

MANY OF A KIND:
HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
(AN EDUCATIONAL STORY COLLECTION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS)

An Independent Learning Project Presented by

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To

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ABSTRACT

This creative Independent Learning Project (ILP), *Many of a Kind: Humans and Other Animals in the Early Twenty-First Century*, is a collection of fictional short stories, presented by a fictional editor, and discussions of actual journal articles. The primary purpose of this project is to facilitate and support first and second year college-level critical study of anthropocentric topics. Anthropocentrism, the notion that humanity holds a unique and superior place among living beings and within the world, has taken root through hundreds of years of acculturation, the process by which individuals internalize, often unconsciously, the beliefs, values, and norms of their cultural group. The book is comprised of nine stories, divided by theme into three chapters of three stories each. Chapters are briefly introduced by the “editor,” and each story is followed by a discussion of two to three journal articles related the themes of the story. Contributing to the growing fields of academic humane education and human-animal studies, this project combines fiction and nonfiction elements in an attempt to provide an accessible and appealing vehicle for revealing and challenging anthropocentrism.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Rationale

In the introduction to her germinal work, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir stated, “if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: I am a woman” (1952/1989, p. xxi). This point is made in the context of arguing, convincingly, that the concept of humanity has not been divided equally between man and woman, but rather that man has occupied a larger territory that includes a generic center (Beauvoir, 1952/1989). One might reasonably ask how human lives, those of both women and men, would differ were this not so. But I have a different question in mind. How would human experiences and identities change if we thought of ourselves, women and men alike, primarily as animals?

This question, and others like it, is at the heart of critical inquiry into the concept of anthropocentrism. The notion that humanity holds a unique and superior place among living beings and within the world, anthropocentrism has important links to some vital concerns of our time. Exploitation of nonhuman animals, degradation of the environment, and racism all have roots in anthropocentrism.

The connections between anthropocentrism and the first two items mentioned above, nonhuman animal exploitation and environmental degradation, are straightforward. An anthropocentric worldview supports the human mistreatment and subjugation of all other living beings and the rest of the natural world by placing their instrumental value to humans above their intrinsic worth. The ways in which anthropocentrism relates to racism are less obvious and require more discussion.

At the heart of racism is the claim that there exists human superiority and inferiority and that these categories run along ethnic lines. Situated within and supported by anthropocentrism, racism targets a human group and denies that group full human status. In the anthropocentric worldview human beings are pinnacle, superior to all other living beings. Within this framework, racism attempts to shift a human ethnic group away from the lofty territory of the fully human toward the lower levels to which anthropocentrism assigns nonhuman animals.

Earlier in the history of the United States, comparisons between human ethnic groups and nonhuman animal categories were both common and baldly asserted. Consider the following quotations, which negatively represent two ethnic groups that have been targets of prejudice and discrimination throughout the history of the United States. In 1847 Dr. Josiah Nott (as cited in Brennan, 1995, p. 6) stated, “The Indian . . . is an untamable, carnivorous animal.” In 1900 Professor Charles Carroll (as cited in Brennan, 1995, p. 6) said, “The Negro is . . . one of the lower animals.” Although such language is no longer acceptable in mainstream society, subtler forms of racism persist.

Anthropocentrism is both ubiquitous and insidious. It might be impossible to fully comprehend the extent to which anthropocentrism, a legacy with deep roots in Western thought, shapes human lives and in turn exerts forces upon other lives and the whole of nature. This does not excuse humanity, however, from attempting to understand and from considering whether change is desirable.

I began focusing upon anthropocentrism through an interest in fictional books and stories with strong nonhuman animal characters. Noting that even works intended for adult readers, such as the nineteenth century classic *Black Beauty* (Sewell, 1877/2007)

and the more recent *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972/1996), tended to be treated as children's or young adult literature, I began to wonder about connections between society's overall disregard for nonhuman animals and the treatment of and response to nonhuman animals in fictional works. The first dip into the literature on representing nonhuman animals in fiction illuminated a number of contemporary debates about appropriate portrayal, such as whether the anthropomorphism of nonhuman animals is ever appropriate and whether it is even possible or right to represent nonhuman animals in creative literature.

After some consideration, I realized that I would prefer to consider issues at a more basic level, rather than extend my research into these current literary debates. Deciding that I wanted my work to challenge people's assumptions about animality, I began to look at cultural myths and stereotypes related to nonhuman animals. It didn't take long to recognize anthropocentrism as the common denominator of the previous issues I had considered. The disregard for nonhuman animals as appropriate subjects of adult fiction, the debates around literary representation of nonhuman animals, and the existence of negative stereotypes and cultural myths related to nonhuman animals are all expressions or results of anthropocentric thought.

This pervasive nature of anthropocentrism relates to the concept of acculturation. Through acculturation individuals internalize, often unconsciously, the beliefs, values, and norms of their cultural group. In college-level study, and other settings, it is desirable to be able to break through barriers of acculturation, in order to more objectively and critically assess subject matter. Fictional stories may provide an appealing and accessible challenge to acculturated anthropocentric views. If this project is not completed, a

promising avenue for introduction to the critical analysis of anthropocentrism will not be explored.

It seems very appropriate that the stories be connected with the tradition of humane education, the subject that informs the project at hand. Humane education, which has links to both character education and environmental education, is perhaps best defined by its goals. Milburne (quoted in Selby, 1995, p. 4) said that humane education “aims to provide the basis for responsible planetary citizenship.” Weil describes the goal of humane education, among other things, as “the evolution of a peaceful and sustainable world” (2004, p. 1). These broad goals are appropriate to humane education, which is an expansive interdisciplinary topic. Traditional academic disciplines can seem quite constrained in comparison. This project attempts to situate humane education, at the undergraduate college level, as a concerned, compassionate, student-friendly introduction to difficult academic work.

I began work on the project with a number of learning goals in mind. I hoped to gain a deeper, more nuanced view of anthropocentric thought, enabling more effective thinking, speaking, writing, and teaching on many topics with shared anthropocentric roots. Additionally, I knew I had much more to learn about the process of writing fiction. Further, I hoped that completing a major fiction project might enable me to teach creative writing in the future.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed by this project is the lack of accessible tools, which would be especially appropriate for beginning college students, to recognize and think about anthropocentrism. Traditionally, academic works related to anthropocentrism, such as

Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975/2002), have been quite challenging and not at all accessible to beginning college students or other similar audiences. This project would attempt to fill this general information gap, using stories—which may be less intimidating and more inviting and accessible—to help reveal and challenge anthropocentric thought.

Goal

The goal of this project is the development of a collection of fictional short stories, which reveal, explain, and challenge anthropocentrism in Western culture. The stories emphasize humanity's relationship with other animals, including such inversions as human animality and personhood in nonhuman animals. A review of the literature in the following four areas of inquiry guided the development of the final project: the history and effects of anthropocentrism, the psychological and educational function of stories, anthropocentric language, and works of fiction related to the proposed project.

The stories are designed to precede and compliment, rather than replace, more traditional readings used in college-level and similar introductory courses addressing topics related to anthropocentrism. The stories are most relevant for courses that explore anthropocentrism through the lens of humanity's relationship with other animals.

Environmental or animal ethics classes offered in philosophy programs are an obvious fit. However, more and more classes critically addressing human/nonhuman animal relationships are finding homes in other disciplines within the humanities, in the social sciences, and in various other subjects and interdisciplinary fields. Courses winning the Humane Society of the United States "Animals and Society Course Awards" in 2006 and 2007 represent all of the following disciplines: philosophy, liberal studies, English, and

sociology (Humane Society of the United States [HSUS], 2007) as well as critical studies, law, history and anthropology (HSUS, 2006).

Population

The project, a collection of stories, is designed primarily to appeal to educators and students of first and second year college courses. This emphasis is due to the recognition that students at this level may lack critical thinking skills and habits required for college level work. This population may be especially well served, then, by a more accessible introduction to difficult concepts.

Of course, this project does not propose a general approach to the development of critical thinking. Rather, it is intended to serve as an introduction or icebreaker specifically to issues surrounding anthropocentrism, especially those related to relationships between human and nonhuman animals. In this way, the project may find wider relevance among both higher and lower levels of academia as well as within community education settings and among popular audiences.

Methodology

The research for this project is qualitative. The project itself, being a collection of short fiction, is ultimately subjective in nature. It is not intended that the project be exhaustive in its treatment of issues surrounding anthropocentrism related to human and nonhuman animals. However, it attempts to address a balanced range of topics that both serve to introduce the issues and point to their depth and breadth.

The primary purpose of the project is to facilitate and support college-level critical study of anthropocentric topics. Therefore, it was important to determine which

story topics would best fulfill this stated purpose. Research on existing course syllabi and journal articles helped to uncover key topics most in need of introduction.

Because the project aims to provide readers with a bridge to broader literature addressing anthropocentrism, it is fitting to include references, citations, or footnotes when appropriate. Although this is not common in fiction, it is not without precedent. Coetzee, for example, used this method in *The Lives of Animals* (1999). Another option, exemplified by Adams in *Watership Down* (1972/1996), is to refer readers to sources of nonfiction as part of the story itself.

At the outset, I planned to complete a story collection between fifty and one-hundred pages in length, consisting of seven to ten stories, ranging between one and ten pages each. The brevity of the collection as a whole is advantageous since the stories will likely amount to additional reading, over and above the nonfiction works that what would normally be assigned in college courses. This consideration is particularly relevant because a main concern of the project design is accessibility to beginning college students, who may struggle with a reading workload that has vastly increased from that which they faced in their previous academic experience.

It is also hoped that the very short nature of some or most of the stories (many qualify as so called micro or flash fiction) will allow educators greater flexibility in their use. For example, these stories are short enough to be read out loud in classrooms. As an added benefit, choosing to read stories out loud together would eliminate the need for extra homework and additional book purchases.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

A review of the literature facilitated the completion of the final project. First, sources explaining the history and effects of anthropocentrism will be considered. After situating anthropocentrism historically, attention will be turned to three sources that focus upon educational concerns related to anthropocentrism. Next, we will explore the psychological and educational function of stories. Included are general notions and a specific theory about stories and the human mind. Also, differing viewpoints will be raised about whether stories should be used to teach moral lessons. With the benefit of some insight into the nature of both anthropocentrism and stories, attention will be turned to a synthesis of the two: anthropocentric language. Lastly, works of literature similar or related to the project will be examined. These will range from foundational works of the genre to very recent works of fiction.

History and Effects of Anthropocentrism

The most often cited villain in the story of the anthropocentrism is seventeenth century French philosopher, René Descartes. Often called the father of modern philosophy, critics' treatment of him might lead one to believe that he is the father of cruelty to animals. Steiner notes that recently some scholars have challenged the widely agreed upon reading of Descartes as the main proponent of the notion that nonhuman animals lack reason, consciousness, emotion, and even feeling (2005). After some consideration of these challenges, Steiner ultimately asserts that, given the whole of

Descartes' writings, as well as the "mission of his philosophy," the more traditional conception of Descartes' views is the more accurate (2005, p. 134).

