue that some movement's failure represents a building block to the later success of their goals, and that social movements never fail (21)! How could one evaluate the relative "success" of these two examples? Reformist movements might succeed and yet many consider that they failed, and many radical social movements failure may lay the groundwork for future successes. This conundrum illustrates that the very concept of success needs to be brought into focus in order to explore social movements.

Rhetorical scholars have largely bought into the resource mobilization theory as a formula or goal. By basing the evaluation of social movements on a simplistic formula of "successful rhetoric equals successful movement," rhetoric is left with a limited view of social movements. Oberschall's point that social movements often create change even when they apparently fail is important to keep in mind. Social movements are more complicated than portrayed in resource mobilization theory or its counterpart, rhetorical determinism. Social movements have been defying expectations and creating more change than was expected for years. Consider the success of the early AIDS activists who fought against overwhelming social stigma, deadly disease, and a hostile media to redefine the nature of AIDS (Crimp and Rolston). AIDS activists showed that traditional expectations of success might be overcome, and the success of AIDS protesters' input on AIDS policy and science decision as well as public consciousness indicates a level of "success."

Finally, these methods of rhetorical study of social movements encouraged a certain kind of numbing analysis upon movement scholars. In the effort to categorize the

oratory of the movement and discern the level of success (based solely on audience transformation) rhetorical scholars trim away some of the exciting elements of study. In many ways, this type of study has certain political connections. Murray Bookchin, the founder of social ecology, suggests that in a hyper-capitalist society the ideas of objective study become tools of power. “. . . [C]apitalism warped these goals, reducing reason to a harsh industrial rationalism focused on efficiency rather than a high-minded intellectuality: that it used science to quantify the world and dualize thought and being. . .” (166).<sup>13</sup> For thinkers like Bookchin, the type of social movement analysis that emerges from an instrumental/rational approach to movements would necessarily focus on categorization and the base question of success. Rather than allowing the unique elements of social movements become the core of studies, Bookchin points out that under capitalism the systems of thought will be tied to a sort of objective level of analysis. The struggle for movement scholars is to crack this box and find new space for analysis.

### *Rise of New Social Movements Challenges Static Forms*

Contemporary political trends have problematized the analysis of Griffin-inspired rhetoricians by producing complicated social movements that do not fit the traditional leader-centric, success driven framework. New media, diffusion of political power and a shift from the political to the personal have all called into question the traditional conception of social movements. The need for a new model comes from the potential traps that plague the old ways of thinking about social movements.

Recently postmodern sociologists have been challenging traditional models of social movement scholarship. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamieson have been

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the stifling nature of rationality see Luke, Merchant, and McLaughlin.

instrumental figures in this challenge, attacking the resource mobilization view of social movements in favor of a view that they call "cognitive praxis," focusing on the way in which protest activity constructs knowledge ("Cognitive" 161). The change has opened the door for a view of movements as achieving change through knowledge transformation rather than victories at the bargaining table or legislature.

One important change in social movement thinking has been the rise in new social movement analysis. Coined by European social movements scholars, new social movement studies focus on the cultural changes of new movements (feminism, ecology) that previously defied the simplistic lens of analysis of "old social movement analysis" (those tied to Resource Mobilization theories). There are a number of exciting European thinkers who are examining movements in new ways (e.g. Eyerman and Jamieson, Alberto Melucci, Klaus Eder, Paul Bagguley). As European scholars recognize that more complicated subject matter necessitates a more complicated lens of studies, American rhetoricians are beginning to see the importance of changing the way we think about social movements. Rhetoric is trying, but is mired in the disciplinary grip of single-issue studies or handcuffed by theoretical questions that preclude a more complex movement analysis.

Social movements do not correspond to a traditional social movement frame of analysis. New social movement studies recognized and adapted to this problem, suggesting that movements are agents of cultural transformation, moving away from some of the more traditional understandings of movements as simply institutional political agents.

The inadequacy of the concept of social movement is a symptom of a more general epistemological problem. The concept of movement belongs

to the same semantic and conceptual framework in which other notions, such as progress or revolution, were framed. In a world where change means crisis management and maintenance of systemic equilibrium, where "no future" is not only a slogan but the recognition that the system is both planetary and dramatically vulnerable, in such a world, the historicist paradigm fades and reveals the need for new conceptual frames (Melucci 799).

Melucci argues that the rise in new social movements as a distinct category from social movements requires moving beyond Resource Mobilization. According to Melucci, new social movements "are increasingly temporary, and their function is to *reveal the stakes*, to announce to society that a fundamental problem exists in a given area (797)." These new goals make for "different meaning and orientation of social action" because they are not driven by the need for traditional political success. Because new social movements do not organize or conceptualize themselves as seeking traditional political change (in the traditional political arena through established institutional channels), studying and evaluating them to determine if they can succeed in that goal may not be illuminating. Melucci concludes: "Because it apprehends a movement only as a given empirical actor, resource mobilization theory is unable to explain the meaning of these contemporary forms of action" (797).

The emergence of new social movements as a cultural phenomenon poses a number of theoretical challenges. First, the rise of new social movements requires new frames of analysis that can discuss the unique nature of the new approaches to protest. Second, the legacy of objectivity in social movement studies must be challenged in order to examine the movements effectively. Third, the focus on movements as though they were distinct unrelated phenomenon as case studies cripples analysis and must be transcended. Fourth, interdisciplinary scholarship can yield a more fruitful approach

because it can encourage us to engage analysis that comes from other fields of knowledge. Fifth, the return to activist methodology of Alain Touraine can help scholars tie the struggles of social movements to intellectual work .

### *New Rhetorical Theory of Movement Protest*

It is valuable to unearth a new method for conceptualizing and studying social movements in rhetoric. It is obvious that movements no longer conform to the categories of case-study analysis, objective claims, and strict borders among academic disciplines. The result of our uncritical adoption of these methods has been shallow research. We need to strive for a new way of thinking about social movements that can enable us to encompass as much of their essential nature as possible.

The first challenge is to return to the understanding that social movements are agents of change that transform cultural norms. With the rise in European new social movement studies there is a lot more understanding of the symbolic and cultural nature of the organization and strategies of movements. But there has also been a lack of analysis of how to study these new movements. With most attention focused on proving the existence of new social movements and describing the transitions between new and old movements, there has been a relative lack of scholarship examining the cultural changes that movements engender. Movements affect change by transforming our culture and they often do this by influencing public opinion. One of the causes of this situation is the intellectual legacy of public address that has been tied to the academic structures that dissuade critical thought about social movements. The challenge to scholars is to develop

strategies of criticism that shed light on the detail of protest patterns that unfold in this cultural terrain.

The second essential change that must take place is to challenge the simplistic creation of academic boundaries between social movement studies. Scholars have made the mistake of looking at single movements or using literature from a single field because they are limited by the boundaries of their disciplines. The academic constraints of particular disciplines have a substantial impact on the type of that various scholars bring to bear. Scholars create distinct borders between social movements as an epistemological model that helps to understand movements. Unfortunately, these models of study create self-referential lines of criticism that only serve to solidify the barriers between disciplines. Claims of primacy to a particular social movement or a line of analysis not only distance literatures that should be connected, but also cut vital pieces of information out of analysis. The methods used to analyze social movements have a direct result in the outcomes of those studies. The problem is not simply that scholars use particular tools to study movements, but that their propagation of those tools limits future studies. Fundamentally, the future of social movement studies is tied to questions of pedagogy.

Opening up the methods of social movement analysis to look at previously excluded phenomenon is an exciting kind of scholarship because it moves outside the traditional mores of movement analysis. Like a biology classroom that suddenly turns to look at the sociological impact of biological research, the very nature of transgressive research challenges movement pedagogy. In the process of studying social movements as a web of movements and exploring the connections, this challenge to prevailing methods can be joined. Education scholar Henry Giroux believes that the creation of

borders around subjects that are studied entrench power, social codes and values. The strategy for resistance is for students to become “border crossers, as a person moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power” (147). Inspired by post-modern thinkers, Giroux’s project of “counter memory” embraces indeterminacy in educational projects. This suggests a fundamental transformation in the way social movements are understood with focus shifted to how movements cross borders. Similarly, movement scholars could become border crossers by seeking out research from other fields, finding areas of movement study that travel between social movements, and by focusing on movements without the deterministic lens of public address.

The third necessary change is a disruption of the single-movement myopia. Opening up movement studies to see more than single movements and instead see the complicated webs of interaction between movements promises to be very fruitful. However, the single case study still holds as the primary method for examining movements.

Activists are well aware of the borrowing – of tactics, organizational forms, slogans, songs and so on – that goes on between movements. Movement scholars however, have been slow to acknowledge the phenomenon, owing perhaps to the dominance of the case study as a model for empirical research. Research has tended to focus on the emergence and development of single movements rather than on the links between movements. [. . .] Still, virtually no one has sought to theorize about the nature and significance of these links and the dynamics by which they are forged (McAdam and Rucht 72-72).

This single-issue focus is repeated in the method often used to study social movements.

This method involves asking students to learn to capture subjects of study and then break

them down according to pre-determined methods of analysis. This makes the call for a new kind of pedagogy all the more vital.

Moving away from the assumptions of objectivity can help to create new ways of looking at movements. The process of studying social movements from an outsider or objective status does two things: it creates an illusion of control and it gives the researcher power in a disparate manner. Often when we study something and claim to be outside the thing we are studying, then we make a *de facto* claim of objectivity. It is vital to remember that when we study phenomena we have an influence on the things we are studying – our very observation has an impact. When studying social movements this becomes obvious – when observing a protest and video-taping the participants it is likely that the researchers will be perceived of as a member of the law-enforcement community. When interviewing activists, the researcher's status as a supporter or critic of the movement has substantial implications on the outcome of the interview. To claim that one can study social movements and not affect the course of protest activity is impossible. Worse yet, this claim to objectivity creates an unequal power relation between the scholar and the movement. Because the scholar is removed from the things that she is studying, there is an element of judgment that becomes part of "objective" work. Studies of social movements make judgments of success and urge changes in strategy and rhetoric for movement participants, all with the notion that they are "outsiders" who are bringing a fresh perspective to the movement. An environmental scholar, Andrew McLaughlin, suggests that we need to rethink this notion of objectivity and the illusion of control that it encourages.

The crux of this illusion [of control] is a certain sort of blindness, a lack of peripheral vision. The illusion of control depends on abstracting from the



system of humanity/nature and attending to only selected aspects of that system. Control involves focusing on one small part of the visible, as if one were looking through a tunnel or a telescope. If we focus narrowly, then control appears to be possible. Indeed it is possible, if context is ignored (96).

The claim to be able to do research in a vacuum of context is the fundamental problem with objectivity. All scholarship has an effect on the movements being studied: to ignore this element is to create a falsehood for oneself that blinds the scholar to their own privileged status. Recognizing the impact that our own perceptions can have on our scholarship can only strengthen our own reflexive lens.

This reflexivity is a key dimension of action research methodology. Conceived by French sociologist Alain Touraine, action research proposes that the researcher “enter into a relationship with the social movement itself” (“Voice” 142). Initially seen as a large project for sociologists to connect with the movements they were studying, action research positions academics as a strategic tool to help social movements succeed. In Touraine’s programme (or approach), various scholars of social movements can play both an *agitator* function (“organize and conduct meetings with critics or opponents and to convey the groups viewpoints”) and a *secretary role*. (“noting the substance of the meetings, and . . . adopting an increasingly critical stance in evaluating the group”) (“Voice” 144). Underlying both kinds of action is the radical notion that the scholar should be involved in the process of the social movement, helping to articulate and pursue the goals of the movement. Using the action research method, Touraine enlisted the aid of graduate students and sympathetic colleagues to intervene in the protest movements of France to aid in the struggle against nuclear power, the labor movement in

Chile and in Poland to help with the rising Solidarity movement (“Anti-nuclear Protest.” “Solidarity.”)

Touraine’s activist research has been tried before with varying degrees of success. Francois Dubet and Michel Wieviorka claim that their attempts to undertake activist-research with several new social movements were very difficult. “Furthermore, the groups were unstable, ephemeral, because actors had a hard time fitting into the theoretically foreseen process of intervention, with its’ flexions and conversations. The research that led into Dubet’s book in 1987 used ten groups, but these did not last as long as the groups in previous projects: on the average seven meetings per group. The farther an action was removed from being a social movement, the harder it was to apply the sociological intervention method. In fact it became so difficult we even wondered whether it was worthwhile” (68).

In the face of such changes, we come to a number of important questions regarding the use of the action research methodology. Chief among them is the question that Dubet and Wieviorka wrested with: “Can the action-research methodology work with new social movements?” I will suggest that the new movements can only be adequately studied with an action research methodology because the make-up of a cultural movement requires that the researcher have insider status to recognize the critical building blocks of the movement identity. Action research gives access to the working structure of a movement that from the outside might appear to have little or no structure. Because I believe that action research can remedy the narrow analysis of previous work, it is important that we look at the theoretical justification of this method of scholarship.

## **Questions/Method of Study**

The new directions of movement research that this project will undertake, open up new questions about movements that can be asked. Some of these questions illuminate important aspects of animal rights protest, while others raise fresh theoretical issues for rhetorical theory of social movements. In the next section, I elucidate both types of thesis questions, setting the stage for discussion of the method I will use to explore such questions.

### *Questions about the Animal Rights Movement:*

- How does music act as a communication medium for protest messages for the animal rights movement?
- What kind of dialogue occurs between the different arms of the social movement during cross-fertilization?
- How does the animal rights movement frame issues of gender? What does a gendered lens bring to the broader questions of strategy and the prospect for change?
- What impact has the rise of gender-based consciousness had on the animal rights movement?
- How can the cross-fertilization approach interact with feminist animal rights ideas to create new understandings of movement interactions?

- What avenues of intervention related to the animal rights struggle does my reading of texts open up, and how do these potential interventions translate into opportunities for political organizing?

*Theoretical questions about social movements:*

- How do movements share ideas and strategies by cross-mobilizing and cross fertilizing, and how does such phenomena implicate understanding of social movements?
- How does the rhetorical legacy of a social movement affect stances on current controversies?
- What new theoretical tools are appropriate to analyze new social movements?
- Does new social movement activity change the way scholars have previously approached the criteria for assessing movement success or failure of protest rhetoric?

*Critical Approach*

The need for a new way to study complex new social movements such as the animal rights struggle is paramount because traditional methods are unlikely to elucidate the full richness of such new movement protest activity. This section will spell out the terms and categories of the rhetorical theory that I use to respond to these theoretical weaknesses. I propose to develop a method of reading texts that emphasizes cross-movement rhetoric and is particularly appropriate for study of the animal rights movement. After spelling out the terms of this critical method, I will discuss the texts

that will be examined in my analysis. In my analysis I will consider how the theoretical commitments involved in a cross-fertilizing theory of social movements necessarily entail an obligation of the researcher to see him/herself as an active participant in the field of social action.

### *New Rhetorical Theory*

The new protest dynamics created by new social movement activity call out for a change in the rhetorical method of analyzing movement rhetoric. The two primary changes that need to occur are the rethinking of the notion of the audience and a reformation of the nature of invention in movement argumentation. In traditional movement rhetoric studies, the audience was a subject operated upon by rhetoric. Audiences had preferences, histories, and ideas, but they were not producers of rhetoric. This approach reflected, in large part, the theoretical commitments of early public address scholarship. The object of study for public address was the orator – they were the active agents of change in the scene. This notion that rhetoric only goes in one direction, from the speaker to the audience, must be transformed to a more complex view where rhetoric is reconceptualized as the give-and-take between different movements and the public. New social movement activists do not just speak to the public or the establishment. They speak to each other as rank-and-file members. Furthermore, new social movements target public opinion as the primary medium of social change, and such efforts often skirt formal political structures. These strategic innovations demand retooled notions of audience in rhetorical analysis.

According to Aristotle, rhetoric is defined as finding the available means of persuasion (36). Movements create and maintain themselves by inventing rhetoric. For many years, rhetorical scholars have studied these inventions; however, such studies have largely remained confined to single intra-movement horizons of investigation. Rhetors invent parallels and commonalities *between* social movements in order to gain more members, build ties, or create differences that distinguish them from other movements, and rhetorical scholars can elucidate these peculiar dynamics of new social movement protest. Much like a healthy eco-system needs the continued migration of genetic material between niches, social movements remain healthy by spreading members and with them new ideas back and forth.

Movements not only constitute and define themselves through rhetoric, but they also enable change via rhetoric. Social movements make new knowledge by manipulating public symbols and common understandings. Calling into question old knowledge (gays are child molesters. African-Americans are dumber than whites, feminists are lesbians etc.), social movements seek to make new patterns of knowledge among themselves, allies, and the public at large. Study of the rhetorical moves that create those new norms re-frames our focus on the internal discussions and debates that occur within movements. Unhinging social movement study from the attachment to institutional change enables us to study the ways that new social movements target public opinion as the primary avenue of change (see Cohen and Arato).

*Method for reading texts*

My reading strategy for examining texts highlights the divergences between traditional views of the animal rights movement and what participants perceive. By looking at points of contact between social movements and arms of the animal rights movement, I hope to explore the questions posed in this dissertation. I want to find examples of arguments that extend olive branches between social movements or sections of movements. Likewise, I want to find places where social movements attempt to distinguish themselves from other movements by attacking them. I also want to find points of interaction between established authority and social movements. The goal is to find the constitutive rhetoric that makes up the social movement and to begin to understand the complex web of interaction that makes the movement work.

The call for new theory and methodology is necessary because previous methods of studying social movements are insufficient to elucidate fully the complex rhetorical dynamics of the animal rights movement. If you attend an animal rights protest, you will often find the participants chanting: “one struggle, one fight, human freedom, animal rights.” This chant reveals a fundamental complexity to the animal rights movement – the participants rarely stop their activism at the boundaries of animal rights. They are often participants of other social movements (driven frequently by ecological and social justice causes). The interrelationship between animal rightists and other movements is a fundamental part of the organizing, strategizing, and coordinating of the movement. Any theoretical lens employed to analyze the movement must take this potential for cross-pollination into account.

In many ways, the animal rights movement is the conscience of the new social movement left, attempting to be a 'voice for the voiceless': it urges other left-leaning activists to consider their diet, clothing, and level of activism. Along with this notion of challenge to other movement participants, there is also a strong self-reflective strain among animal rightists, i.e. they are constantly challenging themselves. The animal rights movement provides a good example of how cross-fertilization is so strong among new social movements because of their cultural makeup. One can grasp an understanding of the identity of movement activists only by attending to the nexus between animal and other oppressions. It is fundamental to the identity of the movement to question its members' consistencies and to seek inter-relationships between animal oppression and other oppressions.

The primary sources used for this work are a series of interviews with activists. I have interviewed traditional leaders and rank-and-file members of the animal rights movement. These interviews are fundamentally influenced by seven years of personal activity within the animal rights movement and a deep connection to the goals and controversies that face the movement. These primary sources are complemented by movement literature, movies and musical recordings which represent important foci of analysis. Analysis of these texts promises to reveal the symbolic strategy of the animal rights movement and the potential for new understandings.

### *The Importance of Reflexive Theory/The Activist Turn*

Given that the animal rights movement is messy and resists codification according to traditional tools, insider analysis can provide a method of study that can get at



elements of the movement that traditional studies might not. One key message of this project is that we must look at the interconnections between forces struggling to use the medium of knowledge production as an avenue of social change in order to understand the new protest dynamics engendered by new social movements. One consequence of this emphasis on cross-fertilization and cross-pollination is a heightened focus on inter-movement dialogue. Another component of this theoretical move highlights the role of academic scholarship as a pollinating agent. Scholars do not operate in a vacuum – the work and research that we engage in has an effect on the “subjects” that we study. To feign ignorance means putting on blinders to our status and playing make-believe. Instead, we should take a cue from Nancy Fraser who suggests that we must recognize and act on our subjectivity (33-5). Our own nature as political beings makes us a part of the movement struggles. The difference is recognizing one’s own position and being willing to speak truth to power about that position. Our work always has an impact on the field that we study; what is needed is a way to determine how to act given this contingency.

An activist mode of research on social movements plays off elements of study. As one does field research about the protest movement and applies it to the academic theories about social movements, the involvement of the researcher in the social movement brings out elements of the movement that might not be easily found through study, but that become evident through participation. In the animal rights case, consider the growing division between younger activists and older activists that stems from appearance issues. Many of the older Pittsburgh animal rights activists see the pierced, tattooed, dreadlocked image as an unsettling face, one that is counterproductive to the

cause when that image greets the public. On the other hand, many younger activists see these kinds of fashions as essential to *who they are* and see the criticisms of the older generation as closed-minded. This conflict might not have been obvious to a strictly academic researcher because this tension is not part of the public front of the animal rights movement. Only through insiders' emails, meetings, and in conversations with activists who trust the academic can this kind of difference come out. This kind of reflexive awareness of the political importance of scholarship has the potential to transform academic work.

Likewise, the academic study of social movements provides essential information for activists who want to contribute to the goals of the social movement. The academic researcher can bring knowledge that is gained through careful examination of the social movements literature to the community of activists. For example, Touraine suggests that academics can play the important roles of agitator and secretary to bring the academic knowledge of the movement to assist the activist struggle.<sup>14</sup>

This activist impulse affirms recent moves in rhetorical studies where scholars such as Anderson (1993) and Mitchell (1996) have encouraged academic interventions and thematized the political concerns raised by such initiatives. This move to bring activist studies to rhetoric is a natural turn because rhetoric is a fundamentally productive art (Leff; King). This final turn completes the circle of this project by suggesting that rhetoricians can help to create a new future.

## Chapter Organization

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<sup>14</sup> Touraine engages with anti-nuclear movements in France and the Solidarity movements in Poland in an attempt to both study movements and help these movements more effectively achieve their goals.

Chapter two addresses the importance of punk rock to the mobilization of animal rights movement. Interrogation of this aspect of protest will reveal generational divisions between movement activists and highlight rhetorical organizing opportunities provided by the music, social gatherings and rituals of the punk rock community. Through interviews with activists who are both animal rights activists and punks, I investigate the importance of punk music as a motivator for activism and for concerts as a locus of activism.

Chapter three explores the relationships between animal rights movement and conceptions of social movement success. Exploring how social movements utilize disparate protest strategies, we get a very different view of the animal rights movement. This avenue of investigation leads to a more complicated notion of interaction between different arms of the social movement itself. With a focus on the membership of the movement as agencies of rhetorical invention and creation, a new perspective to analyze protest behavior can be generated.

Chapter four will address the complexities of gender in the animal rights movement. The work and ideas of Carol Adams are used as leveraging tools to explore how the animal rights movement relates to the difficult question of allies. Using feminism as the central example the chapter explores the impulse toward purity that permeates and separates much of the animal rights movement. I will also look at how gender can be part of animal rights mobilization strategies especially building ties to the feminist community. Using interviews and primary documents, a contrast will emerge between the feminist alliance-building norms and the purity-driven norm of self-righteous animal rights activists. This provides the space for a careful discussion of social

movement cross-mobilization and the value (and risk) of making alliances between social movements.

Chapter five draws out the conclusions that the dissertation has achieved. Taking a more personal turn, this chapter explores my hopes for the academic study of social movements, and for the animal rights movement itself.

## **Chapter II**

### ***One Struggle! One Fight! Animal Liberation! Human Rights!: The Music and Message of the New Animal Rights Struggle.***

A dog's liver is destroyed by alcohol **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 a cats head is implanted with electrodes **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 a donkey is exposed to massive radiation **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 spitting up blood as its skin erodes **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 an elephant is restrained and electrocuted **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 disease is injected into a rat **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 a monkey's eyes are stitched together **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 to see if it can function like a bat **THIS IS VIVISECTION**  
 All experiments done without anesthetic  
 sometimes humanity can be so damn pathetic  
 The capital is funded big business can't resist  
 The mutilations are performed by so-called "scientists"  
 They always claim it's done to benefit humankind  
 But what usefulness could come from such disgusting crimes  
 The only advancements made are in profit not in health  
 And when we allow these actions, we participate ourselves  
 --Aus Rotten, "Pathetic Humanity"

Imagine this speech given by an enraged animal rights activist. The words might fly off her tongue in a frenzy of rage, calling upon us all to become active and fight against animal experimentation. Rhetorical scholars might thematize and evaluate the speech for its successful use of parallel construction or its tepid rhyme scheme. But this is not a speech given by an activist, it is a section of a song by the punk rock band Aus Rotten. Aus Rotten is made up of Pittsburgh-based anarchist punks who are very active in the animal rights movement. They host meetings for local organizations at their shared group house. They play benefit shows to make money for causes and they volunteer to help out at protests and lectures. Aus Rotten is not alone in their participation in the animal rights movement. Hundreds of independent punk rock bands and thousands of

punk rockers help to sustain and perpetuate the animal rights movement. Yet their contribution to the movement has not been studied or credited. This chapter remedies this lapse by analyzing the symbiotic relationship between punk rock and the animal rights movement.

Blurring the lines between activism and music, punk rock bands are introducing animal rights ideology to young members of the punk rock community and the animal rights movement is facing an influx of punk-influenced activists. What kind of political perspective can one gather from a punk rock band? How can punk rock, a musical genre that is generally perceived as apolitical, bring about political action? What kinds of effects will this new generation of activists have on the larger animal rights movement? This chapter explores how bands like **Aus Rotten** are affecting the animal rights movement. We will look at this intersection through the words of insiders who operate at the nexus of animal rights organizing and punk rock. We will look at the controversies of a musical foundation for activism from the insiders themselves. And we will explore how this kind of study can break new ground in the study of social movements.

### **The Animal Rights Movement at the Turn of the Millennium.**

Perhaps the most dramatic issue that is facing the animal rights community is the growing phenomenon of younger, more bombastic activists. Starting with the rise of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a covert organization whose operating mode is based on direct action and the destruction of property to encourage animal liberation, the assumptions of the movement have changed. "With its dramatic military tactics, the ALF has shaped the popular image of animal activists far out of proportion to its small size, so

that many perceive the entire movement as dangerous, destructive and terrorist” (Jasper and Nelkin 34). The rise of direct action-oriented activism has brought unprecedented attention and controversy. When *USA Today*, the nation’s most widely circulated newspaper, chose to profile the animal rights movement on the front page it focused on the violence and threats of this new arm of the animal rights movement. *USA Today* reported that 83 scientists who experiment on animals received razor blades in the mail from a group identified only as the Justice Department.<sup>1</sup> The Justice Department and others have taken the covert direct action philosophy of the ALF and created new cells and names. And as Jasper and Nelkin have suggested, their impact has been significant both on the public perception of the animal rights movement and on the movement itself.

The Animal Liberation Front is a subsection of the animal rights movement that focuses on direct action to free animals from suffering. They do not engage in peaceful protests in front of laboratories. Rather they focus on direct action to liberate animals. The goals of the Animal Liberation Front are “To liberate animals from places of abuse, i.e. fur farms, laboratories, factory farms, etc. and place them in good homes where they may live out their natural lives free from suffering. To inflict economic damage to those who profit from the misery and exploitation of animals” (@nu). The actions of the ALF have been detailed by a number of writers most of whom have focused on the exploits and philosophy of the ALF rather than the impact that the ALF has on the rest of the animal rights movement (see Finsen and Finsen; Jasper and Nelkin; Guither).

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<sup>1</sup> *USA Today* quoted ALF spokesman David Barbarash as saying, “I would suggest that ALF activities have increased dramatically in the last three to four years” (2). Barbarash’s reasoning was that younger activists were not afraid to break the law because there have been few convictions for animal rights direct action.

The rise of the Animal Liberation Front and like-minded groups has changed the strategic arsenal of the movement and affected all the other wings of the animal rights movement (Guither 59). The idea of an Animal Liberation Front comes from England where the group's name has been long associated with direct non-violent activism. In Great Britain, previous groups of Hunt Saboteurs (individuals who disrupted hunting excursions) and a group called the Band of Mercy created the idea of an Animal Liberation Front in 1976 (Finsen and Finsen 100). To the British activists who had created the precursors to the ALF, the idea that others would take up their crusade was unthinkable.<sup>2</sup> They believed that they were so far ahead of public opinion that they would never have public support, so they were forced to undertake anonymous direct action (Robert). The British idea of an Animal Liberation Front, an anonymous, decentralized cadre of activists who engaged in direct action to free animals, struck a chord with American animal rights activists who took up the name of the ALF and undertook to continue its work here in the U.S..

The growth of the Animal Liberation Front has resulted in a substantial change in the tactics, goals, and structure of the animal rights movement. Previous to the ALF the animal rights movement assumed the tactical position of their predecessors, the animal welfarists. These movements agitated the public, called for government agencies to pass laws to protect animals, and sheltered animals that had been abandoned. While those tactics are still the mechanisms used by the majority of movement members, the ALF has opened up the possibility for more direct action to free animals from specific instances of

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<sup>2</sup> "The handful of 'veterans' of the Band of Mercy blinked in surprise at this new phenomena. Up until this time there had been virtually no support for their activities from the rest of the animal protection movement and two Band of Mercy members had been thrown off the HSA committee (they were later reinstated) when it was suspected that they were involved in illegal activities" (Robert 10).



abuse. Finsen and Finsen conclude that "ALF-raids are focused on one or more of three goals: liberating animals, obtaining information [. . .], and destroying equipment use in exploitation of animals and diverting research funds" (102). Like the Justice Department's mailing of razor blades to researchers, these new tactics are cultivated out of a feeling of frustration.<sup>3</sup>

Feeling as though their protests and education were falling on deaf ears in a society that disregards the welfare of animals, animal rights activists have become more militant. The justification for direct action is primarily moral for activists. Jasper and Nelkin describe the clear division between these kinds of activists and most animal rightists.

