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Saving Animals: Everyday Practices of Care and Rescue in the US Animal Sanctuary Movement

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Saving Animals: Everyday Practices of Care and Rescue in the US Animal Sanctuary Movement

by

Elan Louis Abrell

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Saving Animals: Everyday Practices of Care and Rescue in the US Animal Sanctuary Movement

by

Elan Louis Abrell

Advisor: Jeff Maskovsky

This multi-sited ethnography of the US animal sanctuary movement is based on 24 months of research at a range of animal rescue facilities, including a companion animal shelter in Texas, exotic animal sanctuaries in Florida and Hawaii, and a farm animal sanctuary in New York. In the last three decades, animal welfare activists have established hundreds of sanctuaries across the United States in an attempt to save tens of thousands of animals from factory farms, roadside zoos, and other sites of contested animal treatment. These facilities function as laboratories where activists conceive and operationalize new models for ethical relationships with animals, models they hope will influence broader public debates. Building on Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *homo sacer* as a person who lacks all rights and legal protections (1998), this dissertation argues that animals treated by humans as property or material resources can be understood as *bestia sacer*. Comprising an alterity that defines and makes possible the human liberal subject, *bestia sacer* is precisely what personhood is not. In an effort to disrupt this category by leveling conventional species hierarchies, animal sanctuary activists strive to create
spaces in which humans can interact with animals as autonomous subjects with their own interests worthy of consideration and respect.

However, the realities of living with and caring for captive animals often require compromises to this aspiration. Caregivers regularly contend with difficult decisions such as how to best serve animals’ needs with limited resources and when to limit the exercise of animal agency through such practices as sterilization to prevent overpopulation or the segregation of animals deemed dangerous to humans and other animals. Remaining entangled in larger political-economic contexts of animal capital circulation and still susceptible to physical control and potentially harmful treatment by humans as a result of their legal status, animals in sanctuaries are neither fully autonomous subjects nor property. Instead, they function in their relationships with humans as improperty, living beings within a shifting spectrum between property and subjecthood. To the extent that they are able to participate in the sanctuary community as subjects with limited rights to life, sustenance, and freedom from harm, sanctuary animals operate as members of a sort of multispecies polity composed of human and animal citizens. Due to material constraints and the dilemmas of care, though, both animals and caregivers must make sacrifices for the requirements of the larger sanctuary community. As a result, human-animal interactions in sanctuaries constitute a variation of what Wendy Brown describes as “sacrificial citizenship” (2015).

To understand how these animals transform from bestia sacer to sacrificial citizens, this ethnography focuses on six main aspects of sanctuary dynamics. Chapter One, “Coming to Sanctuary,” introduces the primary research sites and describes the different ways in which animals arrive at sanctuaries and become improperty in the process. Chapter Two, “History of US Animal Activism,” situates the sanctuary movement in relation to other forms of animal
advocacy by tracing the philosophical genealogy and political and social history of the contemporary animal protection movement, examining how conflicting ideologies of human-animal difference and shifting patterns in human-animal relations shaped the landscape of twentieth century animal activism. Chapter Three, "Creating and Operating Sanctuaries," examines the political economy of sanctuaries and explores how caregivers navigate the tensions that arise from using rescued animals as fundraising mechanisms while simultaneously seeking to challenge the commodification of these animals. Chapter Four, "Animal Care," analyzes animal care practices, specifically focusing on the many post-rescue dilemmas caregivers face and how their methods for addressing these dilemmas transform animals into sacrificial citizens. Chapter Five, "Animal Death," examines one of the most complicated dilemmas of care – the fact that saving animal lives sometimes requires sacrificing animal lives – and explores the different ways that sanctuaries navigate this dilemma through practices of “necro-care,” forms of care that actively employ death in the service of fostering life, such as feeding animals that consume other animals, protecting sanctuary animals from external predators, and euthanizing ill, injured, or dangerous animals.

In conclusion, this ethnography considers the possible futures of animal sanctuaries and examines the important role they currently play in furthering the greater animal advocacy movement’s goals. The realization of sanctuaries’ visions for the future of human-animal relations will remain limited without larger transformations in social and political-economic systems of value that still treat animals as means for satisfying human needs. Despite these current limits, sanctuaries are invaluable to the broader animal advocacy movement both for the qualitative difference they make in the lives of individual animals and for the symbolic power these experiments in alternative species relations have in illustrating that different ways of living
with animals are possible. Beyond their symbolic value for inspiring struggle toward a better future, sanctuaries perform the essential task of working through the difficulties and contradictions of manifesting that future – the pragmatic labor that must be done in order to achieve more radical transformations in human-animal relations.
For Niko, Lauren, Owl, and Panza, with infinite love and gratitude.
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Biology and law (among other fields) share the concepts of proximal and ultimate causation; the proximal cause is the immediate catalyst that gives rise to an event, while the ultimate cause is the greater contextual factors that made the event possible. If I am the proximal cause of this dissertation, then the multispecies community of friends, family, colleagues, and mentors that have nurtured my mind and heart over the last four decades are most certainly the ultimate cause.

Foremost, none of my research would have been possible without the openness and hospitality of all the dedicated caregivers and volunteers at my field sites who allowed me to observe and participate in the incredibly important work they do by rescuing and caring for animals. They are an integral part of the animal advocacy movement, and I have profound appreciation for everything they accomplish.

I am deeply grateful for the many people who have encouraged, challenged, and guided my interests in issues of social justice as it relates to all axes of oppression, but most especially species. Twenty years ago, Delcianna Winders introduced me to the realities of factory farming and the philosophies of veganism and animal rights, steering me toward a path on which this dissertation is hopefully just one of many milestones to come. Kaja Tretjak spent countless hours over many evenings and glasses of wine helping me strategize all the preliminary elements of this project from research design and theoretical frameworks to the wording of grant proposals. Jordan Stein, Stephen Lee, Chris Elliott, Gilad Isaacs, Cody Hoesly, Dusty Hoesly, Irene Linares, Sivan Rotholz Teitelman, Ben Dubin-Thaler, Lynn Biderman, Ashley Burczak, Sarah Richardson, Jeff Senter, Sebastian Karcher, Mark Kroncke, Stephen Hicks, Jason Williams,
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A wise person once told me that graduate students get the advisors they deserve. If that maxim extends to committee members as well, then I must have done something very right to deserve a dissertation committee like mine. Melissa Checker, Leith Mullings, and Katherine Verdery helped me design bibliographies that made studying for my qualifying exams the most enjoyable and rewarding period of my grad school experience (outside of fieldwork). Katherine and Melissa continued to provide incredible support and guidance throughout my fieldwork, and their superb feedback on my first draft improved my dissertation immeasurably.

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Introduction

*Chicken Rustlers*

We started cruising the neighborhood looking for chickens around ten o’clock, and it was now almost four in the morning. We had a list of all the sites in our chosen neighborhood where chickens had been kept in the past, but most of them were empty this year. We were told that in previous years the chickens were just out in the open, stacked along the sidewalk in plastic crates.

There were three of us in the car. Amanda\(^1\) is in her early thirties. Originally from the Midwest, she moved to the East Coast for school, but she became seriously interested in animal issues while visiting a farm sanctuary in central New York State. She had been working on a master’s degree in education, but her whole world changed after interacting with the animals she encountered at the sanctuary and learning about the way they are treated in the industrial food system. She decided to adopt a vegan lifestyle, refraining from consuming any animal products, including food, clothing, and cosmetics. The most radical change, though, was her decision to leave her life in the city behind and move upstate to take a job as a caregiver at the same sanctuary where she first encountered rescued farm animals. Although by that night she had been working full time with farm animals for almost two years, she was not in the car with us as part of her job at the sanctuary. She was there for herself, and she was there for the chickens.

\(^1\)The names of informants, primary field sites, and individual animals have been changed to preserve anonymity in accordance with IRB protocols.
June is in her fifties, a working-class, single woman with a job at a small commercial food company making vegan products. She makes enough money to get by, but she cannot afford health insurance, even after the Affordable Care Act was implemented. She lives near the sanctuary where Amanda works, and she spends much of her free time volunteering there or taking care of her own chickens. To say June loves chickens would be an understatement. She has four rescued chickens of her own. All former laying hens, they live with her inside her house and sleep with her in her bed. She calls them her girls, a beaming smile spreading across her face and radiating from her eyes every time she mentions them. At Christmas time, she took them to have their picture taken sitting on a mall Santa’s lap. She spreads sheets on the couch – chickens cannot really be housetrained – and watches TV with them. They perch in her lap or on her shoulders, nestling against her like cats. June was also there for herself that night. As she explained when we picked her up at the bus station earlier in the evening, “I just had to come down and be here. I was totally beat after work, but I couldn’t imagine missing the chance to be a part of something like this.” And she was most definitely there for the chickens. “I just couldn’t live with myself if I didn’t at least try to save some.”

After several hours of driving around the neighborhood, we finally saw several stacks of crates lined up along the sidewalk behind a folding table. It was dark, though, so we could not see if there were actually any chickens inside them. June and Amanda had to be sure before they could risk stopping the Jeep and trying to load them in. We looped the block once and stopped at the street corner west of the crate stacks so June could get out. We continued driving down the street while she strolled by the crates. We waited at the next corner for her. “They’re full!” she said breathlessly as she climbed back in. “I
heard them peeping.” A surge of adrenaline made my skin tingle and my stomach do a flip-flop. Up until now all the driving around searching for chickens had felt like a game – we had even joked about running from the cops in a car chase, and Amanda had surprised us by popping a mix-cd in the car stereo that had the theme song from the Dukes of Hazzard on it. But now the reason why we were out here suddenly felt hyper-real: it was time to rescue some chickens.

The chickens were here for the Orthodox Jewish ritual of Kapparot, which precedes Yom Kippur each year. In the ritual, which takes place on public streets, practitioners move a live chicken in a circle over their heads with the intended goal of cleansing themselves of sins, and then take the chicken to an outdoor table where its throat is cut, and it is tossed into a bag with other dying chickens. Although the organizers of the event claim the chickens are given to homeless shelters for food, the unsanitary slaughter conditions would actually make this illegal. Activists have also documented large piles of garbage bags filled with dead chickens left out for garbage collectors over the last few years.

Thousands of chickens are trucked in from factory farms, 12 to a crate, in hundreds of crates stacked on semi-trailers. The chickens, which are only a few weeks old, are given no food or water for a couple of days prior to delivery as well as during the few days they are stored outside leading up to their use in the ritual. Despite these efforts to minimize bodily waste, they still defecate all over the crates and each other. The chickens in the bottom of the stacks get it the worst. Every year, a small number of chickens – sold for a few dollars to practitioners – are taken from the stacks of crates that
are left outside on sidewalks during the three days of the ritual. June and Amanda were there to add to that number.

We had finally found some chickens, but now there was another problem. They were directly across the street from a community center. All the lights were on and men walked in and out of the open doors or stood talking to each other outside. We first spotted the chickens around midnight, but June and Amanda decided to keep looking since there was so much activity across the street. We did not find chickens anywhere else, though, so this spot was now the last chance to rescue any tonight. They had to close the community center eventually, we assumed.

As three o’clock edged toward four, and our dozen drive-by’s was about to become a baker’s dozen, we realized that the sun would soon be rising. Any stealth advantage the dark provided would be gone. It was now or never. On our next loop, all the lights in the community center were still on, and the doors were still open, but nobody was standing outside the building. We stopped the car, and Amanda and June jumped out while I sat in the passenger seat waiting.

Industrial chickens raised for meat, called broilers in industry-speak, grow very big very quickly. This is what they have been designed to do through decades of selective breeding. The faster and bigger chickens grow, the sooner they can be slaughtered, and the more meat they produce.\(^2\) They can now grow to five pounds in six weeks (compared to the 1925 average of two-and-a-half pounds in sixteen weeks). Although industrial chickens usually do not live past a few months, caregivers of rescued birds that do live

\(^2\) See Striffler (2005) for a historical analysis of the scientific transformation of the chicken body during the expansion of industrial agriculture in the twentieth century United States.
past the typical slaughter age have discovered that they need to be put on a restricted diet to stave off obesity and minimize the debilitating impact of excessive weight on the birds’ leg joints. For this reason, Amanda and June were expecting that it would take more than one person to lift a crate with twelve birds in it. But when June grabbed the first crate, she lifted it up and over the folding table with seemingly no effort at all.

“These aren’t nearly as heavy as I thought they would be,” she said to me in astonishment as she shoved the crate into the back of the Jeep. The chickens squawked loudly and rustled their feathers as the car instantly filled with a rancid urine-y smell.

Amanda shoved a crate on top of the one June had just loaded in, also seeming to have no problem carrying it by herself. We all glanced around, and the street was still empty. There were now two crates in the car, but there was still space for more. I think we had all been expecting to get interrupted, but now that the job was going off without a hitch, they could not stop with just two. June loaded a third crate into the back as Amanda reached for a fourth one, but when she started to lift it, it collided with the folding table standing in front of the stacks of crates. We all stared as it seemed to hang in the air, completely off balance and tilted on two legs but somehow holding itself up nonetheless. Then, slowly, it succumbed to gravity and continued on its arc downward, crashing into the ground with a sound like a shotgun blast. Surely no table had ever hit the ground harder in the history of furniture.

Amanda remained frozen, still holding the crate in her hands. Impossibly, it seemed like nobody had heard the cacophonous table. I expected people to come pouring out of the community center, but the street remained empty. For that one second, a solitary tumbleweed bouncing down the empty street or a chorus of crickets softly
chirring from the shadows around the nearby street lamp would not have felt out of place. But only for a second. From somewhere down the street behind us we heard a man yell, “Hey! HEY!”

“Go, go!” June whispered to Amanda as she was already running toward the car with the crate in her hands. She shoved it in the back as June jumped in the driver’s seat. Amanda tried to slam the rear tailgate closed, but it would not catch in the latch. The crates were sticking out too far, and she did she have them time to maneuver them in further. She abandoned the tailgate and jumped into the back through one of the rear passenger doors. We took off down the street with the tailgate swinging back and forth and Amanda holding the passenger door most of the way closed with one hand.

We drove several blocks before stopping to push the crates in far enough to close the tailgate. When we turned onto a street that would take us to a highway onramp, we came to a red light. I had lowered my passenger window to let in some fresh air, but as we pulled up to the intersection, I saw that we were directly in front of a police station. The chickens, all forty-eight of them, were peeping excitedly in the back, and the crates were stacked up almost to the ceiling, clearly visible from the side windows. I tried to raise my window with the electric switch on the door just as a Chassidic man turned the corner and a police officer walked out on the front steps of the police station. The window would not go up. The two men began chatting with each other, as the chickens peeped away even louder, seeming to realize that something was happening worth getting excited about.
“I can’t roll up my window,” I whispered out of the corner of my mouth, watching the two men out of the opposite corner of my eyes while trying not to look suspicious. “Turn off the children’s lock!”

“I’m trying,” June said. “I can’t find it. I’ve never driven this car before.” That’s because it belonged to Amanda, who was behind us stuck on her back trying to stay below window-level.

The peeps kept getting louder and louder. The light remained red. And I kept hopelessly pushing the window switch while I waited for the two men to finally look in our direction. It felt like either I was in an Edgar Allen Poe story or they were both hearing-impaired. Just as the light turned green, June found the child lock. The motor in the door hummed quietly as my window slowly slid up, trapping the peeps and the rank air in with us as the two men remained oblivious. We continued to look in the rearview mirror, expecting to see flashing lights any second as we counted down the blocks to the highway. Finally, we reached the onramp, and June accelerated on to the highway. Amanda reached up to push play on the stereo, and the theme song to The Dukes of Hazzard poured out of the speakers as we sped down the highway with the chickens peeping along.

We drove to a warehouse several miles away, where some other groups of activists who had also been out searching for chickens in other neighborhoods helped unload the car. There were six other people there, including the woman who owned the warehouse. Neither Amanda nor June could pick up a crate without help anymore. Indeed, I helped carry crates up a steep flight of stairs and could barely do it even with a second person on the other side. Their own surges of adrenaline gave them the added
strength they needed to load the car, but now that strength had drained from their sore limbs. They carried the crates to a loft space where plastic garbage bags had been spread out on the floor, and two-foot-high wire panels had been used to section off part of the room.

When they opened the hinged panels in the top of the crates, the chickens inside cowered away from the opening, shoving each other up against the sides of the crate. Inside the first one, a grayish-brown, featherless corpse lay swollen and oozing in the middle of the live chickens crowded around it. I do not know how long they had been trapped in there with the body, but based on the degree of putrefaction, the chicken had clearly been dead awhile. They picked up the trembling, squawking chickens one by one and placed them in the makeshift chicken corral. One of the other activists took photos of the chickens as they removed them while another put trays of water and feed in with the chickens. At first, the birds did not seem to realize what the food and water were, or perhaps they were simply too scared to partake. Eventually, a few started to peck at the bowl, and then many of the others joined in.

When they were done unloading, over 60 chickens crowded against each other in the corral. Amanda explained that, because industrial chickens typically never experience being outside of a space densely packed with other chicken bodies their reaction is actually to avoid open spaces when they find themselves in them. They engage in a practice called clumping, which is exactly what it sounds like. All the chickens were tightly crowded against each other, as though they were all trying to cram themselves into one chicken-sized spot in the corner. Chickens at the center of a large enough clump can be smothered if it is not broken up. The clumping that night was mild enough that the
chickens in the center seemed safe, but some of the activists tried to lure the outer chickens toward the food and water just to diffuse the concentration of bodies a bit.