Steiner explains that Descartes' notion that the immaterial is superior to the material dates back at least to Aristotle (2005, p. 135). Also, Descartes' view that nonhuman animals are not due any moral consideration is part of a pre-existing tradition of thought, although that tradition is not without dissenting voices (2005, p. 135). The special significance of Descartes' assertions, according to Steiner, is that he claimed that humans differ from other animals by kind, rather than simply by degree (2005). Descartes attempted to support this by pointing to the human capability of language as proof of a mind and soul that cannot be reduced to the mechanical functions of the body, unlike nonhuman animals (Steiner, 2005).

Bowers asserts that anthropocentrism persists as a root metaphor in Western culture, evident even in the bible's account of creation (2002). In addition to anthropocentrism, Bowers notes that other root metaphors in Western culture include patriarchy, linear progress, and individual autonomy (2002). Root metaphors, or "taken-for-granted cultural assumptions," are built upon a culture's "mythopoetic narratives" and succeed in perpetuating the modes of thinking that arose in earlier historical periods (Bowers, 2002, p. 22). For example, a person may intellectually recognize that she is a kind of animal, one with more DNA in common with chimpanzees than zebras have in common with horses. However, that knowledge may not prevent her from having contradictory feelings of preeminence among living beings. Her conception of herself as an animal, based upon contemporary science, is muddled by the enduring notion that humanity holds a privileged place in the world. Oddly, these types of contradictions may

not even be noticed. For example, Bowers notes the insidiousness of root metaphors, giving as an example the lack of recognition of patriarchal influence “within the relationships and curricula of the university” (2002, p. 23).

Other scholars point to similar models. Bai, for example, uses the concept of metaphysical realism, which is the belief that the world’s true nature is identical with the way one experiences it, to explain humanity’s instrumentalist mode, which she claims is based in the anthropocentric worldview (2001). Rather than root metaphors, however, Bai refers to “ontological ‘pictures’” (2001, p. 1) related to the state of the world and to the character of humanity. Ontology refers to the nature of reality, so an ontological picture is a picture of perceived reality. Our metaphysical realism occurs, according to Bai, because “we have internalized—that is, reified—these pictures through having been socialized into particular historical, sociocultural, intellectual, religious, and other personal and institutional contexts of situatedness” (2001, p. 1).

Another source situates anthropocentrism even more squarely within current educational settings. Bowers asserts that anthropocentrism is “one of the central cultural messages students encounter in schools” (1993, p. 123). He views anthropocentrism as a cultural myth and defines it as the notion that “humans have a privileged status among forms of life” (1993, p. 123). Bowers addresses the prevalence of anthropocentrism in textbooks in particular (1993). This relates to the project at hand in that the writing and use of explicitly pedagogical stories may be seen as a challenge to the dominant mode of written instructional materials, the textbook. This would seem especially desirable if Bowers is correct in his assertion that textbooks are redolent with anthropocentrism

(1993). Perhaps new stories can reverse some damage caused by standard textbooks, which may have served to perpetuate and reinforce anthropocentrism.

Psychological and Educational Function of Stories

In *Literary Mind* (1996), Turner introduced a bold new theory of the narrative quality of the human mind. He goes beyond arguing that story is “the fundamental instrument of thought” (1996, pp. 4-5), to define the mechanism and the particular type of story through which this instrument functions. Turner asserts that it is the projection of one story upon another that is the primary way that meaning is constructed (1996). This type of story, he explains, is parable (1996). Turner extends his claims regarding the primacy of stories to assert that “[p]arable is the root of the human mind—of thinking, knowing, acting, creating, and plausibly even of speaking” (p. 168).

The literary definition of parable is as follows: “An illustrative story teaching a lesson. A true *parable* parallels, detail for detail, the situation that calls forth the *parable* for illustration” (Harmon & Holman, 2003, p. 363). This accords well with Turner’s description of parable as “the projection of a story” (1996, p.7). Examples of literary parables include biblical stories, such as the story of the Prodigal Son (Harman and Holman, 2003, p. 364).

In a section titled “Allure of Story,” Randall considers the nature of the human attraction to stories (1995, pp. 82-110). On a quite practical note, Randall considers the various ways the terms “narrative” and “story” are used in the literature and ultimately determines that the two words are interchangeable, noting, “...narrative is ultimately a technical term that is attractive to those who wish to develop a respectable science from the study of stories” (1995, p. 85). He comments on the ubiquity of stories, which is

evident daily in forms as mundane as news articles and jokes, and discusses contemporary theories related to stories and human lives and minds (1995). In education in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as in other academic fields within similar timeframes, scholars began to think of stories as fundamental to the function of human minds, especially with regard to interpreting experience and making sense of our lives (Randall, 1995). Also handled is the dual ability of stories to “instruct and delight” (1995, p. 99). According to Randall, this places stories in the realms of both ethics and aesthetics (1995). He further asserts that “[s]tories inherently moralize” (1995, p. 100). This moralizing nature of stories has received both criticism and praise.

Indeed, some writers extol the virtues of the ability of stories to teach moral lessons and model moral behavior. In one such book that addresses the utility of stories in children’s moral development, the authors explain that narrative places readers or listeners as “vicarious participants” in the story, meeting the same challenges faced by the protagonist (Kilpatrick, Wolfe, & Wolfe, 1994, p. 21). If the reader is engaged in the story, if she is rooting for the hero, it is because she relates and hopes that in her own life story she will be able to make the right choices too (Kilpatrick et al., p. 21). In this way narrative stories can help people consider appropriate moral action in their personal lives.

Other writers feel differently. Strauss, for example, while recognizing a relationship between morality and stories, warns against righteousness and over-moralizing on the part of the storyteller (1996). Especially relevant for adult audiences, Strauss urges that a too readily discernable moral is extremely counterproductive to the aims of environmental education (1996). Her vision of story and storytelling requires a more complex, less rigid approach. Addressing story in more mystical and less

instrumental terms, Strauss explains that “[i]nside story, we forget ourselves and dance with the story’s questions, conflicts, complexities, consequences and positive and negative role models” (1996, p. 52).

Anthropocentric Language

It has been argued that anthropocentrism is pervasive in Western culture. Whether conceived as a “root metaphor” (Bowers, 2002) or an “ontological picture” (Bai, 2001), as discussed above, anthropocentrism is perpetuated by human attitudes, actions and other modes of expression. A major mode of human expression, and one that is extremely germane to the project at hand, is spoken and written language. Since this project seeks to reveal and challenge anthropocentrism through the language of stories, it is vital that the chosen language not be at odds with the goal of the stories.

Using critical discourse analysis, Stibbe evaluated a number of publicly available written materials from industries related to animals raised for human consumption (Stibbe, 2001). Critical discourse analysis involves the “...analysis of linguistic features, such as vocabulary, grammar, textual structures, and punctuation to reveal hidden ideological assumptions on which discourse is based” (Stibbe, 2001, p. 149). Stibbe argues that language perpetuating human domination of other animals goes beyond single offensive words to include more subtle changes and arrangements in grammar, punctuation, and classification (2001, p.158). For example, the word broil is modified to create the noun “broiler,” which names a living chicken by referring to a method of cooking the flesh of that animal (Stibbe, 2001, p. 158). Pronoun usage and metaphor are other major devices that may be linked to problematic language (Stibbe, 2001, p. 158).

Other researchers have explored metaphors that negatively portray, and ultimately negatively affect, nonhuman animals. Smith-Harris considered negative idiomatic and euphemistic nonhuman animal metaphors, such as “guinea pig” (2004, p. 12) and “stool pigeon” (2004, p. 13). Most people know why those subject to some kind of experimental treatment might be referred to as “guinea pigs,” but the derivation of the second example is less widely understood. Actual “stool pigeons” were birds that were tied to stools by hunters in order to lure other birds (Smith-Harris, 2004, p. 13). Despite the fact that the historical background of some nonhuman animal metaphors may not be well known, Smith-Harris asserts that the existence and usage of negative animal metaphors are part of “the social construction of a permissive attitude [which] allow[s] humans to accept the normalness of having control over other animals, including cruelty and the ability to inflict violence” (2001, p. 12).

Pronouns represent particularly tricky terrain. Pronouns often associated with nonhuman animals that deserve reconsideration include the following: it, what, and words with the suffix –thing, such as “anything” (Dunayer, 2001). In each case the use of these pronouns figures nonhuman animals not as *beings* but as *things*. It is obvious that “he” or “she” refers to a living animal (human or otherwise), while “it” refers to a thing. If people have difficulty thinking of examples of the other listed pronouns, it is because anthropocentric language has been successful in being so pervasive as to become invisible. “What” is used in contrast with “who” in situations like the following: “look ‘what I caught’ (Dunayer, 2001, p. 155), just a coyote.” Similarly, a person fishing would be more likely to ask another person, “‘Catch anything?’” rather than “‘Catch anyone?’” (Dunayer, 2001, p. 155).

Related Works of Fiction

It is not difficult to find precedent for using stories in the history of humane education. It may even be fair to claim that humane education began with Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877/2007). Although rarely included in contemporary reprints, the original full title was "Black Beauty, his grooms and companions; the autobiography of a horse, translated from the original equine" (Greenwood, 1997, p. 6). An express attempt to improve human treatment of nonhuman animals (Greenwood, 1997, front matter), *Black Beauty* was originally intended for adult audiences (Copeland, 1998, p. 15). Like many other classic and contemporary animal stories, however, the book is treated as children's literature. In the juvenile fiction genre, *Black Beauty* continues to be a major influence.

One recent book that compares very closely to *Black Beauty* is *A Dog's Life: The Autobiography of a Stray* (Martin, 2005). As in *Black Beauty*, the animal protagonist in *A Dog's Life* anthropomorphically narrates her own story, telling of both good and bad treatment by humans. Not surprisingly, this book is also treated as juvenile fiction, however it is equally appropriate for adult readers.

Recent adult works of fiction in the spirit of *Black Beauty*, expressly intended to sensitize and educate, proved difficult to find. Two works, however, stand out: Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* (1999) and Quinn's *Ishmael* (1992). *The Lives of Animals* is a fictional critical exploration of human treatment of nonhuman animals. Situated within the story, the protagonist—a writer—delivers two separate pro-animal lectures to university audiences addressing human moral obligations to nonhuman animals. In *Ishmael*, the titular character is a gorilla who takes the human protagonist on an "educational journey" (Quinn, 1992, p. 17). The purpose of this journey is to reveal the

story that “Mother Culture” tells (Quinn, 1992, p. 37). In part this story, which humans take completely for granted, is the story of anthropocentrism: human beings are the pinnacle and center of existence.

These works seem to be exceptions to the rule that fiction tends not to be overtly instructional. I think this tendency is due to the fact that fiction is art. Very rare is the novel or short story collection that includes the proclamation of the practical intent of the work. However, there are certainly examples of fiction that challenges aspects of anthropocentrism. Especially relevant to the project are short stories that function in this way.

One example is Watson’s *Last Days of the Dog Men* (1996). Watson offers eight stories that, in every case, reflect upon the relationship between humans and dogs and involve important characters representing these two groups. Among the stories, however, the fullness of the dog characters varies. In some stories the dogs are minor, yet important, characters. In others, however, they are full-fledged main characters. In one story in particular, entitled “Seeing Eye” (Watson, 1996, pp. 39-43), one literary critic finds that Watson does something that is unusual in stories of nonhuman animals (Smith, 2005). He grants the canine protagonist a true sense of self, a consciousness that accords with contemporary neurological theory (Smith, 2005).