But activists have also been driven to militancy directly by their moral sentiments. If animal experiments are evil, the equivalent of another Holocaust, then almost any measure can-and should-be taken to stop them. [. . .] They reject reformist tactics as inadequate, and use radical actions to distance themselves from welfare groups (49).

These feelings of frustration with the current pace of social change are common in the animal rights movement. Support for radical actions is often seen as a litmus test for some activists since one's support or opposition to ALF actions places one in a distinct faction of the animal rights movement. In addition, the rest of the animal rights movement that is engaged in education and activism has had to grapple with the new image of all animal rights activists as covert terrorists. As a result of these complications, many organizations have had to publicly disavow their support for the ALF.

In addition to bringing new challenges, the rise of ALF has introduced new organizational ideas to the movement. Rather than being a clear-cut organization, the

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<sup>3</sup> Although direct action as a tactic is new to the animal rights movement, it is not new to other protest movements. For an analysis of the role that direct action has played in the war resistance movement see

Animal Liberation Front "consists of small, autonomous groups of individuals nationwide who carry out 'direct action' according to ALF guidelines" (Achor 115). These guidelines foster independence and flexibility of targets. ALF activists have glued the locks to fur stores, liberated minks from fur farms, destroyed laboratory equipment, lit animal transport trucks on fire, and used dozens of other covert tactics. For the ALF, animal rights organizing and meetings are extremely private affairs – with confidences shared only after years of trust.

Ideologically, this division has been charted along the “reform/revolution” continuum of social movements protest. Ideology in the context of animal rights varies along a range of possible options from absolute revolutionary (ALF/Justice Department) to reformative (American Anti-Vivisection Society/Humane Society of the U.S.).<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging the reform/revolutionary continuum might help us to position the animal rights movement in terms of larger society, but it does not help us to explore how and why the radical arm of the animal rights movement is growing. Perhaps positioning the radical parts of the animal rights movement as a counter-movement within the animal rights movement might provide some insight. Leland M. Griffin, the founder of social movement studies in the field of rhetoric, briefly developed the idea of a counter-movement within a larger social movement, yet he did not give the subject much commentary (“On Studying” 226-7). But the problem with studying the ALF-style actions as a counter movement is that most counter movement analysis focuses on active opposition to the movement, not to a division in the social movement (Cathcart; Jasper,

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The War Resisters Manual. For an analysis of how direct action has influenced AIDS activism see Crimp.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to recognize that this continuum describes the animal rights movement. Those who are interested in animal welfare (ensuring for the well-being of animals) would be largely dismissed by most animal rights. So we are talking about a continuum that is already fairly radical.

“Recruiting”; Lucas). Rather than concentrate on the obvious, that the ALF is a more extreme outgrowth of the animal rights philosophy, we should look at the impact that an invigorated radical wing of a social movement can have.

The radical drift in the animal rights movement is transforming the demographics of the movement. The animal rights movement has been traditionally made up of women and middle class college-educated individuals (Einwohner, “Gender,” 56-7). The older style activists are being crowded out of the limelight by newer, more radical protesters. Dr. Ray Greek, the animal rights movements chief spokesperson for animal experimentation issues, described the change in a Personal interview. “When I go all around the country the people I interact with . . . there was a time when you looked at old pictures of the protests in the 80s and it was the little old ladies in tennis shoes . . . Now it seems to be people under the age of 30” (Personal interview).

The animal rights movement is changing and much of that change can be attributed to the rise in ALF-style activities. Newer activists have increasingly been drawn to the zero-tolerance perspective of the ALF. The older activists with animal-welfare leanings are being overshadowed by direct action. The vast majority of publicity that the animal rights movement gets is about their increasingly dramatic actions, ranging from the sexy public advertisements of PETA to the flame-ridden anonymity of ALF. The animal rights movement is undergoing a metamorphosis with the addition of these new activists as the movement grapples with the issues of tactics. While some wonder about the effectiveness of ALF direct action, other defend years of work in the public

relations area. What kind of public face will the movement have? Will this new generation of activists and tactics take center stage?<sup>5</sup>

While other researchers have documented these changes in the movement, usually by describing different groups in the animal rights movement, the critical question of why these new animal rights activists are more radical has not been explored.<sup>6</sup> I propose that a vibrant radical grassroots arm of the animal rights movement is sustained by punk rock music. A community of punk rock is introducing activists to the movement, providing financial support for the animal rights movement and radicalizing activists. In order to support this argument I will discuss the connections between punk rock music and political mobilization, as well as the role of music in framing political protest and the issues that come from this relationship.

### **The Politics of Punk**

Punks are notorious for not being political. The Sex Pistols permanently influenced an entire generation's view of what a punk looked like and acted like.<sup>7</sup> The public image of punk music was one of destruction and senselessness and, from Richard

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<sup>5</sup> At the animal rights 2000 conference the ALF supporters clashed often with other activists. An undercurrent of tension at the conference came to a head when movie star Alicia Silverstone (who attended the workshops at the conference, but was still seen as a newcomer to the movement) was given an award. When she was awarded this prize she began speaking out against direct action tactics and calling for the animal rights movement to operate totally in public. Her speech was interrupted by dozens of ALF supporters who booed and hissed her.

<sup>6</sup> Jasper in particular describes these changes. "Thus a more radical animal 'rights' movement developed alongside existing humane societies and animal 'welfare' organizations . . ." ("Moral" 71). But his analysis comes up short when the time comes to ask how this radicalization of the animal rights movement is coming about. He focuses his argument on animal rights activists recruiting intimates (parents, spouses) and recruiting strangers (via education). Both of these connections are certainly ways for non-activists to join the movement. But what Jasper is missing is analysis of the friendship networks and political ties that encourage others to join the animal rights movement.

<sup>7</sup> Eliot Kidd, the lead singer and guitar player for the punk band the Demons explained the impact the Sex Pistols had: ". . . the Pistols were more outrageous. The English bands were basically doing their

Hell and his "Blank Generation" to the Ramones, punks were associated with trouble, anarchy and destruction (Palmer 273-275).<sup>8</sup> Whatever politics were behind punk rock many considered to be "fluid and ambiguous" (Leblanc 44). This section will take that notion to task, providing a brief history of political activist-oriented punk rock. This historical perspective will set up explorations of how the punk rock scenes mesh with the animal rights movement and the nature of a new politics that emerges from this union.

Despite the image, many punks have been political and within the subculture of punk there has been a vibrant element that has been adamantly active, engaged in causes ranging from nuclear disarmament to human rights promotion. While the public has consumed media perceptions of violent punks, small enclaves of activist punks have emerged. The most famous enclave was "the second wave of European punk (1980-1984) which was visibly politically oriented. Bands such as Crass, Conflict and Discharge in the UK, The Ex and BGK in Holland, and MDC and Dead Kennedys in America, changed many punks in to rebellious thinkers rather than just Rock 'n' Rollers" (O'Hara 71).

Members of The Clash (a more popular version of these bands) were great political sloganeers but lacked much of the earnest political activism of these smaller bands (Gray). These new bands saw politics and music as critically entwined. They

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impression of what they thought was going on in New York, and it was over exaggerated" (Quoted in McNeil and McCain 259-260).

<sup>8</sup> Although the public perception of punks (fueled by media coverage that focused on violence and the senselessness) is negative, many participants feel that even the British 77-style punk rock of the Sex Pistols should be considered political. Craig O'Hara argues that these bands were political in their drive to foster non-conformity among their listeners: "The most hated thing in the world was someone who was a willing conformist. Many punk bands have built their platforms or messages with the advocacy and admittance of nonconformity" (27). This culture of non-conformism lays the groundwork for political activism and a willingness to challenge social norms so vital for political activism. More importantly, the outrageous nature of these early punk bands cultivates a kind of social ethos that attracts participants to music and politics.

lived in the punk rock communities that they sang about and they created a norm of "Do-It-Yourself" (DIY) that continues to be the political *modus operandi* of the punk community. Bands like Crass and Conflict operated more like political organizations than bands. They would produce fanzines (self-produced magazines), live in cooperative houses, run their own record labels and refuse to have anything to do with corporate media (including refusing to be interviewed by large publications). The concept of DIY is fundamental to punk politics – it suggests not only a way of operating politically, but its various interpretations fundamentally reject traditional political methods of integration and cooperation. Rather the punk/DIY ethic suggests that punks organize and create alternative forms of media (zines), political organizations (collectives, blocs), and engage in activism (direct action).

These actions of DIY are strategic moves to be independent of the traditional framework that one opposes. If a punk is opposed to mass media corporatization, then making one's own zine and exchanging it with others performs a quick end-run around that system. Stephen Duncombe has outlined the importance of this ideology in his book, *Notes From the Underground*, which documents the social and cultural revolution of zines: "Culture is the space where radically different ways of seeing, thinking and being can be experimented with and developed. Zines are one means for creating this space."<sup>9</sup> Similar patterns are occurring with independently produced, recorded and distributed

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<sup>9</sup> Duncombe is also explicit that the end result of cultural change has to be political action. "But without a connection between cultural imagination and political implementation this means little" (175).

music, and the production of concerts which are operated by punks themselves rather than promoters.<sup>10</sup>

This change was primarily triggered by the political introduction of anarchism as a philosophy into the punk community. Penny Rimbaud, one of the driving forces of the Crass organization said, "Anarchy is the only form of political thought that does not seek to control the individual through force" (O'Hara 83). Although the style and dress of punks has roots that go back to the better known punks of 1977 like the Sex Pistols, the philosophy of punk really is connected to these Anarchist bands. Their ideology fostered a commitment to progressive politics and a strong distrust of authority. Together these things created political music that was distributed and sold via a growing network of independent stores, magazines and dealers. Punk became a separate community that struggled together and influenced many people.<sup>11</sup>

Popularization of the DIY ethic and an anarchist philosophy led punks to embrace explicitly political activism. Bands like Crass and Conflict became associated with political movements (particularly the British anti-nuclear protest movement Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament or CND). Penny Rimbaud explained how much an effect the Crass's adoption of the CND had on the organization: "We were responsible for introducing it to thousands of people who would later become the backbone of its revival.

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<sup>10</sup> The notion of DIY may be considered a rejoinder to Cathcart's claims that movements only exist in the face of response from an opponent. The exposition of DIY social movements suggests that many social movements engage with activism to create alternative spaces, organizations, and institutions.

<sup>11</sup> Penny Rimbaud, drummer for the Crass described the ties between the Crass politics and the DIY lifestyle. "From the peace camps to the underground cells of Class War, our particular brand of anarchism was radicalising the lives of thousands of people throughout the world. Every week we would receive hundreds of letters with requests for anything from badges to advice on how to set up a commune . . . Apart from approaches by the music press which rarely got beyond the initial phone-call, no requests for interviews were ever turned down. Our reluctance to deal with the established press reflected our policy of support for the DIY media. It was a policy that created a far greater diversity of overview than the established press could ever have hoped to offer. At the same time, those who might want to know about us were obliged to buy small publications that they might not have otherwise have ignored" (130).

A new and hitherto uninformed section of society was being exposed to a form of radical thought that culminated in the great rallies of the early eighties" (109-110). The Crass in particular raised political ideas in their lyrics and attempted to back them up with action that was philosophically consistent with their politics.

These bands set the standard for future punks whose initial interest might be music, but whose incarnations would include the political philosophies of anarchy and DIY. But these philosophies suggest that traditional political actions like lobbying and participating in political parties would never be consistent with the punk philosophy, so punks allied themselves with non-traditional political action, especially radical social movements. Craig O'Hara positions the philosophy of punk as reaching its political arm in the form of direct political activism. Explaining that the anarchistic leanings make direct action a logical outgrowth of a political philosophy, O'Hara writes:

Dutch punks have bombed Shell gas stations for their ties to South Africa, punks worldwide have destroyed animal research labs and the property of those who run them, and billboards across several countries have been altered to have political meaning. These acts and many more (against McDonalds, banks, etc.) are all viewed as actions taken against oppressors (93).

The politics of punk have to be consistent with the philosophies of "Doing it Yourself" and anarchy. Most punks support direct action against the state, multi-national corporations, and other agencies of social control. Along with these politics comes a uniquely local character to punks' political activism. Punks in different areas often are involved in distinct kinds of political actions ranging from animal rights to feeding the homeless; yet the decentralized, grassroots nature of their activism remains constant. The reason for this is that the DIY ethic has encouraged local participation.



One of the vital contributions that the DIY/Anarchist ethic made to punk rock is the concept that anyone could do it – local punk scenes emerged far from actual punk centers. Being a punk de-emphasized the technical nature of music and contributed a feeling that anyone could play music or be a part of the scene. Because kids in towns were not waiting for a big band to come to them, they would instead create their own bands, zines and ways to distribute music. So thousands of small bands sprouted up across the United States, each with their own characteristics. In some of these enclaves new punk styles and ideas would develop, bringing new ideas to punks. *Profane Existence*, a punk magazine, argued “we are creating our own alternatives. We have created our own music, our own lifestyle, our own community, and our own culture. The more we kick at the foundations of our oppressors, the closer we will come to true freedom” (15). The nature of punk is decentralized and independent, and this is reflected in the politics that spring from punk.

One of the big changes happened in the early 1980s, when the Washington D.C. band Minor Threat created a punk movement called straightedge. Straightedge was a call for punks to give up substance abuse and live their lives in a positive manner. Ian Mackaye, the lead singer for Minor Threat, explained how his ideas about punk and freedom led to the creation of Straightedge.

Punk rock introduced me to this whole underground, and in that there was this incredible array of ideas, philosophies, approaches to life—I was challenged on all these different levels. There was philosophical, theological, sexual, political, musical . . . all these ideas, an incredible assortment . . . and there was room for everybody, and it was open to everyone. So of course it totally made sense for me to be like, “Yeah, well I’m a punk rocker and I’m straight,” and no one could believe it. My friends and I would say “Yeah, we’re straight punk rockers,” and it was unheard of at the time because everybody felt punk rock just meant that you were totally self-destructive and that was it (quoted in Lahicky 96-7).

Straightedge had a massive effect on punk and the idea of remaining substance free became wildly popular among many in the punk community. Hundreds of bands sprouted up with the ideology of remaining pure and avoiding intoxication. Bands like Youth of Today, Bold, Slapshot, Turning Point, Refuse, the Gorilla Biscuits, and many more helped form a generation of straightedge punks. One of the biggest effects that Straightedge had was the introduction of vegetarianism/veganism to the punk community. In the quest to maintain bodily integrity, punks who avoided alcohol and cigarettes saw vegetarianism as a logical outgrowth of Straightedge.<sup>12</sup>

Straightedge had a dramatic effect on the punk rock community, but its political effect was varied. Most of these new straightedge bands were vegetarian, but after that, they ran the gamut from quasi-fascist to hippie-peaceniks. The most common image of straightedge hardcore bands was that of the New York based band Youth of Today. Youth of Today's politics were often vague and their outlook could easily be described as macho. Donning construction gloves and chain link belts, wielding expensive musical instruments and appearing dramatically clean cut, these straightedge hardcore punks represented a new fashion movement and an ideology that although different, was not all that hard for male punks to swallow. Vegetarian slogans were up front in the band's performance, but the emphasis was on having a good time, and politics were put on the back burner.

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<sup>12</sup> Porcell, a seminal Straightedge guitarist who played guitar with Youth of Today was interviewed in Beth Lehigh's book *All Ages*. He explains about the Youth of Today song "No More" which was about animal suffering and the impact that it had on the scene. "After the Youth of Today song 'No More' came out, practically the whole scene went vegetarian. When we wrote that song we weren't sure if kids would be into the idea or completely turned off by it. But we didn't care. It was such an urgent message, and we figured that if people were really serious about not poisoning their bodies and polluting their minds, they'd take to it. Pretty soon being a vegetarian became synonymous with being straightedge. It really inspired

Unlike Youth of Today, peace-punks like 7-Seconds focused their political energy on the capabilities of the young to change the world. Their songs were about building community and remaining strong to oneself. These punks were positive—a term that came to mean politically progressive, socially aware and usually vegetarian. Vegetarianism and straightedge were downplayed in the music in exchange for a more generic political polemic on empowerment.

At its most extreme point, the intersection between straightedge and animal rights was seen in the Memphis hardline movement and its premiere band, Raid. This band positioned itself as the harbinger of a new ideology in the punk movement that joined an ultra-straightedge lifestyle with the politics of purity. Hardliners, Raid included, argued for direct action to save the earth and animals and “dealing out justice to those guilty of destroying it” (Raid). With songs like “Under the Ax” and “Blood Green,” Raid became famous for its political intolerance. This perspective of radical environmentalism/animal rights meshed with metallic hardcore music would find its most popular expression in the Syracuse band Earth Crisis.

Earth Crisis combined a chunky metal musical style with vigorous animal rights philosophy. Their debut 7-inch record, “All Out War,” was a massive success in part because of the zero-tolerance attitude the band took about straightedge, veganism and ecological destruction. Consider the lyrics to the song “Stand By” about violence against animals: “There will be no compromise, no more negotiating, if you refuse to change, then you’re guilty and must be destroyed, thoughts of superiority, your supremacist crimes must end, you’re a demon with blood on your hands, your death will bring their

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me to think that others were actually taking the message of the music to heart. Things were starting to change and it really gave us a revolutionary spirit. We were out to change the world” (131).

freedom” (“All Out War”). These radical politics combined with an attractive hardcore sound to create a powerful and successful band. Earth Crisis continues to perform and record records and they have succeeded in selling hundreds of thousands of albums, a major success for an underground band.<sup>13</sup>

Through all of the changes that straightedge and positive hardcore brought about, many remained committed to the template of the original English anarchist political bands like the Crass and Conflict. Through the political-anarchist DIY ethic of the British political bands like the Crass and the American straightedge movement, animal concerns became a central tenet of punk philosophy. Often, the animal compassion that is represented by Straightedge mixed with the anarchist philosophies of the DIY punk communities to make support for animal rights and animal liberation a logical necessity in local incarnations of the punk movement. Animal rights became a fundamental political facet of modern punk, and it is now commonplace for punks to espouse the ideas of animal rights. Punks’ politics and philosophy came to encourage participants to be active in promoting animal rights and vegetarianism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that much of the punk community is less than enthused with Earth Crisis’s violent tendencies. Taina Delvalle, the lead singer of Anti-Product believes that the energetic work that the Syracuse straightedge hardcore bands have put forward is dangerous. “I definitely see a change happening being that my town is right next to Syracuse which is the root of all that shit! The irony in that is that the group that started all that in Syracuse were two friends of mine who were women the ADL. I think it is really frustrating and I think that it destroys community. I like the fact that people can be dedicated about something and that people can be passionate about something. We’re not making connections about sexism and racism and other different power struggles, and we’re not recognizing that the most important thing about animal liberation is building a strong movement. What happens in Syracuse pushes people away from being involved in Animal Liberation, especially women. I think it needs to be rethought” (Personal interview).

<sup>14</sup> I am not arguing that every punk is necessarily an animal rights activist. Instead I am arguing that the entire community is aware and consciously positions themselves around animal rights. Punks know that animal rights exists and each punk has considered the implications of their choices regarding animal rights – whether they agree with animal rights or not, they have encountered the philosophy. Most progressive punk bands and straightedge hardcore bands retain an explicit lens of animal rights. But many punks choose to remain apolitical or simply in support of anarchism.

Just as the anarchist-leaning punks would avoid political parties as being hierarchical and rigged, the politics of the animal rights movement came to be represented in the Animal Liberation Front for punk rockers, and a vocal part of the punk community has been driving the support for the Animal Liberation Front. "Punks have turned to the ALF partly due to their direct action techniques, partly because mainstream animal rights groups often give the cold shoulder to punks who do not adhere to their conformist protest tactics, but mostly because the ALF succeeds at its mission" (O'Hara 137-8). Philosophically and politically, the no-compromise ALF perspective of the animal rights movement is drawing support from the punk community. The punk alliance with the ALF makes sense because the ALF organization is not in conflict with the punk ideals of anarchy and because direct action is miles away from traditional politics.

Chrissy Vandenberg agrees. She is a chief organizer with Vegan Action in the Bay Area, and she argues that the punk philosophy meshes well with veganism and animal rights because it matches a long-standing punk tactic, the boycott.

Being vegan is boycotting the government is a very large way, so I think that is definitely a very big part of it. I think that Food Not Bombs pulls in a lot of punk kids and makes that connection between vegetarianism and veganism. It is definitely a kind of "fuck the man" and "I'm not going to eat the bullshit that you are giving me, literally. I'm not going to eat that food and I'm not going to participate in that kind of cruel torture/exploitation." For some reason it is just an obvious awareness to punk kids (Personal interview).

The connections between the punk community and the animal rights movement have spawned dozens of musical collaborations, films and documentaries.<sup>15</sup> Consider the benefit record *Realization* produced for Mike Hill, a British Hunt Saboteur who was

killed while disrupting a foxhunt. This record features four prominent straightedge hardcore bands, all singing about animal liberation. The booklet that comes with the record contains lyrics, a history of the Hunt Saboteurs, arguments about becoming a vegetarian, and graphic photographs of cows being slaughtered. There is also the 1992 *Voice of the Voiceless* compilation that contains more than twenty songs about animal liberation and whose proceeds go to the Animal Defense Leagues (the ALF support network). There are dozens of examples of record proceeds being given to animal rights organizations. Perhaps the most telling collaboration between animal rights and punk was the 1999 Primate Freedom Tour.

In the summer of 1999, In Defense of Animals (IDA), a west-coast animal rights organization, sponsored the Primate Freedom Tour. Initially the brainchild of Oregon activist Craig Rosenbraugh, the Primate Freedom Tour was envisioned as a caravan travelling across the United States protesting primate experimentation at each of the federally funded primate research facilities and major research institutions along the way. Rosenbraugh and IDA worked with the political punk record label Tribal War Records and arranged for animal rights bands to accompany the tour. The activists who were attracted to a summer's worth of travel tended to be punks. The nature of the tour (a summer of close quarters, possibility of being arrested and tight relationships with other activists and radical punk bands) created a space for a new face of animal activism to be seen and heard.

Overwhelmingly, the philosophy of the Primate Freedom Tour was no-compromise animal liberation—heavily influenced by punk, DIY ethics and direct action

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<sup>15</sup> Consider the two *Breaking Free* video magazines that include clear references to the punk rock communities as well as a humorous take on the life of underground activists.

animal rights philosophy. Favored tactics included massive protest and public relations pressure on the institutions that used animals. In San Francisco a dozen activists were arrested as they attempted to enter a research laboratory and document the health of the animals held within. At the same time, a large protest was held outside the research facility (Wallace). The goals of the tour were tied up with the ideas of the organizers. Craig Rosenbraugh explained that the goals of the Primate Freedom Tour were to inspire a new kind of animal rights movement.

We founded an organization called CEPE [Coalition to End Primate Experimentation], which consists of representatives of areas around where the primate research centers were at that time. Now it has extended beyond that. The group decided on this goal of the 1999 Primate Freedom Tour which would turn out to be a three month tour going to over a dozen primate experimentation and research facilities with the intent on being number one: creating a new movement, creating an idea and a visualization that a new movement is going on against vivisection. To do that you need publicity. In every single local area we got a lot of headlines, news coverage, TV coverage. And by the time we got to the end when we got to D.C. we were getting national coverage. What that did in the American public mind, was to create the idea that there is not only an animal rights movement, but a movement that is specific to animal research. And above and beyond what the tour did, which was one of its goals, was to place as much media pressure on the facilities to get a public forum. At that time, we weren't interested, because we didn't think it would be right to try to shut them down in four days, we wanted the public forum, where both sides of the issue could come in a public dialogue. The public could come and learn about the issues and make their own decisions. That was turned down by every research institution in the country (Personal interview).

The Primate Freedom Tour was overwhelmingly supported and sustained by the punk community. In some of the cities where the tour stopped, the primary organizers were punks and grassroots animal rights activists (in Texas, for example, punk veteran Tony Nocella, from Huston Animal Rights Team organized three stops of the Primate Freedom Tour). Perhaps more importantly, the tour was kept afloat by the support of

popular anarchist punk bands like Aus Rotten, Anti-Product, Oi Polloi, and others who traveled with the tour providing funds and supporters for demonstrations and actions. Dave Chenga, the lead singer for Aus Rotten, described their role in the Primate Freedom Tour several weeks before they began their stint travelling with the tour: “There are two parts of the tour, the activist part and the bands that are going along. In the cities where the primate cities are the two tours will be together, but the activists will be setting up for four or five days in a city while the bands will be there one night because the bands have to play every night to get money to keep the tour going” (Personal interview). The Primate Freedom Tour was the logical outgrowth of an increasingly familiar joining of two groups of activists, anarchist leaning punks and grassroots animal rights activists. Moreover, it was also an opportunity for direct-action, anarchist punks to express themselves in the political arena, and make their impact on the public perception of the animal rights movement.

Punk involvement with animal rights is becoming increasingly obvious. In some punk communities, animal rights ideology has become a foundation for punk activism. Nocella expressed the power of this connection.

The scene is more powerful than the musician. If you want to be a hardcore band and you want to have an audience, you’ve got to accept animal liberation even if you aren’t vegan. And you’ve got to be a supporter of straightedge even if you’re an alcoholic. Any hardcore band in the Southwest totally accepts animal liberators to speak on their stage at any time . . . animal liberation, straightedge and anti-racist action brings a lot of people and tells people that this band is a *real* hardcore band (Personal interview).

In the animal rights community, punks are a mainstay of the movement. Punk brings with it political resources as well as political baggage. How this mingling of movements, perspectives, politics and individuals plays out will be determined in part by the future of



punk and the future of the animal rights movement. The next section explores the ruptures, creases and contact points of these movements through the voices of animal rights activists and punks.

### **Punk involvement in the animal rights struggle**

The animal rights movement is critically connected to the punk rock community. But the ties go deeper, often entailing a dialectical relationship both introducing activists to punk and punks to activism. In the next section I will outline how these relationships are sustained and the value of these ties by exploring how punks are recruited to the animal rights cause, how the ritual of performance contributes to the sense of community of animal rights oriented punks, and how punk rock concerts and albums have become powerful tools for fundraising for the animal rights movement.

#### *Recruitment*

At the first meeting of the University of Pittsburgh's animal rights group, Friends of Animals, I asked the 40 students there how many of them had become interested in animal rights because of punk music. 32 of the 40 raised their hands. Punk brings activists to the movement in droves. Punk music introduces the ideas of animal rights to a new audience. Through the music of punk bands and the political stances taken by punk media outlets (zines, radio shows, political flyers and meetings) an animal rights message is being spread to new people. Nocella expressed a similar opinion when we talked about a HART project to create a punk rock/animal rights promotional video. Nocella felt as though despite his interest in animal rights, he was facing an uphill battle to persuade older activists to work with him. So instead he organized in the community

that he had experience with, which yielded him contacts with lots of punk bands. "I was at that time nineteen years old and in the punk scene. The only people who would listen to me were my peers in the punk scene. Now I would say that HART is 95 percent punk based and from going about speaking at the majority of the punk shows that are in Houston, Austin, San Antonio wherever else I've met a lot of bands" (Nocella, Personal interview).

Nocella realized that this might be a powerful way to recruit young activists into the HART. He continued: "I thought that was one of the best ways to reach young people. Because they are educated about the issue, it's not just as though they are the popular vanguard" (Personal interview). Nocella believes that this relationship has provided HART with much of its strength. He also discussed the value of videos as a medium for animal rights persuasion. He believes that if he can connect animal rights with popular alternative/punk bands then he can produce and sell videos that will have a dual-edged hook and a decidedly educational focus. Thanks to the tight link between punk music and political activism, Nocella believes that "most of the national punk scene, they are open to veganism and animal liberation" (Personal interview).

One needs to be careful to avoid the simplistic interpretation of the punk contributions. It is not as simple as punk rock acting as a mobilization tool that can be installed as a resource by a social movement. In the case of the punk community, the relationship runs deeper. The music and the presentation of ideas are actual media of protest that carry creative and sustaining weight in and of themselves. The symbolic and expressive functions of punk performance and music carry transformative power that can rework the framework of the listeners, empowering them to become active participants in

the movement. Punk politics includes fashion, music, food and performance. As punks become more than simply audience members for both a political social movement and a musical experience, they call upon us to redefine our understanding of a social movement audience.

The complicated legacy of punk suggests that the punk communities' relationship with animal rights would be equally complex and fertile. With a focus on how the music itself is world transforming, we can move beyond the impulse in rhetoric to explore the outer shell of social movement rhetoric without exploring the insider rhetoric that constitutes the struggle. We must also be careful not to limit our analysis to the unidirectional model of rhetoric with the audience receiving a movement message and reacting. This can be done by looking at how movements interact and reflect internally.

In this vein, I want to position punk as an artistic movement that cross-fertilizes with the animal rights movement. This perspective draws from Murray Edelman's notion that art is the backbone of our world.

Art creates realities and worlds. People perceive and conceive in the light of narratives, pictures, and images. That is why art is central to politics, just as it is central to social relationships and to beliefs about nature. . . . Because they create something different from conventional perceptions, works of art are the medium through which new meanings emerge (7).