A few of the chickens seemed ill, and one clearly had a broken or dislocated foot that was discolored and jutting to the side at an unnatural angle. Amanda, who had experience providing veterinary care to agricultural birds from her sanctuary job, used veterinary medical supplies that one of the activists had brought to administer intravenous fluids to the sick birds. She also bandaged the injured foot. The photographer took pictures of the birds’ injuries as well.

When they were finally done getting the birds situated in their temporary safe haven, the humans in the room stared at each other with exhausted smiles. Our clothes were all spattered with chicken feces, and the few of us who had even bothered to try to wear dust masks had pulled them down around our necks as they had quickly made the air too hot to breathe. We all thanked each other, many of us without ever exchanging names, before saying goodbye and heading home to get some sleep.

Amanda and June planned to sleep at the warehouse for a few hours before transporting some of the birds to a farm animal sanctuary outside of the city. Birds that had been rescued the night before had already been transported to another sanctuary. They would need to be held in isolation to make sure none of them carried any communicable diseases, and then they would be dispersed to several different sanctuaries that had space for them. In all, over a hundred chickens were taken off the streets over the three days they were there.³

³ Some activists might classify the taking of these chickens as an “open rescue.” In open rescues, according to philosopher and ecofeminist Lori Gruen, activists rescue ill or injured animals “that are being held in conditions that are in violation of anti-cruelty or
As illustrated by the different ways chickens are treated in the preceding anecdote from my fieldwork with animal activists, there is a deep ambivalence toward animals in the United States. On the one hand, the consumption of animals is integral to both its culture and economy. On the other hand, there is a pervasive and enduring sense of affection for animals throughout US cultural history, as reflected in popular literature, films, television shows, and now endlessly proliferating Internet memes and videos. The title of a book about this ambivalence by anthrozoologist Hal Herzog articulates the tension succinctly: *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat* (2011). Further complicating matters, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Deer, for example, can be simultaneously loved by children watching *Bambi* (Algar et al. 1942), hated by suburban gardeners trying to protect their roses from decimation, and eaten by hunters.
and their families following deer season each year. Even dogs cannot escape this web of conflicting values. While dogs are arguably the most popular pet species in the United States (rivaled only by cats), cities have passed breed bans against certain types of dogs such as pit bulls, and cultural conflicts have arisen between different ethnic communities over the consumption of dogs as food (Griffith et. al. 2002; Kim 2015, 14). Far from resolving itself, this contradiction has only intensified in the last several decades while the expansion of animal-based industries has fueled the reciprocal growth of animal protection activism.

Some of the most significant effects of post-war production and consumption regimes impact animals. Indeed, everyday human-animal interactions in the United States are embedded in a wide array of shifting cultural and political-economic systems, ranging from food (e.g., factory farms, small scale organic farms, and hunting) to entertainment (e.g., aquariums, zoos, and circuses) to companionship (e.g., pets and

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4 See Franklin (1999) for an historical and sociological analysis of how twentieth century changes in farming, pet-keeping, zoos, and hunting have affected human interactions with animals.

5 For example, Striffler (2005) examines the history of the industrialization of chicken farming and how it has altered chicken bodies while drastically increasing the per capita consumption of chicken in the United States; while the essays in Tansey and D’Silva (1999) cover a broad range of different aspects of industrial agriculture, including biotechnology, corporate consolidation of the industry, animal welfare, sustainability, international trade regulations, and global hunger; and Torres (2007) combines a Marxist political-economic analysis of animal agricultural industries with an anarchist critique of animal activism. Though not focused on the impact on animals, see Weiss (2011) and Paxson (2012) for ethnographies of US food practices based on animal agriculture, specifically artisanal pork and cheese production.

6 See, for example, Cassidy (2007) for a comparative ethnographic analysis of thoroughbred horse racing culture in Britain and the United States; Chrulew (2011) and Braverman (2013) for explorations of the biopolitics of species conservation in zoos; Davis (1997) for an analysis of the exhibitionary commodification of marine life at SeaWorld; Mullan and Marvin (1987) for a sociological comparison of zoos around the world; and Warkentin (2009) for an analysis of acts of whale resistance in captivity.
service animals).\footnote{See Winograd (2007) for an historical examination of the intensification of companion animal overpopulation throughout the twentieth century and how the corresponding rise in shelter kill rates has failed to remedy the problem.} According to the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, the number of farmed animals slaughtered every year for food in the United States doubled between 1980 and 2000, from 4.5 billion to approximately 9 billion. That total peaked at 9.5 billion in 2007 and 2008 and since then has remained at approximately 9 billion (Humane Society 2015).\footnote{The USDA does not provide data on other farmed animals including rabbits, marine animals, and equines (which are not classified as farmed animals, but are also slaughtered in large numbers for export outside the United States). If these animals were included, the number would be in the tens of billions, largely due to the amount of marine animals killed for food each year.} The total annual revenue for US animal agricultural industries (including dairy and eggs) in 2014 was over $420.1 billion dollars, almost a 32% increase from 2010 (USDA 2015). In addition to this mass consumption of animals as food, approximately 175 million people per year visit zoos and aquaria, generating over $5 billion in revenue (Statistic Brain 2015). Nearly 7.6 million cats and dogs enter US animal shelters every year, of which 2.7 million are killed. An estimated 37% to 47% of US households have a dog, and 30% to 37% have a cat (ASPCA 2015). In 2014, people in the United States spent $58.04 billion dollars on pets, including $2.5 billion for live animal purchases, $36.01 billion on food and supplies, and $19.88 billion on veterinary care and other services (ibid.).

These animal-based production and consumption regimes have not gone unchallenged. The US animal protection movement targets these regimes through activism aimed at factory farming, the confinement and mistreatment of animals in zoos and circuses, and large-scale pet breeding, among many other issues. Since New York philanthropist Henry Bergh founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty...
to Animals in 1866, the United States has become an important center in a global movement to protect, rescue, and rehabilitate animals that are negatively affected by the actions of humans. However, as these consumption regimes have dramatically altered and intensified in recent decades under late-capitalist globalization, they have spurred new forms of animal advocacy, distinct from early twentieth century animal welfare movements such as humane societies and anti-vivisection organizations. The extensive range of groups and individual activists that comprise what is collectively known as the US animal protection movement are presently engaged in a wide variety of activities, from public advocacy and demonstrations to legal interventions, on behalf of animals. Striving to end what they see as the suffering and exploitation of animals at the hands of humans, these activists are working to reframe the national cultural imaginary as one that recognizes animals as subjective beings with interests worthy of ethical consideration and legal protection rather than objects to be utilized for human benefit.

Activist efforts are bearing fruit. Public attitudes toward animals in particular grow more complex as concerns about animal welfare, environmental impacts of animal-based industries, and new scientific understandings of animal consciousness continue to spread beyond the animal protection movement. Questions about the appropriate treatment of animals and how to balance these concerns against the needs of humans are becoming increasingly relevant to broader segments of the US population. Popular publications by mainstream authors such as Michael Pollan, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Eric Schlosser have contributed to focusing the public’s attention in particular on the way animals are

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9 Winograd (2007) traces the history of the humane movement in the United States. Chapter Two will explore the various historical strands of animal advocacy in more detail.
treated in the industrial food system. Public concern over these issues has in turn led to changes in production practices. For example, in response to a groundswell of public outcry, several states since 2010 have implemented legislation banning tail-docking of cows, gestation crates for pigs, and battery cages for hens. Dozens of large meat distributors and restaurant chains similarly responded to public pressure by announcing corporate policies ensuring that they will only deal with suppliers who implement these changes. In May of 2015, Walmart – the largest retail chain in the United States – announced that it has adopted the “5 Freedoms Principle,” which supports freedom for farmed animals from hunger and thirst; discomfort; pain, injury, or disease; and fear and distress, and the freedom to express normal behavior (Pacelle 2015). In practice this means that, among other policy changes, Walmart will no longer carry products from suppliers that use sow gestation crates, hen battery cages, or veal crates.

In another example from the animal entertainment industry, the documentary Blackfish (Cowperthwaite 2013) detailed the mistreatment of captive orcas in facilities like the SeaWorld chain of theme parks. This exposure ignited a public backlash against

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10 See Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation* (2005); Pollan’s *The Omnivores Dilemma* (2007); and Foer’s *Eating Animals* (2009) for analyses of how industrial agriculture affects animals.

11 Tail-docking is a dairy industry practice that consists of amputating cows’ tails (usually without anesthetic) with the intended purpose of preventing cows from spreading fecal contaminants to their udders.

12 Gestation crates are 6.6-foot-by-2-foot metal enclosures used to keep adult sows immobile in intensive pig farming operations, especially during pregnancy and while they are nursing their young. Since sows used for reproduction are either pregnant or nursing the majority of the time until they are slaughtered, they are essentially kept in these crates for most of their adult lives.

13 Battery cages are small wire cages in which egg laying hens are kept immobile throughout their lives. Each hen has approximately 67 to 76 square inches of space. To illustrate the size, animal welfare advocates often compare battery cages to a standard piece of paper, which is 94 square inches.
the SeaWorld corporation, resulting in a decline in park attendance, lost profits, and plummeting stock prices, which lost half their value between the film’s release in 2013 and the end of 2015. In November of 2015, SeaWorld seemingly caved to public pressure and announced they would be phasing out live orca shows at their San Diego theme park (though not at their parks in Orlando or San Antonio). Five months later, the corporation also announced it would end its orca-breeding program, making the 24 orcas in its three parks the last it will hold in captivity. According to a statement from the company that implicitly acknowledges the backlash, it is ending the breeding program because “[s]ociety is changing[,] and we’re changing with it” (SeaWorld 2016). In a similar capitulation to broad public opposition to its treatment of elephants, Ringling Brothers circus also announced in 2015 that it would be phasing out elephant performances in its live shows.14

Despite their achievements, not all animal activists support these strategies. Debates among animal activists question the value of such efforts, reflecting a tension between the two predominant perspectives in animal activism: animal welfarism and animal rights. Welfarists advocate an incremental improvement in the treatment of animals through legislation and policy reform, whereas animal rights advocates seek an end to the instrumental use of all animals through an extension of basic rights, especially to life free from harm. Abolitionists, a subset of the rights position, extend the logic of this position to its ultimate conclusion, advocating for the complete abolition of the property status of animals (Francione and Garner 2010). Philosopher Tom Regan

14 Many animal advocates have criticized these changes as not going far enough since both corporations still plan to keep these animals in captivity, and Ringling Brothers plans to continue its captive breeding programs.
summarizes the difference between the rights and the welfare approach as “Empty cages, not larger cages” (Regan 2004, 78). Many animal rights advocates argue that improvements in welfare for animals – such as the ones in agricultural industries described above – simply make their exploitation more palatable to consumers and thus more profitable to producers. However, some “humane” farmers explicitly cite caring about the wellbeing of animals as a major motivating factor in changing farming practices to improve welfare.15 This trend suggests that concerns about the treatment of animals may even be spreading from the consumption side to the production side of animal-based economies, at least in these limited examples.

In the last three decades, animal advocates have also expanded their strategies by establishing thousands of rescue facilities across the United States in an attempt to save tens of thousands of animals from factory farms, roadside zoos, and other situations where, they believe, animals are neglected, abused, or slaughtered. Because it seeks to assist endangered or at-risk animals removed from the various consumption regimes outlined here, this burgeoning animal sanctuary movement – with its focus on the rescue, care, and rehabilitation of animals – provides an ideal context to examine new patterns of human-animal interaction emerging out of shifting cultural attitudes toward animals. This ethnography therefore focuses on the US animal sanctuary movement as an increasingly significant component of animal advocacy efforts to influence the ways animals are valued and treated in US society.

At the same time that concern for the wellbeing of animals is growing, it is also true that many people see animal activists as misanthropes who care more about the

15 See Jonathan Safran Foer’s interviews with farmers who have adopted these practices out of an expressed desire to minimize animal suffering (2009, 149-99).
suffering of animals than humans. This view is further problematized when animal issues are viewed in contrast to issues like racist oppression and violence. For example, a meme circulating on Facebook following news of the contaminated water crisis in Flint, Michigan, showed a picture of a dog being treated by a veterinarian with a caption that read, “The dogs in Flint are testing positive for lead poisoning too; maybe now white people will care.” Similarly, when Cecil the lion was killed in 2015 in Zimbabwe, there was widespread condemnation on social media of the US dentist who shot him. But there was also a backlash against the pro-Cecil movement from critics who were upset by what they saw as a disproportionate outpouring of concern for a lion compared to support for the Black Lives Matter movement and black victims of police violence in the United States. While it is true that there are animal activists who focus their efforts on the suffering of animals while ignoring the social problems that affect millions of humans around the world, it is also true that there are activists focused on single issues related to human suffering that focus little of their energy on other issues.

Moral philosopher Lori Gruen points out that this kind of conflict over which social issues activists focus their energy on is often driven by an unproductive “zero-sum mentality” (2015). In truth, many of the activists I have met through my fieldwork care about social justice issues beyond the treatment of animals, while I also know many people who care about social justice issues who give none of their time to activism of any

16 In her work on the intersection between racial politics and conflicts over the treatment of animals – such as a controversy over the sale of live animals in San Francisco’s Chinatown – Claire Jean Kim argues that activists could avoid this kind of counter-productive zero-sum mentality if they were instead attentive to how human-animal inequality synergistically articulates with other forms of domination, enabling them to embrace an “ethics of mutual avowal” that acknowledged the validity of each others’ interests and provided a basis for intersectional collaboration and mutual support (2015, 20).
kind. But even if one could make a valid argument that animal activists’ time would be better spent on other issues, the work they do now is important and has significant implications for both the future of human-animal relations and, on an even larger scale, the future of humans on the planet.

Research Design

Sanctuaries must balance their efforts to care for animals against the necessities of captivity, which means they must contend with difficult decisions regarding such factors as the amount of restraint required for potentially dangerous animals, compromises to ideal living conditions and diet due to limited resources, the euthanasia of animals deemed beyond rehabilitation, and the creation of appropriate habitats for captive animals. Equally important are the choices and interpretations of sanctuary workers, volunteers, donors, and detractors in relation to the constraints around resource limitations, new revelations about animal consciousness (born from both scientific research and lay experience), and new challenges of dealing with animals who themselves are adjusting to new habitats and to novel kinds of contact with humans and other species. Moreover, sanctuary workers must address unique material and ideological concerns according to the types of animals (e.g., farm, exotic, or domestic) and the corresponding political-economic contexts from which they are “rescued” (e.g., food, entertainment, or companionship). In these highly politicized contexts in which humans tend to be deeply invested in providing animals with the best lives possible, attempts to
manage the tensions around improving and regulating the lives of animals encourage
new, multiple, and at times conflicting meanings and practices of care to emerge.

Through a comparative study of facilities focused on caring for animals entangled
in three different animal consumption regimes – food, entertainment, and companionship
– this ethnography explores the politics and ethics of care practices in animal sanctuaries.
I treat sanctuaries as laboratories where activists conceive and operationalize new models
for ethical relationships with animals – models they hope will influence broader public
debates.17 I spent two years conducting ethnographic fieldwork as a volunteer at a No
Kill dog and cat shelter in Texas, an exotic animal sanctuary in Hawaii, and a farm
animal sanctuary in New York. I also supplemented this fieldwork with visits to other
rescue facilities in New York, Vermont, Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. Through
participant observation and in-depth interviews, I collected data on practices of care and
rescue as well as the ethical values that inform them. I documented how caretakers
structure the living spaces of animals, meet their daily nutritional and sanitation needs,
respond to illness and injuries, and address aggressive, destructive, or uncooperative
behavior. I particularly focused on the criteria that inform decisions such as which
animals are brought into the shelter, when to pursue expensive medical procedures, and
when euthanasia should be employed. Aside from their physical wellbeing, I found that
care practices also focused on animals' psychological enrichment. To examine how
caretakers interpreted animals’ psychological needs, I documented their methods for
providing animals with social and environmental stimulus, how they explained animal

17 In his multi-sited ethnography Emergent Ecologies (2015), Kirksey follows several
multispecies communities that have formed in response to different disasters, providing
similar models for alternative ways of living together with other species.
behaviors and characterized individual animals' personalities, the feelings or desires they attributed to animals, and how they spoke to and for them. Based on this evidence, I discovered that practices of care and the ethical values that inform them are varied and contested across sites. Specifically, they are influenced by the variety of interrelated ethical dilemmas that arise in determining how best to care for animals.