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that the scope of anthropocentrism is broad. However, the literature review has emphasized issues of specific relevance to education. There is agreement that stories are basic to human thought and that they are related to human morality. However, too much moralizing and pedagogy in stories may be

counterproductive, especially for adult audiences. Stories in humane education date back at least to the late nineteenth century. However, there are few overtly educational stories for adults that address anthropocentrism. The proposed project will attempt to use the power of stories to reveal and challenge anthropocentrism. This will be an important contribution to the growing fields of academic humane education and human-animal studies and to the sparsely populated genre of educational fiction.

Chapter Three

Many of a Kind: Humans and Other Animals in the Early Twenty-First Century

With the goal of providing an accessible and inviting vehicle for first and second year college students to engage in critical thinking about anthropocentrism, *Many of a Kind* is a collection of fictional short stories, presented by a fictional editor, and discussions of actual journal articles. The stories, nine in all, are divided by theme into three chapters of three stories each. The stories are extremely short, in most cases only one or two pages, making it very feasible to read them out loud in the classroom.

Each chapter is briefly introduced by the “editor,” and each story is followed by discussions of two to three journal articles related to the themes of the story. Twenty-four articles from eleven different periodicals are discussed in the book. The authors of the articles represent a wide variety of disciplines in traditional fields such as philosophy, anthropology, and psychology. Additionally, less familiar fields such as death studies, visual studies, and sign language studies are represented. A majority of articles can be said to come from a rather new field, human-animal studies, an interdisciplinary field involving scholars with training in a wide variety of subjects, including literature, geography, and sociology.

It is most likely that *Many of a Kind* will be valuable in classes that address reading, writing, and critical thinking. English and philosophy classes are good fits, for example. However, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topics, and the growing interest in human-animal studies, *Many of a Kind* could be very effectively used in a wide variety of disciplines.

This chapter, the project itself, contains two components. Pages 20 through 25 introduce *Many of a Kind: Humans and Other Animals in the Early Twenty-First Century* to teachers, and suggest ways to use the book in the classroom. Pages 26 through 79 comprise the book, *Many of a Kind*. For the purposes of this Independent Learning Project (ILP), the pagination will continue through both of these sections. However, the introduction for teachers and the book are intended to be separate entities, and so will end with their own references cited section. All references, cited in any section of this ILP, are included in the list that follows Chapter 4 of the ILP.

A note about authorship: It is hoped that the many layers of fiction add interest and variety to *Many of a Kind*. However, for the purposes of the real world let the following be made clear: journal articles and author names associate with them are real, the author names associated with the stories are fictitious (except C. M. Bevens), the name of the fictional editor is real and she is actually the author of *Many of a Kind*.

An Introduction for Teachers:

Using *Many of a Kind* in the College Classroom

Many of a Kind is not a typical textbook. In its pages the reader finds an editor from the future, fictional short stories (so short that they can be easily read out loud in class), and connections to real academic scholarship. Twenty-four articles from eleven different periodicals are discussed in the book, representing a wide range of academic disciplines. The words of the futuristic editor, the stories, and the journal articles all support the revelation and exploration of a deeply acculturated cultural myth: anthropocentrism. *Many of a Kind* aims to provide an appealing and accessible vehicle for the development of critical thinking in first and second year college students, to introduce the concept of anthropocentrism and the growing field of human-animals studies, and to demystify academic research and writing. It is appropriate for any beginning level college class emphasizing reading, writing, or critical thinking as well as for courses that address the environment, society, culture, or nonhuman animals.

Purpose of *Many of a Kind*

The inspiration for the strategy of *Many of a Kind* is a widely used reading, writing, and critical thinking textbook designed for beginning college students. In *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*, the editors forward “the premise that learning to think critically means learning to identify and see beyond dominant cultural myths—collective and often unconsciously held beliefs that influence our thinking, reading, and writing” (Colombo, Cullen, & Lisle, 2004, p. v). Each chapter’s introduction and reading selections address a different overarching

cultural myth, such as “The Myth of the Model Family” (p. 17), “The Myth of Individual Opportunity” (p. 293), and “The Myth of the Melting Pot” (p. 546).

What *Rereading America* does not address is the myth of anthropocentrism, the notion that humanity holds a unique and superior place among living beings and within the world. But anthropocentrism, by virtue of its wide acceptance, indeed its near invisibility, may be one of the cultural myths most in need of illumination and challenge. One researcher asserts that anthropocentrism is “one of the central cultural messages students encounter in schools” (Bowers, 1993, p. 123) and notes anthropocentrism’s particularly endemic presence in textbooks. Academic works that do challenge anthropocentrism, such as Singer’s *Animal Liberation* (1975/2002), tend to be too difficult for beginning college students, leaving students without an accessible antidote for this overdose of anthropocentrism.

Many of a Kind offers an alternative. Through a fictional overlay that combines a futuristic narrative device, short stories, and essays pointing readers to real-life academic journal articles, *Many of a Kind* provides a less intimidating, more inviting vehicle for beginning college students. The stories, nine in all, are divided by theme into three chapters of three stories each. Each chapter is briefly introduced and each story is followed by discussions of two to three journal articles related to the themes of the story.

Connections to Academic Literature

Although there are many full-length books that could have served as appropriate references, journal articles were chosen for a few important reasons. First, journal articles are short. Students can explore topics in a number of discrete journal articles in far fewer pages than are contained in a single nonfiction book. Second, journal articles tend not to

be assigned reading for beginning college students. It is true that some academic journal articles are quite intellectually challenging, but others are relatively straightforward. The exposure to more accessible articles, earlier in the college experience, may demystify academic research and allow beginning students to imagine themselves performing original research and professional level academic writing. The choice of journal articles also allowed for a sizable and varied sample of very current scholarship.

Twenty-four articles from eleven different periodicals are referenced in the book. Nine out of the eleven represented periodicals are academic journals, with only two articles coming from publications intended for popular audiences. The nine academic journals correspond to eight different fields of study: anthropology, death studies, ethics, human-animal studies, psychology, religious studies, sign language studies, and visual studies. It should be noted that human-animal studies takes in a wide array of more traditional disciplines. Notable among these are sociology and geography.

Articles were chosen for their accessibility in terms of level of difficulty, level of interest for non-academics, and their physical availability. All articles included in *Many of a Kind* are obtainable in full text through one or both of the following database programs: Academic Search Premier and Wilson Select Plus. Access to these online databases is widely available through memberships at many academic and community libraries.

Activities & Resources

Many of a Kind involves all of the following: short fictional stories, academic journal articles (including original research), short essays that discuss linkages between the stories and journal articles, and a fictional overlay in the form of a futuristic editor

who serves as a sort of narrator. There are some appealing possibilities for classroom activities that correlate with these various aspects of the book. Following are two tables. Table A proposes a number of activities, which might be used to extend the learning experience of *Many of a Kind*. Table B is a list of suggested resources of various types, many of which may be used in the activities.

Table A: Suggested Activities	
ACTIVITY NAME	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Story Writing	Students write their own original fiction addressing anthropocentric themes.
Article Search	Using one's own stories, other students' stories, or published stories, students conduct a search for academic articles that relate to the stories' themes.
Anthropocentrism Journal	Some experts believe that anthropocentrism is especially prevalent in student textbooks (Bowers, 1993). Assign students to keep a journal throughout the semester in which they will record any instances of anthropocentrism that they detect in their assigned readings in any of their classes. They can be invited to include any other instances of anthropocentrism that they encounter in their daily lives as well as their response and feelings about anthropocentrism.
Research Paper	Students choose one topic addressed in <i>Many of a Kind</i> (or better yet an anthropocentric topic that the student feels is missing from the book) to further research. Students identify and evaluate a minimum of six sources and synthesize the information into a short research paper.
From the Future	Students pretend that, like the editor in <i>Many of a Kind</i> , they are looking back at the early twenty-first century from the year 2045. From this perspective, they write a fictional essay discussing one of the of the following topics: human dependence on automobiles, television, communications technology such as cell phones and the internet, humans spending time outdoors, companion animal overpopulation, wildlife habitat and species extinction, global warming, or human population.

ACTIVITY NAME	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Map	The articles referred to in <i>Many of a Kind</i> represent a number of geographical places, in terms of the journal's country of origin, the nationality of the article's author, and the location of the study that is the subject of the article. Some of this information is not provided in the book and so it will be necessary for students to access the original articles through Academic Search Premier or Wilson Select Plus databases. Once the research is complete, categories (journal's country of origin, author's nationality, and study location) can be color-coded. Using pens or push pins of the assigned color, students plot their data on a world map. They will find, for example, that although all but a couple journals are published in the U.S., a number of authors come from other places, and the articles address a wide variety of locations. This activity offers good practice for beginning students in retrieving journal articles and compiling their own data.
Real World	The "editor" of <i>Many of a Kind</i> refers to all the efforts that were occurring in the early twenty-first century to help nonhuman animals. Students can conduct research to uncover organizations and individuals who are doing this work. Categories can be structured by animal type (such as farmed animals, companion animals, and wild animals) or by organization type (college or university, student group, community effort, government, and not for profit organization). A slightly different version of this activity involves students researching possible careers that advocate for nonhuman animals.

SHORT FICTION	NOVELS	BOOKS (NONFICTION)	WEBSITES
<i>The Lives of Animals</i> (Coetzee, 1999)	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> (Atwood, 2003)	<i>Thanking the Monkey</i> (Dawn, 2008)	Animals and Society Institute: animalsandsociety.org
<i>Last Days of the Dog Men</i> (Watson, 1996).	<i>Pluto: Animal Lover</i> (Stover, 1994)	<i>Building an Ark</i> (Smith, 2007)	Institute for Humane Education: humaneeducation.org
<i>Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences</i> (Le Guin, 1987)	<i>Ishmael</i> (Quinn, 1992)	<i>Pleasurable Kingdom</i> (Balcombe, 2006)	Humane Society of the United States: hsus.org
<i>Eco-Fiction</i> (Stadler, 1971)	<i>The Plague Dogs</i> (Adams, 1978)	<i>Next of Kin</i> (Fouts, 1997)	Animal Legal Defense Fund: aldf.org

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Many of a Kind
Humans and Other Animals in the Early Twenty-First Century

C. M. Bevens, editor

DEDICATION:

For Chester,
my canine soul mate.

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Editor's Introduction

Like so many writers before me, I sit at the keyboard with one of my friends on my desk. He reminds me how much less urgent, less timeless, my task is than simply sharing the moment, purring and rubbing cheeks together. And yet, even now, in 2045, we humans persist in making much of reading and writing and other relatively abstract activities. Although certain things like this haven't changed too much, we know that other things have changed dramatically over the last forty or so years.

I am sixty now, so I remember the early part of the century quite well. I finished my first round of college in 2007, receiving what was then called a bachelor's degree. Society was still quite stuck on quantitative and hierarchical measures of achievement. Even then, however, there were signs of resistance to the rigid division of knowledge and learning into artificially distinct fields. I was able to study a broad spectrum of topics, across many disciplines, taking an interdisciplinary degree in the social sciences.