Edelman argues that our understanding of the world is filtered through the lens of the art. Our understanding of welfare may come through thirty hours of sitcoms on the subject, a half-dozen standup comedians, cartoons in *Newsweek*, and even Dickens' novels. Art helps us to navigate and to transform our world by changing the way we think about the world. If art is world-transforming, punk contains the possibility to change an individual's outlook and the way they operate in the world.

Punk has certainly been credited with giving a number of people life-changing epiphanies. Punk combines a rebellious fashion movement with a new kind of idea that there are no rules other than what the listener creates. Punk is a method rather than a clique; one person's "punk" is not the defined path to being punk, but instead is only one avenue among many. Dick Hebdige, the British scholar who has made a life's work studying the issue of style, argues that punk is flexible and independent in regard to both fashion and politics, allowing the individual to use their own inspiration to create their own incarnation of the "punk norm."

How does punk rock help to mobilize people to become part of the animal rights movement? When we ask questions about movement mobilization, we are often asking questions of perception. Does a certain person believe that there is enough "wrong" with a situation to become active? Burt Klandermans argues that the creation of an "injustice frame" is essential to movement mobilization: "Situations are defined as unjust and grievances are transformed into demands" (85). The way we think about a problem is the determining factor of our level of concern. For the animal rights movement, creating an "injustice frame" in the eyes of the public is a central goal in order to change the society and stop animal suffering.

Punk rock music and the punk rock community can help to create an injustice frame ("something is wrong") and at the same time do much more. Consider the quotation from Aus Rotten that began this chapter—the very nature of the song is intended to inform and unsettle, to induce anger. Through music, community and performance, punk rock provides a call of conscience to the listener, restoring agency and invigorating the individual. This can create a real sense of empowerment for listeners.

Social movement recruitment is often tied to the ability to convey “tight connections between beliefs, morals and emotions” (Jasper, “The Art” 156). Punk rock says if you do not like what you see, you can be in a band, you can publish your own magazine, and you can participate politics on your own terms.

As animal rights ideas spread through the punk community, the music came to reflect the politics of a movement that was embracing animal rights. Punk rockers who sang about animal rights were called to task when their politics fell short of their actions. Likewise, bands that performed and lived the politics of animal rights were often rewarded with loyal fans who liked them for the music and the politics. When Aus Rotten performs their song Pathetic Humanity, they have credibility as a punk band that has released a half a dozen records and toured Europe and Japan. They also have credibility because they are long-time supporters of progressive causes such as the animal rights movement. Because the audience of a concert has already self-identified themselves as interested in certain ideas by attending a show or buying an album, there is a strong connection that can help to foster a shared understanding. Likewise, a political activist who might not be a punk rock fan can come into contact with the political side of a punk band like Aus Rotten (meeting them at a protest or a meeting). The political-musical connection has woven together a message that has appeal to several audiences.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Rosenbraugh also talked about the role that activist musicians play in mobilizing for animal rights. Focusing on their music as an outgrowth of their political perspective, he says: “I think back, looking back years ago at the early political punk communities, especially the stuff that came out of England. I could be totally wrong. I haven’t met these people, but I always got the impression that it was very political. That the whole reason they were a band was to express a different kind of political expressionism. A different action, instead of just protesting, they were using their power as musicians as a form of protest. And that is something I respect greatly. For me, whatever your form of talent, you have a responsibility to use that to help to bring an end to the injustices of the world whether you are a visual artist, or theatrical individual, of musician. You have an ability, whether or not you have political verity to talk about these things at your shows. Moby is a good example, he doesn’t talk about animal rights in his lyrics, especially in his recent stuff, but he is vegan, and in his shows (I’ve heard copies of his live shows) where he is talking about

Rosenbraugh explained the importance of credible punk bands in getting the message of animal rights out: “. . . [T]hey are using their ability as musicians and using their community to bring out issues that are important . . . They include literature in their records and CDs and whatnot, and so people buying, if they aren’t exposed to those issues already can learn and get involved and I’m sure that some people have done that” (Personal interview).

Rosenbraugh’s point could be misinterpreted as the need to establish speaker credibility or reach an audience that is primed to hear a particular message, but this phenomenon goes above and beyond the idea of an audience who is interested in listening to a message because they see the speaker as credible. Instead these audiences become involved with the politics and music of punk in unique kinds of performance that suggest that they are *participating* rather than listening. Punks fans will carefully craft their appearance to become walking billboards of their political perspective or ideology.<sup>17</sup> Like an excited audience at a political rally, they will sing along and chant with protest slogans. Perhaps most importantly, punks who hear these messages will create their own versions of political punk music that they have experiences with. Inspired by the “Do It Yourself” ethic, these messages become internalized and externalized by people who are excited to be a part of the movement.

Jasper and Einhowner miss this process of actualizing the political message in their analysis of animal rights movement recruitment. They explore how people first

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animal rights and bringing the issues to the forefront, and to a lot more people who could be reached by someone else because of their talent, so I think it is important” (Personal interview).

<sup>17</sup> For more on this see Hebdige, whose book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, represents a study in the semiotics of style. He argues that the fashion icons used by punks are political moves. “Converted into icons (the safety pin, the rip, the mindless lean and hungry look) these paradigms of crisis could live a double life, at once fictional and real. They reflected in a heightened form a perceived condition: a condition of unmitigated exile, voluntarily assumed” (65-66).

become involved in the animal rights movement, relating their responses to early “moral shocks” (pictures of seals being clubbed or animals being slaughtered). What is overlooked here is the essential part of how animal activists take the external knowledge of a protest symbol (sign, leaflet etc.) and turn it into their own belief and action.

Eyerman and Jamieson’s theory of cognitive praxis could help us unpack this phenomenon. They argue that movement participants produce and recreate knowledge, as they become involved in social movement activities. But this alone is not sufficient – the stage of personal articulation of the issues of the movement is vital to ensure activists are committed and involved (57). Social movement activists “learn by doing,” educating themselves as they participate. A person could internalize a social movement message and not articulate that message. Punk rock provides the opportunity for punks to not only hear the messages of the animal rights movement, but also to become active political agents. The anarchist roots of punk politics position activists to view any top-down political pressure as a recipe for complete failure. Instead, punks are political and through their words and action, they politicize other punks – using pre-established communication networks to foster a relationship of reciprocal engagement.

These distinctions suggest that the traditional idea of an audience may be inadequate to describe the animal rights/punk intersection. A combination of resistance to the ideas of rock-stardom and the Do-It-Yourself ethic create a norm where the people in the audience are an active part of the show. In most punk shows, the idea that the band is separate is considered anathema. Most band members wait to take the stage among the crowd, either drinking at the bar or sitting behind a merchandise table. In the live setting, bands call for sing-alongs and audience members to take the stage to reclaim the

microphones.<sup>18</sup> Non-band members, especially political groups, are credited with importance at a punk show. Political organizations are provided with the space to hand out literature and it is common to find people walking through a show passing out flyers for protests, flyers for shows, or trying to sell underground magazines. The separation of the individual participating from the bands who perform is minimized. And most “fans” often have some ulterior motive for attending a punk show—they may have a poem to read, or a protest to publicize.

In this intersection of music and politics, people connect with the animal rights message. Within the punk audience, information can be conveyed about anthropocentrism and animal suffering to a large group of people who share two things in common, a love for the music and an outrage against animal cruelty. J.D. Foster, the president of Friends of Animals, the animal rights groups at the University of Pittsburgh, describes the role that punk rock music can play in mobilizing new members:

I think [music] has been one of the most important parts of the animal rights movement. There are so many shows where people are handing out *Why Vegans?* and there is a table there discussing all these issues. I think that the punk rock scene (which includes the hardcore scene) is a great avenue for information to come across. I think that so many kids got involved in animal rights with human rights, with women’s rights, with workers rights because someone was involved in the music scene and was able to set up a table at a show and give out information. Without that there would be so many less activists, not only in animal rights but in all grassroots organizations. That’s the big thing about music it is expression, to have an outlet for your ideas. (. . .) without the music scene there would be so many less people involved and so many people who were completely in the dark about issues (Personal interview).

Music and punk rock in particular create more than new animal rights activists.

They also establish the norms for new political viewpoints. Activists who are streaming

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<sup>18</sup> Sick Of It All, a successful New York Hardcore band is famous for setting up microphones for their audience to use to sing along with the performance. This is not uncommon in punk circles.



into the animal rights movement are cynical about power structures and doubtful about systemic solutions, yet they are resourceful and self-reflexive.

### *Ritual*

The musical/political opportunity to recruit new members at a punk rock concert is only the surface of the relationships between punk rock music and animal rights. To look at how these connections are made, we must look at the ritual interactions that occur at political punk performances. The ritual of punk performance provides a sense of movement in the performance and it is through the ritual performance that the Do-It-Yourself ethic and musical catharsis combine to create a kind of experience that elicits new political and social outcomes.

During my interviews, many of the punk rockers expressed frustration with the punk communities for their political failings, close-mindedness, and lack of activism. Yet all continued to be actively involved in punk rock music because they still believed in punk rock as a political force. These punk rockers described an intangible feeling of community and emotional outpouring that occurs at shows. Taina Delvalle, the lead singer for the Binghamton based band Anti-Product, described how many people were affected by her musical performances and how much they affect her.

After every show I'll have somebody (usually more than one person), come up to me and talk about how it affected them or fucking deep shit. We'll talk about rape, or how we feel about our bodies. Women and men, which has been really rewarding. It's definitely been a very powerful experience for me and it is one of the main reasons why I continue to remain in the punk movement. I'm making change and I see change and I see communication (Personal interview).

The kinds of emotional and cathartic experiences that occur in the space shared by punks at a show contribute to the political education of the participants. If we position the punk rock show as a ritual we can explore the elusive variable that keeps animal rights punk activists involved in the musical scene. Perhaps political fulfillment is only part of the experience for those involved in the punk/animal rights community.

A ritual is a social/spiritual/sexual event that is intended to bring about a change (often both ideological and physiological) in the participants. But is a ritual really useful to help us explore social movements and their political outcomes? Anthropologist and sociologist Victor Turner argues that the effects of a ritual can be ideologically transformative.

In this sense ritual symbols are “multivocal,” susceptible of many meanings, but their referents tend to polarize between psychological phenomena (blood, sexual organs, coitus, birth, death, catabolism, and so on) and normative values of moral facts (kindness to children, reciprocity, generosity to kinsmen, respect for elders, obedience to political authorities, and the like). (. . .) The drama of ritual action—the singing, dancing, feasting, wearing of bizarre dress, body painting, use of alcohol or hallucinogens, and so on, causes an exchange between these poles in which the biological referents are ennobled and the normative referents are charged with emotional significance. (. . .) the biological referents . . . under optimal conditions, may reinforce the will of those exposed to them to obey moral commandments, maintain covenants, repay debts, keep obligations, avoid illicit behavior (55).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Some might wonder how this use of mind-altering substances applies in the case of straightedge punks. I believe that the ritual dress, preparation, dancing and cathartic outpouring of a punk rock show act as a replacement for the drugs and alcohol that Turner is talking about. In 1994 I drove to Boston to see a punk concert featuring Worlds Collide, Shelter and 108. 108 and Shelter are both Hare Krishna hardcore bands whose members include several old members of Youth of Today. World’s Collide, a Washington DC-based band opened up the show. There were about five hundred people at the show in an old church in Boston. The show was explosive – everyone was dancing and screaming – almost everyone was totally involved in the concert. The last song that World’s Collide played included the line “Pain is temporary . . . but truth is absolute” – in many ways a reference to the largely straightedge crowd there that night. As I held the shoulders of the people next to me and I looked around I saw probably four hundred people screaming that line in unison – again and again. It was one of the most powerful experiences of my life. In retrospect, I’m not surprised that after a small altercation, the show erupted into a mass riot that required riot police to clear the church. The emotional outpouring of a ritualized sing-along was enough to convince me that the participants didn’t need drugs or alcohol.

At a punk show where a person may have experienced an interaction with vegetarianism (a pamphlet or a speaker) that fostered a “normative value,” the ritual of violent dancing in a circle and singing along with a crowd mixed with shared punk dress and drug/alcohol use, can create a ritual experience that embodies the value with meaning. The peer pressure and performance/participation can turn political ideas that might have been pushed away at another time into beliefs that stick.<sup>20</sup>

Music plays a particular importance to ritual. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamieson, in their most recent book *Music and Social Movements* argue that ritual performance is fundamental to social movement mobilization.

[T]raditions are more than texts which carry ideas; they also involve practical activities, forms of ritualized practice in and through which meaning and significance are embedded. Music, in particular, embodies tradition through the ritual of performance. It can empower, help create collective identity and a sense of movement in an emotional and almost physical sense. This is a force which is central to the idea and practice of social movement . . . (35).

The performance of music, particularly punk rock music creates a shared meaning among the participants that can help to agitate individuals to join the animal rights cause and it can sustain community struggle in the movement.<sup>21</sup>

Dick Hebdige has identified punk performance as revolutionary. When punks abandoned traditional dancing for the pogo (violent jumping up and down) and slamdancing (smashing into each other) and when concertgoers gave up their roles as audience members, and took to the stage and smashed up clubs. “Certainly, they succeeded in subverting the conventions of concert and nightclub entertainment”

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<sup>20</sup> For more on unique punk dress, dance and substance use see Lauraine LeBlanc’s *Pretty in punk*, particularly Chapters 1, 5, and 6.

<sup>21</sup> A chief example is dancing, which is a local ritual that varies with each punk rock community. In different scenes, different kinds of dances are very popular. Among political-oriented punks the thrashy

("Subculture" 110). After describing a Clash concert where the participants tore up the seats and hurled them at the band, he wrote: "every performance, however apocalyptic, offered palpable evidence that things could change, indeed were changing; that performance itself was a possibility no authentic punk should discount" (Hebidge, "Subculture" 110). The parameters of punk and the ritual act of the punk concert are geared to challenge the traditional ideas of audience and performer. The concert is intended to foster independence and non-conformity.

Further, ritual is an important part of social movement mobilization. Jasper argues that "Protest is like religious ritual: it embodies our moral judgements, so that we can express allegiance to moral visions through our actions" ("Moral" 14). Political activism is moral action, and it is often the litmus test for our political beliefs. This is clearly the case in both the animal rights community and the punk rock community. A political punk rocker that is not actually political loses much of her credibility. In the animal rights movement, personal support for various levels of political action are vital distinguishing characteristics between activists.

The rituals of the punk community in performance create a unique political avenue for mobilization. At punk shows the message and the music are mixed. It is common for a song to be introduced with a short political speech or for some bands to bring political speakers to the stage to inspire the crowd before exploding into a song. The dual-reinforcement of these ideas through videos, posters, pamphlets, speeches, conversations and books meshes with the ritual pressure through chanting, dancing,

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circle pit and traditional slamdance are popular. While among scenes where hardcore is more popular karate-inspired kickboxing moves are the norm.

singing, and shared experience. J.D. Foster explained the importance of this kind of ritual for the animal rights movement:

It's great because there are a lot of people who are quick to join you [at shows]. You could do the same thing on the side of the road but here is a bunch of people who are very susceptible to take stuff from you. It's really important for actual bands: musicians and artists who make music who make these movements powerful. Who get up there, and in between songs . . . that's a big thing because you can sing a song about something or have some kind of art that brings a message across, and people might not fully understand it. But in-between performances you clearly explain how you feel and let people know how they can get involved. Because speech is a powerful tool – an incredible way to inspire people who might be ambivalent. It's an excellent way to take a kid who might be there just for the music and set this fire inside of them. Let them know that there is so much wrong with this world. [. . .] You can get involved and you can make a difference. By saying this, bands, musicians, artists can inspire and spark up a lot of people (Personal interview).

The ritual and normative arguments operate on a unique political stage, because the performers are accessible. The musicians who draw punks to come to shows are available to audience members, often working behind a sales table or hanging out with friends or at the bar. An essential part of the punk ethic is the resistance to centralized authority, so band members are quick to position themselves as regular punks. The social experience that punks get is one of being close to their idols (although most of their idols despair at being identified as such).

A prime example of ritual in political punk took place during the Pittsburgh stop of the Primate Freedom Tour which included two days of protest at a primate experimentation facility and two nights of concerts with animal rights-friendly bands. The performances emphasized the ritual function of shared struggle. The bands played behind an enormous backdrop of two primates dancing. In the back of the club, there were tables set up with books for sale, along with thousands of free pamphlets. People

who were travelling on the Primate Freedom Tour met local activists and punks and told stories of being arrested and dropping banners at protests. When bands weren't playing there was a VCR and TV that showed documentaries about the ALF and animal rights causes. Band performances were punctuated with speakers and poets. The entire evening brought animal rights activists together with music in a mutual ritual performance.

Tony Nocella positions these kinds of interactions in terms of political mobilization. For Nocella, the act of protesting and the musical ritual are two essential parts of organizing for animal rights. At the performance space of the show there is a critical juncture that Nocella exploits to get punks to become more involved in HART activities.

We make sure every time we have a protest . . . there is a show going on every week. When we have a protest, we are at that show talking about that protest. The majority of the time, we have at least four people from that show at that protest. When we have a show where it is just the people and the band we pop out our TV and put it on silent and play research laboratories. The majority of time when bands are switching up their gear, people watch that. It grosses them out, but it's the facts. When you show them technology, they are like "whooo this organization is hip, they've got a TV, and a table, and they've got a banner." You put all this in front of them and they want to be a part of it. There are simple things that punks don't want to see like business cards. They're like "man you're a sell out." So you don't bring those out to them. At the same time there are a lot of political punks out there, maybe their shirts are recycled, like they got it (sic) at the thrift store. You've got to know it, but you've got to be punk to know that and you have to be part of the scene (Personal interview).

The ritual norms of the punk concert performance yield new activists for Nocella. Yet he needs to be careful not to violate the ritual norms and offend. In punk society, where proper dress and decorum are essential, professional looking suits and business cards violate these norms and would brand Nocella a hopeless outsider who is trying to prey on

punks. The result would be immediate disinterest. But by sustaining his participation in the punk community and maintaining his credibility, he is able to organize punks into animal rights activists.

### *Funding the Movement*

The punk movement not only provides intellectual and ritual endorsement, but also financial support for radical animal rights causes. Along with busses full of protesters, the Primate Freedom Tour was supported by a touring group of activist punk bands who would play concerts to pay the way for the tour. Craig Rosenbraugh, one of the chief organizers of the Primate Freedom Tour, explained.

Yeah, we had an organizer from Portland who is involved in the punk community really internationally. He presented the idea to a number of bands and individuals in bands that he knew would be supportive of the tour, and he actually organized a tour that would coincide the Primate Freedom Tour that would help promote and raise funds for the tour. They didn't come with the primate tour, they were in cities near the major stops. They usually stuck to major cities . . . what they did was go around and bring people into the tour, and for the most part it worked extremely well. It raised a lot of funds and helped to promote the tour and raise issues about the tour (Personal interview).

The music itself was primarily animal rights oriented. Featuring bands like Oi Polloi, the Scottish anarchist band whose members have been arrested working with the Hunt Saboteurs (people who spoil hunts) and Anti-Product, whose songs were peppered with discussions of direct action techniques, the Primate Freedom Tour was filled with bands whose politics echoed the ideology they were supporting. For this crowd, these musicians have enormous credibility. Not only are they performing the ideas of the movement in their music, but they are also on the frontlines acting alongside with their audience.

The audience is primed to be organized and inspired. The bands and the forum create the framework for individuals to step up their commitment to the movement. By emphasizing their own actions and encouraging others, the political punk bands are creating a new generation of activists to become involved in the struggle for animal rights.

Tony Nocella praises the involvement between punks and animal rights, but expresses the importance for animal rights organizers to come from within the punk community the same way any kind of organizer needs to be a legitimate part of the group they are trying to organize.

One of the organizations that I work with is Latinos for animal rights. When dealing with them, one of my natural instincts that I like is low-rider bicycles. And I think be "authentic" all the time. If you are part of the community or subcommunity you are always going to be accepted. But if you are trying to act gay and you aren't in the gay community it's not going to come off as professional and kind. You are speaking down to that community. But if you are part of that . . . it's like with the Latino culture with the hip hop scene and low rider bicycles then it comes off so smoothly, you know what goes and what doesn't go, you can talk about bicycles instead of someone who just got the lowrider 101 book. Because people aren't stupid and they know the authentic from the fake. Now I can go, and I like doing this because I've been in the punk scene for so long, that I can wear a suit when I go to a punk show. At first people are like "whoa, he's not part of our scene," but they see me so much and things like that, that they know however they dress, they know the real deal. Its not about your clothes or how you dress or how you talk, but it is your whole aura, you'll be authentic (Personal interview).

The Primate Freedom Tour shows presented an animal rights movement that was far from the "grandmothers in tennis shoes" that Ray Greek described. These activists were young, tattooed, pierced and firmly committed to the idea that direct action was essential to the struggle. They are also aware of their audience, and know what kinds of connections can be made between punks and animal rights. For an activist who was



introduced to the animal rights movement in this kind of setting, the direct action of the ALF would seem normal. The frame of reference that punk concerts create is one of radical action. The punk rock community is birthing the new generation of more radical activists that is transforming the movement.

The DIY nature of punk rock performances and bands creates a culture of self-involvement. In this framework, animal rights is a constant part of the backdrop of the music. Animal rights is certainly not represented by every band, but the large percentage of animal rights-friendly bands creates a high level of awareness among the community. When new punks encounter animal rights, they adopt the politics of animal rights along with a critical perspective about traditional tactics. As O'Hara has indicated, the type of animal rights activist that emerges from the punk community is oriented toward the revolution side of the "reform/revolution" continuum. Often this is a result of the DIY ethic. For punks who have learned not to trust politicians, traditional media sources, and established organizations, the obvious tactical stance is direct action. Connecting animal rights ethics to punk awareness/activism results in a dramatic change in the nature of this social movement.

### *Responses to the Punk Rock Invasion*

The mass import of punks into the animal rights movement has created a number of complications. First of all the traditional animal rights movement is made up of people whose animal rights consciousness has developed after a long percolation. Many of the older animal rights activists feel that the younger punk rock animal activists are less

knowledgeable. Several older activists that I spoke to lamented that many of the younger activists had never read Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, there is a significant question of the public face of the animal rights movement. Many lament the multiple piercings, and wildly dyed and shaved hair of punks at protests. Chrissy Vandenburg, one of the chief organizers for Vegan Action in California talked about her early experiences as a punk rocker and an animal rights activist. She ruminated that she had been so involved in her appearance that she might have scared away potential allies. PJ McKosky, one of the leaders in Friends of Animals, the University of Pittsburgh's animal rights club, argues extensively that punks should be willing to set aside their personal appearance at protests and demonstrations. Many in the punk community have responded angrily, seeing those who advocate punks dressing down as "fashion police" and pointing out parallels to their parents or authority figures who have criticized their appearance.

The larger national animal rights organizations are grappling with how to deal with the new influx of animal rights punks. PETA spokesperson Bruce Friedrich openly attacked the blue-haired activists at the animal rights 2000 conference. In Defense of Animals helped to sponsor the Primate Freedom Tour, with several of their staff travelling with the bus full of punks. Although the larger groups are grateful for the

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<sup>22</sup> Tony Nocella, from the Houston Animal Rights Team responds to that criticism. "The ALF scene with the punk mix is bringing a whole new, unique type of group. People are like 'they're not educated, they're just emotional!' Well that's what we need at this moment. There are so many people who disassociate themselves and they can watch monkey research over and over again in this movement and aren't disturbed by it because they are conditioned to that. And I've done that to be more effective, but that's my job. At the same time we need people out there that really have the emotion and that's what the punks bring is the emotion. They don't shy away from the emotion. They're like 'that's screwed up, that's not right, and we need to kick this guys butt'" (Personal interview).

reinvigorated activists, the nationals are struggling to determine how their relationship will unfold along controversial lines, including strategy and public appearance.

## **Conclusion**

The animal rights movement provides a rare glimpse at a new social movement in transition. The movement itself is grappling with the wholesale import of radical direct action-oriented philosophy, and the increasing radicalization of its members. This provides an opportunity to take a careful look at a political wing of the punk rock community that has strong roots tying the independent music of punk with the struggle for animal rights. Streaming through the anarchist punk bands of England in 1977, through the vegan straightedge bands of the 1980s and 1990s, punk rock has fostered an animal rights-friendly norm that permeates many in the punk rock community.

More importantly, the necessary political ideology of punk rock (anarchist and Do-It-Yourself) points punks toward the more militant and direct-action oriented sections of the animal rights movement. The combination of the punk fashion, politics and ethos contributes to a strong animal rights philosophy among punks while the shared rituals of concerts with their chanting, dancing, and political speeches creates a constitutive relationship between an active audience and an oft-decentralized orator. In certain sections of the punk rock community, hundreds of interwoven cues point the punk toward animal rights. The end result is that as Tony Nocella pointed out, you can't be a successful punk/hardcore band in the Southwest without publicly standing for animal rights and vegetarianism.

Viewing the punk rock community as a resource that the animal rights community plunders for their own gain fails to grasp the importance of this relationship. The animal rights movement is relatively small (several thousand active members), and the mass-import of punks has been met with a mixed reception. Many are angry about the appearance of punks at protests, feeling that they are damaging the reputation of the cause. Many view the quick radicalization of the punks as a drawback because they haven't nurtured a slow growing animal rights consciousness. And the major animal rights organizations like PETA and IDA are grappling with their level of public involvement with the punk community.

The stakes for the animal rights movement are huge. No-compromise activists like the ALF call for a total restructuring of our society. Putting all animal exploiters out of business ranging from fur stores to family farms is at the root of all of their actions. They are less interested in education than stopping the suffering and exploitation of animals. They are willing to put their bodies and lives on the line to help defend animals. Their moral stance for protest leaves little room for the traditional role of the animal rights movement—putting up signs, and educating people about vegetarianism.

All of this presents a challenge for scholars of social movements. By focusing on the lived experience of the activists and exploring parts of social movements that have been previously ignored, we can shed light on the complex divisions and seams that make up the movement. By abandoning false ideas of objectivity and plunging headlong into meetings with activists and not only understanding the goals of the movement, but also sharing them, we can learn about the social movement from the inside. When we look at the question of how these newer more radical activists arrive at their positions we can see

the failure of the old methods that would have been unable to elucidate the complicated networks between punk rock and the animal rights movement. Even the idea that a social movement is constantly changing and transforming is radical and new.

Exploring how the animal rights movement has changed introduces new and important questions for scholars and critics. Expanding our lens of social movements study beyond the singular focus on oratory to look at the transformative nature of movements represents a valuable direction for analysis. I believe that this presents fertile new ground for rhetoricians to travel. We should be looking at music and symbols as agents of transformation. We should be exploring how movements affect change by manipulating those symbols. And we should not be afraid to step into complicated questions and come up with complicated answers.



### ***Chapter III***

#### ***Action and Animal Rights: Strategy, Tactics and the Value of Diverse Opinions***

There is a common perception that ideological and strategic division among social movements hurts their chances for success. For example, Resource Mobilization Theories hold movements to conventional notions of success (like the passage of political legislation) where internal disagreement might undercut movement energy and compromise ability to persuade publics. Similarly, traditional rhetorical movement studies tend to focus on effectiveness of message transmission (Griffin) or amplification of protest campaigns (Medhurst) as criteria for success. In a continuing effort to problematize traditional movement studies and to encourage the practical applications of movement analysis, this chapter calls into question these criteria for success as applied to single-goal oriented movements. Using two fundamental issues of the animal rights movement, factory farming and animals in experimentation for analysis, I position the diversity of tactics within the movement as strength for the social movement. This line of analysis calls into question the traditional ideas of an audience embedded in prevailing theories, thereby problematizing and extending criteria for movement "success."

Although often viewed as a movement, animal rights is really a philosophy that positions animals as sentient beings that must be respected. The basic tenets of that philosophy are fairly simple and easily converted into the popular bumper sticker: "animals are not ours to eat, wear or experiment on." The movement is made up of a diverse collection of people who loudly disagree and disavow the actions of other elements of the same movement. While the philosophy provides a certain amount of

shared ground, the participants are well aware that disagreements about strategies are as common as shared ground. When asking the fundamental question “What kinds of tactics and actions should we use to achieve the end result of animal rights?” the answer is virtually guaranteed to spark controversy.<sup>1</sup> This chapter analyzes the major differences in the area of movement strategy and method, contrasting and comparing the voices of activists who are engaged in a vibrant dialogue about the best ways to bring about animal rights. This chapter also provides an opportunity to examine the animal rights movement as a new social movement. Using the strategic distinctions as artifacts, we can take a new look at the concepts of knowledge transformation, success, audience and invention.

This line of inquiry steers attention to vital disagreements about strategy within the movement itself. Social movement scholars could interpret this phenomenon as crippling to the movement. This kind of reading could actually encourage infighting between arms of the movement intent on presenting a “united front” – resulting in further division and damage to the movement itself. This chapter fights this line of interpretation by suggesting that the diverse messages, strategies and arguments of the animal rights movement are vital to its continued success. It is from within the social movement itself, using activist research methods that this line of inquiry can be pursued.