**Anthropological Approaches to Animals and the Environment**

Given their centrality to the development and ongoing processes of human societies, anthropology has long focused on the social effects of human-animal interactions. Early anthropological work examined the ways that humans relate to animals at either symbolic or material levels. Anthropologists working in the structural-functionalist tradition analyzed how human use of animals contributed to the structures of political systems and other corporate forms in non-state based societies. E.E. Evans-Pritchard provides a prominent example in his seminal study of the pastoralist Nuer and their relationship to their cattle. Seeing cattle as the fundamental influence structuring Nuer culture, he describes the Nuer social idiom as a “bovine idiom” through which they “define all social processes and relationships in terms of cattle” (1969, 19). Symbolic anthropologists focused on how animals influence patterns of culture, operating as mental tools for understanding human relationships and practices. Mary Douglas studied the role of animal symbolism in Lele religious practices, particularly the consumption of the boundary blurring pangolin by a fertility cult, and interpreted cultural dietary restrictions in relation to animals – such as the kosher law against eating pigs or the general
restrictions around the consumption of pangolin flesh in Lele society – as a form of symbolic boundary-maintenance (1957; 1966, 51-72, 196-220; 1970, 41-3; 1994[1990]). In his widely influential analysis of totems, Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that animals were chosen as totems because of their symbolic utility in providing “conceptual support for social differentiation” (1963, 101). Edmund Leach also considered the symbolic power of animals in analyzing how their connection to taboo categories influenced the linguistic development of obscenities from animal-related words (1964). In what is likely one of the most famous pieces of anthropological literature and a quintessential example of the anthropological treatment of animals as pure symbol – “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” – Clifford Geertz treats the practice of cockfighting in Bali as a cultural text that symbolically reveals tensions around masculinity and struggles over status between different social groups (1973).

These inquiries set the stage for anthropology to pursue more materialist approaches to the study of animals along different lines of inquiry, such as political ecology and cultural materialism. Influenced by Marxist philosophy and questions of political economy, this work employed an instrumental approach that treated economic and environmental factors as the primary determinants of animal-related cultural practices. Notably, Roy Rappaport used political ecology to examine how the ritual beliefs and practices of the Tsembaga people in New Guinea functioned as mechanisms for regulating the ecological balance between humans and pigs, which was dependent on the caloric input and output of their swidden horticulture practices (1968). In contrast to Douglas, Marvin Harris employed a cultural materialist approach to analyze animal-related cultural practices like dietary restrictions, arguing, for instance, that the
sacredness of cows in Hinduism developed because cows are more useful for their byproducts (milk and dung) than they are for their meat under Indian environmental conditions or that prohibitions on eating pork in Judaism and Islam are mechanisms for preventing ecological competition between humans and pigs (1974).

Lévi-Strauss highlights the contrast between material and symbolic anthropological approaches to human-animal relations in his famous observation that animals make good totems because they are “good to think,” as opposed to being “good to eat” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 89). Recognizing that animals can be good for both at the same time, more recent work bridged material and symbolic approaches to consider how human-animal relations simultaneously shape, and are shaped by, cultural and material dimensions. For example, Robert Brightman (1993) draws on both Marxist theory and semiotics in his ethnography of Rock Cree hunters to analyze how environmental factors and cultural perspectives both influence human understandings of and relationships with animals. Importantly, he illustrates that neither material nor symbolic influences are the singular determining factor in shaping Cree relations with animals (339). Similarly synthesizing both approaches, James Ferguson examines how cattle purchased by Basotho migrant laborers simultaneously function as a form of financial investment and a symbolic representation of the laborers’ positions in the community while they are away working (1990: 159). John and Jean Comaroff (1991) likewise explore how the material and symbolic value of cattle are inextricably intertwined for the Tshidi Barolong in southern Africa (see also Comaroff 1990). In his investigation of the historical conditions that gave rise to a malaria epidemic in post-World War II Egypt, Timothy Mitchell (2002) takes the anthropological analysis of the intersection between material and
symbolic factors even further by focusing on the agency of human and nonhuman actors – including farm workers, soldiers, policymakers, insects, viruses, and chemicals – in shaping the complex network of cultural, political, environmental, and economic elements of the epidemic.

My dissertation builds on this body of literature’s theoretical insights into the mutually influential roles of ideological as well as material and economic factors in shaping human-animal relations. It examines how cultural values – specifically the influence of historical practices of animal advocacy and particular philosophical and scientific understandings of human-animal difference – intersect with the political-economic conditions of captive animal care to shape human-animal relations within sanctuaries. Following Mitchell in his attention to nonhuman actors, I also focus on the active role animals play in shaping their own conditions of care. In this way, my dissertation also responds to the concerns of anthropologist and ecofeminist Barbara Noske, who in the late 1990’s critiqued much of the previous anthropological work on human-animal interactions for treating animals as objects mediating human relations rather than participants (willing or not) in those relations. Based on this critique, she called for a more robust examination of how the subjectivity and agency of animals influences the way humans understand, value, and interact with them (1997).¹⁸

Research in the relatively new but flourishing area of multispecies ethnography – a name coined by Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich – has responded to these

¹⁸ Molly Mullin seconded this call in her Annual Review article “Mirrors and Windows: Sociocultural Studies of Human-Animal Relationships” (1999). Although not receiving as much attention as some of the more recent pioneering work in multispecies ethnography, these pieces from Noske and Mullin can be seen as a turning point in the way anthropologists approach human-animal relations.
exhortations by focusing an anthropological lens on the increasingly legible “biographical and political lives” of animals (as well as plants, fungi, and microbes; Kirksey and Helmreich 2010, 545) and in the process also “reconceptualizing what it means to be human” (Ogden, Hall, and Tanita 2013, 7).\(^{19}\) Sharing similar concerns about relationships between different species and expanding on the focus of early ethnoecology on how different cultures understood their connections to the environment, another recent body of literature dubbed “the ontological turn” focuses on human-environment interactions within the context of indigenous cultures. Concerned with indigenous ontological perspectives, this approach critiques Euro-American epistemology and the foundational distinction between humans

\(^{19}\) Much work in multispecies ethnography is inspired by Donna Haraway’s assertion that humans, like other species, are the products of an ongoing process of “becoming,” and that this becoming is always actually a process of “becoming with” other species in our material and social spheres (2008, 244). Building on this idea, for example, Eva Hayward sees her experience of working with cup coral in a marine biology laboratory as one of cooperative meaning-production mediated by a material-semiotic apparatus of touch that she terms “fingeryeyes” (2010). Celia Lowe, examining an outbreak of H5N1 in Indonesia, conceptualizes interconnections between the virus, wild birds, domestic poultry, and humans as a multispecies cloud that shaped and was shaped by the narrative and material practices related to the influenza outbreak (2010). Jake Kosek examines how the US military is attempting to transform honeybees to assist in the detection of explosives while honeybee sociality – specifically the model of the swarm – is also influencing US military battlefield tactics (2010). And Matei Candea (2013) examines how African meerkats and the scientists studying them create multispecies relationships based around refraining from interacting directly, a practice he describes as interpatience. Overlapping with multispecies ethnography, another growing trend in anthropology – ethnoprimatology – brings together both cultural and biological anthropological methods to examine how humans and other primate species form “naturalcultural” relationships with each other (Fuentes 2010; see also Riley 2013). Augustín Fuentes, for example, studies how human perceptions and land use practices combine with macaque social behavior in an interspecies process of “niche construction” around temples in Bali. Erin Riley and Tiffany Wade examine how the interaction between wild macaques and human tourists boating along Florida’s Silver River affect the monkeys’ dietary strategies (Riley and Wade 2016). Focusing on the same macaque-human interactions, Kirksey brings together ethnoprimatological and multispecies ethnographic methods to examine how the boating tourists and the monkeys “become wild” together as they create new forms of interspecies sociality (Kirksey 2015, 105-134).
and nonhumans “with a call to take seriously a plurality of worlds and not just worldview, especially those of indigenous cultures.” Literature within this ontological turn thus exposes how “human and animal categories are themselves continuous rather than discrete” (Brightman 1993, 3). Carlos Fausto argues, for example, that Amerindian ontologies “are not predicated upon the divide between nature and culture (or subject and object) that plays a foundational role in the modern Western tradition.” Instead, “animals, plants, gods, and spirits are also potentially persons and can occupy subject positions in their dealings with humans” (2007, 497; see also Vivieros De Castro 1998). Applying a similar theoretical perspective outside of indigenous settings, Marc Boglioli’s work on Vermont deer hunters examines the hunters’ “simultaneously consumptive and respectful” treatment of animals and how it is facilitated by their self-perception as wildlife stewards occupying an essential part of the natural order. Boglioli challenges the

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20 In his ethnography of the Achuar community in the Upper Amazon, for example, Philippe Descola extensively analyzes their knowledge of and terminology for different aspects of their environment, especially their species taxonomies, and contrasts the fluidity of the Achuar system of knowledge to an empirical scientific approach to classifying species: “except in the western scientific tradition, representations of nonhumans are not usually based on a coherent and systematic corpus of ideas,” but are instead “expressed contextually in daily actions and interactions, in lived-in knowledge and body techniques, in practical choices and hasty rituals” (1996, 86); Eduardo Kohn sees the relationship between the Runa people of Ávila, Ecuador, and the other species in their environment as forming an “ecology of selves” in which humans and other species communicate across species barriers through nonverbal semiosis (2013; see also 2007); and Paul Nadasdy calls on both social scientists and policymakers to embrace a theoretical framework that includes indigenous ontological views, such as the idea that hunting is a form of reciprocal exchange between human and non-human people (2007), while Julie Cruikshank makes a similar argument in reference to indigenous understandings of glaciers and other natural features of the environment as persons (Cruikshank 2001). Eben Kirksey also turns the lens of multispecies ethnography on the question of ontology to examine how certain species operate as ontological amphibians by traversing multiple ontologies through their entanglements with other species, critiquing the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk’s argument that solely humans possess this sort of ontological flexibility (2015, 72; see also Sloterdijk 2011).
assumed dichotomy between Euro-American and indigenous perspectives toward human-animal relations, calling for further investigation of commonalities as well as differences (2009, 46).

This project builds on the multispecies ethnographic tradition while also taking cues from work in the ontological turn. The animal sanctuary movement is important because it serves as a new flashpoint of contestations around the use and social status of animals in multiple political-economic contexts; specifically, the movement directly challenges practices of relating to animals as property that have shaped much of the Euro-American history of human-animals relations. Focusing on this challenge enables me to examine specific interspecies power dynamics structuring these relations that have as yet not been thoroughly explored in recent approaches to human interactions with other species. This investigation of the cultural and material dimensions of animal rescue efforts provides a deeper understanding of the ongoing transformation of ideas about the roles animals should play in contemporary US society, as well as about what it means to rescue, rehabilitate, and care for animals within the larger context of these enduring power dynamics. Rather than assuming a traditional Euro-American view toward ontological binaries like human-animal, nature-culture, subject-object, and person-property, I adopt the approach of the ontological turn, taking these dialectics and the social relations they produce as questions rather than answers known in advance.

*The Dilemmas of Care*
Sanctuary animals are arguably gaining new lives based on more egalitarian interspecies power dynamics, but dilemmas of captive care also place limits on these lives and raise questions about the extent to which human-animal hierarchies can be subverted. I argue that while sanctuaries are modeled on ethical visions for more equitable ways of living with animals, the care practices and physical spaces of sanctuaries actually limit the full realization of those visions. Due to both their physical and their ideological separation from the larger US public, these spaces can be understood as not only sanctuaries for animals, but also possibly sanctuaries for the ethical ideals they hope to spread. If rescued animals’ social and political lives can only exist within the sanctuary, then those lives generate ethically and ontologically problematic questions, such as what it means to be free when your whole world is enclosed by a fence. Despite activist aspirations, sanctuary animals are also not free from harm within their fences. Practices of care are necessarily entangled with forms of violence or harm (Gruen 2014; van Dooren 2014). While spaying and neutering, for example, serve sanctuaries’ larger rescue mission, they also inflict violence on the bodies of animals. In working through the contradictions and dilemmas created by the social and material conditions sanctuaries face, activists are creating emergent forms of animal ethics that are adapted to the realities of trying to live differently with animals. This ethnography illuminates both the possibilities and limits of these efforts to create interspecies ethical praxis.

Of these various categories, perhaps the most central to human-animal relationships in the contemporary United States – including in sanctuaries – is that of property. The animal consumption regimes that sanctuaries oppose both rely on and
perpetuate the social and legal status of animals as living forms of property. In direct opposition to the practice of relating to animals as property, sanctuary caregivers – in some ways similar to the Amerindians described by Fausto above – quite literally see animals as persons, or beings who not only can but always do occupy subject positions in their dealings with humans. The ways humans relate to animals in sanctuaries are both predicated on this perspective and intended to encourage its proliferation through the culture at large. In *The Vanishing Hectare* (2003), an ethnography about the transformation of collectivized land into private property in Aurel Vlaicu, Romania, Katherine Verdery describes decollectivization as a “process of unmaking socialist property,” reminding us that property itself is a process of “making and unmaking certain kinds of relationships” (13, see also Hann 1998). Following Verdery, I argue that caregivers’ practice of relating to animals as subjects is a process of unmaking property-based human-animal relationships. As Verdery also reminds us, though, the end point of these processes of making and unmaking is not known (ibid.) While the end point of unmaking animal property is likewise unknown, in this ethnography I map some of its possible trajectories.

Animal activists see broad public recognition of animal subjectivity as one of the most powerful challenges to the hegemonic property-based animal imaginary, but how exactly is animal property unmade, and how are animal subjects made? And what does this human-dominated social movement imagine animal subjectivity to be? Before looking more closely at animal subjectification – the move away from relating to animals as mere objects treated and valued as property and toward engagement with animals as conscious subjects with needs and interests worthy of consideration – it is useful to
establish more clearly what I mean when I use the term property. Property is an
eminently multivalent term, especially from an anthropological perspective:

“The concept has been defined in a variety of ways even within western legal
tradition – as things, as relations of persons to things, as person-person relations
mediated through things, and as a bundle of abstract rights. Extrapolating from
Thomas Grey (1980), we should probably see most existing definitions of
property as specific to a given time period and form of (capital) accumulation
rather than as a universally valid conception of it. (14)

Again following Verdery, I understand property “variously as a western ‘native
category,’ a symbol, a set of relations, and a process” (15). As a western native category,
property has certain ideological elements that distinguish it from alternative native
categories. The western native category of property, for example, is grounded in a
person-object ontology quite distinct from that found in many other cultures, such as the
indigenous cultures mentioned above who see human relations to land and the
environment as much more continuous and mutually constitutive (16-17; see also
Povinelli 2002; Rose 2011).

One of the most important ideological components of this western native category
for the study of human-animal relations is its subject-making effect. Verdery observes
that John Locke “theorized property as a particular relation between state and citizens, a
form of subjection to which property entitlements were central” (2003, 16). In Lockean
political theory “the property-owning citizen is the responsible subject of a democratic
polity” (ibid.). In addition to their relationship to the state, people also relate to each other
through property. This relational aspect of property is tied to another trait of the western
native theory: “it emphasizes rights or entitlements and sees the subjects of property
relations as inherently rights-bearing” (ibid.). Property rights simultaneously regulate
property relationships between individual citizens and underpin their relation to the state as the citizens whose rights it exists to protect. This web of property relationships and rights in turn reinforces the person-object ontology on which it depends. According to the logic of this particular native theory of property, “if property involves persons, things, and their relations, then those persons and things are clearly bounded, have integrity, and are easily recognizable as separate kinds of entities. That is, standard western property concepts have long presumed an object-relations view of the world” (ibid.). Within this framework, property is one of the primary mediums through which people relate to the state, each other, and the physical world, including other organisms.

Animals trouble this native theory of property because they remain living beings with their own interests even while they are treated as objects. They are incorporated into the democratic polity as property when the property rights of citizens are attached to them, but they do not possess their own rights. Unlike other things to which property rights can attach, however, they share with rights-bearing citizens the capacity for interests that rights could protect – rights to life and freedom from harm and restraint, for example. The idea of animals as exploitable resources instead of potential rights-bearers is inextricably linked to “the legal conception of property that confers on legal subjects the right to use and even destroy their property objects.” (Delaney 2001, 489). This conception in turn makes rights a determining factor in the relationship between human subjects and animal objects. Legal theorist David Delaney argues that “to the extent that rights are conferred, an entity is subjectified; to the extent that they are withheld, an entity is objectified and rendered (potentially) subordinate to the will of another” (2001, 491). As social constructs themselves, however, rights are as determinant of social
relations as these relations are of them. And in reality, rights have historically often failed to provide their promised protections to humans, so what extending them to animals would change about their daily lived experiences is unclear. Rather than focusing on extending animal rights in the sense that activists often mean – legal guarantees to protection from certain harms – I focus more narrowly in this ethnography on property rights attached to animals and how sanctuaries endeavor to transform them to sanctuary animals’ benefit.

Due to its complete lack of rights, I argue that the animal-as-property is the embodiment par excellence of Giorgio Agamben’s concept of bare life. In his analysis of how sovereign power works to exclude certain people (concentration camp internees, for example) from the protection of the law, Agamben uses homo sacer, a human who “may be killed but not sacrificed” in ancient Roman law, as a symbol of the state of exception upon which sovereignty defines itself through the biopolitical power to determine who can be brought from the realm of zoë, bare life, into the realm of bios, political existence (1998, 8). Homo sacer is excluded from the realms of both civil society and religion. Set “outside human jurisdiction without being brought into the realm of divine law,” homo sacer has no rights and can literally be killed without it constituting either homicide or sacrifice. Rather than a state of exception, this is the norm for animals to which property rights have attached. While anti-cruelty provisions in many US jurisdictions do place limited restrictions on a person’s property rights in an animal, one could still kill even a perfectly healthy animal without breaking the law. If I simply no longer wanted to care for my dog, for example, I could not legally beat her to death, but I could legally pay a veterinarian to euthanize her for me instead of leaving her at a shelter if I so chose
(presuming I could find a veterinarian who would be willing to accommodate me). Like *homo sacer*, animals-as-property have no rights, and they can be killed without it constituting a crime. I therefore argue that, as the ultimate and permanent embodiment of bare life, animals-as-property constitute the category of *bestia sacer*.