Busy with my classes, I had given almost no thought to what I would do for a living after I graduated. In fact, it was not uncommon for recent college graduates to go through a difficult and confusing year or two. I found myself not knowing what to do next and not being able to find employment that matched my vague expectations. Without dwelling too much on my personal experience of those challenging transitional years, suffice it to say that I kept working at the part-time data entry job I'd had during school. At least, I told myself, I did finally have my own apartment.

It didn't take long for my mother to suggest that since I had more time, perhaps Chester could move in with me. Chester had been my best friend when I was a teenager. I had missed him during these five years of college, seeing him only a couple times a

semester when I'd visit my parents. During my second or third year in college, I had dreamed that Chester was human, rather than canine. In the dream I had to explain to him why I had chosen a different roommate and why he couldn't attend university with me. Even now, the memory of that dream is unsettling.

It was Chester moving in that got me thinking seriously about animals. On walks with him, or while we ate dinner, I found myself trying to remember whether nonhuman animals had been discussed in any of my classes. The only instances that I could remember were in the few natural science classes I'd had. We learned about relative brain sizes among mammals and other anatomical or physiological things. But I took most of my classes in disciplines like communications, religious studies, sociology, anthropology and psychology. Why didn't those classes include nonhuman animals in their approach to societal and cultural issues?

Then I remembered that both human and nonhuman animals showed up quite a bit in my introduction to psychology class as subjects of experiments. The memories were not pleasant. Those kinds of lessons always disturbed me, and I had tried to forget them. Vaguely I recalled baby monkeys taken from their mothers, people thinking that they were giving electric shocks to other people, and something about dogs and bells. I couldn't recall the details at the time, but like most students of introductory psychology, I had learned about a number of psychological experiments of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Eventually, I concluded that most of my classes had not seriously addressed nonhuman animals at all. The classes that did consider animals treated them as biological or experimental subjects or addressed them in terms of their products, such as meat, dung, skin or fur. I suppose that I hadn't questioned, or even noticed, this while I was

actually in the classes because I was so engaged in my courses and so busy with the whole experience of college.

Why did this huge blind spot exist? After all, I thought, even if you consider only social issues surrounding human and nonhuman animal interactions (now viewed as only one of the most obvious of many possible perspectives) there is rich subject matter. In 2008 the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) reported that more than one-third of households included at least one cat and almost forty percent included at least one dog (HSUS, 2008). That was a lot of families with nonhuman members. Yet, in my Sociology of Family class, there was not one mention of nonhumans.

Oh, I was annoyed. First I was unable to find some really great and interesting job upon graduation, which I realized had been my fantasy and assumption all through college. Then I realized that in all those years of school I didn't learn anything about the role of nonhuman animals in society, a topic that now completely engaged my intellect and imagination. Even though my account was still active, I swore off the university library, a place that I had loved. I had lost my taste for nonfiction too. I wondered whether I had made a mistake taking so many social science classes. I had always loved poems and stories, but had gotten away from them, because who has time with all the assigned reading?

Then it dawned on me. Hadn't twentieth century philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre used fiction to communicate their distaste for the human condition? I had read a tiny bit about Sartre and existentialism, and I always thought what he needed was a good hike or maybe even a nice long camping trip. Nonetheless, it gave me an idea. I decided to take control of my own intellectual destiny, independent of the academic

establishment. Because academics had completely missed this important issue of nonhuman animals and society, I had lost my faith in them.

Deciding to undertake a major project as an independent scholar, I began to look for evidence that even if academia was not thinking about nonhuman animals, regular folks were. I paid more attention to the news and noticed a lot of what might have been called “animal interest” stories. At local music shows I listened hard to make out the lyrics and attended open mic nights and poetry slams at area coffee shops. I combed the internet and bookstores for blogs and zines.

Ultimately, I decided to focus on the stories, poems, and personal essays of everyday people. These folks were not trying to make money with their writing, they were just trying to understand the things they were experiencing and found that writing, and sharing their writing with others, helped them to do that. So, I started gathering these writings, thinking I would pull them into a groundbreaking collection that publishers couldn't wait to get their hands on. Those stories, however, were not published in 2010, as I had planned that they would be. Rather, they are being published for the first time in this volume. Imagine the surprise of the authors of the pieces in this book, hearing thirty-five years late that I would actually come through on my promise to get their work published!

I abandoned my project so many years ago because I had been wrong about academia's ignorance of nonhuman animal issues. The relative obscurity of academic work addressing the relationship between humans and other animals did not mean that the work didn't exist. In fact, there was no lack of academic literature addressing the notions explored in the stories contained in this volume. The key is that one had to know

both what to look for and where to look. At that time, most people had only had internet access for a decade or so. Most of us still had not developed skills or a strategy for personal information intake, something that is second nature these days.

Discovering the work of human-animal studies scholars helped me to understand that although I had felt alone in my realizations and opinions, there were hundreds or perhaps thousands of people working very hard to move humans away from anthropocentrism and back to a communion with other animals and nature. For every academic, after all, there were perhaps ten or twenty people working along more direct lines. There are and were animal activists, wildlife advocates, social workers, lawyers, humane educators, filmmakers, community planners and many others who work hard to benefit human and nonhuman animals and the earth. I soon found my place among them.

All these years later, it occurred to me that there is something to be gained in looking back at those early times, during the first decade of the twenty-first century. If only to present the perspective of the contemporary layperson, the non-expert, the ingénue, there is value in the stories shared in this book. As an additional layer of information, I will refer readers to contemporaneous academic works. In the early 2000s, these works were relatively obscure. Now, in 2045, they are classics.

The stories, nine in all, are divided by theme into three chapters of three stories each. Each chapter is briefly introduced and each story is followed by a discussion of journal articles related to the themes of the story. The stories will introduce the reader to many human and nonhuman animal characters. A deer, a rat, a turtle, deep sea creatures, and dogs populate these pages. These are just the living nonhuman animal characters. The reader will also be faced with a plastic pig and the memory of a dog with an

unknown fate. A discussion of the articles will extend the story themes and, hopefully, provide for interesting contrasts and comparisons of the work and thoughts of creative writers and academic ones.

C. M. Bevens
April, 2045
Albany, Oregon

Chapter One

We are They/They're Like Us

Each of the three stories that comprise this section might have fit well within other topic areas of this book. However, they are important taken as a group, the last story serving as a good counterpoint to the first two. Additionally, each story addresses perhaps the most basic topic needing coverage: the tenuous and murky border that, for so long, humans vainly attempted to maintain between themselves and other animals.

“The Rat” and “Loss” explore, among other things, the human denial of qualities related to personhood or autonomy in nonhuman animals. The most obvious denial is that of a nonhuman animal’s intrinsic value, the self-contained worth with which each being is born. Farmed animals are an obvious example: they were valued for the food or fiber that humans remove from their bodies. However, the same attitude is apparent in the stories at hand, even though they deal with companion animals, or “pets” as they used to be called. The value of the nonhuman animal characters in the stories, a rat and a dog, is recognized only related to their service to humans. When that service is no longer pleasing or becomes inconvenient, things do not go well for the nonhumans.

In “I am an Animal,” the protagonist realizes the truth of the title’s statement in a new and more profound way. But, will she be able to hold onto her new understanding? Epiphanies can be ephemeral, after all. This may be especially true, given the high degree of societal ambivalence about the animality of humans, which persisted into the beginning of the twenty-first century.

COREY BARNETT

The Rat

“You wouldn’t believe the way he would peel grapes,” Heather told me, “taking his time, those tiny hands working. He didn’t like the skin.”

Initially she looked at me for comment. Receiving plenty of eye contact, but no verbal reply, she lifted her eyes above my gaze, and continued, “I used to just watch him, watch him for a long time.”

I myself have had very little experience with rats, so Heather’s story surprised and moved me. I imagined things on the part of the rat. I considered the patience necessary and the forethought of the worthwhile reward. I thought of him rejecting the less tasty skin, working carefully to strip it off to reveal the sweet, pale green softness of the inner grape. I marveled at this sophistication of taste. I thought too of the dexterous little hands. Humans make so much of their opposable thumbs.

Although still in my own thoughts, I said, “I wonder if the Humane Society has rats needing homes?” Then I remembered Lionel, our Jack Russell mix. I’ve actually seen him kill a rat. It was awful. With amazing speed, he crunched the length of the body up and down and back again, in some kind of perfect, lethal, Kung Fu corn cob maneuver. It was horrible.

I realized that my newly evolving plan to get closer to rats would have to wait, Lionel’s presence in my home complicating my cause a little. As I was puzzling over this, I heard Heather begin again, this time joined by another co-worker.

“He got sick,” she said. “Started acting funny and wouldn’t eat.”

“Not even grapes?” Jack quipped.

She snorted and went on, “The vet appointment would have cost thirty-five dollars. Thirty-five dollars for a rat, can you imagine? I mean, I only paid six bucks for him.”

She paused.

Finally, “He was cute, though” she said.

“Not that cute,” Jack said and laughed.

I could only listen. I didn’t say a thing, just sat there and listened to that.

THE RAT

Related Academic Works

In the story the notion of spending thirty-five dollars on the “pet” rat seems to be considered ridiculous by at least two of the three human characters. Compared to animals raised for food or used in laboratories (as millions were in very recent history), wouldn’t we expect companion animals to be the most valued? Three articles, from different journals, shed some light on this subject.

In the journal *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, Rollin wrote the following:

One key feature of moral psychology is recognition of the moral primacy of those with whom we enjoy relationships of love and friendship—*philia* in Aristotle’s term. Although a radically new ethic for animal treatment is emerging in society, its full expression is severely limited by our exploitative uses of animals. At this historical moment, only the animals with whom we enjoy *philia*—companion animals—can be treated with unrestricted moral concern. (2005, p. 105)

Companion animals were the comparatively lucky ones, then, in the first part of the twenty-first century. However, when people referred to “pets” or “companion animals” back in those times, they usually meant dogs and cats. Although there were many other types of companion animals in existence, those other types (including various rodents, birds, reptiles, fish, etc.) tended to be marginalized.

I had forgotten that point, so a surprise awaited me in my selection process for journal articles related to “The Rat.” Companion animals other than cats and dogs continued to be largely ignored in academic, and surely other, circles until about 2015. The search phrase “rat companion animal” or even “rat pet” in Academic Search Premier

or Wilson Select Plus databases, filtered for articles published between 2000 and 2010, yields scanty results. In fact, most articles from that time period involving rodents tend to address laboratory issues. Thinking that I was surely missing something, I attempted to broaden my search, entering search terms such as “nontraditional pets” and even “exotic pets,” hoping to find some kind of trail to follow. These searches yielded almost nothing except articles discussing animal to human disease vectors associated with petkeeping.

One exception to the lack of literature is an article addressing the third most common American companion animal. This is Anderson’s 2003 article, “A Bird in the House: An Anthropological Perspective on Companion Parrots.” The combined results of a literature review and a survey support the notion that companion birds were increasingly coming to be considered family members (Anderson, 2003). There was, however, a downside to this good news. Most people continued to be largely unfamiliar with the wellness needs of birds, including very basic items such as a healthy diet and exercise needs (Anderson, 2003).