### **Social movement scholarship and the question of “success”**

Some movement scholars have assumed a certain universality of tactics that homogenizes their social movement studies. Scholars like Cathcart use movement tactics

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<sup>1</sup> Some might want to argue that the animal rights movement should not be considered a movement because its members vary in disposition so dramatically. I would respond to these critics by suggesting that the philosophy of animal rights still girds these activists together and that they still share a number of

and strategic methods as a foundation for analysis. While useful for scholars to help clarify how we envision a social movement, the actual complexity of the social movement gets swept under the rug by painting a deterministic and totalizing vision of the strategies of a social movement.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the animal rights movement this kind of analysis avoids what might be the most vital controversy facing the movement itself: the struggle over strategy.

Using action research, it is possible to analyze controversies over strategy from the inside of the social movement. As a participant in the movement I have access to publications that chronicle debates about how to achieve the end-goals of animal rights.<sup>3</sup> I have also been able to identify some of the vital turning points in these debates through interviews with activists.

This is an important contribution both to scholars and activists. This work will showcase the benefits of standpoint-based scholarship and it can help to shed new light on tactical dialogues that unfold within the animal rights movement. I am not the first scholar to notice that the spectrum of actions in the animal rights movement range from vehement direct action oriented basic education. While many have discussed the various tactics of the movement, the philosophies that tie together and the arguments presented to support various levels of action have been overlooked by researchers who have studied the animal rights movement (Einhwoner, "Moral"; Jasper). The interplay of philosophy

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common ideas about action. See Chapter one for a more in-depth analysis of what defines a social movement.

<sup>2</sup> There is also a potential for damage to the social movement from researchers who mis-represent political goals for academic gain. But the fundamental problem is that the focus of this kind of work is to better understand social movements as a static event, rather than as a living organism. As a result the work is seldom useful to the movement itself.

<sup>3</sup> These goals are often utopian. Most of the animal rights activists have a nebulous concept of movement success that have nothing to do with passing laws that would protect animals. Instead, their vision is one of complete societal transformation.



and action that feeds the on-going debates shooting across the movement have thus received little attention in scholarly analysis. For example Finsen and Finsen recount the diverse branches of the movement, but miss the fluid debates about tactics that spread across the movement. Action research illuminates the dialogue that occurs between the diverse activists, painting a picture of a movement that is constantly reflecting, struggling and challenging its own actions.

Activist research methods enable exploration of the complicated nature of theory and practice from a perspective within the social movement. Participant interviews and intra-movement literature are fruitful texts for exploring the communication and debate that goes on between wings of the animal rights movements. This analysis has value as an exemplary model for research within other social movements, and also may help correct the mistaken perception that a diversity of tactics undercuts the success of animal rights protest. Consider Peter Singer's recent work on animal rights, a book chronicling the exploits of Henry Spira, widely considered to be a founder of the modern animal rights movement. At several points in the text, Singer emphasizes the negative impact that the clash over tactics has on the movement (72-3, 130, 144). Singer (and Spira's) perspective is one familiar to the animal rights movement, a social movement that seems to encourage its participants to cling to strategic preferences with religious fervor. Perhaps the most important lesson of this chapter for the animal rights movement is a reminder of the strategic benefits of intra-movement tolerance. In fact, the myriad tactics employed by movements might be essential to protest success.

Internal division over tactics is a fundamental part of all social movements. The civil rights movement contained dozens of strains of black activism from the

integrationist Southern Christian Leadership Conference to the angry voices of the Black Panther Party. Early strains of AIDS activism in New York featured a half a dozen splintered disagreements about tactics relating to gender, class, and science (Wolfe: Crimp and Rolston).<sup>4</sup>

We can position the variety of strategies to bring about animal rights as rhetorical vectors. Some activists believe in a form of direct action, others focus on a particular issue, but vary their tactics, and some use education-oriented mechanisms. Within these descriptions are dozens of different strategic positions and ideas that various groups and individuals hold. Each of these advocates for a particular strategy push their method of protest within the backdrop of all the other tactics advocated. Animal rights groups make arguments that compete for an audience (both the general public and other sympathetic animal-oriented people). It is vital to look at that second part of their advocacy – what method people should use to achieve change because that line of argument is often highlighted by other animal rights activists.

However, we should not envision such arguments as simply competing for space; instead we should envision these arguments as layering upon one another creating new patterns of knowledge that reshape the way people consider a particular issue. Even more importantly, diverse arguments affect diverse communities and oftentimes very different messages are spread for different people.

If we reposition the wings of the movement as complimentary vectors of a young social movement working to gather ideas and wrestle with struggles over tactics we can

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<sup>4</sup> Crimp and Rolston position the women in the AIDS activist movement ACT-UP as a vital affinity group helping to bring about the campaigns arguing that heterosexual women were increasingly at risk for AIDS. Maxine Wolfe, an early ACT-UP member describes the challenges that the women's affinity groups posed to the larger, primarily gay-male organization as essential to the health of the movement. She explains how

engender a new reading of this social movement. As new ideas and new strategies have been imported from other social movements and conflicts have emerged within the movement itself, the movement mutates as any living entity. If the rhetoric used by activists to create change and to bring about animal liberation varies based on the strategy and philosophy used, then the animal rights movement might be said to be facing a crisis of rhetorical diversity. With hundreds of different groups making arguments about animal rights, many in conflict or opposition to one another, this might be seen as a significant weakness. I fundamentally disagree. Using this chapter I want to reposition the understanding that significant disagreements about tactics and philosophy are a necessary flaw among social movements.

If Eyerman and Jamieson are right that social movements effect change by transforming public consciousness, then analysis that looks at the strategies based on the potential to change knowledge will be valuable. This means recontextualizing strategic differences within the animal rights movement as strengths.<sup>5</sup> Obviously there are arguments that suggest that some tactics might turn off audiences (particularly direct-action animal liberation tactics like those of the Animal Liberation Front). Taking this idea to task I will argue that the Animal Liberation Front exists primarily as a narrative of action and success that sustains animal rights activists. These activists also exist rhetorically – carving space in our public consciousness that is difficult to ignore. This question of unsettling activism will be addressed in the light of Eyerman and Jamieson's

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the women's affinity group was able to bring about some radical new ideas about gender and inclusiveness, often by challenging the rest of the group (Wolfe).

<sup>5</sup> This feeling that diversity of messages is a strength of the social movement is reflected in several of my interviews. Many of the animal rights activists that were interviewed for this project argued that the diversity of tactics that the animal rights movement brings to bear on a particular campaign can help to reach a multitude of audiences and reach them in a variety of different ways.

ideas about cognitive praxis and the meaning of knowledge transformation through protest.

The ensuing analysis focuses on two case studies, the struggle against factory farms and animal experimentation. Each case study contrasts two different tactics used to achieve the movements' proclaimed goals. Using these two case studies allows for analysis of four strategic options that animal rights activists use to forward their goals. These tactics are an educational approach with Vegan Outreach, a documentary/educational approach with Farm Sanctuary, a direct action approach with a spokesperson for the Animal Liberation Front, and a scientific approach with Americans For Medical Progress, an organization that is critical of animal experimentation. This approach enables an exploration of the spectrum of diversity in the movement ranging from people who believe in direct non-violent action to people who place all their faith in the ability of education to change the world. This will help to position these activists as part of a fluid spectrum where shared goals clash at the intersection of strategy. It will also illustrate the importance of viewing any one movement as a fabric made of many woven strips, with distinct struggles combining together to make up the multitudes of oftentimes-distinct struggles that make up the social movement.

### **'Numbers Matter' – Farm Animals and the Animal Rights Campaigns**

Claiming that approximately six billion animals die each year for American consumption of food, some members of the animal right movement position treatment of farm animals as the most important struggle within the larger goal of animal rights (Achor 68). These activists argue that the sheer number of animals who are killed makes

the struggle over food animals the most important struggle that animal rights activists have to fight. We will look at two case studies of organizations within the animal rights movement that have chosen to focus on farm animals as their chief agenda. These two groups, Vegan Outreach and Farm Sanctuary, share a common goal of ending farm animal suffering, although they use different tactics and approaches.

### *Matt Ball and Vegan Outreach*

Vegan Outreach is a Pittsburgh based educational organization headed by Matt Ball devoted exclusively to educating people about vegan options.<sup>6</sup> Perceiving that a general consciousness shift can follow sufficient education, Ball has vigorously presented veganism as an ethical, safe, and enjoyable lifestyle. Ball is the publisher of a series of ‘*Why Vegan?*’ pamphlets that attempt to persuade people to become vegans. Ball and Vegan Outreach have staked a claim on a unique section of the animal rights movement, people who advocate exclusively education and education about farm animals and veganism.<sup>7</sup>

Ball’s argument for veganism as the path to animal rights is based on utility. He believes that political protest and social activism are faulty strategies. He believes that since social protest appeals to individuals who have no incentive to listen and because the public is not attuned to perceive of oppression of animals, moral claims will fall on deaf

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<sup>6</sup> Veganism is defined by the ethical approach of minimizing animal cruelty in all aspects of ones life. Vegans choose to abstain from the consumption of meat, dairy (because it comes from the oppression and slavery of cows and chickens), leather (because it entails the killing of animals), and wool (because it comes from the oppression of sheep). Like vegetarians, Vegans discern their own level of commitment. Many choose to avoid honey and silk because of the damage to insects.

<sup>7</sup> There are now several dozen chapters of Vegan Outreach across the United States. There is also California-based group called Vegan Action that has similar goals and tactics. Ball’s ideas are becoming an increasingly important part of the face of the animal rights Movement. Add to this that Vegan Outreach creates a pamphlet that is so well done that it is an essential part of almost every animal rights activists arsenal, this makes Ball’s position an increasingly valued voice in the animal rights Movement.

ears. Arguing that “sympathy is neither a very strong nor lasting emotion,” Vegan Outreach forwards a pragmatic strategy based on building the numbers of vegans (Espinosa et al). According to Vegan Outreach, a mass-movement, like ones that have propelled progress in the areas of AIDS treatment and prevention and civil rights, is a faulty model for the animal rights movement because it doesn’t have the numbers to sustain a massive direct action campaign. Ball argues that huge numbers of people need to be willing to be arrested in order to show society that they are willing to sacrifice the animals, yet the current number of people in the movement is not yet sufficient to reach critical mass. Perhaps more important, Ball argues that tactics other than vegan-focused education simply suck the energy from the movement: “. . . [animal rights] activists have extremely limited resources: money, time, and emotional energy. Instead of reacting to whatever visible abuses that come up or following the leads of other activists, utilizing our limited resources so as to maximize their results should be our first priority” (Personal interview).

Ball also believes that becoming a vegan is the best path for achieving animal liberation. Arguing that the number of vegans is growing and that vegans persuade more people to become vegans, Ball envisions a snowball effect that will eliminate the industries that create oppression to animals. The future, according to Vegan Outreach, is a global vegan consciousness.

However, consider this scenario: the 1,500 members of Vegan Outreach start one person their age or younger on the road to veganism every five years on average, using tools like *Why Vegan*, *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating*, *The Vegetarian Way*, and local support groups. These new vegans also inform only one new person their age or younger every five years (again, on average). No one else becomes vegan during this time by any other means. The overall US population grows as per the Census Bureau's projections, and the death rate for vegans is the same as the general

population. In this conservative scenario, by 2060, more than 15% of the United States population would be vegan. With this many people vegan, there would be many more vegetarian[s], and it will have become easier and easier for people to become vegan. At this pace, less than twelve years later, well before the end of the next century, the entire US population would be vegan (Vegan Outreach).

To achieve this massive transformation, Ball focuses his organization's energy on educating people about becoming vegan. "In my view, veganism should . . . be promoted . . . as a reflection of a consistent way of living – a consequence of thoughtful action (Ball, "Promoting"). The method of this education is primarily through the production of high-quality pamphlets entitled "*Why Vegan?*" The pamphlets include information on the ethical justifications for the vegan life, recipes, pictures of animals, and scientific information about veganism.

The strategy of Vegan Outreach is to educate enough people to become vegans, but perhaps the most important contribution the organization makes is amplifying the urgent position that farm animals should be a central focus of the animal rights movement. Ball believes that it is necessary to shatter the economic foundations that make unjust industries profitable. So he aims to eliminate consumers from the grasps of factory farms and position them as supporters for new vegan food industries by creating consumers for new food items. To that end, Vegan Outreach is committed to making the transition to veganism as easy as possible. This is a unique stance among the animal rights community (Ball, Personal interview). Ball is focused on the "demand side" of animal exploitation rather than focusing his energies on attacking the supply side of the issue.

Many activists agree that focusing on farm animals is essential, yet many are uncomfortable with the single-focus of Vegan Outreach on education for veganism. And

broad-sides against protesting and traditional tactics that have been the bread-and-margarine of the movement have been advanced by several of Ball's critics. Many challenge the tactics of Vegan Outreach. Ball even acknowledges some of his critics in an essay about priorities in the animal rights movement: "Some contend that small-scale, high-profile cases provide a hook to allow organizations to raise money and gain new members. Others argue that victories can help energize activists who would otherwise burn out on actions that don't have a tangible payoff" ("Promoting Veganism").

There are critics of Vegan Outreach who go beyond the issues that Ball raises. Several of the people I interviewed had problems with the intense concentration on veganism and the likelihood of a global vegan revolution. One of the problems with Ball's "inevitable takeover of veganism" vision is that it is built like a pyramid scheme, using multiplication upon multiplication. This scheme assumes that every person who is converted to veganism will a) continue to be a vegan, b) be able to convert others to veganism. I first heard Matt Ball discuss this theory four years ago, and since then, the growth of veganism has been much more incremental.<sup>8</sup> People convert to veganism for many reasons including health, peer pressure, and ethics – but their position as vegans is often difficult, and many find the lifestyle too trying and quit.

Some, like Rebecca Eirine, a Pittsburgh animal rights activist, argue that veganism is a difficult thing to campaign for because the amount of personal change that is asked for is more than many are willing to give.

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<sup>8</sup> The Vegetarian Resource Group sponsored a Zogby's national poll in 2000 to get a feel of how many vegans/vegetarians are in the U.S.. The results suggest that the numbers of vegetarians are certainly growing, but not at the kind of exponential rate that Ball suggests. The Zogby's poll found 9 vegans out of 968 adults, not a significant increase from their last polls of 1994 and 1997. For more see Vegetarian Resource Group.



Vegetarianism is one thing, vegan is tough. People just don't get it. Even vegetarians some times. . . . I was very hopeful several times . . . but not knowing very much about veganism and the issues involved. I thought they were just purists who didn't like using animals. I didn't know anything about the dairy industry and stuff. I would tell people that vegans made vegetarians look like nutcases. So I think that campaigning for veganism should be done on a selective basis (Personal interview).

Eirene is a vegan and an outspoken animal rights activist, but she expresses a common criticism about Vegan Outreach's approach – that asking people to become vegans is too difficult. Erik Marcus, in his book, *Vegan: the New Ethics of Eating*, admits that he had a difficult making the leap from vegetarian to vegan. “. . . [I]t had been hard at first – because I had to give up a lot of foods I loved. To become a vegan. I had to say: no more ice cream, no more pancakes (I thought), no more pudding, no more cheese pizzas” (189). In many ways, Vegan Outreach recognizes this fact and tries to deal with the criticism by suggesting that interpersonal relationships are the things that foster veganism.

It is along these lines that Bert Klandermans suggests that we study the “multi-organizational fields” of social movements. Klandermans argues that pre-existing connections between activists and their audiences and the affinities that might come from such connections are vital elements of social movement growth (97-99). In terms of Vegan Outreach, the recognition that these pre-existing connections are significant routes for social change is important. When Ball argues that each member of Vegan Outreach should convince one person to become a vegan, we can predict who might be most easily converted. A feminist-vegetarian might set another feminist along the path to veganism by encouraging them to read Carol Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. Or a small-town

punk might become a vegan after spending some time with their favorite vegan punk band. It is in these relations that Ball's efforts receive tangible expression.<sup>9</sup>

Yet many long-time animal rights activists still face a significant challenge when it comes to changing their dietary habits. In addition, the transition to veganism usually comes through vegetarianism, which suggests that vegan-focused education might be appealing to people who are already believers. Does Vegan Outreach gain vegan numbers from the already interested vegetarian circles? If this is the case then how does this affect the predictions of a vegan future?

Using Klandermans to argue that a traditional social movement study might challenge the effectiveness of Vegan Outreach would draw upon an organizational field whose interests are predisposed toward veganism. However, if we problematize the notion of success we can re-evaluate this challenge to Vegan Outreach. Traditional ideas of movement success might hold that an organization whose operations create vegans out of vegetarians is a failure. Rachel Einwohner creates a seven-point scale to analyze an animal rights campaign's success ("Gender" 59-60). Setting aside the differences (Einwohner is analyzing a protest campaign and Vegan Outreach is trying to persuade people to become vegans), we could identify Vegan Outreach as a failure because the goal of converting the public into vegans is unlikely to succeed. It is unlikely that the entire population of the United States will become vegan by the end of the century, and the reasons are fairly obvious. But it is important to position Vegan Outreach outside of that scale of success.

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<sup>9</sup> There might be room for agreement on those who disagree with Ball's tactics. If Ball's strategy of vegan recruitment is successful, and his deterministic lens of a future vegan society is true, then perhaps direct action-tactics might be in the future of the movement when the numbers of animal rights-friendly citizens increases. If millions of American citizens are soon going to develop animal friendly consciousness then

Social change is not caused by easily attributable factors. The kinds of elements that might make a person be conscious about a particular issue can vary dramatically. Of the more than twenty people I interviewed for this project almost all of them had a distinct path that led them to become participants in the animal rights movement. Vegan Outreach is not a failure because the *Why Vegan?* pamphlets that it produces might not create a vegan world. Instead we can see the importance of those same pamphlets in leading a person from one level of consciousness to another. Vegan Outreach's message has unique rhetorical appeal that fits a percentage of people who are encountering animal rights. For a person who has never experienced vegetarianism, the *Why Vegan?* pamphlet might confuse or repel. But it also might spark the first conception that animals are mistreated in our society. A quote might encourage some level of consciousness that could lay dormant for years, only to become active in another situation.<sup>10</sup>

Sociologist Anthony Oberschall argues that social movements often lay the groundwork for future success by advancing public arguments that seem unsettling at first, but gradually build upon the public conscience to make the ideas seem more palatable. Oberschall points out that social movements might completely fail by all traditional senses (members quit, headquarters sold, leaders disperse) and yet that movement will have positioned an argument for public consumption that might be an antecedent for social change that comes later. It is possible to see Vegan Outreach in the

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the civil rights strategy that Ball disdains might become an option once more people become vegans and there are enough people to organize a civil-rights style campaign for animal rights.

<sup>10</sup> For more on this see Sillars who attacks traditional movement theory for relying on intent of message transmission as a method of rhetorical movement analysis.

same kind of position – as a persuasive group whose impact is difficult to quantify, but whose ever-present artifacts point to some level of cognitive transformation.<sup>11</sup>

Others have been made angry by Ball's refusal to support traditional methods of activism such as protesting. PJ McKosky, a Pittsburgh-based animal rights organizer, has challenged the stance that veganism is the only issue that animal rights activists should organize around; he counters that there are many areas where animal rights activists should fight. Others argue that vegan-education is an essential part of the struggle for animal rights, but it should not be the only place where activists put their energy. Some activists point to issues like fur, suggesting that their importance as a recruiting issue should not be discounted. The high level of personal commitment required by veganism and the low level of personal commitment to some other issues causes many to argue that a movement with multiple campaigns serves the goals of animal rights best. McKosky raised the notion of bringing recruiting people with certain issues and letting their consciousness develop into more complicated life-style changes like veganism (Personal interview).

Matt Ball and Vegan Outreach represent a significant challenge to the modern animal rights movement whose chief strategy to this point has been traditional forms of agitation. Ball simultaneously wants to refocus the energy of the animal rights movement into recruiting more vegans and to changing tactics. Moving from activism to education is a difficult idea for many in the movement to swallow. They have grown accustomed to the way that the animal rights movement achieves change, and to many Ball is an unsettling voice.

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<sup>11</sup> Despite differences in tactics, and even significant disagreement with Matt Ball, *Why Vegan?*'s are staples of almost every animal rights group.

While highlighting intra-movement differences of opinion, Vegan Outreach plays an essential role within the animal rights movement. Their publications and their unfailing commitment to the promotion of veganism are a foundational resources that many other animal rights activists build upon. *Why Vegans?* is a perfect example of how activists access multiple audiences with protest literature. Animal rights activists use the statistics, health information, recipes and moral arguments for their own education and to help make arguments persuading others to become vegetarians/vegans. Vegan Outreach's education-oriented strategic stance has challenged the animal rights community. Like his pamphlets, Ball's arguments serve two functions – they spark resistance and they encourage reflection – although many continue to protest Ball's arguments.

#### *Farm Sanctuary and Documentation as Action*

Farm Sanctuary is an organization that rescues animals and documents farm animal cruelty. The organization focuses on a dual-track of activism including educational outreach and litigation. Farm Sanctuary has created a space where people can see farm animals outside of the status as “meat.” Members focus on gentle persuasion by documenting the suffering of farm animals and using their sanctuary to spread compassion. They also litigate at local levels to get regulations to protect farm animals. Farm Sanctuary has created a new tactic in the fight for animal rights, the creation of the sanctuary.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The idea of a sanctuary has taken off among the animal rights community. There are now two Farm Sanctuaries, one on each coast. There are specialty sanctuaries for pigs and chickens, and there are dozens of other animal sanctuaries that take abandoned animals and provide them with a comfortable place to live.

Founded by Gene and Lauri Bauston, Farm Sanctuary began when the Baustons videotaped a farm auction and found a living sheep on the “dead pile”.<sup>13</sup> After the sheep, later named Hilda, was rushed to a vet, it recuperated. The Baustons became committed to the idea of a sanctuary for farm animals like Hilda who were abandoned. So they sold tofu hotdogs at Grateful Dead concerts to raise money and then bought a large farm in Watkins Glen, New York that they named Farm Sanctuary. They began accepting suffering animals and pursuing factory farms with video cameras and watchful eyes. The farm came to house dozens of animals and the Baustons positioned Farm Sanctuary to be a simultaneous animal haven and education center, using the animals that they had saved to hook their message about animal rights (Angel).

The actual sanctuaries that they have constructed are hundred acre working farms that have replaced human benefit with animal welfare. When you walk onto the Farm Sanctuary property you quickly discover dozens of signs everywhere that ask you not to consume animal or dairy product while on the grounds. The philosophy of the sanctuary is that this farm is centered on the needs of the animals – it is a refuge for animals who have suffered and have been redeemed. It is a living space challenging anthropocentrism, with a fully vegan staff promoting harmonious co-existence between abandoned farm animals.

While Farm Sanctuary is a working farm that has saved animals, it is also an amazing persuasive act. The Baustons built a “people’s barn” as an education center which houses graphic depictions of farm animals suffering, triumphant farm animals from the sanctuary, and a gift shop. Farm Sanctuary runs tours and brings busloads of

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<sup>13</sup> The dead pile is a place where animals that are sick or dying or were injured during transport to the auction would be discarded.

school children into the barn and onto the grounds to meet the animals every season. Throughout the sanctuary there is a common narrative of innocent farm animals who faced unspeakable deaths (usually through abandonment) who were saved in a daring late night rescue by the Farm Sanctuary staff (often the founders Gene and Lori Bauston). These narratives simultaneously bring the suffering of the animals to the forefront and identify the viewer as responsible for the action.

The Baustons also pursued a local legislative agenda, with the intent of making farms more humane. They have advocated for 'downer laws' that would prevent farms from simply disposing of dying animals. Some see their educational efforts and the legislative actions as tied together: ". . . [B]anning the killing of animals for food and banning vivisection are not realistic legislative goals at the present time. Thus, in both cases the campaigns focus on elimination of specific forms of abuse and public education" (Finsen and Finsen 127).<sup>14</sup>

Throughout all of this, Farm Sanctuary is able to stay afloat because it is savvy about selling its message. By mixing animal rights zealotry with summer camp gusto, Farm Sanctuary activists have developed a protest strategy with wide appeal. This has enabled the Baustons to use the Farm Sanctuary name and image as tools to produce videos and other products like T-shirts. They have also started a bread-and-breakfast complete with a vegan breakfast that enables guests to visit with animals, relax in a country cabin and get a potent dose of animal rights at the same time. They have even co-authored a vegan cookbook with Joanne Stepanik called *Vegan Vittles*.

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<sup>14</sup> This approach comes dangerously close to being described as animal welfare. Several animal rights activists I've dealt with criticized Farm Sanctuary as a place where meat eaters might relieve their anxieties about animal cruelty. One long-time vegan described the Watkins Glen shelter as a petting zoo for vegetarians.

In addition to Farm Sanctuary, there are other farm-animal advocacy groups, including Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM) and Earthsave.<sup>15</sup> All of these groups share certain goals and perspectives, including the gradual education of consumers about farm animal suffering, and the promotion of vegetarianism/veganism.

Unlike Vegan Outreach, Farm Sanctuary is interested in bringing the message of animal compassion to a much larger audience, participating in wide variety of public relations campaigns to encourage vegetarianism, veganism and general animal compassion. Farm animal rights are the last frontier in the animal right movement. Gene Bauston explained: "The farm animal is the lowest link in the chain, low man on the totem pole in terms of animal rights. People just do want to give up meat, and they can't make the link about animals like chickens or cows or pigs being more than just a commodity" (quoted in Rothman).

Bauston's justification is tied to mainstream animal rights ideology – stopping animal suffering because of their sentience. But many position Farm Sanctuary higher than other arms of the movement because they have found a way to fight the most common way that animals suffer – through factory farms.

Like Matt Ball, the Baustons have argued for their importance in the movement because they center their struggle on the largest numbers of suffering animals. Farm Sanctuary creates a moral argument that is very appealing: the day-to-day suffering of massive numbers of farm animals demands redress. Unlike Vegan Outreach, Farm Sanctuary helps to provide an initial awareness about animal cruelty. Using documentary films and their very friendly educational centers (farms) they are able to spread a very

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<sup>15</sup> FARM was the organization who is widely credited with the popular education about veal calves. Their relentless education campaigns in the 1980s gained national attention elevating the cause to massive



palatable version of animal consciousness. By combining the stories of animal cruelty and the rewarding nostalgia of pristine farm animals, they are able to spread their message to a wide audience.

There are however, other more fundamental differences between the two organizations. One difference concerns the question of symbolic action as a persuasive tool. This is where Vegan Outreach and Farm Sanctuary disagree on a strategic level:

Farm sanctuaries can have an educational effect. They're also easier to raise funds for than many animal issues, and some of the money can be used for vegetarian education. But the number of animals that sanctuaries save is so small, and the resources employed to save them so vast in comparison, that it is unclear that it's the best use of our resources (Ball, Personal interview).

Ball raises a number of vital concerns. Is the model of the Farm Sanctuary a symbolic act that might draw resources and energy from other aspects of the movement? It is clear that farm sanctuaries are fundamentally unable to save any real portion of the thousands of farm animals who are killed every hour. From this perspective, perhaps the image of happy animals who frolic in a safe space might have a reassuring effect on people's conscience, convincing them that further action in defense of animals might not be necessary (See Edelman).

Again, this line of analysis prompts re-evaluation of the question of movement success. Farm sanctuaries may be *both* symbolic acts and valuable public acts of persuasion furthering the cause of animal rights. Rather than a simplistic criticism that holds farm sanctuaries responsible for saving as many animals as possible, it is more valuable to consider how farm sanctuaries might affect cultural understandings of animals. Farm sanctuaries put a face on animals that we ordinarily would view as food.

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popular support.

Animals like chickens and pigs are marketed to an audience as living, breathing, exciting animals who are more similar to your family pets than as dinner. Carol Adams calls this “restoring the absent referent” – rhetorically introducing an ethical framework that makes violence against an animal more difficult (“Sexual Politics”). The very thing that makes farm sanctuaries symbolic actions, that they only save a representative sample, may be a great rhetorical strength of the sanctuaries. Their ability to be theme-parks for animal conscience can affect our culture, which in turn can create the frameworks for policy change or wider political transformation (Meyer 186).

Ball’s criticism can be read as a fundamental resource mobilization interpretation – a social movement is using its budget and resources in a way that is not in the best interest of the larger goals of the movement. This notion relies on the formula that ‘money=success,’ which was called into question in Chapter one. Instead we should analyze social movements based on the cultural impact that they have on the knowledge of a society. In this case, Farm Sanctuary takes advantage of new spaces in which to transform public knowledge. Through the use of interactive sanctuaries where animals live and can be felt, played with, talked to, listened to, smelled, and observed, the lived nature of these animals might be restored in the consciousness of the popular mind.

Matt Ball and Vegan Outreach see proselytizing veganism as a tactic that will gain inevitable converts. The Baustons seem to recognize that the struggle they face is an uphill battle. Gene Bauston was reported in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying “We’re barely scratching the surface in rescuing. That’s why we educate, legislate, and campaign” (quoted in Rothman).

Farm Sanctuary members positioned themselves within a sphere of the animal rights movement that does not participate in illegal activities. The animals they receive have been acquired legally and they have publicly stated that they will not harbor animals that are fugitives. Their willingness to legislate for animal welfare places them in a category of activism that most animal rights activists find uncomfortable. Because many in the movement believe that the central goal should be a complete end of animal suffering in all areas, they are loath to call for reforms in the industries that use animals. The Baustons on the other hand, have created a California law called the Downed Animal Protection Act that provides penalties of up to \$2,500 for cruelly abandoning animals (Rothman). They use the law to oversee stockyards and slaughterhouses for humane treatment of the animals.