Sanctuaries and other animal rescue facilities pose a direct challenge to the treatment of animals as *bestia sacer*, relating to animals instead as thinking subjects with personal interests in not only surviving, but thriving. The subject-making practices of caregivers – tending to the physical and psychological needs of animals while seeking to give them the best lives possible – are the means through which caregivers attempt to unmake animal property. However, as I will show, there are at least two related reasons why this unmaking is limited and can perhaps never be fully complete. First, sanctuaries are embedded within many of the same political-economic systems of animal use that they seek to challenge, such as the animal agriculture industry and the animal entertainment industry. Sanctuaries for farm animals, for example, rely on many of the same animal feed, farm equipment, and veterinary care providers as for-profit farmers. Many sanctuaries also offer tours to educate the public about the treatment of animals and to generate fundraising revenue, but in the process they risk reinscribing animals as objects of exhibitionary consumption even as they seek to treat them as subjects. But even if they were able to fully remove animals from circuits of exchange value and capital accumulation, the animals in their care still retain their legal status as property. It is precisely this property status that makes it possible for sanctuaries to hold them in captivity and care for them in the first place.
Second, as mentioned above, caring for animals creates many post-rescue dilemmas with which sanctuaries must contend. While caregivers across all my field sites share a common goal of providing animals with the best lives possible, the limits of that possibility are shaped by the material constraints of captivity as well as their own understandings of what constitutes the “best life possible” for different animals. Caregivers regularly contend with difficult decisions such as how to best serve animals’ needs with limited resources and when to euthanize severely ill or injured animals. Especially problematic for their goal of maximizing animal autonomy, they also must often place limits on the exercise of animal agency, such as the sterilization of animals to prevent overpopulation or the segregation – or even killing – of animals deemed dangerous to humans and other animals. Remaining entangled in larger political-economic contexts of animal capital circulation and still susceptible to constraint and potentially harmful treatment by humans as a result of their legal status, animals are neither fully autonomous subjects nor property. They can be understood instead as improperty, living beings within a shifting spectrum between property and subjeckthood.

If sanctuary animals cannot be fully unmade as property, they also do not remain entirely rights-less. By recognizing and endeavoring to serve animals’ interests in lives free from suffering and control, caregivers extend to animals basic de facto – if not de jure – rights to life, sustenance, and freedom from harm, the exceptions listed above notwithstanding. Paradoxically, animals become rights-bearers at the same time that they remain property. In a sense, sanctuary animals arguably gain limited property-rights in themselves. Further, by relating to animals as rights-bearing subjects, human caregivers transform the sanctuary space into a sort of polity in which animals operate as citizens.
Sanctuary citizenry does not come without its costs, though. If sanctuary animals and humans are forming a new kind of post-human or non-anthropocentric citizenry, species hierarchies still remain. Post-rescue dilemmas require certain sacrifices from both humans and animals. However, animals have to make sacrifices that humans do not, including the possibility of experiencing austerity when resources are limited, discomfort when veterinary procedures or constraint are deemed necessary, and at times even death. Wendy Brown uses the concept of “sacrificial citizen” to describe the ethos of citizenship under neoliberalized democracy that expects citizens to act as “responsibilized human capital” willing to make sacrifices to serve the requirements of the economy (2015, 210-12; see also Brown 2012). I reference the term “neoliberalism” here with caution. Following Jeff Maskovsky and Katherine Kingfisher, I understand neoliberalism as a process “fraught with contradiction and partiality and subject to limitation” (2008, 115). Brown similarly observes:

“Neoliberalism” . . . is a loose and shifting signifier. It is a scholarly commonplace that neoliberalism has no fixed or settled coordinates, that there is temporal and geographic variety in its discursive formulations, policy entailments, and material practices. . . . Neoliberalism as economic policy, a modality of governance, and an order of reason is at once a global phenomenon, yet inconsistent, differentiated, unsystematic, impure. (2015, 20)

In examining its influence on the creation of sacrificial citizenship, she specifically focuses on neoliberal rationality, rather than neoliberalism per se, as a ubiquitous form of governance-shaping ideology that is “converting the distinctly political character, meaning, and operation of democracy’s constituent elements into economic ones” (17, emphasis in original). Sanctuaries probably have more in common with welfare states or

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21See also Clarke (2008) for a critique of neoliberalism’s overuse as a theoretical concept and an argument for the need to recognize its contingent and contested nature.
socialist democracies than late capitalist ones. Unlike the conditions of intensified austerity and retrenched social safety nets Brown describes, sanctuaries are essentially institutionalized versions of social safety nets for rescued animals, although resource limitations can lead to conditions of austerity. Nonetheless, Brown’s concept of sacrificial citizenship is useful here because both animals and caregivers must make their own kinds of sacrifices for the requirements of the larger inter-species community at times. In this way, sanctuary animals and caregivers also function as sacrificial citizens within the sanctuary polity.

As a result of sanctuary efforts to unmake property-based relationships with animals by making inter-subjective ones, I argue that animals are moving from the realm of bestia sacer to the realm of sacrificial citizenry. To understand this transformation, I focus in this ethnography on six main aspects of sanctuary dynamics. Chapter One, "Coming to Sanctuary," describes the different ways in which animals arrive at sanctuaries, including placement by animal welfare officers, surrender by concerned citizens who cannot care for the animals, and theft from sites of contested animal treatment by activists. This chapter also explains how by residing in sanctuaries, animals become improperty, suspended between the poles of property and subjecthood. Chapter Two, “History of US Animal Activism,” traces the philosophical genealogy and political and social history of the contemporary animal protection movement, examining how conflicting ideologies of human-animal difference and shifting patterns in human-animal relations shaped the landscape of twentieth century animal activism. This chapter helps to situate the animal sanctuary movement within that larger field of activism.
Chapter Three, "Creating and Operating Sanctuaries," examines the political economy of sanctuaries, including funding, governance structures, labor practices, and public relations strategies. Specifically, it highlights the material and economic constraints on sanctuary goals and how caregivers navigate the tensions that arise from using rescued animals as fundraising mechanisms while simultaneously seeking to challenge the commodification of these animals. Chapter Four, "Animal Care," examines animal care practices, including how caregivers understand and respond to animals’ material and psychological needs, how they address the unique medical needs of different species, and how the spatial organization of sanctuaries facilitates cohabitation between multiple species with occasionally conflicting interests. Specifically, this chapter focuses on the many post-rescue dilemmas caregivers face and the further limits they impose on efforts to relate to animals as autonomous subjects. It is through caregivers’ methods for addressing these dilemmas that animals are transformed into sacrificial citizens.

Chapter Five, "Animal Death," examines one of the most glaring contradictions of sanctuary care: saving animal lives also entails sacrificing animal lives. It examines the different ways in which animal death affects sanctuaries, including feeding animals that consume other animals, euthanizing ill, injured, or dangerous animals, and protecting sanctuary animals from external predators. Sanctuaries must make value-based decisions about which animal lives to save and which to sacrifice by designating certain animals as patients of care and others as food, pests, or predators. By making these valuations, sanctuaries engage in practices of necro-care, a form of selective biopolitical intervention that relies on categories of difference similar to those from which they hoped to liberate animals.
Finally, in the conclusion, I examine the possible futures of animal sanctuaries and their significant value to the future of human-animal relations as well. Animals are gaining recognizable social, biographical and political lives (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010; Kirksey 2014), although what kind of subjects they may be becoming remains an open and largely unexplored question. A related and equally important question is one that animates much of the recent work in multispecies ethnography. As Eben Kirksey explains, “Rather than simply celebrate multispecies mingling, ethnographers have begun to explore a central question: Who benefits, *cui bono*, when species meet?” (2014, 2). Through an analysis of how *bestia sacer* becomes sacrificial citizen in the context of interspecies relationships in animal sanctuaries, I will provide some possible answers.

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22 This question was first formulated by Susan Leigh Star: “It is both more analytically interesting and more politically just to begin with the question, *cui bono*?, than to begin with a celebration of the fact of human/non-human mingling” (Star 1991, 43).
Chapter One: Coming to Sanctuary

Protecting and Killing the Sacred

“Coming to sanctuary” is an idea I encountered repeatedly throughout my fieldwork. It refers to the idea that animals usually start somewhere else – somewhere worse – before they end up in sanctuary. Animals come to sanctuary in many ways, found abandoned outside auction yards, running loose on the road, surrendered by owners who can no longer care for them, or placed there after being seized by animal welfare officers. And sometimes, like the chickens in the story that opened this ethnography, animals are simply taken by activists without the permission of their legal owners and given to sanctuaries, usually with vague stories about how they were found and rescued.

This chapter describes the origins of this project – how I myself “came to sanctuary” – followed by an examination of the multiple ways that anthropomorphism influences both ideas about human-animal difference and contemporary human-animal relations. It then provides an introduction to the three main sites where I conducted fieldwork, concluding with a description of how these sanctuaries reconfigure animals as impropriety – neither fully property nor completely autonomous subjects, but instead suspended on a spectrum between these poles. First, though, I will explain the origins of the idea of sanctuary and how it applies to the practice of saving animals, specifically focusing on the idea of the sacred as it relates to sanctuaries and, in a very different sense,
how it relates historically to the general kill-ability of animals that sanctuaries seek to challenge.23

The word sanctuary comes from the Latin sanctuarium, composed of the noun sancta or sancti (holy things or holy people) and the suffix –arium, which when used together with a noun means a place where things are kept: a place where holy or sacred things are kept. The word began to take on its more contemporary meaning as churches in England began granting protection to fugitives fleeing arrest or violence as early as the fourth century, a legally recognized practice that continued into the early seventeenth century. This idea of providing protection to people at risk of oppression or violence has evolved into multiple contemporary forms, such as the legal practice now employed by many countries of granting political asylum to persecuted individuals and the New Sanctuary Movement, the present-day revival of the Sanctuary Movement of the eighties in which hundreds of cities around the United States and Canada were declared “sanctuary cities” where undocumented immigrants (many of whom where fleeing civil wars in Latin America) could be safe from the enforcement of immigration laws. The modern US animal sanctuary movement started in 1986 when Gene Baur and Lorri Houston used proceeds from selling veggie dogs at Grateful Dead shows to found Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen, New York, providing a model that has been copied hundreds of times as new animal sanctuaries have proliferated across the United States over the last three decades.

Before describing how I came to study this phenomenon, it is worth taking a small theoretical detour to consider how the idea of the sacred also plays a central role in

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23 As future chapters will reveal, however, there are also occasions when sanctuaries reinforce rather than challenge this historical status for certain animals.
the conceptual opposite of the sanctuary: the concentration camp. Philosopher Giorgio Agamben sees the concentration camp as the ultimate spatially localized manifestation of the juridical state of exception that constitutes bare life, a condition in which certain individuals are excluded from the political realm and deprived of its protections (1998). For Agamben, this state of exception is embodied by *homo sacer* (or sacred man), a figure from early Roman law who “may be killed and yet not sacrificed” (8, 15). According to Agamben, Jews living under Nazism provide a “flagrant case” of "*homo sacer* in the sense of a life that may be killed but not sacrificed” (113). Their killing constituted “neither capital punishment nor a sacrifice, but simply the actualization of a mere ‘capacity to be killed’ inherent in the condition of the Jew as such. . . . [T]he Jews were exterminated not in a mad and giant holocaust but exactly as Hitler had announced, ‘as lice,’ which is to say, as bare life” (ibid.). As this example illustrates, *homo sacer* is confined to the realm of *zoë* (bare life), by means of a biopolitical exclusion from its opposite realm, *bios* (political existence) (8). In his book *The Open: Man and Animal*, Agamben explicitly links this biopolitical distinction to the categories of human and animal, arguing that “the decisive political conflict, which governs every other conflict, is that between the animality and the humanity of man” (2004, 80). He elaborates, “In our culture man has always been the result of a simultaneous division and articulation of the animal and the human, in which one of two terms of the operation was also what was at stake in it” (92).

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24 Cary Wolfe observes that the reductionism of this argument “leads to a remarkable flattening of the differences between different political, ethical, and institutional conjunctures . . . a homogenization that is a direct consequence of the severe delimitation of the realm of the ‘genuinely’ political” (2014, 156).
Highlighting an inherent problem with the way this formulation affects our understanding of animals, Cary Wolfe (expanding on the work of Dominick LaCapra) argues that it leads to a “flattening of the category of ‘the animal’ itself” in two senses:

First, as LaCapra notes, animals in all their diversity “are not figured as complex, differential living beings but instead function as an abstracted philosophical topos” (2009, 166). And second – a consequence of the first – Agamben’s position provides no means for a politically focused questioning of “the extent to which certain animals, employed in factory farming or experimentation, may be seen in terms of the concept of bare or naked, unprotected life’ (LaCapra 2009, 172). What gets lost, in other words, is our ability to think a highly differentiated and nuance biopolitical field, and to understand as well that the exercise of violence on the terrain of biopower is not always, or even often, one of highly symbolic or sacrificial ritual in some timeless political theater, but is often – indeed, maybe usually – an affair of power over and of life that is regularized, routinized, and banalized in the services of a strategic, not symbolic, project. (2014, 156)

Wolfe and LaCapra are correct that an abstract philosophical topos risks flattening important differences and variations among myriad kinds of animals (both human and non-human), and that this flattening can in turn obfuscate how biopower, particularly in the form of violence, serves strategic projects of resource extraction and instrumental use of living beings. Wolfe also argues persuasively that understanding the effects of biopower through a Foucauldian lens rather than through Agamben’s formalistic topos “has the advantage of making the questions of freedom and power, questions of degrees and not of kind when it comes to the disposition of human and non-human bodies, as those are networked with each other and with technologies, practices, and disciplines which may cluster and co-constitute them regardless of species designation” (159).

However, understanding how both humans and other animals are affected similarly – and

25 Nicole Shulkin argues similarly that in Agamben’s theorization of bare life, “animals’ relation to capitalist biopower is occluded by his species-specific conflation of zoë with a socially stripped-down figure of Homo sacer that he traces back to antiquity” (2009, 10).
in certain ways even identically – by biopolitical processes does not preclude also recognizing how the historical construction of human-animal incommensurability has facilitated the contemporary enfolding of non-human animals into biopolitical processes in ways that humans admitted into the political sphere are not (e.g., as sources of food).

Factory farming and biomedical research on animals may not primarily be strategies employed in service to the symbolic production of the human, but they both contribute to it and are facilitated by it. Going back at least as far as Aristotle – from whom Agamben borrows his categories of zoë and bios – animals have been excluded from political life, consigned to the category of bare life.26 Precisely because Wolfe is right to recognize the value in a politically focused and nuanced interrogation of the ways animals in different political-economic contexts are impacted by this category, I argue that Agamben’s abstract philosophical topos is still conceptually useful if we are also careful not to lose sight of the differences it encapsulates. Specifically, homo sacer, the embodiment of bare life, is a fitting heuristic for understanding animals as they are impacted by their legal status as property. In the United States, for example, humans have the right to kill – albeit humanely – even a perfectly healthy animal as long as it is their property27, with the possible exception of animals that are covered by the Endangered Species Act. Firmly in the realm of bare life, the animal-as-property is arguably the ultimate embodiment of the state of exception: bestia sacer.

The category of bestia sacer can thus be understood as comprising an alterity that defines and makes possible the liberal subject – it is precisely what personhood is not.

26 Foucault references this distinction between man and animal in The History of Sexuality: “[F]or millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence” (1978, 134; see Wolfe 2014, 152).
27 Although the methods of killing may be restricted by anti-cruelty laws.
But while *homo sacer* has historically been a porous category from which certain groups of humans have been able to escape, even as others have replaced them, status as fully formed liberal subjects has remained firmly off limits to other-than-human animals. If the concentration camp is the example *par excellence* of the spatial localization of bare life for *homo sacer*, then the entire world is spatialized bare life for *bestia sacer*. Animal sanctuaries, on the other hand, invert this dynamic by providing zones of exception from bare life, spaces for keeping the sacred safe from its deprivations.