It must be said that even canine and feline companion animals were not exempt from neglect or other kinds of abuse including abandonment, ultimately leading to death. A 2004 statistical analysis of survey data considered the birth and death rates of dogs and cats, as a way to better understand companion animal overpopulation (New et al, 2004). Conclusions of the study include the recognition that humans appeared to value cats less than dogs, more cats having been killed, died, or disappeared during the study period (New et al, 2004). Also, far more unplanned kitten births were reported (New et al, 2004). This apparent disregard for cats is especially worrisome when you consider that

the study did not address stray or feral populations, only cats to which human respondents “admit to some relationship” (New et al, 2004, p. 240).

OLGA FEDORUK

Loss

Two mother and daughter pairs were sharing the afternoon together. Perhaps in caution against spilling their tea biscuit crumbs on the new upholstery, the two women sat near the edge of the couch. Both were trim, with medium length hairstyles that were neat but feminine. They looked like they belonged together.

Wholly absorbed in their playworld, the two girls sat nearby on a round rug, chatting and drawing with fat pens. The children were schoolmates at Lincoln, the best private school in the area. Their clothing was quite similar, as there was a dress code at their school. However, unlike the grownup women, these girls did not look alike.

Katie had rolled up her pant-legs to the knee and pulled her socks straight up, their stretched tops landing just below the calf. Also, she had loosed her braid at some point in the day. Now her thick brown hair was unkempt, crimped sections of it falling away from her head in funny angles, in that special way of undone braids. Ashley was more still, more contained, than Katie. She looked just as she had that morning when her mother brought her to school: neat and tidy.

Checking to see if the girls were paying attention, one of the mothers began to speak in a hushed and conspiratorial tone: “Did you hear that we had to get rid of Lucky?”

“Oh no, really?” the other responded.

“Yes, it was a hard decision,” she replied, giving a little sigh that seemed more resolve than regret. “She was like a member of the family.”

“What happened?”

“Well, you know we got her last spring, so I guess we’d had her about eight months or so. Anyway, it turns out she was terrified of thunder and lightning. During that storm last week, we were out to dinner and she was home alone. Well, she went crazy, trying to get into the house from the garage. She tore the paneling right off the wall! Joe was furious. We really didn’t have a choice. You can’t keep a dog that is going to destroy things.”

“How did Ashley take it?”

“Well, pretty hard. She cried all day, you know. But she’ll be OK. We’ll get another dog and she’ll forget all about it. Joe said he’d like to get a bulldog. I’ve heard that they are very calm and don’t need much exercise.”

“Sounds like my kind of dog,” the other woman said, but her color had drained and her smile was weak.

The girls were drawing. Katie drew a horse and Ashley drew a box.

LOSS

Related Academic Works

What makes a family decide to “get rid of” a family dog? In the case of “Loss,” Lucky’s behavior did not match the expectations and requirements of her adult human “owners.” It is interesting to consider the genesis of human notions of how nonhuman animals ought to behave and how they will fit into the family. One possible source is representations of companion and other nonhuman animals in the popular media of the twentieth and very early twenty-first century.

In “Pernicious Portrayals,” a *Society and Animals* journal article, Anderson and Henderson suggested that nonhuman animal portrayals in children’s media may be partly to blame (2005). They argue that real animals cannot possibly meet the expectations set by the romanticized fantasy animals in children’s stories and other media (2005). The mismatch between fantasy-driven expectations and the behavior of real nonhuman animals may lead to abandonment and sometimes death (Anderson & Henderson, 2005).

In another article, “Forty-two Thousand and One Dalmatians: Fads, Social Contagion, and Dog Breed Popularity,” Herzog analyzes U.S. puppy registrations from 1946 through 2003 (2006). His analysis indicates that there exists a significant boom and bust cycle in the popularity of some dog breeds, amounting to as much as a 3200% increase in registrations in peak years (2006). This means that during the time of greatest popularity, thirty-two times as many puppies of a particular breed were registered. It will be very difficult for younger readers to imagine that once dog breeds were subject to the whims of fad and fashion, as if they were on par with the newest hairstyle or the right (or wrong) length of shorts.

Although “Loss” addresses the relinquishment of a companion animal, rather than her death, grief is a common denominator. In an article in the journal *Death Studies*, Kaufman & Kaufman combine a case example with a literature review to closely consider the case of children’s grief after the death of a companion animal (2006). Kaufman and Kaufman emphasize that it is important that parents not trivialize the deaths of companion animals and that these animals play important roles in the lives of children (2006).

MINDY KAPOOR

I am an Animal

I am an animal. Hailey thought this upon waking. Her thoughts were racing, clear and true, like a freezing cold stream: all business, effective and undeniable. It is a biological fact, of course. But she had never really thought about it as part of her identity. She was a woman, a student, a human, an animal!

People always seemed to convey something more than just the plain meaning of the words when they talked about humans being animals. There seemed an unspoken understanding that although this was technically true, the fact is more bizarre than meaningful, more paradoxical than instructive. Also, people tended to add a bunch of qualifiers. She had heard and read things like, humans are animals biologically, but we differ so vastly that we are really in a class all our own. Or, we (humans) have a whole host of abilities and skills that other animals lack.

A few things along those lines of reasoning had always bothered Hailey. Number one, why was it always animals versus humans, with all the other types of animals in one group and humans all alone in another? Also, didn't lots of other kinds of animals do lots of things that humans can't do? Just as one example, what about how some birds, and some fish too, can navigate over hundreds and even thousand of miles and find their way to their destination? She had asked her biology teacher about that once. He had answered something about "mere instinct." Hailey wasn't convinced.

Also, she noticed that the list of things only humans can do had changed since she was a little kid. She had grown up watching PBS and flipping through her dad's old *National Geographic* magazines. She had heard somewhere that humans were the only

animals that used tools. But in her physical anthropology class she learned that chimps make and use tools too. And just this week she read that crows also make tools, apparently a fairly recent discovery. These kinds of discoveries resulted in constant revisions to the list of qualities that supposedly separate humans from the rest of the animals on the planet.

She wondered whether and for how long humans might have been trying to convince themselves that they weren't like other animals. She thought about the clothes we wear, as an example. Twenty-first century American fashion was pretty casual. But what about the dress in all those British period movies she had been checking out from the library lately—*Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, all of those? There was so much extra in the clothing, way beyond any kind of functionality. The dresses and suits were so formal, so fussy. She knew that there were lots of other times and places throughout history which involved elaborate clothing. She couldn't help thinking that it had something to do with trying to prove that they were radically distinct (beyond all notion of comparison) from nonhuman animals.

As soon as she thought it, she imagined what her history major boyfriend would say. He would remind her (and she would admit that history wasn't her strong suit) that dress was usually about class distinction. And those movies she mentioned were about relatively well-off British people. They would have dressed according to their social class, distinguishing themselves not as human, but among humans. But she was thinking so clearly this morning, she couldn't be derailed by the imaginary rebuttal of her brainy boyfriend. She was smart too. She decided she would reply by saying something like, "But distinction among humans, by class, ethnicity, sex, whatever, is all about superiority

of one group over another. But on what grounds? I think often superior means more human, more refined, more evolved, more intelligent . . . less like an animal.” She was sure he wouldn’t be able to argue with that.

All these thoughts occurred to Hailey within the first minute of two of waking. Her mind had moved quickly, fluidly, and without distraction. She was still in bed, in fact. She had simply turned over and looped her arm around her pillow, the ball of her hand comfortably supporting her chin. It was all so clear. An epiphany, she thought, that’s what this is called. Simple, but so significant. How was it that she had never realized these things before? She sat, a bit awed, wishing to hold on to the clarity of mind that she’d had upon awakening. The sounds of Arcade Fire, her favorite band, suddenly filled the room. Her radio alarm had gone off. Quickly her mind came to attention, grasping the fact that the regular day had begun, that she had forty short minutes to be ready and out the door.

I AM AN ANIMAL

Related Academic Works

A particularly interesting pair of articles makes a good counterpart to “I am an Animal.” In 2006, the journal *Society and Animals* published an article by Andrew Goatly entitled “Humans, Animals, and Metaphors.” Goatly explores a range of interpretations of the assertion “Humans are animals” (2006, p. 15). The most straightforward possible meaning is the literal denotation, that people are truly animals. He finds that most often the statement is a metaphorical projection, linked to one or more social theories, such as sociobiology (Goatly, 2006).

Just one year later, an article addressing a more focused issue related to animality, or “creatureliness” as it is dubbed in the article, appeared in the *British Journal of Social Psychology* (Beatson & Halloran, 2007, p. 619). In “Humans Rule! The Effects of Creatureliness Reminders, Mortality Salience and Self-Esteem on Attitudes Toward Animals,” Beatson and Halloran found that people assert more negative attitudes about nonhuman animals after they had been reminded that humans too are creatures (2007). Even more interesting, they found that this was especially the case with people measured as having low self-esteem (2007). It is difficult to interpret this any other way than to accept that even into the early twenty-first century humans were deeply resistant to reclaiming their animal identity. Furthermore, it seems that humans’ repugnance to their own animality was linked to negative attitudes toward other animals.

Chapter Two

Words, Symbols, and Segmentation

What we say and how we say it reveals much about the way we think. It is often the smallest words that convey meanings that may be surprising, even to the speaker or writer of those words. Consider the case of pronouns, such as “he,” “she,” and “it.” In the early twentieth century it was still quite common to refer, casually and without conscious derogatory intent, to a nonhuman animal as “it.” It is true that in that same time period, people persisted in referring to a small baby as “it,” sometimes even when the sex of the child was known. This disturbing fact, however, is outside the scope of this book.

“Speaking of Words” is a group of poems that consider some examples of word usage with meanings that may be unrealized or unintended.

Words like “it” linguistically turn nonhuman animals, living beings, into things, mere objects. Humans have had another tendency that attempts to turn nonhuman animals into things, but in this case quite complex and abstract things: metaphorical symbols. Perhaps more than denying status, the way objectification does, turning nonhuman animals into symbols ignores their reality, their corporeal body, and their needs. “The Meaning of a Deer” illustrates this human tendency.

The third story, “Picnic Shoulder,” explores still other territory. The protagonist shares his thoughts and feelings about being faced with the dividing and naming of parts of a pig. In this case, the parts are named not for their function in the living being. Rather, their names unabashedly denote their intended role for human consumption.

MARIA AVILA

Speaking of Words: three poems

Fishing for Different Things

It's quite odd that we "fish for fish."

Doesn't "birding" mean bird watching,

Not bird killing?

Also . . .

Why are fisherpeople forever asking,

"Caught *anything*?"

Does it bother them to say,

To their partner in crime,

"Caught anyone?"

Say “We”

Do you ever say “we,”

And mean animals?

“We animals are a clever bunch!”

Do you ever say “we,”

And mean mammals?

“We mammals love our children so much!”

Do you ever say “we,”

And mean primates?

“We primates have to stick together!”

Do you ever say “we,”

And mean apes?

“We apes really know how to party.”

Do you ever say “we,” and even mean all humans?

Met Anyone?

I asked my friend, “Have you ever met a miniature donkey?”

She laughed at me, was delighted by me.

How sweet I am to say it that way.

Nonplussed, I didn't tell her more.

How friendly the two donkeys were.

How I'd like so much to visit with them again.

How I think my life would be enriched by their acquaintance.