The Baustons' fervent support for downer laws has called into question Farm Sanctuary's effectiveness, since some in the animal rights community view such laws as a public relations gimmick. For example, McKosky questions downer laws as examples of an ineffective welfarist approach to animal rights.

I don't have a problem with what Farm Sanctuary does. Farm Sanctuary says promote veganism and yet let's stop the downed animal trade. Focusing on downed animals is a completely welfarist approach . . . . Animals don't care what our philosophy is and I agree with that. If you are going to be able to ban veal crates or ban battery cages and yet they the animals are still going to be exploited that's still one step better. At least what it's going to take to get those issues resolved – small yet significant issues (Personal interview).

McKosky expresses a type of argument that is common in the animal rights community. Rather than attacking another organization's approach directly, most activists position different strategies against ones with which they agree. McKosky believes that fostering veganism is one of the most important things that animal rights activists can do. So his

frame of reference in terms of activism sees the legislation to protect downed farm animals as welfarist – something anathema among the animal rights community. Yet, as McKosky is issuing a challenge to Farm Sanctuary, he is calling for an incremental understanding of change that allows for many different strategies. Even as he is criticizing Farm Sanctuary, McKosky seems to recognize the value of incremental steps toward change. This approach to protest mirrors Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato's theory that new social movements maintain a dual focus of protest activity, shifting between poles.

Perhaps it is from this contradictory stance that one of the most important elements of the animal rights movement might emerge. Even the most fervent animal rights activists see value in other tactics, even if they publicly profess a different path. Because many animal rights activists have to exist within a world that is so far away from ideal (animals used as objects by most humans), they have become dedicated to the strategies that they see as most effective. More than simply preferring their way of doing things they have become attached to tactics as survival mechanisms in a world that seems intensely cruel. The vision of a committed animal rights activist is simultaneously one of a zealot and a pragmatist. Zealously believing in a particular path of social change, and at the same time pragmatically recognizing who their allies and enemies are, the animal rights movement grapples with movement insecurity. McKosky's janus-faced attack and recognition of Farm Sanctuary seems to be indicative of this kind of dualism.

When we look at the seams that join a new social movement we often see differences. We see driven activists who are struggling to gather converts to a particular philosophy or tactic. When we look at the divergent strategies of the animal rights

community when challenging farm animal oppression we can locate layers of dialogue. Rather than viewing Vegan Outreach and Farm Sanctuary as opponents who battle for supremacy we should see them as participants in a discussion that builds upon the arguments of the other. Creating a world where humans no longer use farm animals is an enormous task, one that requires massive change in popular opinion. Yet change is occurring. The public opinion campaigns against veal and the increasing popular acceptance of veganism and vegetarianism indicate a slowly changing populace. Some level of change is occurring.<sup>16</sup>

Eyerman and Jamison argue that new social movements transform society by changing people's knowledge structures. The dialogue between Vegan Outreach and Farm Sanctuary not only creates a discussion between two branches of animal rights activists who envision tactics in different ways. It also creates a new norm of knowledge: a new kind of understanding about a previously understood problem. The layers of dialogue between dozens of campaigns to help farm animals create an endless feedback loop of conscience for society helping to foster a new understanding of animals. The real power of the comparison between Farm Sanctuary and Vegan Outreach is not to recognize the philosophical differences, but instead to recognize the synergistic value of diverse rhetorical approaches as they play off each other during the course of movement evolution. Farm Sanctuary and Vegan Outreach may appear as political failures according to the resource mobilization theory, but these campaigns have unique symbolic value that can be best exposed through the exploration of new social movement theories.

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<sup>16</sup> The Vegetarian Resource Groups' poll supports these claims. In particular, large numbers of people order vegetarian entrées when eating out.

## **Animals in Research: Direct Action and Science**

Viewing the animal rights movement as a diverse amalgamation of campaigns joined together by rhetorical dialogue enables a unique pathway of analysis. We can look at how a movement is constituted – not in the members or the headquarters, but in the words that flow between different members of the movement. When we look at the animal rights movement we can see different tactics and strategies not as territorial markers but as constitutive and reconstitutive moves by individuals who reflexively develop their views on appropriate movement goals and tactics.

Echoing the discussion about the best way to improve the status of farm animals, the conversation that emerges between activists who focus on research animals helps to change society's knowledge formations. Where the farm animal conversation focuses on the overwhelming numbers of animals that face death in slaughterhouses, those who target animals in research face an industry whose status is very difficult to challenge – the scientific research industry. Here, activists deploy a diverse spectrum of tactics, ranging from the militant direct action of the Animal Liberation Front to the establishment-oriented approach of scientists who challenge animal experimentation.

### *Direct Action Against Animal Experimentation*

West Coast Activist Craig Rosenbraugh is a long-time leader in the animal rights and social justice communities, having been arrested more than a dozen times during demonstrations. He is a strong advocate of non-violent direct action against institutions of animal oppression, with a special focus in on the issue of animal experimentation. He

is the philosophical and media spokesperson for the non-violent direct action arm of the animal rights movement.<sup>17</sup>

Rosenbraugh was contacted in 1997 by the Animal Liberation Front and given a communiqué to present to the outside world. Rosenbraugh's enthusiastic embrace of this tactic and pursuit of it in a media-savvy manner reflected his belief in the cause and the tactics. Soon covert animal rights organizations were contacting Rosenbraugh and asking him to interpret and speak for their actions on the public stage.

When Rosenbraugh talks about non-violent direct action, he is careful to argue for the importance of radical direct action to the movement. He has been a part of an ongoing debate within the animal rights movement where he has represented the side of direct action that includes dramatic property destruction including arson. Part of this discussion occurs with other activists who point to the civil rights struggle and Gandhian non-violence as the foundation for their direct action. Rosenbraugh has chosen to position himself as an intellectual vanguard calling for and defending direct action and property destruction. In an interview, I asked him about the impact that Gandhian non-violence theory had on the animal rights movement. He replied:

I believe that nonviolence is blown out of proportion with its relevance to past historical social movements. I think its blown out of proportion in the civil rights movement in the sense that that was not the only tactic that registered success. There was also the more militant tactics used by Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. Years ago in the Gandhi movement, people will discuss that as being the most significant example of successful non-violent mass mobilization, and indeed, non-violence did play a key role. But another key role was played by a number of different factors, including a world war and a more militant aspect of that society that threatened the English government, and if the English government didn't work with Gandhi, they would have done a lot of damage. That

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<sup>17</sup> Rosenbraugh has been a spokesperson for the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front since 1997. He has also been the target of extensive attention from law-enforcement, receiving several FBI visits and at the time of writing 8 grand-jury orders.

threat is what led to the success of the Indian independence movements (Rosenbraugh, Personal interview).

Rosenbraugh believes in direct action that includes people blowing up fur-transporting trucks and burning down ski-resorts that destroy wildlife. Rosenbraugh positions himself philosophically to defend the destruction of property. In a *New York Times Magazine* article that profiled him as a spokesperson for eco-saboteurs, he was quoted as asking "Is it a greater evil to destroy this property of this corporation or to choose to allow these corporations to destroy the environment, and I guess the activists and what I'm saying is that I guess it's a lesser evil to stop these corporations from destroying the planet" (quoted in Sullivan 49).

This is the philosophy most often represented by the Animal Liberation Front. Although he was the public relations mouthpiece for the ALF/ELF (he resigned in 2001) some of Rosenbraugh's arguments are not intended to be disseminated to the general public. Part of his job is to articulate a philosophy of strategy to the rest of the animal rights movement. His ideas are spread to a highly engaged portion of the animal rights movement and his stance has also affected others within the animal rights movement. Rosenbraugh articulates a strategic vision and disseminates inspirational emails to the rest of the animal rights community.

Rosenbraugh and several other spokespersons spread the news of animal liberations and raids through email networks. These information bulletins often give the image that underground animal liberationists are lurking almost everywhere ready to leap up and break the law for animals. This perception is matched in some ways by reality. The FBI and other law enforcement organizations have been hard at work trying to catch



Earth and animal liberators and they have had virtually no success while the number of incidents has increased in the last five years (Sullivan).

The relationship between above ground animal rights organizations and these direct action groups is a difficult one to analyze. Because the public and mass media reaction to direct action in defense of animals has been to slap on the label of terrorism, animal rights activists have had to tread a fine line between supporting the ALF and its like-minded cousins, while still publicly disavowing their tactics. Many in the animal rights movement are unwilling to publicly support these kinds of actions for fear that they will lose the support of public opinion. Privately, their relationship is another matter. Rebecca Eirene expressed with guarded prose a certain amount of dislike of the Animal Liberation Front's tactics.

I have divided feelings about it. I think they do stupid things sometimes like throw firebombs—that isn't very clever. But I have to admit that whenever I see a post about the ALF that says that they went into a lab and rescued some rabbits and smashed the place up it makes me happy. I have an emotional reaction to that. I don't think they are very wise. I think that the Earth Liberation Front does dumb things . . . I don't like burning things down. I think burning things down is stupid because you can't say you are an animal person and burn anything down because things live in walls (Personal interview).

Eirene showcases one of the major challenges to the ALF-style actions within the animal rights community. Many believe that non-violence includes property and that the stance of non-violence is threatened by bombings and sabotage because animals or human-animals could be hurt. Yet at the same time, the ALF has come to represent a certain

Butch Cassidy-style folk hero to Animal Rightists. Many who would never participate in direct action protest, they silently cheer when they hear of ALF actions.<sup>18</sup>

The rhetorical value of such mythology can not be overstated. In a movement where the activists routinely face burn-out and frustration about the overwhelming amount of animal abuse that is considered commonplace among our modern society, the ALF represents a kind of karmic specter that enables rank-and-file animal rights activists to continue along with their work. As a flamboyant vanguard, the ALF also provides a certain amount of respectability among animal rights activists who seem very reasonable next to the direct-action oriented activists.<sup>19</sup>

The controversy over tactics becomes acute when it comes to challenging medical laboratories that experiment on animals. Supporters who have clear feelings about wearing fur or eating veal might balk when it comes to attacking animal-based medical research. Medical researchers are given wide berth in our society because they are perceived as experts trying to heal illnesses. Despite early gains by the animal rights movement against cosmetics testing, biomedical research institutions are proving to be very difficult to challenge (Finsen and Finsen; Singer). These institutions provide rhetorical breathing room for people who experiment on animals to levy a wide-variety of arguments against animal rights protesters like Rosenbraugh. So then why would activists put their energy toward fighting animal experimentation rather than some other kind of animal suffering?

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<sup>18</sup> At a certain point this makes sense given that many animal rights activists face overwhelming opposition in their daily lives. To be involved in a struggle that you know that you will never win can be overwhelming. The ALF represents a certain psychological outlet for frustrated activists.

<sup>19</sup> For more on this see Dave Foreman's *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* in which he argues that Earth First! the radical bio-centric activist group played a vital role in making other activist groups seem more reasonable and encouraging government and business interests to negotiate with mainstream environmental groups.

Rosenbraugh answers this question by positioning animal experimentation at the root of other social injustices. Thus Rosenbraugh sees the fight against animal experimentation as a vital campaign in order to enable other animal rights activists to continue with their good work.

I stayed on vivisection because people always argue that there is a core . . . if you stop one issue of abuse then all the other issues will fall down, such as veganism. I believe that to an extent, but I believe that one of the most controversial issues is animal experimentation. One of the hardest issues for someone to work on, one of the hardest issues for the public to come to terms with is animal experimentation. And that is one that I chose to work on because I think some of the greatest injustices going on right now are done in our laboratories in America (Personal interview).

Traditional social movement analysis might position Rosenbraugh as an extremist activist whose goals are utopian and whose views are out of touch with public sentiment. Yet, repositioning Rosenbraugh's audience as other animal rights activists yields an entirely different interpretation of his work and output. The animal rights movement rewards consistency – people who believe animals suffer in one area and are willing to make changes in their lives not to be complicit with that suffering are logically called upon to continue the project when they receive new information about animal suffering. When that information deals with animal experimentation, this phenomenon can lead to the unraveling of someone's belief system. Rosenbraugh's arguments and stance simultaneously create a powerful intra-movement argument against animal experimentation and bring news of those who act outside the constraints of the law and society. Rather than dismissing him and his ideas as extremist, it is more fruitful to position Rosenbraugh as a vital component of insider movement dialogue.

Of course there is also a public component to Rosenbraugh and the Animal Liberation Front. The above quote suggests that Rosenbraugh views education about

animal rights as vital to the success of the movement. As a holistic ideology, animal rights needs to 'make sense' to the public, and one of the easiest justifications for violence to animals is in the area of animal experimentation. Rosenbraugh justifies his involvement in this area because it helps other people to defend animal rights as a philosophy to live by. Rosenbraugh wants to give people who have decided to side with the animal rights movement the philosophical ammunition to debate the biggest threat to their position.<sup>20</sup>

Although his activism is centered upon producing pamphlets and articles about the moral failure of animal experimentation, Rosenbraugh and others who share his position recognize that this is a difficult argument to win. Unlike farm activists that can easily appeal to the moral bankruptcy of taking life for our pleasure, activists who oppose animal experimentation need to grapple with higher stakes than comfort. Arrayed against them are scientists and pundits who are quick to point on the life-and-death stakes of their activism.

In this analysis the actual impact that the Animal Liberation Front and other direct action groups might have is questionable. Commentaries on them generally gloss over the question of success (Blount) or merely chronicle a laundry list of ALF actions organized by date (Finsen and Finsen; Guither). Holding up the ALF and direct action organizations to a traditional standard of movement success ignores the unique nature of their actions. Rather than plotting ALF actions on a chart that positions their success/failure between freeing animals and getting arrested, we should look at the larger meaning of the ALF. In the day-to-day struggles for animal rights, most campaigns are

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<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to consider that the central web site for the Animal Liberation Front is The Animal Liberation Front Information Service – whose name suggests just such a role, that of a central organization

fairly mundane, often filled with busy-work that contains little opportunity for satisfaction or a sense of success. The ALF represents an apocryphal agency whose operations carry significant meaning for the rest of the movement. ALF successes represent a kind of punishment for villains and self-righteous validation for animal rights activists. When they fail, especially when they are arrested, ALF protesters become martyrs whose behavior within the legal system is scrutinized by animal rights activists.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of public opinion, there is an obvious downside to the ALF. People tend to view direct actions like sabotage and bombings (even if they are limited to property destruction) as terrorist-like activities. When these negative perceptions color the entire landscape of animal rights protest, activists of all persuasions appear threatening, even dangerous.

Yet the relationship between the ALF and other animal rights activists is a critical component to understanding the animal rights movement. For many within the movement, despite public criticisms to the contrary, the Animal Liberation Front represents a kind of unrepentant element that is willing to put themselves at risk for the animals.

Perhaps the most telling artifact that represents this position is Ingrid Newkirk's (the executive director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) book *Free The Animals!* This book tells the story of "Valerie," the founder and leader of the American ALF. The entire book consists of exciting rescue stories and tactical details of midnight raids. It reads like a mystery novel – very exciting and stimulating. Despite the highly

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through which people share information about animal liberation ideas and tactics.

<sup>21</sup> Rodney Coronado was arrested for ALF actions and his decision to accept a moderate plea bargain has resulted in a deed schism between those who see this as a willingness to compromise with authorities who

public status of the book's author (Newkirk is one of the most quoted leaders of the mainstream animal rights movement), the book contains very little actual information about the ALF or even about animal rights philosophy. Almost all of the ideas on animal rights come as an outgrowth of conversations and actions – there is little actual theorizing. I believe that this is because the book is not intended for a general audience – it does not really introduce or even describe much about the Animal Liberation Front, instead it tells exciting stories, ones that could just as easily be about bank robbing or rescuing hostages.

With echoes of Rosenbraugh's email notifications of ALF actions, *Free the Animals!* helps to establish the mythical presence of the ALF. As a mysterious ninja-like collective of secret activists, the ALF and direct-action agitators become an ever-present facet to the animal rights movement. Not only is direct action part of a philosophical debate within the movement, it is also a sustaining element of the movement.<sup>22</sup> Consider the words of Nicole Rosmarino upon hearing of the ELF arson of a Vail ski area – she described herself as “jumping up and down with delight” (Markels 64). Direct action represents an ethical and even mythical umbrella for the animal rights movement.

In this interpretation, the meaning of the ALF is larger than its parts or even of its activists; rather it is a representation of an idea and an illustration of the potential for a better world. Likewise, Rosenbraugh's position should be seen as one of support for other animal rights activists who face a difficulty in dealing with the issue of animal experimentation. Looking at the ALF and Rosenbraugh through these new

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want to imprison other ALF activists. Other activists have been pilloried on various web sites as traitors and informants when they accept plea bargains.

interpretations can enable us to move past old ideas of success and gather a new understanding of how social movements affect change and constitute themselves.

*Ray Greek and the Scientific Challenge to Vivisection*

Dr. Ray Greek is a Medical Doctor and former instructor at several medical research facilities. His focus is on challenging animal experimentation as a scientific fraud. He believes that animal experimentation is so successful because of the financial incentives that sustain the research institutions and businesses that continue to experiment. He does not believe that moral persuasion tactics will convince the public to give up animal experimentation. Instead Greek has waged a single-issue campaign to convince the world that animal experimentation is not scientifically valid. Here Greek explains that animal experimentation won't end until the financial incentive that drives the industry to continue is undercut.

The cotton gin obviated the need for all the slaves. Now granted that you could still keep them around to do the household chores, but the economy of the south functioned based on slavery until the cotton gin came out. In contrast to the homosexual issue or other social issues, a lot of people still need animals to make money. God, the animal exploitation industry is the biggest industry in the United States. If you look at beef, dairy, they are right up there with steel and General Motors blah, blah, blah. If you look at the whole industry then you are talking about people's pocket books. Now you are going to have to do some educating because they are not going to give that stuff up (Personal interview).

Greek's pragmatic approach challenges a core strategy of the animal rights movement – the appeal to people's compassion. Instead Greek wants to engage and challenge the scientific basis for animal experimentation. Through his book *Golden Geese and Sacred*

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<sup>22</sup> Several of my interviews suggested this line of dialogue. Both Mclosky and Vanderberg voiced support for the ALF, recognizing their ideological and mythopoetic value. Both also had questions of their pragmatic effectiveness.

*Cows* and his organization Americans for Medical Advancement, Greek challenges the scientific community to justify its own defense of animal experimentation on scientific and medical grounds.<sup>23</sup>

He has also become a spokesperson for the animal rights community – often flying to debate pro-vivisection advocates or give talks at colleges. His message is unique among the animal rights movement. His lectures are packed with facts, dense with PowerPoint slides, and filled with a steady barrage of scientific examples where animal experimentation has harmed the health of humans. Unlike Rosenbraugh whose arguments are fundamentally moral and ethical, Greek keeps his arguments strictly in the scientific realm. He believes that relying on the moral arguments against animal experimentation will lose traction when contrasted to either financial gain or the trope of human suffering.

People are greedy, they are self-centered, they're selfish. They are narcissistic. We think we've won the war on cosmetic testing. But there are a lot of people who don't mind putting drops in bunnies eyes. It's maybe 50-50 in the population, but whatever it is there are still a lot of people who don't care about testing cosmetics on animals. If you haven't even gotten beyond that, then forget it. And look at fur. Fur is a completely non-essential item and there are still huge numbers of people who wear the stuff. Granted there has been a decline and blah, blah, blah. But people are greedy, they are selfish and they are going to look out for number one (Personal interview).

For Greek, the danger of moral arguments is that the general public will abandon them when faced with the persuasive arguments made by the scientific community (and scientific lobbying groups). Worse, the institutions of change will fail to respond to arguments that threaten their financial well being. Here, Greek extends Rosenbraugh's point that the financial gain driving animal experimentation is an important issue

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<sup>23</sup> Golden Geese and Sacred Cows was co-authored with his wife, a veterinarian of fifteen years.



deserving attention. While Rosenbraugh and the direct action wing of the animal rights movement choose sabotage and property destruction as counters to this drive for finance, Greek uses his logic and oratory to attack the common-sense justifications for animal research. Greek argues that because animal experimentation not only doesn't work for human health, but also because it often has additional health costs, it should be recognized as financially dangerous for researchers. Despite this strategic position, Greek recognizes the uphill battle he faces.

It's a hard argument. With the anti-vivisection groups all they have to do is show one picture of one dog in a cage with a burn on the side of its body or a chimp with bolts through its brain. And that's it, they can generate a lot of money. My argument is very sterile, more scientific so I think I have a much harder job. But the thing that impresses me is that NEAVS [New England Anti-Vivisection Society] . . . has on their logo that they've been around for 105 years. The last thing that I would tell someone is that I've been trying to accomplish a job for 105 years. So while I think that it is going to be much more difficult to sell the scientific argument to the public, because it's more complicated and doesn't involve touchy-feely emotions. You've been doing the other for 105 years and it hasn't worked. Time to go with another approach (Personal interview).

Many believe that activists who choose to focus on animal experimentation as a central goal must address morality as well. "Because many scientific and medical authorities insist that animal research is vital to medical progress, the battle becomes one of credibility. Here moral and scientific arguments become entwined; the vivisectors' claims for the scientific validity of their practice are challenged in part by attacking these people's motives, credibility and ethics" (Finsen and Finsen 129).

Dean Smith at the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is qualified to talk about the scientific challenges to animal experimentation. He is a researcher and spokesperson for the AAVS, and he has been directly involved in the struggle to create alternatives that would allow researchers to eliminate or minimize the use of animals in

labs. Yet, Smith believes that the scientific challenge to animal experimentation is a losing battle. Instead, he suggests that animal rights activists focus on the moral culpability of a society that condones violence against animals and on creating alternatives (Smith).

Finsen and Finsen explored the moral approach when they wrote: "The haunting images of animals immobilized in stereo-tactic devices, animals with open and festering wounds and missing eyes and limbs, and animals in tiny barren cages function not only to arouse the horror of the viewer to the suffering of the animal, but to call into question the scientific authority of those who would deliberately inflict such suffering" (129).

Activists who choose to focus on the morality of animal experimentation stress the similarity of animals to humans and the need to consider the feelings of animals that are used in experimentation.

There is some feeling of success in this area because the animal rights community has largely eliminated the use of animals in cosmetic testing. Using the public relations friendly graphic images of rabbits in stereo-tactic devices with bleach in their eyes, the animal rights community has been largely victorious in their struggle to end cosmetics testing. The battle has shifted to research-oriented science, with activists attempting to educate and agitate for the rights of animals in laboratories. Unfortunately, the public's faith and unquestioned belief in science has undercut the ability of the animal rights community to make very many gains in these areas (Singer).

The animal rights movement attempts to call into question the scientific value of animal-based research and to restore the lived nature of the animals to play on the morals of their audience. It is the tension between these two positions that has created several

differences among animal rights organizations who choose to challenge animal experimentation. Greek sees this dual-natured strategy as a positive long-term goal, although it is frustrating in the short-term because people will always defer to humans in their own ethical situations. He suggests that relying on an animal rights ethic before the majority of a society can sustain such a belief is like putting the cart before the horse.

Education takes forever. But on the other hand, it is the only thing that works. If you don't change people's minds . . . lets say you've got an initiative on the ballot in PA do away with all hunting. And let's say it passed. In ten years from now they can put another initiative on the ballot and it can come back. If you educate society then they won't (Personal interview).

This is a common theme in debates conducted within social movements. Education takes a long time, yet it is vital because without education laws are largely ineffectual as tools of societal change. Greek argues that changing people's attitudes about animals is the only thing that will permanently end the suffering of animals, and that the passage of laws can only affect their conditions. For activists like Greek, the most important part of the struggle is to redefine the parameters of people's understanding of animals—to get at the root causes of animal oppression. The alternative of reforms, like downer laws, Greek argues, can simply be circumvented.

Again these differences of opinion might be viewed as a weaknesses for the movement. To have two major animal rights organizations like AAVS and AFMP disagree on a fundamental level whether to challenge animal experimentation on moral or scientific grounds could be read as a crippling internecine disagreement. Yet there are virtues of sustaining both lines of public argument simultaneously.

Greek's ideas are important because they provide an important tool for activists who have to defend their ideas. His scientific analysis of the issue of animal

experimentation provides other animal rights activists ammunition in their local battles.

Gary Yourofsky, the Michigan based leader of ADAPTT (Animals Deserve Absolute Protection Today and Tomorrow) says this about Greek's work.

Ray has been invaluable to me. [ . . . ] I only wish the majority of the movement would follow Ray's lead in attacking vivisection at the scientific level. Using ethics to end vivisection is fruitless. We won the ethical arguments about vivisection years ago. Vivisection continues because society has been duped into believing that animal research will save their dying babies and ailing mothers. Ray is brilliant, ethical, judicious, uncompromising and articulate. And the movement could learn a lot if it listened exclusively to Ray when it comes to dealing with vivisection issues. I know I have (Personal interview).

Yourofsky has given more than seventy-seven lectures about animal rights and points to Greek's work and ideas as fundamental to his own success. When faced with difficult questions about animal experimentation, Yourofsky turns to the examples and research that Greek has produced. It is the synergy between Greek's public rhetoric – his lines of argument – and Yourofsky's use of it that layers change in the public sphere.

As a public proponent, Greek's uncompromising scientific approach has gained him support and criticism from within the animal rights movement. Yet his line of argument presenting the scientific and medical dangers of animal research is a compelling tactic. Greek reverses the traditional debating roles of animal rights activists and supporters of research science, with animal rights activists hurling examples of human harm at supporters of bio-medical animal research. Using Greek's work, animal rights activists have been given a line of attack against animal-based research. They can suggest to a person on the street that the previously sacrosanct research science might be dangerous or even deadly.

For public argument, this kind of position can make the moral approach much more appealing. For a person with compassion toward animals, the information that animal-based research might result in faulty medicine or medical techniques that might put humans in harm can allow the moral arguments to come to the fore. It is also reasonable to consider that these arguments mesh with a certain amount of learned distrust of the medical establishment. After years of HMOs and aloof doctors, many people cling to traditional medicine out of necessity yet actively dislike their doctors and insurance providers. The scientific criticism supports the image of doctors and research scientists as fundamentally financially motivated. These two ideas mutually reinforce one another.

Unlike the campaigns against veal and fur, the struggle to dethrone animal experimentation is in its earliest stages of success. Despite years of action on the part of anti-vivisection societies, the increasing financial and medical gains have strengthened the importance of animal-based research in our society. Against these research interests, the animal rights movement has spawned several new tactics and ideas that can help to change the public's ideas about animal research. Turning first to support the activists who are grappling with this issue, Rosenbraugh's messages from the ALF foster a mythological norm that encourages, and cheers on struggling activists. At the same time, Rosenbraugh and Greek help to inform activists of the kinds of arguments they can make against animal research. Perhaps even more important, the tendrils of these tactics spread into public consciousness. The ALF becomes a paragon of intolerance that makes negotiation and press conferences with mainstream organizations more palatable, and the

ideas of Ray Greek slowly enter the mainstream dialogue. Eventually, these ideas may affect the way that we perceive of animal experimentation and research scientists.

Greek and Rosenbraugh represent two very different approaches to the struggle to liberate animals from research laboratories. Yet like Ball and the Baustons, their arguments, groups and ideas provide a woven fabric that approaches a wide audience. The diversity of approaches reaches different people – for as many who are turned off by the direct-action advocacy of Rosenbraugh, there are an equal number whose faith in the medical value of animal experimentation is undercut by Greek. And for an audience that is already initiated into the animal rights philosophy (punks for instance), Rosenbraugh's arguments have an ethical resonance that can mobilize and sustain activists. And Greek's no-compromise scientific approach can give them the ammunition they need to transform public opinion about animal research.

### **Conclusion: The Future of Action in the Animal Rights Movement**

The animal rights movement represents a shared intellectual space between hundreds of diverse and distinct activists who often disagree with one another about tactics. Some movement theorists might see this division as a weakness. On the contrary, I find that the animal rights movements diversity of tactics and ideas enables the movement to have a space for many different kinds of activists. This acknowledgement of difference (despite the often high-energy disagreements), creates a kind of buffet of strategies to achieve a larger goal. Within these different activist paths, there is a valuable ongoing dialogue between wings of the movement, with activists aware of demonstration tactics that are happening on the other side of the U.S. Thus animal rights

activists use each others as sounding boards for ideas, operating as a kind of thinktank for activists.

Acknowledging the diffuse structural and ideological nature of the animal rights movement gives us an opportunity to look at the social movement in new ways. We can recognize how the large numbers of animal rights sub-groups can provide new opportunities for social movement analysis. For instance, we can see that it fosters a necessity for shared contact between different sub-groups in the animal rights movement. This results in a healthy cross-fertilization of ideas and strategies. It also challenges the movement as various arms reach out to potential allies who may bring numbers and new ideas to the movement. It also has a unique knowledge producing function where multiple arguments and positions are presented to the general public at the same time. Unlike traditional social movement scholarship that might see this diversity as a challenge to the animal rights movement, such diversity may actually be essential to the movement's strength. In this chapter I have re-framed the animal rights movement to place the divergent wings of the movement in dialogue with each other. Through this juxtaposition, we can come to a new way of understanding the animal rights movement.

When a group or a person becomes involved in a specialized segment of the animal rights movement, they share the intellectual resources with others who are involved. Activists like Yourofsky giving a speech about animal rights will refer to Ray Greek's ideas to cover a section about animal experimentation. Or an activist might pass a copy of *Why Vegan?* to someone at the same time giving directions to a Farm Sanctuary. These cross-fertilizations happen at other points of intersection – consider the punk concerts in Chapter two where pamphlets by Vegan Outreach are passed out, ALF

videos are sold, and local activists give talks. In these spaces, there is not only a shared sense of purpose and support, but also a kind of discussion that helps to educate from within and debate tactics.