This is not to say that animals outside of sanctuaries are all treated the same. “*Bestia sacer*” is a heuristic for understanding the general ever-present susceptibility to human violence or instrumentalization that animals in Euro-American societies have been subject to for centuries, but I do not want to erase the distinctions between the real lived experiences of different animals. There are in fact many kinds of *bestia sacer*. The way a cow in a factory farm experiences its bare life is quite different than the way a neglected dog chained in a backyard does. And animals can also find small zones of exception from bare life outside of sanctuaries. In practice, people form compassionate care-based relationships with animals outside of sanctuaries, as evidenced by the millions of people with close relationships to their pets. As explained above, though, these pets are also still subject to that ever-present susceptibility. Writing about her family’s relationship with two American Spotted Asses in their care, artist Karin Bolender describes this enduring contradiction:

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28 Building on Agamben’s understanding of biopolitics, Dinesh Wadiwel sees democratic politics as the process of admitting animal life into the political sphere (2008, 23). He argues it is this biopolitical distinction that marks “the struggle over the definition of . . . the fully formed human subject,” which is reflected in “democratic struggles over the last two hundred years: for example slaves, women, savages, queers and children” (2008, 29).
This is the essence of a harrowing truth for me: Aliass and Passenger are killable in the society we live in. If something happened to our family, they would become mere assets without much economic value, and it is likely that they would wind up on a rumbling trailer to the slaughterhouse. More likely (because donkey meat is not much desired in the United States), they would go to a glue factory... otherwise known as the local rendering plant. Thousands of unwanted dogs and cats also end up at the rendering plant and so are annihilated and dispersed into products as diverse as makeup and soap and, most horrifically, cheap dog food... . However fuzzy the boundary between other species and me may be in my experience and ontology, a stark line is drawn in Western society that renders some of my loved ones killable while others enjoy a full suite of civil and individual rights. Most deeply, I know this to be wrong, wrong, wrong. I know that dog and donkey and horse and cat and every other creature has a unique _bios_, however unwritable or unknowable it may be for human logos. Thus, like so many of us, I find myself in a society with which I am fundamentally at odds. (2014, 85)

One of the unique aspects about sanctuaries as institutions is that they seek to provide a space in which that is not the case, in which the norm is that animals are protected from this susceptibility. As the next chapters will show, this goal is never fully attainable for actual sanctuaries operating in the larger political-economic system that depends on the existence of _bestia sacer_, but it remains an aspiration.

_Auto-ethnography and The Anthropomorphism Taboo_

Every animal has a story about how she came to sanctuary, including the humans who work there. In the end, I was brought to sanctuary by my cat, but the journey started much earlier than that. I have loved animals for as long as I can remember. Like “coming to sanctuary,” I have also heard variations of this sentiment expressed by virtually every person I encountered during the course of my research at animal shelters and sanctuaries throughout the United States. What it means to love animals, the relationships and obligations that arise from this particularly potent affect, and the spaces created by those
relationships are the focus of this ethnography. As I will show, love for animals – like the acts of care it gives rise to – manifests itself in different ways and means different things for humans and other animals across all my field sites. Before delving into the story of saving animals in the United States, I will explain what this phrase means to me in order to provide some insight into how this project developed and to explicitly identify my own ethical and affective orientations toward its subject.

I strived to follow the basic anthropological injunction to make the familiar strange in my efforts to understand practices of care and interspecies relationships as much as possible through the perspectives of those engaged in them. Like all researchers, though, I cannot remove myself from my own values or history. Personally, I support the animal-saving missions of sanctuaries and shelters, even if I do not always fully align with their methods. I tried to see their views, attitudes, and values as separate from my own even when they seemed to closely parallel each other. I tried to suspend my own ethical and political commitments and to see the story of saving animals through the eyes of those who were living it rather than through my own sympathetic assumptions about how it goes. In practice, this entailed trying to distance myself from my own moral judgments about the way animals are treated in sanctuaries as well as the institutions from which they rescue their animals. While trying to understand their critiques of the ways animals are treated in US society without conflating them with my own, I also tried to understand the ways sanctuary caretakers engaged with animals without presuming these were necessarily any better than the practices they opposed. It was not easy, but based on the unexpected insights I gained from my research it also was not unsuccessful. Still, my positionality no doubt influenced my understandings of and engagements with
humans and other animals throughout my research in ways I was not even fully aware of, so I will attempt to sketch out that positionality a bit here to contextualize what follows.

For me, saying I love animals does mean on a basic level that I feel a general affection for and fascination with other species combined with an aesthetic appreciation for the way they look, move, feel and sound. But it means something more relational as well – a sense of affinity or similarity, a curiosity about the lives and minds of other species that grows into a sense of concern for their wellbeing if I have reason to believe it is at risk. Like the people I encountered throughout my fieldwork, I am attracted to what Donna Haraway, in her book *When Species Meet*, calls encounter value (2008). Imagining a modern day equivalent to Karl Marx writing *Biocapital, Volume I*, she posits that the author “would have to examine a tripartite structure: use value, exchange value, and encounter value. . . . Trans-species encounter value is about relationships among a motley array of lively beings,” in which commerce, consciousness, evolution, ethics, and utilities are all in play. Like use and exchange value, encounter value is a name for a relationship (45). Engaging in this relationship with members of other species, however, necessarily opens the door to anthropomorphism.

It is not necessary to imagine that another being is like you in order to love it, but doing so can make the act of loving more rewarding in certain ways. Take my cat Panza, for example. His mother was a stray who appeared one day, pacing on the balcony of my third story apartment during my sophomore year at UC Santa Cruz. My two vegan roommates and I all thought it was wonderful that she had decided to pay us a visit, so we opened the door and let the blue-eyed Siamese cat wander into our apartment. She started showing up every day, and we let her come and go as she pleased. About two weeks later,
she gave birth to three kittens in our linen closet. One of the kittens was an all-black male with a round, bulging belly. Before he even opened his eyes, he would shove his way back and forth along his mother’s nipples, knocking his two siblings out of the way while seemingly trying to drink all the milk at once. We named him Panza – Spanish for “belly.”

Panza lived with me for the next 15 years, traveling with me across 11 different states on countless car and plane rides. He was by my side through multiple family deaths and romantic break-ups. I honestly considered him my best friend. Although he comforted me through hard times and made good times even better, I was always aware of the fact that he was a cat, that he had a radically different perspective of the world that I would never fully understand. While recognizing that we were different species with radically different worldviews, I also enjoyed simultaneously entertaining the fantasy that he shared a view of me as his brother, as a co-partner in life’s adventures and travails. I do believe that in his own way he loved me, but I also know that if he did, the feeling was different for him than it was for me in probably many different ways. Nonetheless, the frisson of anthropomorphic synergy enhanced my experience of our relationship even while I never really lost the awareness that it may have been just in my mind.

At the same time I was engaging in these kinds of anthropomorphic indulgences during my experiences of encounter value with Panza and other animals I have known, those animals were also educating me further in how to understand and value animal autonomy outside of an anthropomorphic perspective – how to see them as subjects of and for themselves. It was such experiences with Panza that ultimately led me to sanctuary. Before elaborating on the catalyst for this project though, I would like to pause
to consider the issue of anthropomorphism further. What is anthropomorphism and why is it something to be avoided?

While human-animal relationships, both historically and cross-culturally, reflect a range of complex dynamics that cannot be adequately understood within a rigid personhood-property framework, efforts to understand or conceptualize animal subjectivity – both within scientific disciplines and popular debate – are often criticized in a western context as anthropomorphic projections of human traits onto animals. Conceptualized as a problem distorting attempts to understand the human animal divide, anthropomorphism – like the ideas it gives rise to – is an ideological construct with its own material and social influences and effects. Theorizing it as such, and identifying these influences and effects is an essential step in understanding how the human-animal divide is reproduced and altered.

Derived from the Greek *anthropos* (human) and *morphe* (form), anthropomorphism originally referred to (and was criticized by some philosophers and religious scholars) as the attribution of human traits to deities. But in what could be read as a Promethean move, humans have over centuries of western philosophy and science supplanted deities with themselves in the hierarchy while putting nonhuman animals in the subordinate position. Rather than dragging gods down to the level of humans, anthropomorphism now threatens to taint the exclusive category of human uniqueness with the admittance of other animals to its privileged status among all other species. The strictures of scientific empiricism and a commitment to parsimony have led many western thinkers to sever potential links between human and other animals with the surgical precision of Occam's razor, choosing a lack of commonality with humans as the
simpler explanation of animal traits when formulating hypotheses to explain biological or ethological data. This has contributed to a centuries long history of the animal-as-machine model in the natural sciences, from the Cartesians and their public dissections of live dogs, intended to illustrate the clockwork like yelps of canine pain in response to each act of mutilation (see Chapter Two), to modern behaviorism à la B. F. Skinner with its own version of the animal as a stimulus-response machine. Why the law of parsimony would lead these thinkers to conclude there is a stark divide between humans and their co-evolutionaries rather than a commonality of mental, cognitive, and affective capacities is a question that requires investigating cultural, political, and economic values as much as scientific ones.

The question I am interested in here though is not so much about how the anthropomorphism taboo came to be such a powerful tool in policing the boundaries between humans and other animals, but about the policing itself and its effects. Beyond the realms of science, anthropomorphism has been picked up more generally by lay-cultures (after diffusing through science and philosophy) to continue to perpetuate and reinforce a Cartesian understanding of animals as mechanistic objects rather than subjects in their own right – as reflected, for example, in such attitudes as the nearly quotidian conviction that other animals do not suffer as much as humans. And while the findings of contemporary science continue to erode such attitudes, I have encountered this taken-for-granted folk wisdom even among animal rights activists, animal sanctuary workers, and vegans.

Species started as a taxonomical category grounded in the diversity of biological traits among living beings, but the idea of species is also shaped by factors beyond the
scientific realm. Species is a cultural construct with serious implications for the social and material relations between the beings that compose its myriad categories.\(^{29}\) Perhaps most importantly, the unique position of the category of human has been partly made possible by the idea of fundamental species difference. Haraway describes this idea of humans being unique from all other animals as human exceptionalism, “the premise that humanity alone is not a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies” (2008, 11). The taboo against anthropomorphism – as much in its popular usage as in its scientific one – has contributed to the spread of human exceptionalism as a broad consensus throughout many human societies. And this attitude has in turn helped to reinforce the historical monopoly of personhood (or subject-status) by humans in these societies. I do not mean to overstate the case – many, if not most, humans interact with animals regularly in ways that we experience as inter-subjective. To see examples of this in the United States, one merely needs to go to a dog park. However, even in the midst of such experiences, anti-anthropomorphic attitudes make possible the social devaluing of animals' experiences in relation to that of humans. An experience involving Panza that served as the catalyst for this ethnography provides an example of how this works.

Unfortunately, when he was eight-years-old, Panza developed a chronic bladder stone problem. These small pieces of calcium oxalate that form in the bladder are extremely dangerous for male cats as they can entirely block their urethras, a condition that quickly becomes deadly as the blocked urine builds up, rupturing the bladder and leading to sepsis. The first time Panza’s stones caused a blockage, vets performed an

\(^{29}\) See, for example, Probyn-Rapsey (2015) for an analysis of how the ideology of species shapes understandings of how hybridization facilitates extinction in relation to dingoes in Australia.
emergency surgery to remove them. As the surgeon explained to me afterward, they had
to laser through an inch of belly fat to get to his bladder, which they opened and flushed
out. I started feeding Panza a prescription cat food diet and gave him only purified water
to reduce the likelihood of future stones, but his black-cat-luck was working against him.
He had another blockage a year later. This time the vets at the emergency hospital
recommended giving him a perineal urethrostomy. This is a surgery that entails removing
the penis and making an incision in the urethra to create a larger orifice in the perineum
to pass urine through. This enables male cats to pass large stones that would otherwise
have caused blockages. Since Panza was likely to continue developing stones throughout
the rest of his life, regardless of the special diet and purified water, I chose to go through
with the $6,000 procedure, hoping that it would avoid the need for any more bladder
surgeries in the future.

Shortly after the surgery, I ran into Yoni, a fellow graduate student, and
mentioned the procedure to him. Yoni's mouth dropped open in disbelief, and he asked
with complete sincerity, "Why don't you just put him to sleep and get a new cat? This is
what happens when people anthropomorphize animals." Yoni’s question tapped into my
own ambivalence about what to do in this situation. The cost of Panza’s surgery was
intimidating, especially on a graduate student’s budget. And it was hard to know if it was
the right thing for Panza. Would the additional suffering he might experience from the
surgery outweigh the potential benefits? Is it what he would want, or was I projecting
what I would want on to him? At the same time, the question also struck me as absurd,
like asking why I wouldn’t just euthanize a parent or sibling if she became sick enough to
incur the costs of medical treatment. There are of course many differences in value
between my perspective and Yoni's that would make this question not seem absurd to him, but what I find particularly interesting for my argument here is that the idea of anthropomorphism (and the taboo against it) seemed to have the effect, for Yoni, of reinforcing human exceptionalism at that moment. (Only later did I realize there could be other interpretations to his comment, which I will explain shortly.) Why was it ridiculous to spend that much money on Panza? Because he's not a human. I could have further explained the suffering I was hoping to alleviate, why Panza mattered so much to me, and why ultimately I felt my money was less important, but I did not think his comments were really about a cost-benefit analysis. I thought they were about the discomforting challenge my choice posed to the idea of human exceptionalism. We do not spend thousands of dollars to keep replaceable objects alive. Only the lives of human subjects are worth such sacrifices.

In this way the idea of personhood or subject-status, as exclusively belonging to humans, functions similarly to Katherine Verdery’s theorization of property as “simultaneously a cultural system, a set of social relations, and an organization of power” which “all come together through social processes” (2003, 19). Rather than just a mistaken projection of human traits onto other animals, anthropomorphism is also a process of person-making employed in relation to humans as well as animals. Humans are people, in part, because animals are not, so any traits, characteristics, or ways of relating that we associate with people cannot also be applied to animals by definition.

Referring to this fundamental ontological separation, Jacques Derrida argues it is not about denying traits like "speech, reason, experience of death, mourning, culture, institutions, technics, clothing, lying, pretense of pretense, covering of tracks, gift,
laughter, tears, respect, etc. – the list is necessarily without limit” (2003, 137). It's not about creating a lack, a negativity in the animal, so much as asserting the positivity of the human, making humans unique in their possession of these self-constituting traits. This simultaneous production of the human vis-a-vis the animal as well as the animal vis-a-vis the human I think of as the refractive action of the anthropomorphism taboo.

One of the most significant effects of this action has been the almost ubiquitous acceptability of the subjugation, exploitation, and killing of animals for human benefit, leading Derrida to assert, "The confusion of all nonhuman living creatures within the general and common category of the animal is not simply a sin against rigorous thinking, vigilance, lucidity, or empirical authority; it is also a crime . . . a crime of the first order against the animals" (2008, 417). Ultimately, injunctions against anthropomorphism function to obfuscate our own failure to understand animal subjects because denying the possibility of subjective commonalities makes it unnecessary to do the hard work of actually discovering if they are there, or in the inability to confirm their presence, at least taking the much more difficult ethical stance of treating animal subjectivity agnostically, even if that may demand radical ethical shifts in the way we treat them.

In critiquing the anthropomorphism taboo and its contribution to the socially and ecologically deleterious processes of human exceptionalism, it is important to emphasize that I am also not arguing for anthropomorphism. Understanding other animals as subjects means understanding as much as possible how they experience their own lived worlds. Take another example, this time from a private zoo I visited while doing fieldwork in Florida. Untamed Beasts is a 22-acre private zoo with over 200 animals located in central Florida. The park is open to the paying public, with tickets ranging
from $13 to $32.99. Visitors cannot wander freely through the park, but are instead led
around in groups by a tour guide. When I visited, the tour started with a ride in a streetcar
from the main office to a large automatic gate that opened on the driveway of the owners’
residence, a distinguished-looking house built in 1911. The trolley parked at the top of a
steep hill covered in cages and enclosures with different birds and mammals pacing and
fluttering around inside. A nicely landscaped path wound down between the cages. The
grounds were scattered with lawn ornaments like stone fairies and cartoonish animals
holding birdbaths or flowerpots. The grounds were clean and orderly. Chickens and
roosters wandered around freely between the animal housing facilities, which were cages
and enclosures containing monkeys, bears, tigers, lions, cougars, otters, deer, and goats,
among other animals. The tour guide later explained that these birds had moved into the
zoo on their own after escaping from a cock-fighting ring in the neighborhood that had
been busted by police. Founded in the 1980’s as a rescue and rehab facility for exotic
animals, the tour guide said that the zoo was opened to the public nine years ago in order
to raise funds and public support for the captive animals. Although he claimed the zoo
had only ever purchased one animal and that the rest of the animals are “rescue” animals,
videos in the gift shop and on the trolley had shown many of the baby animals born in the
facility, including several tiger cubs and a baby macaque. Their newest resident was the
Mystery Monkey of Tampa – renamed Cornelius after the character from the *Planet of
the Apes* films – a rhesus macaque who was captured in Tampa, where he had been living
on his own for years, foraging for food among the gardens and trash of residential
neighborhoods in the city. The tour guide informed us that the zoo was trying to raise
money to buy Cornelius a "wife." They had attempted to house him with another Rhesus
macaque, hoping they would mate, but he beat her up. The assumption that macaques sexually partner the same way as humans, however, is problematic since it completely ignores the social dynamics that determine how macaques mate, which are shaped by relationships of kinship and hierarchy. It is unlikely that the macaque and his next cage-mate will decide to "marry" or romantically partner, and future violence is quite possible. In his case, however, enough knowledge already exists about the social dynamics of rhesus macaques to avoid this bit of anthropomorphic wishful thinking, but as I have found throughout my research, resisting projecting human values and desires onto animals is as important as not rejecting animal subjectivity outright in attempting to gain new insights into animals' subjective lives.