SPEAKING OF WORDS: THREE POEMS

Related Academic Works

There are many articles written in the first decade of the twenty-first century considering anthropocentric human language. Some especially interesting ones are those that address pronoun usage. We have already discussed the word “it” in reference to nonhuman animals. A more subtle choice of pronouns exists between the words “who” and “which.” The following examples indicate appropriate pronoun usage for humans and for objects: “Sally is the one *who* baked the cake” and “The cake, *which* is moist and delicious, will be served soon.” The choice, then, between using “who” or “which” in reference to nonhuman animals becomes quite significant. “Who” grants greater status in terms of sentience and other qualities often reserved for humans, while “which” groups nonhumans with mere objects¹.

In “Elephants Who Marry Mice are Very Unusual: The Use of the Relative Pronoun Who with Nonhuman Animals,” Gilquin and Jacobs surveyed nine dictionaries, one encyclopedia and thirteen grammar textbooks for usage rules of the pronoun “who” in relationship to nonhuman animals (2006). They found quite a bit of variation, with about half of the sources allowing for the possible usage of “who” in reference to nonhuman animals (2006). The usage of “who” was often allowed only in specific cases or under certain circumstances, such as when the animal’s name or sex is known, or if the animal is deemed a “higher” animal (Gilquin & Jacobs, 2006, p. 82).

Another article in the same *Society and Animals* issue explores human pronoun textual references to different nonhuman animals around a particular scenario: the fox hunt (Gupta, 2006). In “Foxes, Hounds, and Horses: Who or Which?,” Gupta used

¹ The pronoun “that” is a neutral option, which may be used with humans, nonhumans and objects.

Google keyword searches to uncover a large body of writing regarding fox hunts (2006). The analysis of that data yielded some surprising results. Pro-hunting literature more frequently employed the use of “who,” imparting sentience to nonhuman animals, than did animal advocacy oriented texts, which primarily used “which,” especially in the case of the fox (2006). In the closing sentences of her work, Gupta offers the following advice to animal advocates:

Consider that a consistent use of the personalized pronouns could help signal to the reader that the animals are sentient and could convey emotional closeness.

This is particularly important where the argument most likely to succeed is based on an instinctive repugnance to suffering of sentient beings. (2006, p. 126)

KATE JONES

The Meaning of a Deer

“She was there again yesterday,” I told my mother over the telephone. “I’ve seen raccoons here before, but never a deer, and I’ve been in this apartment for almost five years.”

“Hmm,” Mom said, “Once, when your father was still hunting, three deer came right into camp. And he hadn’t seen any while he was out with his bow.”

I had heard this story so many times I wondered if I actually remembered this event that took place before I was born.

“I think maybe it means something—my deer, I mean.”

“Means something? Means what?” mom asked, reasonably.

“Well, I don’t know. But somehow, I don’t think it’s just a deer.”

I remember that conversation so vividly. It only took place two weeks ago, after all. But I feel so differently about so many things now. I’m going to make some changes in my life.

The deer had shown up five evenings in a row. I could see her from my second-story apartment window. She would lay in the tall grassy triangle that was protected from mowing by the three big spruce trees. The trees, planted in a close grouping, were the only ones in the half-acre shared yard of the apartment complex.

She would stay there each evening, still and serene. My window framed the picture perfectly, the trees in the middle of the field and she nestled amongst the trees. She seemed to be looking right at me. I kept wondering what it was that she wanted to tell me.

I had been invited to go out to Willy's that night, for pizza and drinks. We usually have a group of six to ten people. Willy's has an old-school jukebox, with all this crazy 1980s metal. It also has air hockey. It's always a good time, but I had decided to stay home. I didn't want to miss her.

It's hard to explain, but watching her made me feel a certain way. I felt more still, more able to be quiet, relaxed, present. The first few evenings, this is all I felt. But last night, instead of just enjoying *being*, it occurred to me that it must mean something, the deer being there all of a sudden. What could it mean?

Trying to answer that question is what I was up to right before my mom called that Saturday morning. I decided to go online and research deer. I didn't quite know where to begin. I mean, you can't just Google "What is the deer that keeps showing up at my apartment trying to tell me?" I knew a good website where you can look up information about your dreams. I figured that the symbolism would be the same whether the deer was in a dream or outside your window, so I started there.

It turns out that in dreams deer are connected with a lot of the things that you might expect them to be: grace, beauty and other tender qualities. Other associations were listed too, like independence and virility. I tried to think of other avenues of research. I did some searches on mythology and even fairy tales. There was some pretty interesting stuff out there, but none of these meanings resonated strongly with me.

I had spent the whole day searching for information without even leaving the house. I remembered the days when that wouldn't have been possible. I would have gone to the small public library and their collection would have limited my search. By the evening, I wished that I had gone to the library. At least I would have spoken to another

person. I could have ridden my bike and gotten some fresh air on the way there. But now the daylight was gone. I had missed my deer and now it was too dark to see if she was out there among her trees.

Worst of all, I hadn't really figured anything out. I realized that I was looking for an answer to an undefined question. What was I looking for? What did I feel was missing? What was that French term I'd had as a vocabulary word somewhere along the line? I think it was "ennui." It meant something like a vague feeling of discontent. That's what I had. And I didn't even know why. I had a good job, friends, and family. Things were going okay. But somehow, I just wasn't excited about anything anymore.

Knowing that there were people in the world with real problems, huge concrete problems like lack of sanitation and not enough food and water, I felt like a real ass for whining around about my own ill-defined unrest. Then I just felt worse. I tried to imagine what it would be like to not to have enough water. I've always been able to simply turn on the tap.

Then I thought of something. I rifled through the pile of papers I'd printed from the day's research. There it was: deer foretell draught. Not enough water. Or perhaps, not enough food. Is that why the deer had come down through the foothills and into the valley? She wasn't here to tell me something about myself. She was here for reasons of her own.

Although I had sworn it off earlier, I hopped back on my computer. Even though a world of information is at your fingertips on the internet, I was looking for local information. I went to the search engine, and typed the following: "deer or wildlife in

Little Valley 2008.” The search engine returned tons of hits, some really off topic. But the third one down linked to an article from the local newspaper. I clicked.

Dry conditions over the winter and spring have resulted in food scarcity for deer and other wildlife. Little Valley Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation (LVWRR), a not for profit organization, has partnered with the state Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a plan of action to provide assistance for these animals. Some work has already begun. Local farmers have donated plant foods deemed appropriate for deer consumption. Twenty locations have been identified for food drops.

Asked how effective the food drop project is likely to be, Mark Banner, Wildlife Biologist and Executive Director of LVWRR responded, “If we can get enough people involved, we can certainly make a significant difference in the lives of hundreds of individual animals. And that’s just in our area. Other communities are taking similar measures. The combined good we can do through food drops and other projects is really without limits.”

I finally knew what she had been trying to tell me. Or at least what it meant that she was there. She was hungry. I finally knew what to do. And I already felt better.

THE MEANING OF A DEER

Related Academic Works

As part of a larger study addressing cognition in dolphins, Fraser et al were concerned about how popular portrayals of dolphins might thwart the public's ability to engage in scientific learning about dolphins. Analyzing popular media sources, such as stories, movies, and songs, the researchers uncovered four main themes. These include, dolphins as peers to humans, dolphins as innocent human subordinates, and dolphins as superior to humans (Fraser et al, 2006). The theme most connected to "The Meaning of a Deer," however, is the tendency to view dolphins as "metaphors or interlocutors for messages from nature . . . represent[ing] an ideal of peace, freedom, or unconditional love" (Fraser et al, 2006, p. 329).

If in the early twenty-first century, someone had conducted a study of popular representations of deer, it is very likely that, like the dolphin seen as metaphor for peace and love, deer would have been strongly linked to particular symbolic meanings. Likely meanings would be majesty, beauty, and strength. I can't help but imagine the once iconic image of a huge buck, standing tall, chest out, with perhaps the sun setting behind his great antlers.

Speaking of bucks, there is surely another representation of deer: prey animal. Two articles from different journals address the meanings not just of prey animals, but of prey animals as trophies. In the journal *Visual Studies*, Kaloff and Fitzgerald consider the meanings of photographs of dead nonhuman animal bodies in popular hunting magazines (2003). In contrast to the discourse of hunter as lover of nature, in their visual analysis

Kaloff and Fitzgerald found “extreme objectification of animal bodies, with severed deer heads and cut-off antlers” (2003, p. 119).

A strikingly related article, published two years later, also considered photos of animal “trophies” (Brower, 2005). In this case, however, the photographs featured live animals. Even though these animals had only been photographed, and had not been physically harmed, Brower argues that these animals had in fact been hunted (2005).

Against the cultural backdrop of the early twentieth century, Brower concludes that “[t]he confluence of changing American attitudes toward hunting, nature and masculinity allowed the photographing of animals to function as hunting and produce trophies” (2005, p. 26).

JAMES WASHINGTON

Picnic Shoulder

There is a piece of meat called the “picnic shoulder.” I learned about it yesterday on a T.V. cooking show. The chef pointed out the cut on a life-sized, pink, plastic pig that was right there on the set. Right up on the counter.

Grandma once had a pink elephant for decoration in her yard. At first glance, that is how this pig looked, flamboyant, merry, superfluous. But the pig was not for show; the pig had a grim purpose. He was a three-dimensional map, his numerous parts neatly delineated and labeled. Horribly, the region between his neck and front leg read “picnic shoulder.”

After a long moment, I switched off the T.V. I never saw how the meat was prepared. I never actually saw the pork at all, only the pig. I think I was afraid they’d actually show a picnic. I don’t want to see the picnic.

PICNIC SHOULDER

Related Academic Works

In the late twentieth century more attention began to be paid to the role of language in shaping the social world of humans. According to Stibbe, much of the work of researchers in this arena relates to power relations (2001), such as exploitation between or among ethnic groups. Noting rare exceptions, it is reported that the role of language in the oppression or exploitation of animals had been largely ignored, even into the twenty-first century (Stibbe, 2001). Using critical discourse analysis, the performance of “detailed linguistic analysis of discourses to expose embedded ideologies” (Stibbe, 2001, p. 149), Stibbe identified a number of areas in which language perpetuates human domination of other animals. For example, the word broil was modified to create the noun “broiler,” which names a living chicken by referring to a method of cooking the flesh of that animal (Stibbe, 2001, p. 158).

Another article, one that focuses on another kind of animal that was killed for food, addresses the highly selective breeding that occurred in cattle and many other domesticated animals. Cattle shows, venues for the exhibition and competition of different cow breeds, treat the cow as a commodified object to be partitioned, measured, and judged against the standard of perfection for the breed (Grasseni, 2005). Particular attention, according to Grasseni, is paid to the udder, with the score for that particular body part “divided into five traits that help in objectifying the preferred shape of the udder” (2005, p. 37). Reminiscent of the plastic pig of “Picnic Shoulder,” Grasseni’s article includes an illustration of a cow, with judged parts named and labeled, including “teats –direction and length,” “hock quality,” and “height at withers” (2005, p. 39).

Chapter Three

From Dominion to Communion

We so took for granted the dominion of humans over the rest of the living world and only recently have we returned to the more natural condition of communion with others, especially other animals. Many believe we have much farther to go in our relationships with non-animal life. But that subject is for another book.

Although the words “dominion” and “communion” often have religious connotations, I use each in its broadest sense, their meanings not necessarily being connected to spiritual matters. But dominion and communion are not always experienced as pure states. Humans can be inconsistent and confused.