While the cross-fertilization between wings of the animal rights movement is healthy, the growing relationship between animal rights groups and other left-wing political activists groups should also be explored. As the animal rights movement grows, the relationship with other social movements can be tracked to shed further light on analysis of movement cross-fertilization. One contentious issue for the animal rights movement is the difficulty engendered in moves toward building these alliances with other social movements. Some in the movement believe that the small numbers of activists need to grow through alliances with other activist groups. Others are afraid that the focus of animal rights activists will be undercut through the involvement with other social movements (for more on this see Chapter four).

Analysis of cross-fertilization highlights the role that new knowledge plays *within* social movements. Study of social movements reveals that through acts of public persuasion the social movement creates new knowledge in the minds of protest audiences and this can translate into changed behavior.

We not only have to re-envision our idea of social movements, but also reconsider the idea of audience. These audiences receive the messages of animal rights activists with complicated backgrounds. Perhaps a cousin is a vegetarian and they have sat through a Thanksgiving meal with compassionate commentary. Maybe the audience is a child who saw animal rights activism on the way to a supermarket. Another audience could be an active pro-choice supporter who finds the tactics of the ALF too similar to those of



**Operation Rescue.** These past experiences layer audience receptiveness to a received argument. Fundamentally, audiences are active participants in the formation of a social movements message.

As activists (either within other social movements that might be receptive or within other wings of the animal rights movement) hear the arguments put forward by an animal rights activist, new kinds of knowledge are created. For activists who might be willing to listen to the arguments put forward by a person giving out leaflets on the street, there is a reflexive element that involves incorporating new ideas into one's frame of reference. After these ideas have become adopted, there is also new knowledge that is created through movement participation. Activists become aware of their own potential, and using their own power in the public sphere, they are able to actualize arguments and animate strategies that were previously philosophical ideas.

Perhaps the most powerful element of this self-education occurs when new social movements empower individuals, transferring the power of decision-making from protestors to new participants. This is the beginning of a kind of self-emancipation through activism. Education and new knowledge become building blocks to show that traditional "experts" can be questioned. In the case of animal rights, this might mean pointing out how a commonly accepted truth (animal are ours to consume) is fundamentally wrong at the *personal* level. This might encourage people to educate themselves and become expert on a particular aspect of protest activity<sup>24</sup>. Anyone who has been a vegetarian for any length of time has become familiar with the statistics on nutrition to debate parents and concerned friends who are afraid that vegetarians are

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<sup>24</sup> See Crimp and Rolston whose book carefully chronicles the growing expertise of people with AIDS on the biology of the disease.

doing themselves harm. This new knowledge enables activists to challenge the experts and to become confident in their own position as agitators who are striving to change the society.

This educational function of organizing and protest is essential to consider when we examine the modern animal rights movement because the large numbers of regionally distinct and diverse groups creates lots of new knowledge. In contrast to social movements that transmit knowledge top down from leaders to rank and file activists, the animal rights movement debates with itself – creating new knowledge through dialogue and participation. This cross-fertilization will only increase as more and more diverse activists become involved in the animal rights struggle.

The diverse nature of the animal rights movement has created a social movement whose participants are deeply committed to the philosophy of animal rights, even though their interpretation of tactics that flow from that ideology are drastically different. Some are committed to refining the face of the social movement, engaging in dialogue and discussion at every opportunity in an attempt to bring out the best ways to fight animal oppression. Others have invested themselves in the tactical space of a certain kind of action and are reluctant to even acknowledge different perspectives. Such insights represent a challenge to the deterministic underpinnings of Michel's Iron Law of Oligarchy, the theory that argues that success in changing institutional structures ushers in movement bureaucratization and professionalization, detaching movement leaders from original goals that drove the initial protest activity.

## **Chapter IV**

### ***Resisting the Call to Purity: Feminism and the Animal Rights Movement.***

[W]hen the book [*The Sexual Politics of Meat*] came out, Bloodroot, which is a feminist vegetarian restaurant, they told me in 1990 that animal rights people bought the book in hardcover but feminists were going to wait until it was in paperback.  
- Carol Adams, Personal interview.

Gender is a fundamental element of the animal rights movement. Historically, this is due to the driving force of the large number of women movement leaders in anti-vivisection and vegetarian movements (Adams, "Sexual"; Guither). That image of strong women leadership continued as women flocked to the animal rights movement in the 1980s and 1990s. As campaigns against fur and cosmetic testing grew, the image of women as leaders of the animal rights movement took hold.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the clear indications that women were essential to the success and make-up of the animal rights movement, there was little dialogue about feminist concerns within the movement. With the exception of tensions with PETA's continuing sexist advertisements against fur, there was little reflection about gender in the animal rights movement. This all changed when Carol Adams published her treatise *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, a text that connected feminism to animal rights. In part inspired by Adams, and in part driven by an increasing sense of alienation, other feminist theorists have called into question the assumptions of the animal rights movement by connecting

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<sup>1</sup> Consider that the person most pointed to as the "leader" of the animal rights movement, Ingrid Newkirk, the executive director of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), is a strong outspoken woman.

the social status of animals and women. Feminist ideas and theorists drive a healthy dialogue about theory, philosophy and practice within the social movement itself.

Despite the impact that gender and feminist theorists have had on the movement, it has not been given the attention that it deserves. In rhetorical studies of the animal rights movement, gender concerns and the role of women are treated as epiphenomena if at all, and the topic gets treated in only one of the major books on the animal rights movement.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter remedies this oversight by analyzing the impact of gender and feminism on both the study of animal rights and the social movement itself. The first section discusses the implications that feminist theory and feminist activists have had on the animal rights movement. Focusing on the role of women in the movement and the challenges of feminist theorists, this section provides a framework for the discussion of feminism in the animal rights movement. The second section discusses perhaps the most important challenge that feminists bring to the animal rights movement – the challenge of intellectual and strategic purity. In order to explore this issue in depth, the interactions with the animal rights movement and prospective allies will be brought into focus. It is here that a new social movement theory emerges – the tension between purity and alliances.

This analysis paints a picture of a social movement that is engaging in dialogue with itself. Activists are reading columns and passing emails among one another – this social movement is educating itself, a process that is often cumbersome and confusing. But this is how new social movements evolve – not along a guaranteed framework of

growth and relationship with the state, but through the pushes and pulls of people who struggle with each other to define a social movement.<sup>3</sup> This struggle is a tenuous and complicated process, and like water seeping through an ancient system of pipes, ideas become backlogged, a network confused and in some places the water rushes. Yet it is in this situation of a social movement confronting itself that my analysis of the precarious issue of alliances has unique value and where the question of cross-fertilization between social movements can be explored with both negative and positive implications.

In this chapter, the primary texts that weave together these themes of movement growth and the struggle between alliance-building norms and purity are my readings, friendship and ultimately an interview with Carol Adams. Building on the ideas of Adams, this chapter explores the feminist challenge to purity within the animal rights movement and culminates in a dialogue about alliance-building.

### **Gender Consciousness and the Animal Rights Movement**

That Carol Adams is an important part of the animal rights movement is often overlooked in scholarly treatments of the animal rights struggle. She authors a monthly column in *The Animals Agenda* (the leading animal rights magazine), has published four books about animals and feminism, and as a prominent speaker travels around the country presenting her slide show on “The Sexual Politics of Meat.” Adams is the most prominent feminist animal rights theorist who has attempted to argue that violence against animals is entwined with violence against women. Her book, *The Sexual Politics*

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the specifically created books tying animal rights and feminism together (all either written or edited by Carol Adams), only Finsen and Finsen directly analyze the role of gender in the animal rights movement.

<sup>3</sup> See Cohen and Arato for more on dynamics of social movement growth.

*of Meat*, published in 1990, positioned Adams as a new animal rights critic, drawing from ecofeminists and cultural theorists.

In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams contends that we learn how to commit violence through the “absent referent” that encourages humans to overlook and forget the lived nature of animals and women. Adams situates the struggle to restore linguistically this absent referent using artifacts that showcase how words and metaphor enable violence. She creates a theoretical understanding of violence that not only exposes how violence against animals “makes sense,” but also how this enabling process is perpetuated against women, people of color, immigrants and other traditionally excluded groups.

Among animal rights theorists, Adams’ ideas are new and challenging, but among feminists these connections have been previously articulated by ecofeminists. Ecofeminism is the philosophy that attributes special environmental consciousness to women. Because of their unique standpoint in the world, ecofeminists argue they are situated to recognize, empathize and challenge environmental challenges. Ecofeminists see parallels between the oppression of women and the destruction of the environment. Arguing that both are based on the oppressive impulses of male privilege and a masculine-based society, they see the solution in the recognition and affirmation of feminist ecological outreach and activism – ecofeminism.<sup>4</sup>

This move to connect women and the oppression of the environment laid the groundwork for the idea that feminism and animal rights might in fact be parallel philosophies. It is along these lines that the connection between women and animals can

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<sup>4</sup> Ecofeminists have been strongly criticized by many feminists for what many see is complicity with biological essentialism. This criticism and responses to it are worked out in Kheel, Weil, and Sanchez.

be fostered. Caroline Merchant, an ecofeminist theorist, has identified ecocentrism as a fundamental core philosophy of ecofeminism. Ecocentrism entails resistance to the human-centered, rationality based, world of reductionist science: "An ecocentric ethic is grounded in the cosmos. The whole environment, including inanimate elements, rocks, and minerals along with animate plants and animals, is assigned intrinsic value" (Merchant 74-5). Feminist animal rights based philosophy becomes possible with this ethic that seeks to ground feminism in an environmentalism that ascribes value to every element of nature.

But Adams did more than simply introduce the ecocentric philosophy of ecofeminism to the animal rights movement; she created a critical theory that tied the oppressions of animals and women together. She theorized that humans create an absent referent by effacing the lived nature of an animal or a woman, thereby paving the way for violence. The absent referent, the removal of the lived nature of the other being, is a valuable concept that helps Adams explain the parallels between violence against animals and violence against women.<sup>5</sup> According to Adams, the absent referent occurs through a process of learning, in a cycle of objectification (where the unique nature of the person or animal is reduced to the utility from which one can gain), fragmentation (where the being is separated out in our minds into distinct parts whose value is based on our ideas of their worth), and consumption (where the animal or woman is raped or butchered and eaten).

For example Adams' analysis encourages us to explore how the "live" nature of an animal becomes reduced to meat. Through a linguistic reduction (from pig to pork to bacon) and physical reduction (slaughter and butchering) the animal is packaged to

remove any ethical impulse in the person consuming it. Adams brings this same line of analysis to bear on gender concerns. Similarly, women are reduced through linguistic tools (bitch, whore) and presented via erotic images (advertising, pornography) and often consumed via a rape or assault. Adams argues that these processes of reduction are similar and more importantly, that their liberation struggles are tied together.

Adams' ideas are challenging and stimulating to both feminists and animal rightists. Philosophically, her arguments breathed new life into a social movement whose expectations, strategies and philosophies had been long taken for granted. *The Sexual Politics of Meat* also had political implications: it called upon feminists to become practicing animal rights activists, and for the animal rights movement to become involved in the feminist struggles. This invitation to become aware and involved in a struggle outside of the one you are in is simultaneously encouraging and frightening – it means that you have allies, that you have friends and sympathetic ears, but it also means that you might not be completely on the right track and that you might need to do more than be involved in the single issue that currently concerns you. It is also here that the idea of expanding animal rights to include alliances with other potential activists comes to bear.

Adams' work points to a kind of alliance building that is defined by consistency and personal growth. This is radically different from other kinds of inter-movement alliances that have emerged. Most movements build alliances on some level of identity-based connection. Between blacks and feminists, the ground of philosophies like womanism or black feminism emerges because black women are reflecting on their status at the intersection of two oppressions. There is no similar intersection possible based on

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<sup>5</sup> Adams' theory not only applies to women and animals, but also to anyone who becomes devalued enough to enable someone to commit violence against them. Adams discusses the relationship with racism.



identity between the oppression of animals and that of women. Instead the work of feminist animal rights theorists like Carol Adams is based on a call for consistency – that the struggles are rhetorically entwined and that the freedom of one oppressed group is critically linked with the oppression of another. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams argues that in the language of feminist liberation often contains the oppression of animals.<sup>6</sup> Her call for alliance is based solely on how far one wishes to engage with the project of critical analysis—for a conservative feminist, these arguments might seem silly or worse yet, a dangerous distraction from the proper focus of feminist activism. This has resulted in significant disagreement both among feminists and animal rights activists about the value of her project.<sup>7</sup>

Adams herself has faced some of this difficulty in dealing with her peers both in the animal rights community, and among fellow feminist/academics. In an interview she talked about the difficulty she had faced in both feminist and animal rights circles when she first published the *Sexual Politics of Meat*.

The problem for animal rights versus feminism is different. For animal rights it becomes a gift for anyone who is trying to make arguments about interconnected oppression. For an animal rights person who benefits from male privilege it may be problematic and account for the ignoring of it in certain areas. For any animal rights person who really understand what they're doing as having their roots in the civil rights and feminist movements this book is a gift that argues for why there is a connection, it makes sense of something. For feminists who are meat eaters it is problematic, they are blocked vegetarians, they don't want to change. They don't want to encounter this theory. It was so funny, I thought I had written a feminist theory and that it would be labeled feminist theory. We generally, (feminist theorists/feminists) want to keep up with feminist

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which is drawn out much more graphically in Marjorie Spiegel's book, *The Dreaded Comparison*.

<sup>6</sup> It is possible that because there is no identity-based foundation for these ties, feminists have felt free to ignore this invitation. Unlike ecofeminism and black radical feminism which calls upon women because of some shared characteristic, Adams's arguments offer nothing to a complacent feminist.

<sup>7</sup> There has been significantly more criticism from feminists than animal rights activists. This could be attributed to a hierarchy of oppression. Years of struggle have given feminism a kind of legitimacy that the animal rights movement still lacks.

theory, suddenly I found that I had a book that was a hot potato. And it immediately got labeled an ecofeminist text, and as an ecofeminist text, only ecofeminists had to engage it. And then I thought—it's been ghettoized (Personal interview).

The ideas put forward in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* are unsettling to feminists who don't want to connect the long-standing traditional activism of feminism with the defense of animals. For animal rights activists who have developed a set strategy for agitating for animal rights (for more on this see Chapter three), Adams' book seemed like a harsh criticism – calling upon them to relocate activism along the paths of rhetoric and to acknowledge the interrelationship between their own activism and feminist struggles.

These difficulties might explain why Adams' arguments haven't received the response that they could have in animal rights circles. Instead, the movement seems to have continued along the traditional reform/revolution pattern with some organizations calling for complete social transformation through radical protest tactics (ALF) and others are willing to work with institutions of power to reform the system (HSUS, FARM) (Jasper, "Moral"). It is possible that Adams's ideas are too philosophical or too difficult to implement. Or perhaps there is a fear among activists that opening up their consciousness to consider the oppression of women in relationship to animals and the Earth might dilute some of the passion that they feel for animals.<sup>8</sup> Despite the preliminary intellectual connections made between animal rights and feminism, there is still a long way to go to forge ties between animal rights activists and feminist activists.

Many animal rights activists seem to be able to separate out their activism for animals from any other kind of activism. At the root of this duality might be an

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<sup>8</sup> Despite the difficulties in spreading Adams' message among animal rights activists, she was clear that her message has been broadcast and some are certainly affected. "Anecdotally, I have heard throughout the

unwillingness to consider the Eco-feminist/feminist ideology of shared oppression.

Finsen and Finsen discuss this implied connection in their book *Animal Rights*, the only major book on animal rights to discuss the impact that Adams and feminist animal rights activists have had: “The transformation from radical feminism to ecofeminism focuses primarily on this point: all forms of domination are related, and thus ecofeminism must include an analysis of racism, classism, speciesism, heterosexism, and the exploitation of the environment” (253). As a result, animal rights activists are called upon to involve themselves in a number of other struggles across a spectrum of oppression.<sup>9</sup>

Outside of the philosophic realm this idea is much more difficult to implement among activists. Most animal rights activists will recognize that despite their sympathies for a number of other causes, they feel a certain connection or primal relationship with animal rights. Many of the activists that I interviewed had very pragmatic challenges for feminist animal rights theorists – worrying about animals falling to the wayside in alliances or squandering the time that set them on the path to concentrate on animal rights in the first place. It is obviously a controversial issue for activists. It is my hope that this chapter might help to further the dialogue among activists who wrestle with these vexing issues.

Feminist animal rights activists such as Adams have called for a rethinking within the movement. Elevating the animal rights movement to a movement at the highest level, recognizing connections between oppressive situations and becoming a template for

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years, and I get lots of mail being thankful for the work I’ve done. It’s all ‘thank you so much, its changed my perspective, I’ve never thought about it this way’” (Personal interview).

<sup>9</sup> Finsen and Finsen call specifically on animal rights activists to become more involved in ecological concerns. “. . . [E]cofeminism suggests that animal liberationists should examine their commitment to individuals over ecosystems and recognize that both human and animal life cannot be fully lived or understood independent of the ecosystems on which they are dependent. Animal liberationists should

activism that would agitate with a global sense of justice.<sup>10</sup> Much of this chapter will focus on the reaction from animal rights activists who grapple with the criticisms of feminists. Questions of ideological purity and what kind of allies the animal rights movement should seek out arise in this tumult of a movement that is being transformed from within.

The stakes that Adams and the feminist animal rights critics are contesting relate to the very identity and future make-up of the animal rights movement. Their perspective calls for animal rights activists to rethink not only their own primacy, but also the type of activist mentality that flows from their conceptions of animal rights, since the root of an issue of ideological purity among the animal rights movement is a norm of male privilege that makes certain kinds of tactics sensible. And the issue of alliances among the animal rights movement is an essential outgrowth of the ideas of a continuum of oppression that feminists have put forward.

Feminist animal rights activists are not simply pushing for the movement to become different or to include women's concerns, but instead to reformulate the way we think about problems. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat* Adams calls for feminist animal rights activists to "destabilize patriarchal consumption" (190). Tactics, ideas, and assumptions about what the animal rights movement looks like would all radically change if this perspective would take hold. These challenges are some of the most important elements that face the animal rights movement.

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recognize that commitment to saving wilderness is an essential part of the program of animal liberation, for without habitat there will be no place for animals, once liberated, to life" (Finsen and Finsen 255).

## **The Call to Purity**

Zygmunt Bauman defines purity as an impulse for order: “Purity is a vision . . . in which each thing is in its rightful place. There is no way of thinking about purity without having an image of ‘order’” (6). Purity is an idea that makes sense because of our need to order the world – to make sense of madness or discomfort. In a complicated, difficult time or period, purity appeals to us not only because of its untainted nature, but also because of its simplicity. When humans are faced with complicated and inconclusive or frustrating elements, we attempt to rework the situation and create a new order, one that is more than natural – one that is pure. Bauman identifies the impulse for ordering chaos into purity as the root cause of much discrimination (Nazis ordering the world without undesirables like Jews or Romany or Gays). I want to position this same kind of thinking as a fundamental theme among animal rights activists. Obviously, because animal rights is a movement based on compassion and respect for living beings, violence against humans is unlikely. I believe that the underlying impulse toward purity allows for activists to create an overly simple world of black/white (or vegan/nonvegan) and in this polarized existence obscure potential relationships that might bear fruit. I also believe that feminist animal rights activists are challenging this theme. In this clash over the construction of the social movement identity itself one of the most fruitful, important, and exciting opportunities for analysis emerges.

Advocates for a particular cause often face difficulties in their relationships with others who disagree with their perspective. This is particularly true of the animal rights movement. Animal rights activists have received a two-dimensional image in most

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<sup>10</sup> There is an obvious parallel between Alain Touraine, whose activist movement work encouraged academics to help social movements to raise their level of meaning beyond the current levels of struggle to

media presentations – either that of the angry (and absent) terrorist or the shouting street agitator. Add to this the driving impulses to right the injustices of animal oppression that is shared by many animal rights activists and the poorly thought out actions of many campaigns, and you get a very difficult situation for most animal rights activists. This frustration at the lack of success of the movement and even at the lack of understanding on the part of the general public contributes to a strong impulse toward purity within the movement. As Bauman indicates, this frustration often evidences itself as a desire for an ordering – often of behavior.

Two years ago, I attended a vegan Thanksgiving feast that was hosted by a local Farm Sanctuary. I witnessed this impulse to order one's life by a woman who was desperate to remain pure to veganism. Matt Ball gave a talk about veganism and the promotion of vegetarian norms and afterwards he took questions from the crowd. The first question came from a middle-aged woman who leaped up and was desperate to know how she could determine whether there were animal-based ingredients in her food. She wanted to find a list that included the animal ingredients that were in dyes and in the chemical additives that companies put into food. Ball pointed this woman to the World Wide Web for a list of such ingredients. He also suggested that she not be too wrapped up in the minute amounts of animal-ingredients in food additives, but instead to spend her energy promoting veganism. Slightly upset now, the woman who had asked the original question leaped back up again. She launched a poorly organized harangue about the evil nature of food manufacturers and made it clear that she wanted a copy of this list of ingredients *right now*. Ball calmly repeated what he had suggested earlier and was quickly interrupted by the same woman.

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a global sense.

This woman's impulse to ensure that the food she was eating was vegan is an understandable impulse of purity. Once she became aware of the cruelty that was the direct result of her diet, she became obsessed with eliminating it. Her desire to control not only what she ate, but also what went into what she ate became an all-consuming quest for her. It also became something that she had the power to fix. Unlike the fur industry's use of animal experimentation, the devastation done to farm animals is something that is entirely driven by consumer desire. In a social movement whose successes seem miniscule when stacked up against the continued success of animal industries, it is easy to become distressed. The desire for purity takes over and calls upon a conscious activist to not only make personal changes in their life, but to make sure that those changes are consistent and are as true to the animal rights ethic as possible. While an admirable trait in many activists, this call to be pure often creates a never-ending process of self-flagellation.

Worse yet, to activists who have committed themselves to making their lives cruelty-free, the behavior of people who fall short of the purity ideal seems incredibly reprehensible. But even when dealing with other animal rights activists, these purists feel a certain amount of self-righteous frustration. They may have become extremely conscientious vegans and taken off time from work to attend every single showing of a circus to protest. When they deal with an activist who might be simply a vegetarian, or who couldn't attend all of the protests, they judge the person to be deficient. The ideal of purity becomes a fundamental part of that person's identity, and another person who might not live up to these self-prescribed standards falls short in comparison.

Oftentimes, this process of judgment is not explicit or even spoken – it might be a casual remark like “don’t you know that there is horse hoof in that?”

The problem is that this kind of mentality of purity encourages a kind of knee-jerk activism that requires that a person be totally active – doing something for animals all the time. Often this results in demonstrations that are not thought out or messages that seem confusing or overly critical. This process of purification is at the root cause of many of the negative perceptions of the animal rights movement. Starting with images of activists throwing fake blood on people wearing fur, and protesting seemingly fun events like circuses, the animal rights community has the reputation of being extremely judgmental and negative.

In part as a response to this negative image, many in the animal rights community have become more firmly attached to their beliefs. Tiana Delvale, an activist from Binghamton, New York and the lead singer for the progressive punk band Anti-Product put it this way: “There is a lot of people patting themselves on the back. Animal rights people are like ‘I’m the veganist of the vegan!’ Pat on the back. ‘I go to all the demonstrations,’ Pat on the back. ‘I organize everything,’ Pat on the back” (Personal interview).

During my interviews with animal rights activists across the country, and my experiences at more than twenty demonstrations, hundreds of meetings, and a national conference, I found this feeling of frustration to be quite common. Animal rights activists recognize this as fundamental theme of the movement – the idea that commitment to a cause is determined both by the willingness to do anything to forward that cause and by the single-minded commitment to purify one’s life and live completely



cruelty free. The outgrowth of these maneuvers is that the movement seems increasingly intolerant and distant from popular opinion. As increasing numbers of people are becoming vegetarians and even identifying themselves with the term animal rights, this increased desire for purity seems to jeopardize such gains as sympathetic participants are driven out of the movement, and supporters are lost.<sup>11</sup>

The perception of purity is often solidified by casual language and strategies that are used with animal rights organizations. At the University of Pittsburgh, I was a participant in the campus animal rights group, Friends of Animals. One time, we were planning a talk about veganism and were passing around flyers for members to put up in their dorms in order to advertise the event. A young woman who had come to a couple of meetings burst into tears exclaiming “I can’t do this, I ate some chicken today!” We were all taken aback – thinking that this event would be a great opportunity to encourage people who were thinking about becoming vegetarians. Upon reflection, I realized that the conversations that we were having were filled with subtle calls for judgement – we were making jokes, assuming that everyone who was there was a vegan, and playing the role of insiders. But for a person who was still struggling with the changes of becoming an animal-compassionate person, the end result of our behavior was disastrous. We never saw the young woman again.

While many animal rights activists are bothered by the call for purity, some defend it. PJ McKosky, a Pittsburgh based animal rights activist lamented the lack of unity and willingness to compromise in the animal rights movement. I asked him about the connection between philosophy and the actions of the animal rights movement during

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<sup>11</sup> I do not necessarily believe that these desires for purity are based on psychological problems. Rather that their zeal creates a self-referential world that makes sense.

the animal rights 2000 conference. In this quote he laments the willingness of the movement to settle for incremental gains.

The movement itself started in a very inconstant way. In the 80s when the movement was already in full swing, vegetarianism was not a priority. Very few of the animal rights people who were involved back then were vegetarians let alone vegan. The issues to conquer back then were animal experimentation, fur and cosmetic testing. Perhaps those are necessary steps to get to places, but to me just the way the movement goes now, and the way people look at things sets up for . . . I don't know it doesn't set us up for failure, but it makes it a lot more difficult because of our lack of ability to define what we believe, who we are, what we are going to do about it, and what we really feel is right. For example, no one in this country ever wanted to touch fishing, except for PETA in the last few years. That says something because animal rights philosophy says that animals are sentient beings who deserve to live their lives free from human-inflicted suffering. Yet somehow it was really bad to be shooting cougars for trophies, but it was not even mentioning or questioning the thousands, and millions and probably billions of impaling and torturing fish with hooks. That is just one example of how the movement has failed to really come up with a concrete philosophy that is solid. I guarantee if you go downstairs and you ask these people what it is they believe and some of them are going to have a really hard time defining what they believe. Maybe it is because it is such a complex issue; I'm sure that's part of it. I think another part of this is because the people who really started and pushed this forward tended to focus on issues, it's issues that make up the movement and the philosophy, not the philosophy itself. It is okay to say fur is bad, animals shouldn't be killed for vanity, but that doesn't get into the fact that animals shouldn't be killed for *any* reason! Animal rights really does say, as far as human go, that for basic survival is not necessary to harm animals at least here in the United States. Hence it is wrong period. For me that just makes me kind of extreme in the way that I'm thinking, and maybe I'm not being fair about how far we have to go but it just seems to me that that is a really big problem (Personal interview)

For McKosky, the animal rights movement is in trouble because of the willingness to compromise and miss the larger change in consciousness that should be its core goal. According to activists like McKosky, the purpose of the animal rights movement is to transform the world and defend every animal no matter how ugly or useful. In this perspective, the sense of purity is a defensive measure against a movement that many believe is willing to compromise by saving the most attractive animals. Similarly,

Michigan activist Gary Yourofsky also expressed a firm belief that a refusal to compromise was vital to the success of the animal rights movement (Personal interview). These activists recognize that making changes is important – and being consistent a key part of that campaign for change. Is there a possible space where animal rights activists could both be flexible on what a committed animal rights activist might look like and be firm about what they believe? I believe so – I think that the feminist animal rights activists provide the potential for a new open-minded and conscious version of the movement.

Perhaps the most commonly identified extremists in the animal rights movement are the direct-action oriented elements. This no-compromise wing of the animal rights movement is most often connected to the supporters of the Animal Liberation Front and the activist magazine *No Compromise*. There is a norm of judgment that emerges around tactics (often direct action oriented), behavior (a willingness to get arrested or take lots of time off in order to go to a protest or a conferences), and dress (outfits that are completely cruelty free). The outgrowth of these ideas is fostered in a cliquish community of self-congratulatory activists whose behavior perpetuates a norm of activism that often turns people off.

So it is amazing that *No Compromise* magazine recognized and even dedicated a column to challenging this image. Entitled “Clarifying the No Compromise Strategy,” the essay explained that activists who have gone to jail were criticized for not hunger-striking, and people who have pled guilty had been challenged for their level of commitment. It continued: “Even worse, activists, particularly new activists are so afraid of the censure of their peers that they shy away from putting their bodies on the line. Our

goal is to give them the courage to face the consequences, not to give them something else to fear” (“Clarifying” 21). This is a notable artifact because it suggests that *No Compromise* has recognized that the agenda of activism that it had promoted was losing them converts and frustrating activists. Animal rights activists have used purity as a coping mechanism, but the acknowledgement of *No Compromise* magazine suggests that there is space for the animal rights movement to change. The question is what that change might look like and what the movement can do to successfully make the movement a comfortable space for newcomers.