Derrida's thoughts about animals were inspired by an experience he had with his own feline companion who walked in on him while he was changing. He wrote that he saw her "as this irreplaceable living being that one day enters my space, enters this place where it can encounter me, see me, see me naked" and he wondered what if she responded (2008, 378-9)? This question “comes down to knowing not whether the animal speaks but whether one can know what respond means. And how to distinguish a response from a reaction. . . . It would not be a matter of 'giving speech back' to animals but perhaps acceding to a thinking . . . that thinks the absence of the name as something other than a privation” (416). Acceding to such thinking, to the possibility that animal subjectivity could be something other than a privation, in turn opens the door to the possibility of a non-anthropomorphic yet still inter-subjective relationship with animals.

The problem with the anthropomorphism taboo is that it a priori assumes difference – and further, the hierarchy of human exceptionalism grounded in that
difference – rather than the possibilities of similarities as well as differences, both of which are equally important to the possibility of response. Being open to such possibilities creates a space from which one can engage with animals without assuming they are either human-like or unhuman-like. In this sense, the real cats that stroll through this chapter (both Derrida's and mine) are the opposite of Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger's theoretical cat. Whereas the cat in his famous thought experiment was simultaneously alive and dead inside her opaque radioactive box, these cats need not be on either side of the binary created by anthropomorphism - they can instead occupy their own animal subject positions. Understanding this seems an important component of trans-species encounter value that comes from living with other animals.

I recognized that Yoni’s opinion about Panza’s surgery reflects a common point of view about animals, but reflecting on my own ambivalence about it made me wonder why we saw things so differently. As I thought about it, I also realized that other people who loved animals might make very different choices about their loved ones than I would. My understanding of what it means to love Panza does not necessarily lead to the choices I was making. In fact, one could love a companion animal just as much as I loved him and precisely because of those feelings decide on the same solution Yoni proposed. In light of these thoughts, it also occurred to me that Yoni’s suggestion need not be motivated by a reflexive buttressing of human exceptionalism. I had to admit that it was even possible that Yoni was correct that I was anthropomorphizing Panza, that I was projecting my values or desires on to Panza in thinking he would rather have the surgery than be euthanized.
Realizing I did not know as much as I assumed I did, I was left wondering all over again what accounted for our radically different responses to Panza’s situation? Much philosophical thought has been devoted to why people see animals as different or less worthy of moral consideration than humans, but I could not think of any work that explored why others do see animals as worthy of such consideration, much less how such attitudes may vary in different ways. It seemed the best sites to explore these questions would be spaces in which people dedicated their time to saving and caring for animals. A conversation about my decision to spend thousands of dollars on my sick cat thus sparked the idea for this ethnography of the US animal sanctuary movement. In this way, Panza brought me to sanctuary.

The Sanctuary Movement(s)

Rather than one cohesive movement, it would be more accurate to say the spread of animal sanctuaries across the United States over the last three decades was the synergistic result of multiple intersecting historical social movements related to the way animals are treated by humans. The US animal rescue landscape is composed of a constellation of groups of common intermingling interests with a range of different ideas about who or what animals are and how they should be treated by humans, especially how they should be understood and related to as subjects. US animal sanctuaries can be divided into three basic categories based on the types of animals they rescue: farmed animals, exotic animals, and companion animals. These types in turn correspond to the major arenas of everyday human-animal interaction in the United States: food and
clothing production, entertainment, and companionship. In practice, these lines are often blurred, especially with smaller farm animals and companion animals living in sanctuaries focused on other types of animals.30

There is one other significant area of human-animal interaction that I have not yet mentioned: encounters with wild animals in their native ecologies. Unlike the sanctuaries where I conducted my fieldwork, wildlife rehabilitation facilities rescue and care for injured animals with the intention of rereleasing them to the wild, and when possible, minimizing human contact with animals.31 Although the exotic sanctuaries I visited did have some wild animals that could not be rereleased – for medical or legal reasons (and in some cases both) – the majority of animals at these sanctuaries were rescued from other situations of captivity where they had been kept as pets or used for entertainment enterprises.

US sanctuary models are also unique from other models of animal care that developed elsewhere. While they have been influential to animal advocacy efforts abroad – and the phenomenon is beginning to spread to other countries – US animal sanctuaries generally differ significantly in their goals from wildlife preserves, zoos, and other more traditional modes of in situ animal care originally developed outside the United States.32

Unlike efforts that have proliferated in Europe, Africa, Asia, and elsewhere to conserve

30 Rescued laboratory chimps also form a unique category with their own sanctuaries, but I did not include this kind of sanctuary in my fieldwork since they have already been studied in depth by others. See, for example, Gruen (2015) and Hua and Ahuja (2013) on the topic of sanctuaries for former laboratory chimps.
31 See Collard (2014) for an analysis of how a wildlife rehabilitation facility for animals rescued from the exotic pet trade attempts to turn animal commodities and back into wild animals with tactics designed to make animals fear humans. See also Parreñas (2012) for an ethnography of a wildlife rehabilitation center for orangutans in Borneo.
32 See Braverman (2013), Mullan and Marvin (1999), Horowitz (1973), and Alcampora (2010) for biopolitical, historical, and philosophical (respectively) analyses of zoos.
animal species in settings approximating their indigenous environments with minimized human contact, the US sanctuary movement is somewhat unique in its attempt to create environments that actively and regularly foster embodied interactions and socialization between humans and animals. Sanctuary settings thus differ from zoos and other animal-care contexts in that they seek to provide models for spaces in which direct human interactions with animals as subjects provide the basis for interspecies sociality. Unlike the separation of the realms of culture and nature reflected in these older modes of care - in which nature is often presented as a spectacle to be enjoyed at a distance – animal sanctuaries involve care-based interspecies relationships that reflect intentionally subversive ideas about how animals should be situated in human society.

As I will further illuminate throughout this ethnography, there are important differences in practices of care, ethical values, and aspirational orientations toward the future across sanctuaries. Nonetheless, it is possible to locate the many different strands of the US sanctuary movement between two main historical trends in the larger context of the history of animal advocacy: welfarism and animal rights. Welfarism seeks to improve the conditions of animals used by humans by reducing suffering as much as possible.

Current broader public debates about the treatment of animals in agricultural and

33 Possible exceptions are sanctuaries that focus on particular species that live communally in their natural environments, such as elephants or chimpanzees. Some of these sanctuaries instead seek to provide spaces in which rescued animals can form social groups with each other with minimized interference from humans. I would argue that even in these types of sanctuaries, the more limited human-animal interactions that occur are still guided by an ethos that values animals as fellow subjects. See, for example, Buckley and Bradshaw (2010) for an analysis of this dynamic in a US elephant sanctuary.

34 On the spectacularization of nature, see Bulbeck (2005) and Vivanco and Gordon (2006) for examinations of how ecotourism shapes ecopolitics; Chris (2006) for an analysis of how televusal and cinematic portrayals of wildlife reinforce human sexual, racial, and gendered ideologies; Davis (1997) for an ethnographic study of the exhibitionary commodification of marine life at SeaWorld.
entertainment industries, for example, reflect a welfarist approach to animal ethics. The animal rights approach, on the other hand, seeks to end certain (or all) uses of animals by extending them certain legal rights. In animal activism, and especially when it comes to sanctuaries, it is useful to understand these trends as two ends of a spectrum rather than polar orientations. Many of the people I encountered at sanctuaries support animal rights and the abolition of animal exploitation while also supporting welfarist policies that could reduce animal suffering, while others who see animal rights activism as unrealistically utopian or too militantly radical still share many of the rights approach’s critiques of animal use.

Throughout this ethnography, I use the term sanctuary to refer generally to the spaces of animal care where I conducted fieldwork. Organizations focused on the rescue of companion animals (mostly cats and dogs, but also other animals commonly kept as pets) are called shelters rather than sanctuaries by those who operate them. There are important differences between companion animal shelters and sanctuaries for other kinds of animals, which I will examine in more depth throughout this ethnography. Most significantly, shelters are structured around a model of rescue driven by the aspiration that the animals will eventually find permanent places to live with human companions in their private homes. The shelter is ideally only a temporary stop in an animal’s rescue journey. Sanctuaries, on the other hand, are more often understood as the permanent home for most animals that arrive at them. This is largely the result of the kind of animals that different organizations cater to. Whereas exotic and farmed species require more resources and experience to care for and are often restricted from living in certain areas by municipal or state ordinances, companion animals are bred to be pets. Adopting
common pet species is more culturally normalized and desirable to a much larger portion of the population; the rapid growth of the pet industry in the last century has helped to create extensive socio-economic infrastructure to make pet care relatively easy for most people; and millennia of co-evolution with humans have made common pet species such as cats, dogs, and rodents amenable to living in human habitations. Put simply, a lot more people want to live with a dog than want to live with a tiger or a zebra.

Despite their differences, I have found that shelters and sanctuaries share far more in common in their goals and approaches to animal rescue and care. Including shelters as a part of my research was essential in forming a more complete picture of the whole landscape of the culture of animal rescue and care in the United States, both because companion animal interactions are such a significant part of human-animal relations and because (as mentioned previously) the boundaries between different arenas of animal rescue – companion, exotic, and farmed – are much blurrier in practice than they are in theory.

Shelters are also important to the larger story of saving animals because they played an integral role in the early history of animal advocacy in the United States. The modern US animal advocacy movement arguably started with the creation of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) by wealthy US philanthropist and New York native Henry Bergh on April 10, 1866. The catalyst for the ASPCA was an uncannily Dostoyevskian moment: during a carriage ride around St. Petersburg, Russia, while serving as a diplomat on behalf of Abraham Lincoln, Bergh allegedly witnessed a man beating a donkey and was so horrified, he ordered the man to
The experience galvanized Bergh’s concern for the suffering of animals. Upon returning to New York, Bergh delivered the first documented lecture on animal welfare on February 8, 1866. This was quickly followed by his drafting of a “Declaration of the Rights of Animals,” which garnered over a hundred signatures, and the procurement of a charter from the State of New York for the establishment of the ASPCA. A little over a week later, on April 19, 1866, the state passed a law against animal cruelty, giving the

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35 This historical motif of a beaten horse echoes throughout the nineteenth century. In a case of art imitating life, Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment (finished in 1866, the same year Bergh founded the ASPCA) features a scene in which the protagonist, Rodya Raskolnikov, has a dream in which he sees an angry, drunken mob beat an old, sick mare to death. I have found no evidence that Dostoyevsky was aware of Bergh or his experience in St. Petersburg, but this scene may have been influenced by a separate horse-abuse-related experience Dostoyevsky had as a teenager while traveling to St. Petersburg when he witnessed a courier repeatedly punch a coachman on the back of his neck, prompting the coachman to in turn furiously whip his horse (Dostoyevsky 1993, 327-8). A famous anecdote about Friedrich Nietzsche also involves horse brutality. Witnessing a man beating a horse while walking in Turin, Italy, Nietzsche allegedly ran over and threw his arms around the horse before collapsing. Following this, he suffered a mental breakdown from which he never recovered. (Although, in contrast, a younger Nietzsche showed far less concern for the suffering of animals – not to mention many humans – in On the Genealogy of Morals:

The curve of human susceptibility to pain seems in fact to take an extraordinary and almost sudden drop as soon as one has passed the upper ten thousand or ten million of the top stratum of culture; and for my own part, I have no doubt that the combined suffering of all the animals ever subjected to the knife of scientific ends is utterly negligible compared with one painful night of a single hysterical bluestocking. (1967, 68)

At the risk of beating a figurative dead horse, I mention this recurring motif because it hints at the lasting affective impact witnessing violence against animals can have. A common saying in animal activism circles – often attributed to Linda McCartney or her widower Paul – is that if slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian, reflecting the idea that a lack of visibility of the negative treatment of animals is a significant factor in it not being more widely opposed (see Pachirat [2013] for an ethnographic analysis of how slaughterhouses use technologies of surveillance and concealment to compartmentalize and obscure institutional violence from public scrutiny; and Vialles [1994] for an analysis of the system of symbolic representations that facilitate this concealment of violence in her ethnography of French slaughterhouses). This view also plays a significant role in the somewhat controversial use of graphic images of violence against animals used in public relations campaigns by animal advocacy groups.
ASPCA the authority to enforce it (Winograd 2007, 12). Prior to the creation of the ASPCA, animal control practices in New York City were dismal for stray animals. Partly motivated by a fear of rabies and other public health concerns, the city pound’s approach was to catch and drown as many dogs as they could. One of the many accomplishments of the ASPCA under Bergh was its opposition to the pound’s campaign against dogs. Bergh started by conducting a citywide survey that found there had been no documented cases of anyone contracting rabies from stray dogs. Following this finding, he achieved a series of legislated reforms that included:

- requiring the poundmaster to give dogs fresh food and water,
- requiring the city to build a new, more modern facility,
- and passing a law that no one under 18-years-old could turn in dogs to the pound, thereby eliminating what Bergh called the ‘thieving gangs of young dogcatchers’ who were previously paid fifty cents for every dog they brought to the pound, no questions asked. (Winograd 2009, xvii)

Rather than rounding up and killing strays, Bergh advocated simply leaving the dogs alone since they did not pose a real threat. Within a year, his reforms resulted in an 84% reduction in the number of dogs killed (ibid.).

Eventually New York City officials offered to hire the ASPCA to run the pound, but Bergh refused. He replied that the ASPCA “could not stultify its principles so far as to encourage the tortures” that operating the pound entailed (ibid.). He was adamantly opposed to allowing an organization dedicated to saving animals to take on the task of killing them. The older model of animal control would resurface following Bergh’s death, however. The ASPCA did eventually assume responsibility for operating the city pound, and while it employed humane education and adoptions as part of its approach to animal control, it continued killing the vast majority of homeless animals that came in, replacing drowning with a gas chamber, which was perceived to be more humane at the time.
Independent but similarly modeled SPCA’s and like-minded organizations in other cities adopted the same strategies, as reflected in this platform statement from the Animal Rescue League of Boston:

We keep all dogs we receive, unless very sick or vicious, five days; then those unclaimed are humanely put to death except a limited number of desirable ones for which we can find good homes. We keep from twenty to thirty of the best of the cats and kittens to place in homes and the rest are put to death. . . . We do not keep a large number of animals alive. (xviii)

Such strategies became the national model for animal control by the time the American Humane Association (AHA) – the first national humane organization in the United States – was established in 1879.

Over the last century, this strategy has remained essentially unchanged at most animal shelters in the United States. Now many municipalities throughout the country contract animal control tasks to independent humane societies or SPCA’s. Although they share similar names and receive advice and support from their large national counterparts, these organizations are not directly affiliated with or operated by the current ASPCA or the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Currently, approximately eight million cats and dogs enter these shelters annually, of which three million will be killed. These statistics include many lost strays who could potentially be reclaimed by their guardians and feral cats who could potentially be neutered and returned to their habitats, both of which are contested issues within the larger controversy surrounding the killing of shelter pets.

Texas Companion Rescue
Henry Bergh’s philosophy provided the first formulation of the life-preserving approach that underlies the modern No Kill movement in companion animal rescue today. Contemporary companion animal rescue proponents generally fall into two camps, both of which employ a welfare approach. As the name suggests, No Kill proponents advocate a prohibition on killing any adoptable animal. The No Kill movement estimates that up to 90% of animals entering shelters (approximately seven million annually) are savable. It is this vast disparity – the additional three million animals who could be saved annually – that smolders at the center of the deeply contested controversy between No Kill advocates and those who believe that the traditional approach is the only way to address what they perceive as a severe animal overpopulation problem. There are many disagreements between the two sides over the efficacy of specific policy reforms and the severity of overpopulation as the primary issue facing shelters. It is important to note, however, that despite the heated rhetoric from each side of the debate, most of the human stake-holders involved share the goal of reducing the suffering of animals, even if they define what constitutes suffering differently.

While proponents of the traditional approach to managing homeless companion animal populations do see the killing of homeless animals as the only realistic and compassionate solution to minimizing the suffering of living animals, they have also expanded on the nineteenth century model with the incorporation of birth control into their repertoire of methods. Because they are probably the most visible face of animal activism, challenging the propriety of the treatment of animals for food, clothing, laboratory testing, and entertainment, people are often surprised to learn that People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is actually a major critic of the No Kill
movement. At their own Virginia shelter, PETA has over a 97% kill rate and euthanizes about 2000 animals a year. They even made the news recently when two overly eager PETA employees took a family’s Chihuahua from their porch and euthanized it. In an essay entitled “Why We Euthanize,” PETA director Ingrid Newkirk explains:

there is a world of difference between painlessly euthanizing animals out of compassion . . . and causing them to suffer terror, pain, and a prolonged death while struggling to survive on the streets. . . . It's easy to point the finger at those who are forced to do the "dirty work" caused by a throwaway society's casual acquisition and breeding of dogs and cats who end up homeless and unwanted. . . . Since 2001, PETA's low- to no-cost spay-and-neuter mobile clinics, SNIP and ABC, have sterilized more than 50,000 animals, preventing hundreds of thousands of animals from being born, neglected, abandoned, abused, or euthanized when no one wanted them. . . . As long as animals are still purposely bred and people aren't spaying and neutering their companions, open-admission animal shelters and organizations like PETA must do society's dirty work. Euthanasia is not a solution to overpopulation but rather a tragic necessity given the present crisis. . . . Please, if you care about animals, help prevent more of them from being born only to end up chained and left to waste away in people's back yards, suffering on mean streets where people kick at them or shoo them away like garbage, tortured at the hands of animal abusers, or, alas, euthanized in animal shelters for lack of a good home. If you want to save lives, always have your animals spayed or neutered. (2009)

As she mentions, shelters that do kill rescued animals refer to themselves as open admission shelters. Advocates for this approach often express an equal abhorrence for killing animals, but they see it as a necessary evil given the overpopulation of companion animals in the United States. In addition to seeing the killing of homeless animals as compassionate euthanasia that rescues them from the suffering inherent to a life outside of a human home36, this perspective emphasizes reducing the reproduction of animals

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36 As with other hotly contested social issues, word choices are politically charged. “Euthanasia” is the preferred term by critics of the No Kill movement. I have chosen to use the term “kill” here when referring to the action of ending the lives of shelter animals, however, because I find it to be the most value-neutral option between terms that connote a more critical perspective such as “slaughter” or “murder” and terms which connote a
through spaying and neutering as the only effective approach to reducing the number of animals killed in shelters. “Open Admission” refers to the fact that these shelters accept all animals that are surrendered by owners or brought in by animal control officers. A criticism often directed at No Kill shelters is that they are only able to avoid killing animals by selectively choosing which animals they admit based on adoptability criteria. In practice, though, No Kill shelters actually vary in the openness of their admissions policies, as illustrated by the first fieldwork site where I came to sanctuary.