This is the case in all three of the following stories. In “Pond Turtle,” the human protagonist finds that he has missed being out of doors, among other animals and the rest of nature. He lacks communion with nature in his life. Unfortunately, his solution puts him back squarely in the dominion camp. “Just Waiting” explores the ocean depths and philosophical territory similar to that of “Pond Turtle,” though of a fittingly grander scale. In the last story in this section, “Patch,” the human protagonist comes closest to communion with other animals. But her fear and ambivalence get in the way.

BRIAN FINDLAY

Pond Turtle

I hadn't remembered how green the pond was. The water itself was green and the trees and shrubs and reeds reflected on the pond in deeper shades of green, kind of muted and smudgy. I spent so much time there as a kid, wading and swimming. The water was warm but still provided some refreshment against the 110 degree weather that was so common in the far northern California central valley summers.

It had been at least five years since I'd been over to the pond, having moved away from my parents place even longer ago. But they still live there, and the pond is always waiting, still and patient and eternal. But I'm getting too dramatic. It isn't eternal. It is a man-made² pond and a fairly small one at that. We had it built when mom and dad bought the place. So the pond is about as ancient as bell bottoms, having been built in the late sixties or early seventies. But I spend most of my time either in an office, filled with the smell of toner and the buzz and glare of fluorescent lights, or at home in front of the television. I don't get outside and away from buildings and traffic enough. I had forgotten how good it felt to be surrounded by trees and water and sky. On that day the little pond gained great majesty. In my mind it represented the whole of nature.

It was a little early in the year for swimming, not really hot enough yet. But I was wearing shorts, so I peeled off my t-shirt and decided, what the hell, I'll go in. I remembered that the pond was pretty shallow, but had forgotten that the bottom was lined with soft, clayey mud. It was thick but not dense, and was piled at least eight inches high. My feet squelched through to the solid bottom. The mud felt wonderful! It was soft and

² "Man-made" was one of many sexist terms that persisted in the English language for far too long.

smooth and cool, as my feet slid through it and it slid through the spaces between my toes.

I was up to the bottom of my rib cage, somehow a very sensitive spot, and just about to take the plunge. Then I saw him. He was on top of one of the group of logs that lay jumbled, half in and half out of the water. Staring intently at me, shell the size of a tea saucer, was a turtle.

Never had I seen a turtle in that pond! There were plenty of fish, frogs and even polliwogs at the right time of year. I had even seen a water snake or two. But I'd never glimpsed a turtle.

Suddenly, I knew what to do. I was a man possessed. The long side of my desk, along the partition wall I shared with the next cubicle, would be cleared to make room for a deluxe aquarium. Or would it be a terrarium? Whatever. I could have the splendor of this pond in my life everyday. At my desk. At work. Everyday. It could change my life.

I stood completely still, as my mind raced with all the plans and all the glory of my plans. Once I had calmed down, I slowly retreated toward the shore. Standing near the edge of the water line, and keeping my eyes on the turtle the whole time, I reached backwards to retrieve my cell phone from its t-shirt nest on the shore. I dialed my parent's number.

"Mom," I said calmly, "I need Dad to come down to the pond with one of his fish nets."

"Okay. What's going on?" she asked, reasonably.

"There's a turtle down here that I want to catch."

Now I heard her talking to Dad: “There’s a turtle down there, Paul. Steve wants you to bring a net.”

“Alright honey. He’s on his way.”

I said, “Tell him to be very quiet.” Then I clicked off the phone.

The turtle remained. I could tell he had more staring contest experience than I did. But my determination did not flag. I had experienced something similar with a feral kitten. The little cat and I had stayed in a standoff, a clear path being blocked from him on two sides, long enough for my wife to drive home and fetch some gloves and a carrier in order to transport the little demon. He’s a big, friendly cat now.

But when Dad got there, it all went wrong. It wasn’t his fault. He came stealthily up the bank and wordlessly held out the net for me, handle positioned just right for me to grab. I tried to grasp the handle without looking away from my turtle, but I clutched open air. I automatically looked back to grab at it again and a split second later, net now in hand, the turtle was nowhere to be seen.

After a moment of sickening disappointment, I realized that I was glad he’d gotten away. I wanted to escape into the pond as well. I wanted to submerge, leaving only two streams of nostril blown bubbles behind, resurfacing somewhere safe, shaded, hidden, and so very many shades of green.

POND TURTLE

Related Academic Works

The human desire to inhabit nonhuman animal experience is evidenced in academic literature as well. Looking at a still earlier time in history, in a *Society and Animals* article, Pocock considered turtle-riding behavior occurring in the first half of the twentieth century at Australia's Great Barrier Reef (2006). Looking beyond the obvious concerns about whether this act is humane, Pocock concluded that turtle-riding exhibited humans' interest in the turtles as well as their desire to participate in the life of an unfamiliar environment: the marine world. Pocock expresses that, in fact, there may be something very special about the experiences with these turtles that allow humans to explore and express animality in a way that was unusual at the time (2006). It has been widely acknowledged that humans have spent a lot of energy attempting to distinguish themselves from other animals. Another way to say this is that humans have spent a lot of energy building the anthropocentric worldview. The turtles and turtle riding offered an alternative. Pocock explains:

At the Great Barrier Reef, humans are clearly distinguished from marine animals simply because they cannot live in water. The underwater is alien to everyday existence, so the division does not require any maintenance. In this context people can give free expression to their own capacity to be animal or other. (2006, pp. 140-141)

Our curiosity about other animals, at least wild other animals, very often used to lead to zoo visits. Although opposition to zoos existed before the twenty-first century, it certainly began to gain strength at that time. Two different *Society and Animals* articles,

published only a year apart from one another, critically assess zoos and zoo-type situations. In “Zoos and Eyes,” Acampora compares the exhibition of animals in zoos to pornography, both of which degrade their subjects through overexposure (2005). Knight takes on the claims of a zoo alternative, Japanese “wild monkey parks” (2006, p. 245), in “Monkey Mountain as a Megazoo.” In the parks, monkeys are not confined, but their movements are influenced by the strategic placement of food for their consumption, resulting in the sedentarization of normally nomadic animals (Knight, 2006). Knight concludes that the regular feeding and the resultant sedentarization of the monkeys blurs the distinction between a traditional zoo and the more natural condition that the parks claim to achieve (2006).

TAGE HUDSON

Just Waiting

I was watching a program on undersea and outerspace exploration. Kind of interesting that they linked those two things. There were experts from a number of fields, like marine biology, astrobiology, geology and some other fields I'd never heard of, like exploration planning.

They were on a deep sea exploration together, taking turns launching small bubble shaped crafts down very deep. They went so deep into the ocean that the food chains were based not upon plants photosynthesizing light, but on bacteria chemosynthesizing chemicals. It's funny how much people don't know about their own planet. In fact, when I typed "chemosynthesizing," I discovered that my word processor's spell checker doesn't even know that word.

Everyone seemed to be enjoying him or herself a lot. Each researcher had a small segment where they told about their work and their dreams and how theirs was "just about the best job ever" or something similar to that. It made me think how it is really important to try to create a fulfilling life for yourself. These people were engaged in their work, fascinated by it. Maybe some were even obsessed, and I thought those people were taking it a bit too far.

They saw some pretty amazing stuff from their little bubble crafts. They saw giant billowing creatures, like big flexible silicone sheets, undulating in the underwater current, the tissues of their bodies white and translucent and decorated with regular striations. The dumbo octopus, looking as if she were flying, slow and blimp-like, rather than swimming through the water. Probably most impressive were the hydrothermal vent communities.

Where the heat erupts from the earth's crust, these vents push up columns of earth around which colonies of life thrive. These were amazingly beautiful, looking like some beautiful Japanese fantasy painting. Imagine a rough, dark, rocky column, shooting shimmering hot water through the top, covered in giant tube worms, blood red and looking like super long, slender spring tulips. And teeming amongst these, packed impossibly tightly, were tiny white crabs.

It is wonderful to think of all this life that has so little to do with humans. These creatures don't depend on us for anything. They aren't affected by our urban sprawl, or by our cars or planes. Until recently this kind of life was completely unmolested by humans. But that had changed, hadn't it? Now, I watched as these scientists, who had exclaimed the beauty and wonder of the animals and the vent colonies, unabashedly began to collect samples. Using their awkward underwater remote controlled grabber, looking very much like the claw in those games at mall arcades where you try to grasp a stuffed animal or some other piece of cheap nonsense, they clutched at rocks and crabs, dropping them into tanks and pulling those tanks with them to the surface. Most crabs were packed away live and saved for some later unstated purpose. Others were selected for on the spot experiments.

I started to get confused about what I was seeing and what I was feeling. But the researchers didn't seem confused. They seemed excited, confident, and pleased with themselves and the situation. Then she said it. The marine biologist said something that made everything clear. She said: "Just imagine how much life is out there, under the sea or out in space, just waiting to be discovered."

JUST WAITING

Related Academic Works

The protagonist in “Just Waiting” was uneasy about the scientific methods that he witnessed on the television. It was not uncommon, in fact, for scientific endeavors to be subject to public criticism. In a 2007 article in *Science and Engineering Ethics*, Jones asserts the need for the development of a life sciences professional ethics code. The development of such a code was meant to assuage the public concern and mistrust related to a number of controversial scientific issues and innovations of the late 1990s and early 2000s, including “Dolly the sheep,” the human genome project, human embryonic stem cells, gene transfer, transgenic animals, the chimera hu-mouse and the fraud surrounding human ‘cloning’” (Jones, 2007, p. 26). Significantly, three of the seven items on the list refer directly to nonhuman animals. Yet the recognition of public concern about nonhuman animal issues does not find its counterpart in Jones’ reckoning of the goals of research in the life sciences, which she defines as “advancing the health and welfare of all human beings . . . [while] respect[ing] human life and dignity, remembering that science is a tool, a means to an end and never an end in itself” (2007, p. 37).

Humanity’s effects on nonhuman animals and nature are, of course, not limited to those related to scientific undertakings. In 2002 Crutzen proposed a geologic epoch name, “the anthropocene” (2002, p. 23), for the period beginning in the late eighteenth century, in which human activity began to significantly affect the earth’s environmental systems. According to Crutzen, this effect began to be recognized as early as 1873. Yet humanity’s global interference of natural systems continued to accelerate. For example, Crutzen reported that energy use increased 1600% in the twentieth century (2002).

In an article published in 2008, six years after Crutzen coined the term “anthropocene” (Crutzen, 2002), Rose focused on a particular aspect of humanity’s impact on the environment: species extinction. Highlighting the need for working with humans indigenous to regions targeted for wildlife conservation, Rose described how that cooperation requires the consideration of worldviews that differ from those which inform the approaches of science (2008). For example, Paul Gordon, an indigenous leader in New South Wales was concerned about legislation involving a “division between natural and cultural heritage” (Rose, 2008, p. 83), at least partly due to his consideration of the pademelon, a type of small marsupial, as family (Rose, 2008). Gordon’s recognition of the lack of real boundaries between nature and culture would not be embraced by scientific research institutions for almost two more decades.