Jane Braaten has used the work of Iris Young to explore this give-and-take between the impulse toward purity and community in social movements. She uses Young’s metaphor of a city life in which recognition of difference among movement participants creates alliances based on respect for different goals. Braaten “suggests a vision of solidarity in which the enclave or project one is most devoted to is recognized at the same time as uniquely appropriate for her or him as an individual, and as one among unaccountably many foci of devotion and belonging that deserve mutually cooperative attention” (153). This perspective is able to break apart the sense of ideological purity and replace it with alliances that call upon the participant to engender respect for others. In a radical move away from purity, Braaten positions each activist in their own sphere, creating a life-style for themselves that might be as consistent as they want. But at the same time, there is a space of ‘mutually cooperative attention,’ where activists recognize the choices of other activists.

This vision of organizing is heavily influenced by feminist theory, with both Young and Braaten relying on feminist ideas of community and respect. Because the

impulse to become active often results in a kind of closed-minded thinking, it is important for them to not simply rage against purity, but instead to suggest a new model of activism that acknowledges and values the activism that derives from purity.<sup>12</sup> Inspired by feminist visions of tolerance, this new model of alliances of respect provides an internal criticism that guides activists to avoid these traps of prejudice.

Carol Adams suggests a similar kind of analysis to replace the call to purity in the animal rights movement. Responding to a question where I pushed her to outline in a pragmatic way how activists would cultivate a sense of respect rather than judgment, she suggested that we think of activism in terms of “primary emergencies.” Adams attempted to reposition the animal rights movement as a network of allies whose needs must be respected.

Something from the feminist movement that I remember was articulated in the notion of “primary emergencies” – for a black woman, an African American woman her primary emergency might be race rather than gender. For a working class man, his primary emergency might be NAFTA and world trade, not something else. So we have to understand what the primary emergencies of the groups that we are coalition building are and honor those and have them honor ours. We are coming together because meat eating does XY and Z or because this tacit understanding, this whatever. We imbed within other primary emergencies the interpretation of how this relates back to us (Personal interview).

Adams’ ideas mesh with the work of Young and Braaten, by focusing on a respect for the decisions of allies who may come to the protest situation from unique and different backgrounds. All suggest that tolerance is needed, but none of them call upon activists to abandon their own personal life-changes that constitute their identity. Instead, an

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<sup>12</sup> This is important for me because I have a certain amount of respect for direct-action oriented activists who are willing to break the law in order to further animal rights. Although I believe strongly in non-violence and see my path of activism as distinctly public-sphere oriented, I respect and admire these activists. Using this model, I can see their actions as part of a larger holistic view of a social movement. And recognize that their activism has value even if the inspiration is close-minded.

opening of dialogue with others and a careful respect for other people who might order their priorities in a different way can help surmount danger inherent in the call to purity. In the relationship that emerges from this dialogue and interaction new visions of activism can emerge.

Difficulty in maintaining this type of perspective comes up whenever the question of judgment is explored. The very nature of the animal rights movement is judgmental – positioning some people as bad because of their thoughtless choices. In fact the feminist challenge strikes at the core of the identity of the animal rights movement. It asks us about how our activism interacts with other people's oppression. Feminists do not simply want to make animal rights activists tolerate new animal rights activists, but to embrace a relationship with many different kinds of movements. They believe that this relationship can not only make animal rights stronger, but more importantly, stem what they see are dangerous impulses in the animal rights movement. In my interview with Carol Adams, we talked about one example, the legacy of sexual harassment that many animal rights activists tap into when they demonstrate against fur.

This is again, the problem of the anti-fur activists who in self-righteousness or because that is the activism that has been created, what we do . . . [when they] assail fur-bearing women what we do is recapitulate sexual harassment. Who is going to feel friendly toward us? Who is going to learn from that? Women have been sexually harassed for years! Who defines that anyway? Men! Men in the movement! They already had that model. It might have been unconscious, but they always had that model growing up (Personal interview).

Implementing a theory of respect for allies means taking into account our own privilege and thinking about how our actions are going to be read by those who are oppressed. This means thinking hard about the tactics and strategies that we choose to implement. Consider how animal rights activists who accost fur-wearing women on the

street will be seen not only by feminist allies, but what kind of background knowledge exists for these acts to be read by the general public. As Adams points out, this act of confronting a wealthy woman on the street and accosting her has a rhetorical antecedent that activists can't escape. Even if they try to redefine the action, they run smack into the old understanding of what kind of behavior is acceptable.

Other examples abound. Consider People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and their sexist advertisements. For years, PETA has been using half-nude models (usually women) in their campaign "I'd rather go naked than wear fur." While gathering attention, many women both in and out of the movement have heavily criticized the group for the lack of respect that it shows to women. Perhaps more importantly, feminist activists have criticized PETA for selling animal rights through sex and demeaning women in the process.

Another example comes from New York and New Jersey where the Animal Defense League and a coalition of animal rights activists have sustained a long campaign against Huntington Life Sciences, a British-based corporation that experiments on animals. One of the major tactics used in this campaign has been home-visits, where activists will go to the homes of prominent researchers or corporate heads to protest and chant. While there are dozens of other elements to the campaign, this type of action has received the most attention.

With both of these examples, the justification given by the animal rights activists who have undertaken these campaigns is that they are willing to do anything to get out their message. They believe the cause to be so important that they are willing to insult or anger people in order to spread the word. While the old adage that any media coverage is

good media coverage might be a popular mantra, its justification falls short in these three examples. What is really occurring is a senseless impulse toward purity that calls upon these activists to do *anything* in order to sustain the struggle against animal oppressors.

In addition to the example that Carol Adams gave about sexual harassment on the street being the background knowledge that allows us to “read” the scene of animal rights activists who throw blood on a woman wearing a fur coat, there are other pieces of knowledge worth exploring when looking at PETA’s advertisements and the campaigns against Huntington Life Sciences. The background behind PETA’s advertisements featuring buxom models is pornography and advertising (two industries that are quickly merging). Pornography provides us with the peripheral cues that we need to understand a naked body – the poses struck by a model and the allure of semi-clad bodies. The advertising industry has long used half-naked women to sell products and ideas. One criticism suggests that the use of these kinds of advertisements degrades women and create body-norms for young women that are often unattainable. While these ideas may be true, from an animal rights perspective, one has to ask how a person is going to read such an advertisement. How likely is a person to become aware of animal consciousness from an advertisement featuring half-naked models? Considering the significant cognitive changes that the animal rights movement calls for, these kinds of advertisements can be read as symbolic actions that do exactly the opposite of their intention. Rather than challenging our relationships with animals, the conscience is distracted by the pageantry and the nudity of the event – calling to us that it is acceptable to have fun and look at the naked woman.



Bringing this idea full circle, Adams would suggest that these approaches do little good for the struggle for animals. Because violence against animals and violence against women are entwined senses of meaning, the reinforcing of a sexist norm only makes the struggle to reinscribe the absent referent more difficult.

Even more dangerous is the notion that any publicity is good publicity. This approach of using sexist advertisements has earned the ire of feminists, including *Ms Magazine* who have highlighted material in their “No Comment” section which gathers sexist ads. This approach has made it more difficult to bring animal rights concerns to feminists. That PETA has been willing to abandon allies and their concerns in favor of some nebulous press coverage seems to abandon the successful strategy of cultivating personal conversion based on personal interactions and ideas that are allowed to self-percolate.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, the campaign against Huntington Life Sciences has an antecedent that provides a reader with a background that enables them to understand the actions of these protesters. Another social movement famous for home-visits is the anti-abortion movement. Pro-life activists have long campaigned at the homes of doctors who provide abortions – actions that have included threats of violence and unsettling behavior toward children. Since two doctors were killed in their homes by pro-life snipers, the tactic has fallen on severe disfavor among pro-life campaigns because the negative publicity that it gathered was overwhelming. It is obvious that the home-visits of the campaigners against Huntington Life Sciences resonate with memories of anti-abortion activists

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<sup>13</sup> I have recently been part of a series of dialogues between a local feminist group and a campus animal rights organization. At one meeting hosted by the animal rights organization, several women brought in pictures of PETA advertisements and wanted to address the implicit sexism in using PETA literature. The

plaguing doctors. To pretend that this kind of demonstration has no context is ridiculous and it suggests that the value of purity has overwhelmed the ideas of common sense.

Underlying all three of these examples is a sense of privilege. Activists who make the tactical decisions to forward a particular kind of activism often do not need to think about the ideological ramifications because they are happy in their status, both in the movement and in the world. White men might not be threatened by pornography-style advertisements because they are inevitably targeted as the audience for consumption.<sup>14</sup> White men do not usually have to worry about abortion-rights or even being threatened, because they will never have to walk through a clinic door preparing to abort a child. More dangerous than the negative publicity engrained in these actions is the lack of reflection about how these actions will be read by women in the movement.<sup>15</sup>

When animal rights activists call for rank-and-file members to put animals first and to ignore these kinds of gaffes, they are really suggesting that these other concerns are not valid. This process of silencing is fundamental to the sustaining of privilege and the norm of purity. Based on this model, the goal of the animal rights community is to forward the cause of animal rights at any cost, and for the activists who represent a utopian cruelty-free life-style that is next to impossible to sustain. The result of this combination is a social movement that is doomed to marginalize itself in the public eye

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response from the animal rights crowd was fairly dismissive, despite it being a forum whose intention was to tie the two struggles together.

<sup>14</sup> Although PETA has added men to their "I'd Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur" campaign (largely to placate feminist critics), the media representations are inevitably still those of a blonde model wearing nothing but a PETA banner.

<sup>15</sup> The theme of alliance building in this chapter does not excuse this lack of reflection. Returning to Young and Braaten, the vital part of any alliance is that both movements come to the table as equals. In this case, the animal rights movement seems to want to recruit within the feminist community without incorporating much of the feminist lens.

and make alliances next to impossible. Or more dangerously, such a stance may encourage alliance formation with anti-progressive activists.

What would animal rights look like if feminists were able to overthrow the norms of purity? Taina Delvalle positioned her own activism in a space that might help us to envision what Adams and the other feminists are presenting.

I think I'm definitely for animal liberation, but I think about it in a holistic sense –The invasion of all life. Of all the things I talked about at the show today were my feelings about not wanting to categorize things, "this is animal liberation" "this is environmentalism," but instead trying to find a way to bring them together. When I first got involved in politics I was very much focused on animal rights, that specific movement. But I was also encountering a lot of sexism and racism and I was feeling very separate from animal rights, and feeling frustrated, as though I had to choose one or the other. Through things like ecofeminism that has brought two different elements together. I think that too many people in animal rights don't make those connections. What happens is that . . . I see that it limits their work, it limits what they do. Because more so in animal rights, than any other movement, we need to change ourselves and our minds about things (Personal interview).

Feminist animal rights activists are challenging this bastion of privilege, calling upon activists to recognize their own status in the world and rethink the goals of animal rights. By positioning a new kind of space for respect to bloom between activists, perhaps these feminist strategists are laying the groundwork for alliances to emerge. The next section explores this invitation – looking at what alliances with the animal rights movement means both to the animal rights movement and to prospective allies.

### **The Question of Allies and Perspective**

At a protest challenging the use of a chick hatchery at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh, I had the occasion to talk to several activists from Washington D.C. who came to Pittsburgh for the protests. The Chick Hatchery protest occurred just a

week after the A16/world trade protests in Washington D.C.. I asked if the D.C. activists had participated. They replied that their animal rights group had scheduled a Kentucky Fried Chicken protest that day – and they had skipped the A16 protest.

I was startled that this group of activists did not see the importance of the A16 protests as an important part of the larger struggle for global emancipation (for more on the importance of these large anti-globalization demonstrations see Cockburn and St. Claire). In reply they expressed a fear that their goals are going to be subsumed by some other cause. This kind of response represents an outgrowth of the call for purity. The fear that engagement with a larger group of activists might water down their message suggests that their message of animal rights need be kept separate, even at the expense of solidarity. Such responses should be informed powerfully by ecofeminist thinking which might show how these problems are interrelated. To have a situation where animal rights activists might skip a gigantic protest (in which one could lend their voices to tens of thousands in protest of global inequity and show that grassroots activism can affect change) in exchange for a local action undercuts the potential for the animal rights movement to mesh with other movements and further the struggle against global oppression.

This encounter with the Washington D.C. activists is not always the norm among animal rights activists; many in the animal rights community are involved with lots of different kinds of activism. Several of those interviewed including Vandenberg and Rosenbraugh indicated that the philosophies of compassion that animal rights activism engender often encourage activists to get involved in other struggles as well. One of the best examples is the group Food Not Bombs, the anarchist organization that gathers

abandoned food and cooks vegetarian meals for homeless people. I have spent time working with three different Food Not Bombs chapters, two in New York and one in Pittsburgh – I have also known people involved in a half a dozen more. In each of these instances, animal rights activists make up a core part of these Food Not Bombs collectives. The National Conference on Civil Disobedience (now called the National Conference on Organized Resistance), despite having a broad palette of issues ranging from transgender politics, to indigenous rights is organized by an animal rights organization.<sup>16</sup>

At the core of an increasingly radical progressive political movement are animal rights organizers. Animal rights activists, especially younger activists, are participants in many different kinds of activism ranging from anti-imperialist work, feeding the homeless, prisoner support, and AIDS activism.<sup>17</sup> Rebecca Eirene, a Pittsburgh animal activist, talked about this phenomena:

I find that there is a lot more people in the younger generation. . . I mean even if they are focused on animal rights they understand that it is part of a whole spectrum of social issues. And we can't be focused on animal rights and not care about people because everything is connected. And I think that things like the WTO and Seattle and D.C. protests really brought out more people like that. When they are campaigning about what are basically human rights, they are all eating vegan food.

One of the implications of these kinds of relationships between activists is that ideas become cross-fertilized among networks. This cross-fertilization happens when activists from different causes work together and share each other's experiences. For the

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<sup>16</sup> And despite all of the issues brought to the table during this conference, the massive demonstration that emerges from this action is traditionally a giant anti-fur demonstration. In 2002, several other demonstrations were sponsored, including one that I attended against the closure of a community center. This demonstration gathered a handful of people from the conference, with the vast majority heading to a big Macy's fur demonstration.

<sup>17</sup> For more on the benefits and outgrowths of inter-movement participation see McAdam and Rucht and Meyer and Whittier.

animal rights movement, this has created a new space for recruitment. The ideas of the animal rights movement are spreading among new networks of anarchists, anti-globalization activists and progressive organizers. Because of shared membership (participants who are both animal rights activists and involved in other political organizations), many progressive activists are primed to be receptive to the animal rights message. And as Eirene points out certain social norms like food have become universal. Perhaps the kind of mental repositioning described by Adams has occurred among some animal rights activists and other left-wing protesters.

This new vision of alliances needs to be balanced against the fear among animal rights activists that the anthropocentric impulses of humans will result in the depreciation of animals' importance in a hierarchy of oppression. This fear is a legitimate one, and many activists see the struggle for animal rights as a privileged opportunity among activists, less important than other causes. Yet, the value of tenuous alliances forged with protestors agitating for these other causes might prove valuable to animal rights activists. Because other activists have already connected political ideology with pragmatic life-behavior, they can make connections between their struggles and the causes of animals.<sup>18</sup>

While some activists are quickly connecting animal rights to the goals of other social movements, the relationships are often tenuous. During a protest against the Pittsburgh GAP clothing store line in 1999, I gathered together a loose alliance of environmentalists, labor/sweatshop activists and animal rights protesters for what I hoped would be a major demonstration against the Gap. As a company whose parent company

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<sup>18</sup> Consider the anti-sweatshop activist who is familiar with avoiding clothing that was made in sweatshop countries. This person is willing to abandon their personal comfort for an idea – this kind of logic translates easily into ethics/action. They might be sympathetic to avoid eating meat after learning of the environmental costs.

was responsible for clear-cutting old-growth forests in Northern California, GAP had one of the worst sweat-shop records of any textile company. Given that GAP had just unveiled their “everyone in leather campaign,” the company seemed ripe for a joint protest. However our loose alliance of activists was held together by the respect of each group for the goals of the other groups. Animal rights activists, afraid that animal concerns would fall to the wayside, emailed all the groups involved the night before the demonstration telling all involved not to wear leather shoes or they would be asked to leave the demonstration. Labor and environmental activists who I had carefully persuaded to participate based on the understanding of respect felt as though they were being dictated to and threatened. The demonstration occurred but it was only animal rights activists who came. Perhaps most unsettling was the general feeling among several of the animal rights activists that the demonstration was better off without anyone else because this way the message was purely about animal rights. Beyond the difficulty in creating alliances with other social movements, there is a greater risk that the purist impulse in the animal rights movement might be motivated to ally with right-wingers all in order to further the goals of animal liberation.

Lynda Burke provided an example of alliances with racists who might share a common campaign. Burke talks about British protests against Jewish Kosher slaughter laws and the racist allies that the campaign attracted. Even worse “some members of animal rights groups have taken part in racist activities on the grounds of attacking cruelty to animals” (Burke 49). If the goal is to forward animal rights at any cost, then one casualty in the move toward that quest might be other people’s suffering. It is

possible that the animal rights movement could be used as pawns by larger more right-wing political entities.

Rebecca Eirene recounted one such situation when she talked about her experiences as an animal rights activist in France.

We were protesting Bion – it is basically a NASA-like organization who was sending monkeys into space. It was very cruel and unnecessary blah blah blah. And I found myself protesting with a bunch of people who were giving out cards for Jean Marie Le Pen, who is the leader of the very far right wing National Front party in France. I expressed to the organization that I really wasn't comfortable and I thought it was wrong, and was told that they agreed, but we needed the numbers. And its true that a substantial number of French animal rights members at least at the time had a high percentage of people with a right wing tinge, it probably was a problem. But I think you need to cut the moral ground somewhere. I also warned an organization about farming in France about that. I told them that if they got involved in this they were on the wrong track and that they would alienate yourselves from so many people. Brigit Bardot, is in France, I could tell you so much stuff . . . but she is anti-Muslim and hates Muslims and just has no intelligence. And of course if you need to say, if animal rights is across the board then how wide is the board? (Personal interview).<sup>19</sup>

The simplistic purist approach to animal rights runs the risk that the kinds of allies that the animal rights movement will gather will forward an agenda of intolerance. Because the call to purity places everything second to the needed reordering of the world, there is no reason to think that these kinds of examples will be the last of animal rights activists whose well-meaning campaigns are piggy-backed by racists and xenophobes.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> There are certainly American examples of close-minded animal rights activists, like those whose campaign against the Makah whaling and allied with right-wing legislators who had built their political careers on disenfranchising native groups.

<sup>20</sup> This calls to mind a quote by Murray Bookchin, the founder of Social Ecology. "Ultimately, however, the key problem with the "pragmatic" political strategy of trade-offs, compromises and lesser-evil choices is not that it can't take us as far as we want to go. An even more sinister effect of this strategy is that it conditions us to go where we do not want to go. This 'pragmatic' approach has had deadly consequences over the course of recent history. Fascism made its way to power in Germany, in part, because the radical labor movement moderated its revolutionary politics and sought to be 'effective' by throwing its weight behind lesser-evil candidates. The movement thus surrendered its own initiative and leadership. Such a 'realistic' approach, which seemed so practical at the time, led the German workers from making 'realistic' choices between a moderate left and a tolerant center, to a tolerant center and an authoritarian right, and



It is amidst this risk that a new kind of continuum theory for social movements emerges. We can sketch the nature of a movement between two poles of purity and community. Purity oriented social movements are self-righteous, judgmental and often fairly extreme. Community oriented movements are intent on building alliances and working with other groups. A theoretical analysis deploying such a continuum can help social movement scholars understand the nature of complex protest activity today.<sup>21</sup>

In striking a balance across the continuum, the risk of purity needs to be balanced against the perceptions of animal rights activists who feel as though their concerns always go last. PJ McKosky outlined what he believed is the major risk with making allies in other social movements.

I think we should be seeking outside allies, but without compromising the core of what we stand for. To work with someone who focuses on veganism and protecting farm animals, to get into an alliance with a NIMBY [Not In My Back Yard] group or some type of anti-factory farm organization based on environmental concerns would be a positive thing. But getting into the slippery slope of that organization saying “we want small family farms, we want things to be back to the way they used to be. And we don’t want this pollution, or these fumes from hog feces that are polluting the water.” But as far as the animals go, those people don’t care at all. It seems to me that the animals in the animal movement, are always the ones that are going to be . . . it’s really always going to lose when it comes to certain types of alliances. As far as I can tell, you really can’t be consistent animal rights activist if you can’t see certain human issues or environmental issues. It is easier to see environmental issues because animals and the environment are so connected. At the same time, as I was saying earlier, the environmental movement is very anthropocentric, and . . . the mainstream environmental organizations . . . Here these organizations if they lobby have more people to help us fight this issue and not lose anything, only gain. And then you can have the animal

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finally between the authoritarian right and totalitarian fascism. Not only did this moral devolution occur almost inevitably on a parliamentary level; a cruel dialectic of political degeneration and moral decomposition also occurred within the German labor movement itself. That the once militant and well-organized German working class permitted this political drift from one lesser evil to another without any act of direct resistance is perhaps the most dismal event in its history” (“Defending” 77).

<sup>21</sup> This theory could be tied to the “Iron Law of Oligarchy.” Just as the drift toward the reform pole invites inevitable movement co-option by institutions, a drift toward the purity pole invites inevitable response by counter movements (For more on counter movements see Jasper, “Moral”).

movement feeling, whether in philosophy or in actions, or the way they go about doing things compromising animals and the whole philosophy that's making them do what they do to begin with. And that to me is not a good thing. There has to be a happy medium to have coalition building and still be able to get the job done the way it needs to be. ACT-UP San Francisco got involved with saying that AIDS research on animals was bad, and the cancer march didn't help that that was a really good thing. It didn't take away from the argument that animals can't be experimented on it just added to that fact. Where saying that family farms are okay, and factory farms are bad because they are bad because they are environmentally destructive and here are a bunch of animal people who say that too, that really takes away from the issue. It says that animals if they are treated humanely can be killed and eaten, which that's not true . . . that's not animal rights (Personal interview).

McKosky's fears make a certain amount of sense. Consider the most famous of the meeting places for allied movements in the modern imagination – Seattle. Despite the popular conception that the protests that galvanized the anti-globalization movement contained allies who gleefully tied arms, there was little talk of the contributions of animal rights activists. This is frustrating given that many of the hardcore 'anarchists' who wrecked the Starbucks and Nike stores were direct-action animal rights activists. It is an even more glaring error given that many of the serious anti-globalization activists who gathered in Washington D.C. on April 16 to tear up the Republican and Democratic National Conventions were punkish animal rights folks. Alexander Cockburn, Jeffery St. Clair and Allan Sekula wrote *Five Days that Shook the World*, a book that takes some of the air out of the Seattle vision.

The larger political agenda of the liberals with their myth making was far from benign. By falsely proclaiming a victory for peaceful pro-cop protesters marshaled under the banners of the AFL-CIO, they were preparing, under a largely factitious banner of "unity," to hunker down with the government policy makers to rewrite the WTO treaty to their satisfaction. This is the core meaning of co-option . . . (65).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> But even their account relies on the actions of a generic brand of direct action activists whose animal rights foundations are painted over.

The big alliance to write about and fixate upon was the labor-environmental coalition that was widely abandoned by organized labor. In the desperate desire to claim credit for Seattle, or solidify it into some kind of watershed moment for protest, many activists created a vision of peaceful unity among very diverse strands of protest. Seattle could just as easily be pointed to as an example of how progressive activists so significantly disagree – consider the activists who tried to protect the windows of Starbucks and the Gap and called for anarchists to be arrested – the difference between these activists and window smashing anarchists is mammoth.

Dangers abound when social movements build alliances. Movements that rely on a purist vision of their own message may create methods of protest that alienate potential allies and supporters. Worse yet, purist activists may find themselves making alliances that forward their cause disregarding the potential danger of their newfound allies, as was the case with French animal rights activists and the National Front. On the other hand, the possibility that creating an alliance with another social movement will dilute a movement's message (possibly driving members of the original movement out of the group!) are very real. Alliance building can also provide space for movement ideas to be coopted and can bring strategic differences to public attention, as with anarchists and property destruction in Seattle. So the question remains, are alliances valuable for social movements?

The answers to the question are not easy, but they might be found in the works of feminists who point us to the need to respect each other's "primary emergencies" and to envision coalitions that are based on mutual education rather than mutual utility. If movement alliances can be established based on common interest and mutual aid, and if

allies come to the table as equals with their goals included in the larger struggle, then alliances can be valuable.

One of the primary benefits of alliance-building is the information exchange that happens when movements cross. Consider the example of an activist who is involved in the protest against Iraqi sanctions who is also a member of an animal rights group. This person might bring members and ideas back and forth between the two groups. And although they might not actually share a demonstration together, members of one organization might be willing to attend demonstrations and actions of the other. This creates a kind of educational function between the two movements, where activists who are not directly involved in a particular struggle self-educate themselves in order to be more effective at achieving their own cause.

For many activists on the street, animal rights is a fundamental part of their politics as well as their outlook. There is a strong wave of animal rights activists who have connected social justice concerns to the animal rights struggle. When it comes to analyzing and working through these issues of alliances, the feminists in the animal rights community have put forward some of the most useful tools to help us to rework our ideas of alliances. Perhaps by exploring the role of the primary emergencies we can get past our differences and make thoughtful alliances. Perhaps one of the best places to start is with the feminist community itself.

From the perspective of feminism, there is a significant difficulty in acknowledging animal concerns. When I was studying for my Ph.D. I took several women's studies classes, and in one class I worked on a finished project that would extend Carol Adams' ideas about the absent referent to meat preparation. When I

presented my initial theories on this project to the graduate level class of all women. I faced a massive backlash. The women were enraged that I would dare compare the struggle of women for emancipation to the struggle for animals. They were even more angry that I would connect the processes that enabled violence against animals to violence against women.

Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan respond to this kind of reaction in the introduction to their anthology *Animals and Women*.

We cannot allow the biases of such questions to go unchallenged. The presumption that these efforts are opposed to each other arises from the dualistic premise that humans and animals' needs are in conflict. It also implies that human needs are paramount, reinforcing a status hierarchy that has favored neither women nor other animals. It is a haunting repetition of the traditional trivializing of women's issues. We could respond by saying that these efforts are not in opposition to one another. That is, we can, for instance, challenge homelessness, *and* be vegetarian, work against violence against women while refusing to wear fur or leather. Should we have to justify concern for animals by indicating that human beings are not neglected? Just as feminists were charged with man-hating when we began to challenge our energies and our theorizing to women's needs and experiences, animal activists now stand accused of people-hating. Such charges reveal anxiety about the moral content of the activism as well as ignorance about the underlying interconnected roots of oppression (3-4).

The difficult discussion of the 'reasonable tradeoff' places us in a hard place. What are we willing to sacrifice to achieve our goals? Are feminists willing to give up the primacy of women's position in order to allow animals space to be considered as victims suffering unjustly?<sup>23</sup> Are animal rights activists willing to consider the negative

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<sup>23</sup> Tiana Delvalle, lead singer for Anti-Product addresses this question: "But then also, I don't think that feminism always goes as far as it could. But the root of ecofeminism is feminism, being originally a very white movement. I think we need a multicultural ecofeminism. African American slaves were brought into this country they were also seen as animals, less than human. And time and time again, Carol J. Adams makes that connection. When a woman is seen as an animal or less than human, their soul is taken away from them therefore they can be consumable and easily exploited. I think the same thing can be seen in slavery. If you look at slavery in this country you see the same thing. Black people are gorillas as being

ramifications to their impulse to purity? Is there a possible space for these compatriot movements to become real friends who share? These questions could form the foundation of a new kind of animal rights movement.

## **Conclusion**

Animal rights and feminism are percolating together. The challenges produced by feminists who want to expand the strategic scope of animal rights and who want to use animal rights as a metaphor and foundation for liberation cannot be ignored. And the animal rights activists who are beginning to see their goals as entwined with a larger vision of liberation are beginning to see the input of feminists and other progressive activists as valuable.

Arrayed against these activists is the call to purity – the impulse to ignore alliances with other movements and focus on making oneself as clean and perfect of an activist as they can. It is this self-centered desire that poses the largest threat to the animal rights movement. Rather than pushing for large kinds of social change that might help animals, activists are too caught up with judging one another and presenting a cohesive and consistent front. This impulse to order the world is understandable and even admirable in some circumstances, but in the animal rights movement, it has created a norm of activism that is unreflective and potentially dangerous.

The solution is not to attack those whose impulse is to purify themselves and the animal rights movement, but to offer a different way of seeing the world. Rather activists should use these examples as topics of discussion inside these movements to cultivate a

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less than human and consumable. You can eat them, you can purchase them, and you can beat them to a pulp. And I don't ever hear of that take on it at all" (Personal interview).

method of reflection about purity and alliance-building. This reflection can make a significant difference in the way that a social movement operates. Feminist animal rights activists have extended an invitation to discuss these issues with the rest of the animal rights movement. Resolution of the difficulties in navigating alliance-building and purity is impossible. But establishing a norm of dialogue and reflection would certainly be a success.

## *Chapter V*

### ***What Must Be Done: The Future of the Animal Rights Movement***

“Fuck with Mother Nature and she’ll fuck back.”  
— Former Governor Clinton “Skink” Tyree as quoted in Carl Hiaasen’s *Stormy Weather*.