Located in the relatively liberal capitol of Texas (Austinites commonly joke that they are an oasis of blue in a sea of red), Texas Companion Rescue began taking in rescued cats and dogs in 2008. The organization was founded by a group of No Kill activists who had been lobbying for the City of Austin to reduce the kill rate at the city shelter since the late 90’s. At a kill rate of over 50%, the Austin Animal Center (then called Town Lake Animal Center) – which, unlike most shelters across the country, is run by the city under its Department of Animal Services – was killing approximately 13,000 animals a year. Based on their estimates of available homes that would be willing to adopt, these activist were convinced that the city could reduce its kill rate to 10%. No Kill advocates define a No Kill shelter as one with a 90% live outcome rate, estimating that more euphemistic sanitization such as “put down” or “put to sleep.” Despite the argument that the lives of homeless animals constitute a type of suffering, I treat the term “euthanasia” as an example of the latter category since it connotes an act of killing intended to put a physically suffering being out of its misery, while the vast majority of animals who die in US shelters are in relatively good health. The term “kill” is neither intended as an endorsement of the No Kill perspective or a critique of their opposition. Rather, it is an attempt to use the most value-neutral yet still accurate term for this highly controversial practice. See Fawcett (2013) for a discussion of the politics of language surrounding the use of the term “euthanasia” in relation to the killing of animals.
approximately 10% of animals will either be too unhealthy to survive or too aggressive to safely adopt out.

Under the leadership of Dr. Samantha Marshall – a veterinarian who had been converted to the No Kill cause while working in Austin – and with a quickly expanding network of volunteers committed to reducing the city’s kill rate, Texas Companion Rescue quickly grew to rival the city shelter in capacity. Texas Companion Rescue’s approach was to take as many animals as they could from the kill list each day at the city shelter, thus freeing up more space for taking in new animals there. Texas Companion Rescue does not take in animals directly from the public, but continues to only take animals that have already been processed at the city shelter. This strategy, combined with an intense lobbying campaign by Texas Companion Rescue and other activists to get the city council to commit to achieving a No Kill save rate by the year 2011, resulted in Austin becoming the largest No Kill city in the country.

Although they are currently still maintaining that status, the pressure is always on. Texas Companion Rescue now relieves the city shelter of all its excess animals, preventing the overcrowding that would increase the kill rate, but they are only able to do so through intense adoption marketing campaigns, and a large, organized volunteer staff that makes it possible to care for all the rescued animals, some of whom stay in their shelter much longer than they would at a shelter that was regularly killing to reduce overcrowding. With this increased length of stay in shelter, many new issues related to animal care arise, one of the most important being the need to socialize (and keep socialized) animals that run the risk of becoming increasingly anti-social, and thus less adoptable, the longer they stay in the relative isolation of the shelter.
My first day at Texas Companion Rescue did not actually involve any work with the animals. They have hundreds of volunteers and have found it necessary to develop a highly organized and somewhat bureaucratic volunteer training system to maximize the efficiency of the time they invest in training. Before you can work with any animals, you must pay $20 to participate in an hour-long orientation that includes a short video about the history of the organization and the No Kill movement in Austin. Senior volunteers explain all the possible areas you can volunteer in – from cat or dog care to office work, donor outreach, the media team, and grounds maintenance. During the orientation, I sat in a large conference room in the administrative building of Texas Companion Rescue with about a hundred other volunteers of all ages and ethnicities. There seemed to be more teenagers (you have to be at least sixteen to volunteer) and retirement-aged people there than anyone else. Many people were wearing the brown t-shirt with an orange Texas Companion Rescue logo that we were given when we paid our registration fee. The air conditioning was not working in the room, so the back doors were propped open and giant fans were running at the back of the room to at least stir the sweltering, sticky air a bit.

Following the orientation, some people who knew they wanted to work with dogs or cats stayed around for breakout orientations about animal care. I chose a dog breakout group. My orientation leader was Pablo, a retired Cuban-American who taught himself how to train dogs. Pablo liked to work with the “problem” dogs that others were afraid to work with. He loved a challenge, and he loved even more the feeling of helping a dog learn the manners that could help it get adopted. Pablo had a plastic tube running along his arm and into the collar of his tank top. He had a heart problem, and the tube provided
a feed of medication directly to his heart that kept it beating regularly. Pablo needed a transplant and was near the top of the donor list for a new heart. I often worked closely with Pablo while I was at Texas Companion Rescue. Though his tube was often visible, his commitment to volunteering almost everyday in the baking summer heat and his energetic attitude made it easy to forget about his condition.

The dog orientation consisted of a demonstration of how to put the different types of leashes and collars on dogs – a body harness that fastened around a dog’s shoulders, a gentle lead that fastened around a dog’s muzzle, and a choke collar that slipped around a dog’s neck. Pablo also showed the procedure for entering a dog’s kennel: wait for the dog to sit; open the door enough to slip in and close and latch it behind you; put the leash on the dog and give her a treat if she’s calm (plastic boxes with treats hang between most of the kennel doors); wait for the dog to sit before opening the door; walk out ahead of the dog; and leave the gate open so others can tell the kennel is empty. Finally we learned what to do if a dog gets off leash: yell, “Dog off leash!” so staff can find the dog and get her back on a leash. You are not supposed to chase the dog because this may be misinterpreted as a game or a threat and cause the dog to run faster or turn and bite. If you are walking another dog and you hear “Dog off leash!” you are to step into the nearest open kennel with your dog and close the door. Dogs are to be kept apart unless a trainer who is familiar with their temperament is putting them together to play.

After the orientation, my first day was over. It took about two hours. A significant amount of volunteers never return to actually volunteer after the orientation. In addition to bringing in funding, the orientations help to filter out people who are not serious about
volunteering, which saves the senior volunteers from investing time in training people who will not come back.

Texas Companion Rescue is now based at the site where the city animal shelter used to be. The facility is a warren of interlinked medical buildings, offices, and covered dog kennels. While I was there, Texas Companion Rescue shared the facility with the city animal shelter, who used about a third of the kennels for overflow from their new facilities on the east side of town. The relocation of the city run shelter had the unintended side effect of steering more traffic to Texas Companion Rescue. I overheard many potential adopters commenting on how they either did not realize the city shelter had moved or intentionally came to the more centrally located facility because it was closer to them and easier to drive to. The facility is next to a large parking lot at the end of a road it only shares with a few soccer fields. It is also easy to walk to from downtown Austin or the landscaped recreation trail along the nearby Lady Bird Lake (formerly Town Lake, from which the facility derives its name, but recently renamed in honor of Lady Bird Johnson), a damned-up section of the Lower Colorado River that flows through the center of the city.

Austin ranges from uncomfortably hot to oppressively hot for about two-thirds of the year, and during the other third it is often surprisingly cold. Due to this weather, the cats at Texas Companion Rescue are kept in doors. The dogs, however, live year round in the outdoor kennels. They are given blankets and mats during cold weather, but most of the year these are unnecessary. The rest of the time the shaded kennels are kept cool by a series of misting hoses strung above the rows of kennels.
The kennels themselves are basically crumbling concrete cells with rusted metal gates on the front and back and rusted cyclone fencing along the top – some of the dogs can jump several feet into the air, and could escape if the tops were not enclosed. Each kennel has a front and back area divided by a concrete wall. There is a square hole in each of these walls with a wooden, sliding guillotine door on a cable that can be lowered down from outside to close a dog in either the front or back portion. This is especially useful when a volunteer needs to go into one side of a kennel space where a potentially dangerous dog resides. Most of the time, the doorway between the front and back is kept open to allow the dogs to choose where they want to be.

The kennels run in long rows that form three sides of a large rectangle with a courtyard in the middle. Each row has thirty to forty individual kennels running along the front and back sides. The spaces on the outside front and back of each row form the front areas of each kennel, and the rear areas of each kennel face each other across a walkway running through the inside of each row. Sidewalks along the front spaces allow visitors to see dogs, while the walkway between the rear sections of the kennel spaces allow volunteers to see and interact with dogs that choose not to lie in the front portions.

Each day over a dozen volunteers come throughout the day to walk dogs. And others work indoors cleaning up after, feeding, and providing any needed medical treatments to the cats. Texas Companion Rescue has developed a color-coded collar system that categorizes dogs based on their behavior tendencies. Only volunteers who have gone through multiple trainings can walk the dogs that have been determined by the staff dog trainers to have behavioral issues such as leash aggression, which manifests as barking, growling, or snapping at other people and animals while they are on a leash.
Dog-walkers usually take the dogs to fenced-in runs at the rear of the property or one of the small fenced-in yards in the central courtyard. The least hyper, most gentle dogs are generally walked the most often because their collar level – blue – is the basic level all volunteers start at. Since many volunteers are not qualified above this level, the blue dogs are the only ones they can walk. Generally the more training a particular collar color requires or the more intimidating a dog is to volunteers, the less often she is walked. Each fenced-in area has a garbage can and a long-handled scooper for cleaning up dog feces. Most volunteers are good about cleaning up after dogs when they walk them, and both volunteers and paid staff members clean up after dogs when they notice they have soiled their kennel. Despite this vigilance, the sheer amount of waste produced by the hundreds of dogs on site at any given time produces a pungent aroma of ammonia and methane that is always faintly wafting through the air.

Texas Companion Rescue has a long term plan to build new facilities, hopefully on their current location. Although volunteers struggle to keep the facilities clean and to repair the worn infrastructure as doors fall off hinges or pieces of fencing rust through, the organization sees occupying the decades-old former city shelter building as a temporary situation. Such concerns about the conditions of the shelter are tied to a major critique of the No Kill movement, which is that refraining from killing animals will lead to hoarding. In fact, this issue is one that resonates for sanctuaries in general: not every one with the desire to rescue animals has the means to do it. This is something I learned firsthand at the first exotic sanctuary where I conducted fieldwork.

Rainbow Haven
Unlike the gradual introduction to volunteer work I experienced at Texas Companion Rescue, my first day at my second field site immediately confronted me with the visceral realities of animal care. “We have to dispose of the testicles,” Joan said, handing me a plastic bucket from the refrigerator in the garage. The bucket was full of large purplish organs about the size of my fist, snaked with veins of white connective tissue. There were about a dozen. They sat in a shallow pool of dark blood. Brighter red, clotty globs stuck to the sides of the bucket.

“Whose testicles are these?” I asked.

“They’re from some rams we had to castrate the other day,” said Seth, one of the veterinary interns. There were three interns: John, who grew up in Hawaii and had just finished his second year of veterinary school at the University of Washington; who was from Long Island and had just finished his second year at Cornell’s veterinary school, and Kristin, who was from Southern California, had just graduated from UC Davis with a pre-vet major, and was hoping to return to Davis to attend the vet school there. A tenant staying at a property about three-quarters of a mile further up the volcano from the ranch had called Joan for help with some sheep that had been abandoned there by the property owner. He moved to Australia without bothering to arrange for anyone to care for his sheep. None of the other tenants on the property cared about the sheep, so it fell to this one to try to look after them, even though she did not know anything about sheep. The males were hard to handle, so Joan decided castration would help to mellow them out while giving the interns the opportunity to practice the relatively simple surgery.
Seth held a garbage bag for me while I poured the bucket into it with a wet “schlorp!”

“Where are the testicles going,” I asked?

“In the garbage.”

This was my first task at Rainbow Haven, an exotic animal sanctuary on the big island of Hawaii. The grounds are several acres of landscaped property on the volcanic slope above Kona. Joan and her husband Sam bought it so they could raise horses there, but their plans changed in a quite dramatic way. When Joan came to sanctuary, it happened in a flash – literally. Unfortunately, Joan was severely injured when she was struck in the mouth by a bolt of lightning at their wedding. It took her a long time to recover, and she grew very depressed. The part of her brain that processes speech was affected, and she struggled to regain her ability to communicate normally again. Seeing how hard she was taking it, Sam, a surgeon, came to her and asked, “What do you want? Just name it. Name anything that will help you, and I’ll help you get it.”

“Giraffe,” she told him. She probably meant something like “Take me to Paris,” she told me later as she relayed the story, but the word “giraffe” is what came out. It was an incredibly fortuitous synaptic misfire because there happened to be two giraffes on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Sam had just read about an exotic animal park that was closing there and was trying to find homes for its animals.

“If you can figure out how to get them here, we can build a home for it,” he told her. And she did. She put all her time and energy into researching how she could ship the giraffes to the big island by boat, what kind of facilities they would need when they got there, and how she would care for them. She credits this all-consuming mission with
pulling her out of her depression and giving her the motivation she needed to struggle through rehabilitation therapy.

After she had already made all the arrangements to transport the giraffes, the Honolulu Zoo contacted her. They wanted her to give them the giraffes instead. She was reluctant, but they persuaded her that they were better equipped to care for the giraffes. Acquiescing to the zoo is her biggest regret. The giraffes were overly sedated and died in transport. Rather than sinking back into a deeper depression, though, Joan decided that if she could not save the giraffes, she would save other animals. So she turned her home into an exotic animal sanctuary.

When I arrived she had dozens of rescued parrots and other exotic birds, flamingos, waterfowl, chickens, owls, a Hawaiian hawk, an American bison, two zebras, a capuchin monkey, two Rhesus macaques, two ostriches, five giant African spur-thighed tortoises, three horses, several goats and sheep, three alpacas, a llama, and a peacock. The grounds of the sanctuary are meticulously landscaped – weeding is a Sisyphean task in the tropical climate there. Animal areas are cleaned regularly, and the mornings and afternoons are filled with a carefully planned feeding schedule. Joan often uses the sanctuary’s annual USDA inspection as a constant reminder to volunteers to keep the sanctuary clean, the animals well fed and watered, and to report any unsafe conditions to her right away. In the afternoon of my first day volunteering there, we repaired some of the fencing around the zebra enclosure. Sometimes the wires in the fence separate from each other when the zebras lean against it, and we were tying them back together with more wire. “If we’d left the fence like this, what would Bobby Lynch say?” she said, pronouncing the man’s name with the thick southern drawl that I assumed was an
imitation of his accent. Bobby Lynch was the USDA inspector for the island. Even if she was never inspected, though, one gets the sense that Joan would run her sanctuary exactly the same way.

*Roosevelt Farm Sanctuary*

My first day at Roosevelt Farm Sanctuary fell somewhere in the middle between the slow introduction at Texas Companion Rescue and the excitement of my first day at Rainbow Haven. I arrived a few minutes after noon. The twenty-three-acre sanctuary for formerly farmed animals sits in a little valley with no cell phone reception in rural New York State. That day the valley was surrounded by fiery hills of red, yellow, and gold trees on the verge of shedding their foliage for the winter. Sturdy, well-built, new-looking fences lined the dirt drive. Goats roamed in the pasture on the other side, leaning on their front knees to bite at patches of grass.

I parked in a small gravel parking lot ("Park snuggly," a cartoon dog on a sign requested) next to a two-story brown wooden house with a landscaped yard. Another sign stated that the house was a "private residence," while a few others pointed the way to the visitor center, where they suggested I should check-in. I learned later that the home belonged to Rita Johnson and Ted Klein, the founders. Following a week she spent filming animal abuse while undercover at stockyards in Texas, Rita decided to go into animal care fulltime. After interning at Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen so she could learn all the ins-and-outs of farm animal care, she and Ted bought this property in 2004 to start their own sanctuary.
After I snuggly parked my car between two other cars with bumper stickers extolling the virtues of veganism, I walked down a dirt path through a hinged gate and past two large barns to the visitor center, a freestanding brown wooden building about half the size of the barns. I passed a woman with pink hair and solarized glasses who was pushing a wheelbarrow. I smiled as we nodded hello at each other. The visitor center was unlocked, but it looked closed. Nobody was there, and the table was covered in sheets. The email confirmation I received about volunteering gave me the impression there would be more people around, or at least that they'd be expecting me. I went back outside and asked the woman with pink hair where I should go or whom I should talk to. "Talk to Janice," she said. It turned out that the woman with pink hair was a volunteer. Unfortunately, I did not catch her name and never saw her again after that first day.