C. M. BEVENS

Patch

I read somewhere that when humans started reading and writing they began to lose some old ways of thinking or perceiving. It has something to do with all that association of symbols with words, it's all code really. I can't remember exactly what I read, but I think it also had to do with how abstract it all is. Spoken words only point to what they represent and then we make things even more abstract by giving these words a physical form using a bunch of symbols. And in a lot of languages, these forms are completely arbitrary.

Well I know I'm rambling. What I meant to tell you about is the dogs. I had been thinking about perception and about how humans might perceive differently than other animals. Which other animals I don't know, but dogs and cats are what I know best, so I started thinking there. And not how we're better, smarter, or anything like that. I was thinking more about whether we were missing out on some way we maybe used to think or see.

When we visited my mom's house, I spent a lot of time with her two big dogs. These are outside dogs that live in the country, really the forest. In my mind, that likes myth and fancy, this makes a difference. Between the two is plenty of lab and heeler and something bigger in the mix too. Good friendly dogs.

I had the time so I let them jump up on me. I sat at the opening of their dog house when they turned in at night. I let them nip at me. I groomed them a bit.

Then something happened. If it were a movie they'd slow down the motion just a little bit and maybe blur the outside of the frame and sharpen up the image around

Patch's eyes. I sensed that he thought of me as a peer. All at once I perceived the world so differently, the normal chatter of my mind had fallen away and was replaced by an unaccustomed level of focus and clarity. It felt different, quieter, more timeless, more direct, fewer layers, less safe. It scared me. I snapped out of it quickly and removed myself to human company. Guiltily.

I think now of Patch inviting me. Did he do something different because I had earned it? Or is the invitation always there and I just never saw it before? Do they wonder what is wrong with us? Do they think we are deficient in some way? I worry a lot that I disappointed Patch.

PATCH

Related Academic Works

Talking with the animals: in the early to mid part of the twentieth century, this idea was largely limited to children's stories. As it happens, perhaps the two most significant nonhumans related to this topic, at least in the U.S., died within weeks of each other near the beginning of the twenty-first century. Alex the parrot died, at the age of thirty-one, in September of 2007 (Morell, 2008), and Washoe the chimpanzee died, at age forty-two, in October of the same year (King, 2008).

According to a *National Geographic* article, Irene Pepperberg began verbal interspecies communication studies in 1977 with Alex³, then only one year old (Morell, 2008). Certainly, Alex was not the first parrot to utter human language. For hundreds of years parrots and other birds, subjected to human company, have learned to mimic the words of their human companions. But Pepperberg applied scientific rigor to Alex's language acquisition, attempting to discover the cognition behind Alex's ability to speak (Morell, 2008). Among many accomplishments, the article reports the following (Morell, 2008): Alex used nearly one hundred English words; created new words, such as "ban-erry," a combination of banana and cherry, for apple (p. 44); and made requests using his adopted English language. Consider the following passage from Morell's article:

"Wanna go tree," Alex said in a tiny voice.

Alex had lived his entire life in captivity, but he knew that beyond the lab's door, there was a hallway and a tall window framing a leafy elm tree. He liked to see

³ Fans of the now classic *Oryx and Crake*, by Margaret Atwood, will recall Alex as a character in that important book (2003).

the tree, so Pepperberg put her hand out for him to climb aboard. She walked him down the hall into the tree's green light.

“Good boy! Good birdie,” Alex said, bobbing on her hand. (2008, p. 45)

Even before Alex began his English language studies, Washoe was learning American Sign Language (ASL). Among the compelling findings of Washoe's use of ASL is the fact that she signed to herself, the way many of us talk to ourselves (King, 2008). Also, she taught her adopted chimpanzee son to use ASL (King, 2008). During her lifetime, Washoe learned to use about 170 signs, and like Alex's invention of the word “ban-erry” (Morell, 2008, p. 44), Washoe combined known signs to create new signs for things for which she had been taught no name (King, 2008). Among these are “water bird” for swan and “open food drink” for refrigerator (King, 2008).

Such were the inter-species communication efforts of the twentieth century. Now, of course, it seems bizarre that humans would subject other animals to proving their intelligence through human language, on human terms. One resulting irony is the twentieth century science's claim to eschew a different “ism”: *anthropomorphism*. Yet, some scientists endeavored to learn more about other animals' cognition and communicative abilities through an insistence on their adoption of *our* own spoken and signed language, rather than try to learn more about the communication within another species by attempting to learning *their* language or explore the bounds of the quite obvious ability for members of different species to communicate nonverbally.

One ray of light that began to shine on these possibilities in the early twenty-first century came from the humanities (as the broad subject encompassing the arts and religion was then rather anthropocentrically named) rather than the sciences. In

“Animals, Animists and Academics,” Harvey attempts to point ethologists, animal behavior scientists, to animists for guidance (2006). He defines animism as a belief system “in which the world is understood to be a community of living persons, only some of whom are human” (Harvey, 2006, p. 9). Harvey asserted that animists of different cultures have experience in effective methods of communicating with nonhuman life, including animals, which may be instructive to ethologists (Harvey, 2006).

Although Harvey’s work was in some ways far beyond its time, his expression of the need to consider plants more seriously (2006) for example, in other ways his anthropocentrism remained undiminished. He emphasized animistic, typically shamanistic, communication with nonhuman animals involving respect for those animals, including cases in which animal lives were taken to feed humans (2006). Attempting to extend their example to scientific endeavors, he writes the following: “Many cultures have protocols by which a hunter might approach an animal, and there may be lessons here for those who decide that some necessary experiment requires the taking of an animal’s life” (2006, p. 16). This is, of course, a highly offensive notion by today’s standards. In fact, the fairly rapid phase-out, between about 2012 and 2015, of nonhuman animal experimentation was an important early victory in the battle against anthropocentrism.

Epilogue

This concludes our journey together into the past. Social change is a mysterious thing. We have seen that even a few decades can significantly change how humans perceive reality. When we go out into the world, making choices, interacting with others (human and nonhuman), we must remember that our actions are affecting the world. Our words and our deeds can either support or challenge the assumptions that are taken for granted at our particular time in history. They can maintain the status quo or they can bring to life more compassionate, more life-affirming alternatives.

The authors of the stories contained in this volume, myself included, could not have imagined the many important changes that would occur between 2010 and 2045. But, in fact, we helped to create those changes. I invite the reader to consider what changes s/he thinks are necessary or desirable and to heed some very good advice, commonly attributed to one of the most important philosophers and activists of the twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi: *You must be the change you wish to see in the world*. Because, after all, if you change yourself, you have already changed a small but important part of the world.

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Chapter Four

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The project's goal is the development of a fictional collection of short stories for beginning college-level that reveals and challenges anthropocentrism in Western culture. The selections are designed to precede and compliment, rather than replace, more traditional readings used in introductory courses addressing topics related to reading, writing, critical thinking, or anthropocentrism. The book is designed to appeal primarily to educators and students of first and second year college courses and is intended to serve as an introduction or icebreaker to issues surrounding anthropocentrism. Special emphasis is placed on relationships between human and nonhuman animals.

A five-tiered review of the literature facilitated the completion of the final project. First, sources explaining the history and effects of anthropocentrism were considered. After situating anthropocentrism historically, attention was turned to sources that focused specifically on educational concerns related to anthropocentrism. Next, the psychological and educational function of stories was explored. Then, attention was turned to anthropocentric language. Finally, works of literature similar or related to the project were examined.

Stories in humane education date back at least to the late nineteenth century. However, there are few overtly educational stories for adults that address anthropocentrism. This project attempts to use the power of short stories to reveal and challenge anthropocentrism. This will be an important contribution to the growing fields

of academic humane education and human-animal studies and to the sparsely populated genre of educational fiction.

The work on the actual project occurred along two main lines: creative writing and journal article selection. I began the creative writing work by thinking of and beginning to write a new story each morning for about two weeks. I spent between thirty and forty-five minutes only on each story and did not allow myself to be critical about any story idea that I had. I just wrote. This was an organic process, without any conscious prior planning about story topics. This method functioned to both warm up my creative writing practice and to relieve the pressure of needing to choose the best topics.

Concurrent with the short creative writing morning sessions, I began to research and catalog journal articles that critically assess anthropocentrism. Next, I entered each record into a spreadsheet with a column for entry of a topic related to each article. This initial exercise provided me with some signposts for appropriate topics. These efforts yielded about fifteen stories or story starts and a mapping of common themes and important topics in current scholarship related to anthropocentrism.

One of the joys, of course, of a creative project is the freedom from rigid processes. So, at this point, I simply began to pull my project together, choosing those stories I thought were best and most important. Early in this process I began to feel that something was missing. I wanted to present discrete stories, yet I felt a pull to link them together somehow. Reviewing the purpose and goals of the project, I thought of a way to bolster the stories' ability to disarm reader's defensiveness in the face of challenges to deeply acculturated anthropocentrism. I decided to apply another layer of fiction. With a fictional editor who looks back on the early 2000s from the middle of this century, a

fictional voice could be maintained even throughout the discussion of real journal articles. This provided the device that I was looking for to draw the separate stories into one a linked collection.

Conclusions

I learned that there is a growing body of scholarship critically assessing anthropocentrism. This field is most often called human-animal studies or animals and society and is interdisciplinary in nature. Evidence of mounting interest in these areas includes more and more journal articles and new college classes representing an ever-increasing number of academic disciplines. However, whole academic departments or degree programs are absent, or at least very scarce. Surely, someday in the not too distant future, human-animal studies degrees will take their place among other interdisciplinary fields such as women's studies and ethnic studies.

I hope that this project will be the first of many writing endeavors that will bring humane education topics to various reading audiences. This project combined fiction and nonfiction, a fresh and promising avenue that deserves more exploration. I would like to continue to explore projects that either combine or blur these genres. This could include forays into creative nonfiction as well as new ways to combine elements of both fiction and nonfiction.

It may be possible to publish some or all of the work contained in *Many of a Kind*. One option is to attempt to get one or more individual stories published. However, as the project evolved, the fictional overlay of the futuristic editor, as well as the article discussion sections following each story, became more and more integral to the project. The stories may still function alone, but it would be best if the book could be published in

its entirety. I may inquire with publishers and/or agents to determine whether there is any interest in the commercial publication of *Many of a Kind*. If that appears unlikely, there are still other options for the distribution of this work.

I will, of course, make the book available for the Institute for Humane Education community, through the online classroom. It is also possible that there may be an additional built-in audience for the book. Many of the authors of journal articles referred to in the book are college or university professors. They may be interested that their work is referenced in a work of fiction, aimed at college students, that attempts to further the goals of both human-animal studies and humane education. It is possible that some of these people would be interested in using the book in the classes that they teach. I will consider self-publishing the book in portable document format (pdf) and sending it to all the authors of articles that are referenced in the book, along with information about my project and about the Institute for Humane Education. This would be a valuable networking opportunity as well.

Both humane education and human-animal studies are fields that have only recently begun to receive academic attention. Although we would be better off if that were not so, it does make this an especially exciting time to be involved in those disciplines. The academic worlds of these two subjects are small, but growing rapidly. It is a dynamic and exciting time and a time when it is possible to help build the future of these important disciplines. Creating this Independent Learning Project has been a truly edifying experience. It was particularly satisfying to identify gaps in current scholarship and creative literature and to work to help fill those gaps.

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