#### **Direct Action and the New animal rights Movement**

The introductory quote comes from an unusual figure whose voice pops up in this dissertation on occasion. Clinton Tyree is the fictitious former governor of Florida. He is a man who abandons his office in the face of overwhelming greed and becomes a vengeful hermit in the Florida everglades. Skink is the kind of semi-hero that Edward Abbey would invent – a hulking former professor whose outrage at the destruction of natural wilderness calls upon him to abandon civilization, eat roadkill and enact revenge on the greedy developers who are intent on tearing up the land and poisoning the sea.

Skink is a recurring figure for Hiaasen too – he slips into five of his novels. The Governor is usually a shadowy figure who emerges to wreak havoc on someone who inevitably deserves it (be it political fixers intent on shooting an ancient rhinoceros in a fixed big game hunt, a tele-evangelist real estate developer who poisons the water of the Everglades while fixing a bass fishing tournament, or the creator of a Disney knock-off world whose hotels are destroying native habitat). In all of these cases, Skink helps to right what he views as an unnatural balance between humans and nature. He cheers for animals that are willing to fight for their territory, and he laments the animals and nature that are displaced or killed by people.

Hiaasen’s character is a man filled with rage. He is also a man who feels deeply that the world is in trouble. He is an activist, willing to do whatever it takes to right an



imbalance that most of us don't even dream about. He is clearly unstable, quite probably insane and not the figure to identify as a hero. Yet for some reason I read Hiaasen's novels in large part because of Skink and the Skink-like characters that pop up. I like people who are fed up with waiting for a political system to pull out the stops and slow the ever-creeping push toward total extinction (either at the hands of ecological collapse or at the hands of complete ownership by Wal-Mart or a subsidiary).

Like Skink, I do not think that traditional electoral politics are going to do what I think is necessary. I agree with Murray Bookchin when he writes that to place any faith in the current structure of our world is risky because: "insofar as they are restricted merely to reforms they often create the dangerous illusion that the present social order is capable of rectifying its own abuses" (160). So long as people still make money by selling veal calves and testing shampoo on rabbits, then there will continue to be animal abuses. To rely on government reforms or small protections to save animals means abandoning their fate to end in suffering.

So is the solution to engage in a vigilante war to defend the animals? Well that approach has a certain appeal – the macho impulse to go out and *do something* – if for no other reason than to make yourself feel better is a strong impulse, but I'm not sure that it is the right path. I believe that this impulse is the outgrowth of the kind of call to purity that I outlined in Chapter four. Action for the sake of action can often be thoughtless and do more harm than good — not only to the cause of animal rights, but also to potential allies and to people who might be future animal rights activists.

The Animal Liberation Front and The Justice Department make up an undercurrent that is possibly the most difficult thing to understand in this project. I read

an article in *Vanity Fair* where Christopher Hitchens, a columnist who I usually admire, defended foxhunting as a jovial and parochial tradition. It makes me want to disappear only to appear with a large club at Hitchens's next garden party Skink-style. I started this dissertation grappling with the stories of the Justice Department mailing razor blades to researchers who experiment on animals. At the same time as I was beginning the project I was involved in a long-standing campaign against the animal experimentation that occurs at the University of Pittsburgh. I ask the questions in this dissertation in large part because I want to know the answers myself. How can I (an activist and an academic) understand the actions of the Animal Liberation Front and the Justice Department? What is it about them that make me throw up my hands in frustration and also silently cheer that they are out there breaking the law to protect animals?

This dissertation has been undertaken to help me answer this question (among others). And each of the chapters has helped me to understand the direct-action impulse in the animal rights movement. Chapter two explored the core constituency for this kind of activism – the punk rock community. As activists are recruited through the social experiences and the rituals of punk rock, their understanding of what animal rights activism looks like is predefined to include the ALF as normal. More than normal, the punk rock distrust of centralized authority has morphed with the philosophy of animal rights to make direct action the standard of what is to be done for animal rights. As a punk whose politics lie in sympathy with Anarchism, this understanding seemed baffling to me until I attended Animal Rights 2000, the national conference on animal rights and met dozens of other punks who had become not only rank-and-file activists, but leaders of the movement. From Tony Nocella, who heads the Houston Animal Rights Team, to

Chrissy Vandenberg, who coordinates Vegan Outreach, punks seem to be the future not only of the direct action arm of the movement, but the mainstay of the younger generation of animal rights activists.

Convinced that my sympathies for punks and the ALF weren't driving my own analysis. I wondered if the direct action wing was doing damage by convincing the public that the animal rights movement was terroristic. So the third chapter looked at the question of success. In the process of exploring how a social movement deals with infighting, I had to challenge my own beliefs about success. Coming back to my belief that passing legislation and convincing people who make money from animal suffering was a dead-end street, I had to reconsider what I meant by success. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamieson helped me to understand that success meant changing the knowledge structures – how people think about animals. Carol Adams's idea of restoring the absent referent suggested that what I really meant by success was change. What I wanted was for the norms that make animal seem acceptable to be transformed into a norm of compassion and respect. From this perspective, the battling wings within the social movement might be part of a method to achieve such change. By layering ideas upon ideas, from different places – by hanging banners, by giving out free food, by talking to our friends, by educating, by documenting and by liberating animals we call into question the knowledge structures that make cruelty make sense. The ALF might be successful – it certainly is successful in spreading the message among punks, and maybe it inspires a few other people as well.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> They definitely inspire some. Consider the arguments by Rebecca Eirene in Chapter three when she argues that the ALF give her a source of inspiration. I also believe that the ALF operate as a kind of mythical force that inspires and sustains animal rights Activists even if they don't publicly support them.

Although I believe and support direct action on the part of the ALF, I couldn't help but feel frustrated with the lack of recognition within activist circles that this wasn't the only path for social change. I see a dangerous impulse that emerges from the direct-action wing of the animal rights movement, that of purity. Like Skink, these activists envision an idyllic return to wilderness for animals, and a heavy utopian impulse. Despite my own resonance with these sentiments, I also can see that they are dangerous if not matched with compassion and strategic considerations. This call to purity – to reorder the world in order to make it right can overwhelm common sense and even lead the animal rights movement to ally with right-wingers who could use animal rights for nefarious ends.

That is why feminist animal rights thinking is so important for me. The goal of changing the world needs to be informed by other's needs to change the world. Would it be worthwhile to end animal suffering by continuing to sell women as sex objects? As Audre Lorde argues "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." This adage is valuable – we must attempt to build a new world and avoid pushing the oppression that was heaped onto animals onto others. Our goal should be to recognize other movements' 'primary emergencies' and build relationships with them so that we can educate one another about our needs and causes. If we don't try to create a new structure of understanding for all humans, then we will simply create more battles for us to fight. This line of argument is heavily influenced by the feminist animal rights scholars I have known – their core argument is often that animal oppression girds human oppression, so the solution is not to move humans into the unique category of human-

ness, but rather to shatter the epistemological norm by reclaiming the “dirty” space of animals.

The solution is not to abandon the impulse to act. The Skinks of the animal liberation world should inform other wings of animal rights activism in dialogue of respect. In this dialogue between activists both within the animal rights movement and with allies, perhaps a new kind of animal rights movement can be created that reformulates the call to purity into something positive. Evidence for the idea that these dialogues can prevent activists from closing in on themselves and abandoning hope comes from first hand experiences – my activism has been sustained by dozens of close friends whose various campaigns range from anti-globalization, to turn town councils into Green Party bastions. The impulse to purify is a devastating impulse for a social movement whose hallmark should be compassion and interconnections. I believe that feminists can help to inform that dialogue between direct action philosophy and alliance-driven coalition politics. There is something about being part of a movement that is facing insurmountable odds that makes folks do and think strange things. Almost all of the short-sightedness that I’ve identified as the call to purity in the animal rights movement in the last four chapters can be connected to a single cause – the fact that the problem of animal cruelty is so overwhelming.

There is another value to action developed in Chapter three. Successful action in an animal rights campaign has a unique rhetorical impact. A campaign that gains public attention often becomes a prominent topic of intra-movement dialogue. Even activism some may find disagreeable has an impact on the conversations held within the movement. This understanding of success breaks from traditional movement theories, by

explaining the value of this kind of move in rhetorical terms. Instead of being a stable theoretical category, success becomes contingent, constantly rearticulated through the movement discussions that constitute their own meaning. This move re-centers social movements in the rhetorical realm and it cuts loose the idea of success from scholars and puts it in the hands of social movements.

I see a sliver of hope for the animal rights movement. I see it in the friends I've made who approach the crisis of animal suffering with strategic intention, a good sense of humor and the willingness to continue the fight. I encounter hope whenever I meet an animal rights activist at a take back the night rally, or at a rally for imprisoned Native American activist Leonard Peltier, or see Food Not Bombs serving vegan food and passing out animal rights literature. In these intersections animal rights activists pave the way for new connections to be made and ideas to emerge that create space for a radically different future. It is here that the animal rights movement is being reborn.

What this movement will look like when it is reborn is certainly up for debate, but I believe that it will look a lot like the punk animal rights activists profiled in Chapter two. Punks are the future of the animal rights movement. While much of the publicity-oriented elements of the animal rights movement center around large organizations like PETA, much of the actual organizing and recruiting happens through punk-connected activists. For example, Tony Nocella uses his connections with the punk and BMX community to mobilize committed animal rights activists. Along the way, Nocella and other like-minded activists follow the path that feminism points us toward – making coalitions, recognizing difference, and being thoughtful not to use our campaigns to hurt others. Punk animal rights activists are committed, diverse, and willing to foster norms

of protest that are direct-action oriented. These changes occur in large part because of the context of punk rock music.

In Chapter four I pointed to the alliances that have emerged from the Seattle-style protests as a potential model for this new animal rights movement. The readiness to use mass demonstrations and in-your-face activism, the willingness to bypass traditional media outlets, and the focus on changing minds through personal contact are parts of this model. Likewise, the phenomenon of members who share multiple connections with other movements (e.g. members who are in anarchist groups, Food Not Bombs, labor movements, and Earth First!) will probably become more and more commonplace. The new animal rights movement will differ from these alliances embracing a sense of constant activism. Rather than focusing on massive gatherings to make their point, these small enclaves of activists will agitate to transform their local communities, informing people (and each other) about sweatshop labor, animal rights, and women's rights.

### **What We Struggle Against**

Like Skink, I am captivated by the question of those who oppose the animal rights movement. We must ask what kinds of forces are at work that sustain animal oppression, the very ideas and patterns of knowledge that obscure violence against animals? When we can answer these questions and create a social movement whose tactics and strategies hinge on this kind of work, we can make progress in transforming our world.

Chapter four featured commentary on the role of financial greed in the continuation of animal oppression. Ray Greek is the most potent in his analysis when he says "People are greedy, they are self-centered, they're selfish. They are narcissistic. We

think we've won the war on cosmetic testing. But there are a lot of people who don't mind putting drops in bunnies' eyes" (Personal interview). Greek's perceptions are valid – oppression is not just something we live with, it is something we are sold so that people can make a profit. Animal suffering is not something we like to see or recognize, so it is packaged to prevent consciousness of the issue. Animal experimenters couch their arguments in the frame of greater good for humans. Factory farms and slaughterhouses carefully disguise the nature of dead animals to prevent anyone from recognizing their own culpability.

The forces that oppose animal rights have specific vulnerabilities – fur salons, slaughterhouses, fast food restaurants, research laboratories, and individuals that profit from these industries. Along with these obvious enemies, it is important to consider ignorance one of the enemies that the animal rights movement must challenge. In particular I believe that voluntary ignorance is one of the biggest opponents that the animal rights movement faces. Carol Adams points out that most children have a difficult time eating meat when they reach the age where they are curious enough to discover where their meat comes from. She says that we are able to convince children that eating meat is normal, and that their feelings of awkwardness are unusual. Usually this period passes and children grow up eating meat and thinking nothing of it.

Somehow we are able to separate our compassion and ourselves from the animals that have to die for our supper. Adams calls this process blocking, and suggests that meat eaters are “blocked vegetarians” – people who want to become vegetarians, they just don't know it yet. I have come into contact with many people who prefer to defend their choice to eat meat by either ridiculing the idea of vegetarianism or by suggesting that



there is some natural right that justifies their behavior. People prefer not to justify what they do, they would rather move the discussion into some other area (preferably trivializing the arguments for vegetarianism), such as asking if plants have rights.

This kind of behavior leaves the animal rights movement in a difficult spot. The enemies that Greek is talking about – big corporations, research laboratories, and factory farms are all targets – they can receive boycotts, be raided by the ALF or be picketed by well-informed activists with full-color flyers. But when we are talking about people who would prefer to avoid the subject entirely, then we are dealing with a kind of natural avoidance mechanism that might make the entire movement useless. Worse yet, if people are responsible for their own delusions about animals, then perhaps our friends and relatives are the enemies that we need to overcome.

I believe that this line of inquiry is devastating for the animal rights movement. When we consider people we have never met before to be enemies that need to be convinced that what they are doing is wrong, we are headed down the wrong path. This realization, that in many ways movement activists are protesting and agitating regular people, can be unsettling. Campaigns are targeted (whether we like to admit it or not) at other people who choose to live their lives without compassion toward animals. While the lines of protest may target a company for animal testing, there is often a secondary audience of shoppers protesters are trying to convince to boycott that company. Too often the animal rights movement fails to distinguish between campaigns against “enemies” (like corporations) and campaigns to educate the public.<sup>2</sup> When these two

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<sup>2</sup> This is compounded by the fact that many animal rights campaigns contain both elements. Consider the example of a campaign against McDonalds. Activists might undertake actions like a demonstration at a particular McDonalds store and their audience might be the manager or the corporate headquarters; but at the same time, there are store-goers that the activists are trying to educate about McDonalds.

different kinds of activism are mixed activists find themselves unleashing the rage of injustice on people who might be ignorant or even sympathetic to the animal rights cause. If we start down this road, then our audience for persuasion becomes our enemy, exactly what we do not want to happen. Instead we should reposition ignorant members of the public as potential converts, ones whose conscience can be kick-started, but not dictated. I think that this notion of a lack of consciousness is one of the fundamental barriers to the success of the animal rights movement.

If ignorance (chosen or not) is one of the enemies in the struggle for animal rights, then scholars need to reframe common conceptions about the animal rights movement. This entails thinking about novel ways that movement activists might approach this challenge, a task undertaken in the next section.

### **What We Can Do**

Recognizing that acceptance of animal rights is a difficult step for many people to take is the first step a successful animal rights coordinator must make. Keeping in mind that ignorance and greed sustain animal oppression is fundamental to determining what kinds of strategy activists should undertake. This section calls upon the animal rights movement to rethink the way we recruit, campaign, and think about our movement.

People become involved in animal rights through two paths. Either they develop an animal consciousness that calls upon them to sympathize with animals and try to prevent their suffering or they connect to the movement through friendship networks. I believe that often the networks are paramount to the development of the animal consciousness that sustains a belief in animal rights. The ideology of animal rights is

seldom simply conveyed to people – it needs to be mulled over, and steep in the sediments of a person’s brain. Because the cause of animal rights involves not only political stances, but significant personal behavior changes, the objective of swelling the ranks of animal rights activists poses special recruitment challenges.

When people become involved in animal rights through friendship networks, they get to know other people who are animal rights activists and they realize that they are normal people. Adams agrees, pointing out for example that many vegetarians make a big deal of eating out, when instead they should recognize the restaurant space as a place where they can persuade others that vegetarianism is not a big deal: “The more the structure changes so that people can see that you can go out to eat and get good food. In fact I do a whole chapter on going out to eat, and that people need to see that you can get good food and it’s not stressful. . . . What I advise is that even if you end up with a lettuce salad – you know that terrible iceberg lettuce salad – still enjoy it. Because we are communicating something at the non-verbal level” (Personal interview).

Recruiting people to be involved in the animal rights movement occurs most successfully with people who already have a relationship with animal rights activists. This is a large part of why punk is such a successful organizing space for the animal rights movement, because punks already have a reason to listen to what other punks have to say. There is a connection – a tie that enables punks to inform other punks about animal rights. The same thing happens with roommates and friends. Most of the roommates that I’ve lived with have become vegetarians. Many of them have done so because of my good cooking – rather than preach animal rights propaganda at them

(although I have occasionally been known to do this as well), I'd prepare a delicious vegan meal and then offer them food.

Organizations like Farm Sanctuary and Vegan Outreach offer similar connections that go beyond simply plucking at people's heartstrings. Their campaigns to educate and inform people about animal suffering is leveraged through other relationships, be they a field trip to Farm Sanctuary, or a friend passing along a *Why Vegan?* pamphlet. Similarly, Greek's scientific campaign asks audiences to logically evaluate the connection between charity donations and how such donations might support animal experimentation. Feminists are invited to explore animal rights through the work of Adams and others who connect the suffering of women with the suffering of animals.

It is through relationships that people actually become aware of the ideas of animal rights and begin to consider them. Often these relationships might seem trite at the time. Eddie Lama, the protagonist of the animal rights documentary *The Witness*, had his first spark of consciousness because a woman he was trying to date asked him to babysit a kitten. With this in mind, we should reevaluate what we seek to gain from our political campaigns with the focus on how we can bring about this kind of self-reflection within audiences rather than being enraged because they do not see what we see.

Perhaps dialogue that allows people to ask questions about animal rights might be important. It is important to create a space where the perceived stigma could be defused and replaced with a certain amount of normalcy. At the same time, it is important to raise issues with people to shock them out of their complacency and move them to the point of curiosity. We also need to respect the level of comfort that each person has with animal rights – the same time as gently pushing for changes in behavior. Creating new animal

rights activists means walking the line between agitation and comfort. This requires striking a balance so audiences are anxious enough to keep asking questions and progressing toward a cruelty-free life but soothed by the realization that the changes they are considering are not that difficult.

The difficulty of this challenge explains why recruiting for animal rights can often damage the movement. Some activists tend to be reactive, bombastic, loud, and not tolerant at all, others tend to be ineffective because they pick the wrong audiences. Consider activists who picket a circus, they may be pursuing an admirable goal, but one that is strategically disadvantageous because in already having chosen to come to the circus, many audience members have brought children and have very little interest in hearing something that might call into question a decision that is tied up in their commitment to their own children. Instead, activists who saturate a community with anti-circus leaflets, radio advertisements, and who pressure communities to ban circuses that use animals for entertainment has a much higher success rate.<sup>3</sup>

The problem is that activists rely on demonstrations and campaigns as opportunities to prove how dedicated they are to the cause of animal rights. The movement tends to be as loud as possible in order to show that it loves animals more than anyone else does. This kind of behavior does not endear movement activists to the general public, but instead confirms the media image of animal rights protesters as thoughtless fanatics who are willing to attack humans at any opportunity. One outcome of this kind of demonstrating is that the well for future persuasion is poisoned. One loud

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<sup>3</sup> For more on this look at Peter Singer's book *Ethics Into Action*. Singer chronicles the life and campaigns of Henry Spira, whose perspective would be extremely valuable to many activists because he focuses on these kinds of pragmatic issues of organizing.

encounter with an animal rights activist on the street corner might sit with a person for years, instilling a long-standing inoculation against any animal rights message.

The animal rights movement needs to re-position itself. It needs to get away from these impulses of purity, and instead refocus energy on the animals and how to most effectively reposition knowledge structures to prevent animal cruelty. This means creating massive boycotts against companies and farms, including people who might only be lightly interested in animal rights. This means thinking pragmatically about what kinds of a movement face can be presented to the public.

The changes occurring in the animal rights movement stemming from the import of punk activists, and the formation of alliances with other movements, will do a lot to help bring some of these issues into focus. Along the way animal rights activists need to take a stronger role in thinking about typologies of protest strategy as they apply both to recruiting and to campaigning. Self-awareness about the real “enemy” and attention to public perceptions will go a long way to helping to define what kinds of activist campaigns will be most “successful,” in the rhetorical sense sketched earlier.<sup>4</sup>

### **Lessons for Academics**

This dissertation has called upon me to rethink the value of traditional social movements literature, since I have had to rework the public address model of movement persuasion in order to fashion an appropriate theoretical framework to explain the animal rights movement. In the writings of Griffin and other rhetorical analysts, there is a belief that social movements persuade by directly informing passive audience members. Some

movement scholars position a single movement leader who preaches to an audience who either rejects or adopts the message.

This dissertation has relocated the process of persuasion to new spaces, like associative networks (such as punk rock), the ritual experience of communication (like a punk rock concert), the layered nature of message adoption (Ray Greek's messages meshing with Farm Sanctuary's messages), and the intra-movement dialogue of feminist animal rights activists. The rhetorical determinism that is implicit in the approach of traditional movement scholars encourages theoretical rigor but inhibits cross-movement comparison. By repositioning social movements as entities fundamentally concerned with cultural/knowledge transformation, critical space is opened to support analysis of previously obscured movement phenomena.

Another benefit from this repositioning of social movements as agents of knowledge production/transformation is that the idea of movement success can be explored independently from Resource Mobilization theory. Instead of evaluating the effectiveness of a social movement on its ability to raise money, gather converts, or pass legislation, social movements can be evaluated on their cultural impact on society. This sets up the possibility of focusing on the interactions between social movements (like feminism and the animal rights movement), analyzing cross-fertilization (as ideas percolate from one organization to another), and moving away from the single-issue social movement model of persuasion.

These methodological changes open up multitudes of new research projects that could stem from this project. In the area of cross-fertilization, one might examine the

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<sup>4</sup> It is important that this not be read as a polemic against activism. I believe that there is certainly value in protesting, and direct action – but I wish that animal rights activists would think about the outcomes of their

cross-national exchange of animal rights ideology from the United Kingdom to the United States, looking at the cultural and structural norms that help to define an evolving social movement.<sup>5</sup> Scholars could also look at participants in multiple movements who have found a space between ideology and practice to participate (and in many cases join) movements.<sup>6</sup> A scholar could also look at how the ideology of direct action has been influenced by the relationship of radical environmental forces like the Earth Liberation Front and Earth First!<sup>7</sup> All of these analyses might develop accounts of the purity-community continuum by exploring how a movement actions can draw connections between other movements or push away participants because of their lack of purity. This continuum can be a complimentary lens of analysis, paralleling the traditional reform-revolution continuum. Together, these two lenses work together to help scholars look at the political stances and the ideological formation of social movements.

In the area of movement success, new conceptual strains of analysis enable one to explore the notion that media coverage is an indicator of movement success by looking at the outcomes of media campaigns and the culture industry of news production in contrast with activist-driven consciousness. These lines of analysis can more fully express the ideas of topical success that emerges in Chapter three. This would re-position the definition of movement success to be internally evaluated and used as a reflexive tool to challenge and reformulate strategy.

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actions. For more on this see chapter four.

<sup>5</sup> A good place to start might be McAdam and Rucht's article on cross-national diffusion of movement ideas.

<sup>6</sup> A study of the train-hopping squatter punk, anarchist animal rights strain would be an promising example.



## **The Value of Action Research**

Although I hope that scholars will benefit from this project, one of my chief goals has been to educate myself about a movement that I care about. Frankly I often find myself a much more effective activist than an academic. To that end, I do not believe that this project would have succeeded without action research methodology and insider research. The vast majority of the ideas that came through in this dissertation were percolated through years of meetings, lunches and actions with animal rights activists that were then filtered through academic experts. It was not difficult for me to acknowledge my own activist tendencies when writing this and I have no regrets for adopting the activist methodology of research. If I had not been a full participant in the movement I was studying I would not have been able to understand the issues facing the animal rights movement. Others have argued much more successfully in defense of this research methodology, but I would add my own argument in favor of this line of scholarship.

Rhetorical scholars who study persuasion for their livelihood can be extremely beneficial to a social movement when they are planning and implementing a campaign of activism. The world needs more activists, and academics have certain structural benefits that can aid a protest organization. We have financial resources, a large degree of control over our time, and elements of ethos that can be useful in certain situations in dealing with (media, on the street interactions).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Perhaps focusing on the ecofeminist/social justice wing of Earth First! represented by Judi Bari and contrasting the reactions to that movement with the reactions to the pushes of the Feminist animal rights activists.

<sup>8</sup> Anecdotally I can suggest that academic credentials have helped me deal with police in delicate situations. I was filming some animals at a circus, looking for animal abuse when several police officers and security guards approached me to escort me off the premises. We began a fairly friendly dialogue that got even friendlier when they found out that I was a professor at a local college who wanted to talk his way back into filming the animals.

This does not mean that academics are more important than activists are, or that the average person on the street can't create powerful and successful campaigns. In fact, I am calling for these two elements of our society to engage in a dialogue with one another. Consider a relationship where academics, with power, offices, and photocopiers listen to what people have to say and use that knowledge not only to help publish papers, but also to feed new knowledge back into the protest arena. This approach revamps an unbalanced power relationship by replacing an objective research posture with one that connects scholars and activists on a more equal footing.

Academics can help by becoming one more person who is involved, even by abandoning their special skills, and instead acknowledging that where they are most needed is as silent nighttime billboard surgeons, or as patient pamphleteers. Too often we get wrapped up in thinking that activism is too difficult and that the people who are activists have some special power that allows them to step up and do what needs to be done. Quite the opposite – simple, small actions can open pathways to changing the way that society thinks about problems. Perhaps activist research methodology can play a leading role in this process.

At the same time, scholarly and even densely theoretical work has made a successful contribution to my own activism. My research involving other social movements and thinkers has encouraged me to bring ideas from other social movements into my local organizing. This has resulted in the introduction of new patterns of knowledge to animal rights protest groups. With scholarship working as a catalyst to help cross-pollination from one movement to another.

After finishing the section in Chapter four where Carol Adams argues that the sexist legacy of men assaulting women on the streets was continued in the activist tradition of verbally attacking women who wear fur, I had an incident in a restaurant. I was eating at the all-vegan café in New Paltz, NY when I noticed that the owners were frantically gesturing to me behind the counter. I walked over and they hissed: "That woman is wearing a fur!" The owners of the Vagabond Café are intense animal rights activists – they are very active, and very opposed to fur. I could envision a scenario where they would throw this woman out of their restaurant and cause quite a scene.

I slid up to this woman and asked her whether the fur was real and after receiving an affirmative reply began engaging her in a friendly dialogue about fur. With the Carol Adams analysis firmly in my mind, I was careful not to attack her or raise my voice, but rather to ask her questions and see if she might see my perspective. She told me that the fur was given to her by a friend, and that she would never buy fur. I asked her if she thought she might be an advertisement for the industry. She and I talked for about ten minutes and never yelled at each other once. Finally she said that she agreed with everything I stood for, but couldn't see wasting the fur by throwing it out and that she was going to keep the fur simply to use in place of a scarf. I replied that if she would give me that fur, I would use it in demonstrations against fur and that it would not go to waste. She pulled the fur off her neck and handed it to me.

The theoretical writings about the animal rights movement have had a significant effect on my own activism, and I have encouraged others to read and consider the ideas of social movement theorists. The research for this project has influenced my own kind of activism, helping me to fine-tune my own goals and methods of activism. It is here that

the value of activist research methodology is most clearly evidenced. By pointing to a kind of rhetorical study that is both aware of its own power and excited to engage with a social movement, activist research methodology can have significant impact.

## **Conclusion**

Fundamentally, I am an optimist who believes that change can occur. Consider the status of animals during the 1950's – there was almost no public consciousness as animal testing, meat eating, and various strains of animal cruelty were routine. But in the short span of fifty years, much of that has changed, there is now a vibrant and outspoken minority that calls upon the general public to remember the animals.

The animal rights movement is becoming a force. Perhaps this is best signified by the fact that activists are now recognized as a threat by most institutions that benefit from animal cruelty. It is now next to impossible to film in a slaughterhouse. I have been personally escorted away from several circuses for attempting to film the status of the animals kept there for entertainment. And the FBI considers direct-action animal rights activists to be one of the biggest “terrorist” threats in the United States today.

I feel pretty confident talking about the future of the animal rights movement, but when it comes time to talk about the academics that write about social movements I lose some of my confidence. I think that the academic community is tied up too tightly with academic group-think and unwilling to consider the actual face of activism. My purpose in writing this dissertation was originally to call to task the academic failures that I encountered when trying to analyze something close to my heart. After spending a lot of time thinking this through, I think that the best thing that can come from this dissertation

is that I finally understand that academics fundamentally make mistakes when they try to study social movements in large part because their own standpoint closes off important avenues of inquiry.

The nature of academic life is fraught with intellectual fear and political reality. Activism (of any kind) is discouraged because of the potential risk to one's career and future promotion. Academic research often reproduces the kind of disparate power relations that the animal rights movement is working to overthrow. It makes sense why the academic community prefers traditional methods of scholarship to activist research methods.

This dissertation is not intended to be an assault on academic work in the field of social movements, but a plea for recognition of the great value that can come from self-reflexive work. Some of the work in the field of social movements studies is fantastic and extremely useful both to academics and activists. This research project grew out of an honest interest and curiosity about a movement that I care deeply for. I would like to see animal suffering end as soon as possible, and I have done my research, and written this dissertation with that criteria. In that capacity, I have learned more about myself and about my ideas of academic work than I have about the animal rights movement. I hope that this work helps to inform other academics to become involved, and animal rights activists to reflect on their tactics.

This project stands as a move to bring new lines of analysis to bear on the animal rights movement. In order to explain the facets and creases of this complex social movement I have explored feminist analysis, punk rock politics, grappled with direct action and considered how movement success and alliances can be rethought. But it is

where this project points the reader – to activism, to a newfound appreciation for punk rock or even to a new way of reading the ALF that I take the most pride.

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