I turned around and saw another woman wearing a “staff” t-shirt walking out of the large barn next to the visitor center. She had shoulder-length, dark hair and several tattoos on her arms. "Hi, I'm Janice," she said; I picked up how to spell it from the walkie-talkie on her hip that had a strip of yellow tape with her name on it.

She brought me back into the visitor center and had me fill out an electronic waiver of liability form on an iPad mounted on one of the sheet-covered desks. I later learned that the sheets were there to keep the desks clean when chickens from the adjacent medical facility wandered in. I went back outside to find her, and she suggested I take a self-guided tour of the sanctuary before starting. While she was explaining where to walk, a donkey strolled over, green water pouring from the corners of her mouth (either from a big gulp of water she had just swallowed or some really juicy grass). She
stuck her head in Janice's lap for an ear scratch, green rivulets dripping on the caregiver's jeans. Janice smiled and obliged.

I gave the donkey a few scratches of my own and then strolled down to a pasture with several huge bulls who had to be at least six feet high at the withers. A few goats, turkeys, and roosters wandered free along the paths between fenced-in areas. As I walked along a chicken enclosure, dozens of hens ran along next to me as though they were expecting some kind of treat. I found out later that that is exactly what they were expecting – like the Kapparot chickens, these birds were what are called “broilers” in the chicken industry. Because of genetic manipulation through selective breeding, they are pretty much always hungry and will peck at anything that looks like it might be food.

As I walked along the dirt road that made a ring in the center of the sanctuary, I passed five other chicken enclosures, a pig enclosure in the center, and a duck enclosure with its own pond. When I found Janice again, she was crouched by a small fenced area next to the visitor center with three white female turkeys in it. A fourth female stood next to her, pecking at the design on the back of her hand. "She likes to peck at my tattoos; she thinks they're lice," she said. I put out my hand, and the turkey began pecking at my fingers too. It did not hurt at all because the tip of the top half of her beak was missing. The upper part of her beak just ended in a jagged line about a quarter of an inch from the tip of the lower part. A tiny bit of pink tongue was visible in the gap where the missing piece should have been. She had been "de-beaked" as a chick, a process in which the tip is either cut or burned off with a blade or hot wire. The tip is very sensitive, and the extremely painful procedure is usually conducted with no anesthetic. Any concern in the poultry industry for the suffering "de-beaking" causes birds seems to be outweighed by
the financial cost of buying anesthetic or finding an alternate way to house the birds that
does not lead to the intense overcrowding and stressed-out pecking behavior they hope to
minimize by clipping the beaks. "She also really likes it when you rub her chest," Janice
said. I scratched the bird’s feathery chest, and she looked at me with dark, potentially
pleased eyes.

Janice showed me where I would be working that day: the duck coop, a two room
wooden shed with several inches of wood chips on the floor. While she was there, Janice
introduced me to Sasha the rooster who lived with the ducks instead of the other
chickens. He also had a deformed beak, but this seemed to be congenital rather than the
result of amputation. The top of the beak curved sharply to the side rather than running
parallel to the bottom part. This made it harder for him to stand up to other roosters that
might mess with him, so he lived with the ducks instead. He had a duck companion who
followed him everywhere he went while I was cleaning.

There were a few bowls of clean water sitting among the wood chips in the coop.
Piles of duck feces were scattered across the wood chips and sticking in clumps to the
bottoms of the walls and door frames. I used a rake, shovel, broom, and paint scraper to
clean all the old wood shavings and duck feces from the structure, loading it into a
wheelbarrow and dumping several loads into the giant, rusty, yellow scoop on the front of
a farm tractor Janice had parked outside the duck fence. Working until about four, it took
me most of the afternoon to clean the shed.

At one point, one of the ducks must have taken a bath in one of the clean water
bowls I left outside while I was cleaning because when I came out it was murky with dirt
and a few feathers floated on the surface. I walked back to the main office to ask Janice
where to find water to clean the bowl. She was sitting with another woman who introduced herself as Monica. They were smoking cigarettes while they stroked a goat. The goat, named Bowie, was born a male, but they referred to Bowie as “she” because she “mellowed out and lost her beard” after she was castrated.

I asked where I could fill the bowl and they directed me toward a pump hooked up to a hose, but I could not get it to bring up any water other than a trickle dripping out of the connection between two hoses. So I put the bowl under the drip and rinsed it out each time it had enough water, repeating this action several times until it was clean. I turned off the water, but it kept trickling at the same pace as before.

When I was done with the ducks, I went to see if there was any more work to do. Janice and Monica were feeding the pigs. The first time you witness pigs being fed is a frightening experience. The pigs literally start screaming once they know they are about to be served. It is a deafening, disconcerting, high-pitched squeal that sounds to people unfamiliar with pigs more like they think they are about to die than they think they are about to chow down. Three black-spotted pigs isolated by themselves in the large barn for goats, sheep and cows screamed back in what seemed like a call and response pattern. They were young pigs who had just come to the sanctuary and were only staying temporarily before being transported to a different sanctuary. Pig social groups seem to have complex politics, and caregivers need to be cautious when trying to blend new individuals into a group to avoid violence.

There was nothing left for me to do that day, so I washed my hands at an outdoor sink by the infirmary, which occupied half of the visitor center building. As I was drying my hands, another staff person walked by. She introduced herself as Pattie, the events
coordinator. We walked toward the parking lot together and passed a goat named Polk. At fourteen years old, Polk is the oldest goat at the sanctuary. She was wearing a special goat jacket Velcro-ed around her body to keep her warm. Pattie mentioned that she had been throwing up recently, which may be due to liver problems. As we approached the pig enclosure, Pattie stopped to scratch the huge floppy ears of a full-grown sow through the fence. “This is Petunia,” she said, introducing me to the pig. Petunia is from North Carolina. She escaped from a farm or slaughterhouse when she was young and was found running down the road. She was rescued by a couple who eventually found her a home at the sanctuary. When you scratch her chin, Petunia grunts with a chuckling sound, “Huff, huff, huff.”

“That’s the sound pigs make when they’re happy,” Pattie explained.

Impropriety

If there is one basic principle underlying sanctuary caregivers’ ideas of proper human-animal relationships, it is that if animals are fortunate enough to make it to sanctuary, their lives there should be as free as possible from human control. Activists typically establish sanctuaries with the goal of creating spaces where “animals can live out their lives to be who they are without any obligations,” in the words of Amanda, one of my companions from the chicken rescue. This ideal functions more as an aspiration than a fully attainable goal. As I will explain in later chapters, the necessities of captivity – even in a sanctuary – require certain restrictions on animals’ free exercise of agency. But in practice, this principle guides efforts to create lived spaces in which animals are
treated as fellow subjects with at least some interests and needs equal to those of their human cohabitors, in contradistinction to the ways animals are often treated as property in more conventional contexts. The differences stand out clearly in sanctuaries focused on the care of formerly farmed animals or exotic animals like Roosevelt or Rainbow Haven, where the daily lives of these animals are significantly different than they were prior to rescue. With rescued companion animals such as cats and dogs, the differences are less obvious since these animals are often treated more like family than property outside the sanctuary context as well.37

Ultimately, though, even perfectly healthy cats and dogs can be legally euthanized by their owners, underscoring their legal status as living property. Take, for example, the 2014 case of the dog Excalibur in Spain. His owner, Teresa Romero Ramos, is a Spanish nurse who contracted Ebola after treating infected patients from Sierra Leone. While her husband and several health workers who came into contact with her were placed in quarantine, Excalibur was euthanized, even though there was no indication he had contracted the virus. Thousands of protesters took to the streets in Spain and more than 390,000 people signed an international petition to spare his life, whereas, the New York Times noted, at that same time about 150,000 people had signed a petition urging the Food and Drug Administration to fast-track research on a potential vaccine and treatment for Ebola (Minder and Belluck 2014). As philosopher Lori Gruen argues in an op-ed in *Time* magazine, “Spanish authorities weren’t thinking of Excalibur’s life as valuable or of how devastating his death would be to his family [because] . . . animal lives are thought

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37 Although see Shir-Virtesh (2012) for an analysis of human-pet relationships in Israel where, she argues, pets are sometimes treated as “flexible persons,” losing their familial status when human children enter the family.
to be worth less than those of humans. If authorities can come and kill your family members because it is expedient, then we may be heading down a path that is more frightening than the virus itself” (2014). This idea, that dogs are not just like family members but literally are family members, is shared by many of the caregivers and activists I encountered throughout my research.

Ideas about the proper and improper way to treat animals are not, however, homogeneous across animal activist communities, and that is especially the case in the arena of cat and dog rescue, as evidence by the No Kill / Open Admission schism in the companion animal shelter community. PETA, for example, sees euthanasia as the compassionate response – similar to what one might provide for a terminally ill human family member – to the suffering of animals that have been discarded as unwanted property. However, starting from the same position that animals should be treated as family rather than property, sanctuary activists reach the opposite conclusion precisely because the sanctuary is a space for fostering the kind of “improper” relationships that challenge an animal-property system.

Of course, this system is deeply entrenched. Even wild animals can easily be drawn into a property-based relationship with humans. Seeming to draw on a Lockean labor theory of property, courts in the United States have found that “wild animals reduced from the wild state in compliance with applicable law become property of an individual” (Braverman 2013, 152, citing the court’s decision in Animal Protection, Education, and Information Foundation v. Friends of the Zoo for Springfield, Missouri, Inc.). There are some limits to property rights in animals, though. Legal theorist David Favre points out that as “living property” animals do in fact possess limited basic rights
under anti-cruelty statutes, specifically the rights to be free from pain and the right to have their basic sustenance needs met (Favre 2010, 1033). Nonetheless, as legal theorist Maneesha Deckha observes, law is an anthropocentric institution: “Statutes that purport to protect animals are limited in their effect since they are founded on and interpreted through anthropocentric assumptions about animal inferiority and reside in an overall legal framework that subordinates animals through their property classification” (2013, 813).

What then do these improper relationships look like? To better illustrate how activists oppose conventional norms of relating to animals as living property, I will focus on the example of poultry. The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act ostensibly places small limits on property rights in livestock by requiring that livestock be rendered insensible prior to being slaughtered, but the USDA has explicitly exempted poultry from even this minimum protection. This likely both contributes to and results from the fact that more poultry is raised and killed for food now than all other land animals put together. More than 7 billion chickens are slaughtered per year in the United States, and another 452 million are housed in factory farms for egg production. This intensity of production has also resulted in more poultry being rescued and cared for in sanctuaries than any other type of farmed animal. Poultry thus serve as a model case in the animal-property system since poultry owners are legally free to treat them or dispose of them in whatever manner they choose. For this reason, poultry living under the control of industrial agriculture also provide a perfect example of bestia sacer.

In stark contrast to the commodification of poultry bodies, however, activists like June (one of the chicken rescuers from the introduction) bring these birds into their
homes and beds to live together as companions. Thanksgiving, in particular, has become a focus for challenging the “proper” treatment of poultry through the inversion of the central role played by the bodies of turkeys on this holiday. Roosevelt holds a turkey-centered festival this time of year called “ThanksLiving,” and many other sanctuaries for formerly farmed animals hold similar festivals this time of year. Intended as fundraising and educational events, visitors participate in vegan Thanksgiving-style feasts and are then invited to help serve the turkeys at the sanctuary their own feasts of raw pumpkin pie, cranberries, and other fruits and vegetables. Perhaps the most improper activist tactic of all is the one I described in the introduction: the act of simply taking animals from those with proper legal property claims, flouting the law in order to give animals the lives activists think they deserve. What the owners would describe as theft of their living property, these activists describe as liberation of living subjects. Taking animals in this way is a radical refusal of property-based human-animal relationships that challenges the ideological basis of such relationships by forcefully enacting their opposite: relationships based on a recognition of animals as subjects who cannot be owned by another being regardless of what the laws say.

Reminiscent of Engels’ assertion that theft is “the most primitive form of protest” (Engels 1969, 240), activists like the chicken rustlers I rode with practice a form of what Hobsbawm theorized as social banditry - a type of peasant protest and rebellion (1969). Unlike Robin Hood-style social bandits, however, these bandits are stealing property not to give it away to those who lack wealth but to give the property over to itself, to liberate it from its property-ness. In a sense, they give animals property rights in themselves. Although bandits and caregivers cannot extend legal rights to animals or force the courts
to recognize animals as legal persons, by treating them as subjects entitled to rights, they essentially imbue the animals with *de facto* rights, at least in the context of their relationships with them. But there is a paradoxical irony in this act because, while saved from being a particular form of property – a disposable prop in a religious ceremony, for example – the animals do not ultimately fully shed the property-status that made their theft possible in the first place. As Hobsbawm observes, “the crucial fact about the bandit’s position is its ambiguity. . . . [T]he more successful he is as a bandit, the more he is both a representative and champion of the poor and a part of the system of the rich” (1969, 19). Similarly the more successful these bandits are at liberating animals, the more those animals are reintegrated back into a system of property. This is because the lives of animals in sanctuaries are made possible by the fact that legally they remain property, only now they are property of the sanctuary. Despite the forging of relationships based on the caregivers’ recognition of their other-than-human subjectivity, legally speaking animals remain property without the rights of legal persons. Even in the case of compassionate euthanasia, the animals are so easily killable precisely because they are not legal persons.

This ouroboros-shaped pattern of de-propertization through propertization is similar to what we see in the model of the creative commons license, in which people can surrender their copyright interests in intellectual property by granting certain usages of

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38This is an ongoing strategy employed by other animal advocates though. In 2012, PETA filed a lawsuit against SeaWorld seeking to establish protection for five orcas under the Constitution’s 13th Amendment, which prohibits slavery. The presiding judge ruled that the 13th Amendment does not apply to orcas, however (see *infra* note 94). In 2015, the Nonhuman Rights Project (NRP) filed a lawsuit on behalf of Hercules and Leo, two chimpanzees being used for research at Stony Brook University. The lawsuit sought the release of the two chimpanzees based on a right to bodily liberty, though it was unsuccessful.
that property. But the reason why the creative commons licenses that grant certain uses retain legal weight is that they are supported by the underlying copyright that the holder could reassert whenever a work is not used in accordance with the license. They subvert the system of copyright but are also only possible within it.

In the space of the sanctuary and in their homes and private relationships with animals, activists can model improper ways of relating to animals as subjects rather than property, but as long as rescued animals’ social and political lives can only exist within the sanctuary – as long as sanctuaries are the only zones of exception from a world of bare life – then those lives will generate ethically problematic questions, such as what it means to be free when your whole world is enclosed by a fence. And despite activist aspirations, sanctuary animals are also not totally free from harm or control within those fences. As I will show in later chapters, practices of care are necessarily entangled with forms of violence or harm. While spaying and neutering, for example, serve sanctuaries’ larger rescue mission by ensuring as much space as possible for more rescues, they also inflict violence on the bodies of animals. In working through the contradictions and dilemmas created by the social and material conditions sanctuaries face, activists are creating emergent forms of animal ethics that are adapted to the realities of trying to live differently with animals. But the internal contradictions of captive freedom reveal that these animals are neither fully autonomous subjects nor property. They are instead improperty, living beings within a shifting spectrum between property and subjecthood, possessing limited rights within the sanctuary context even though they are not legal persons.
In her research on a wildlife rehabilitation center in Guatemala, geographer Rosemary-Claire Collard discovered a parallel but significantly different process of unmaking and making human-animal relationships (2014). This facility takes in wild-caught animals rescued from the exotic pet trade so they can be de-habituated to humans and re-released to the wild. Collard argues that this work of rehabilitation entails taking apart animals’ lives as commodities and putting back together their lives as wild animals (152). While the sanctuaries I studied also seek to unmake the lives of animals as property, they do not seek to replace those lives with new ones free from human interference. Due to the larger political-economic and legal contexts that make it impossible for animals to be full rights-bearing subjects outside of sanctuaries, humans will always be a part of their lives. So instead of trying to sever animals entirely from their dependency on humans like Collard’s rehabilitation center, they endeavor to unmake property-based relationships with animals by forging alternative relationships with them. However, the same political-economic and socio-legal factors that would render animals bestia sacer outside sanctuaries also place constraints on these alternative relationships within sanctuaries. Put simply, property-based relationships transform into improperty-based relationships as sanctuary workers try to enact their visions for human-animal sociality while navigating the dilemmas and contradictions of sanctuary work. Understanding this transformation reveals some of the limitations that confront sanctuaries in their efforts to move society closer to realizing animal activists’ visions for human-animal relations.
Chapter Two: History of US Animal Activism

Animal sanctuaries are one part of a complex array of efforts made to improve the lives of animals. Animal activism in the contemporary United States currently takes many forms and is engaged in by activists with a wide range of political and moral philosophies, employing and debating over an equally wide range of strategies and tactics, and seeking to enact diverse visions for the future of human-animal relations. These goals include everything from making farming practices or animal testing more humane to abolishing all human use of animals and liberating all captive animals from human control. While such a multifaceted activist constellation as this strains against being categorized within the bounds of one movement, these activists do share two overarching common goals: advocating for humans to shift away from relating to animals as things and toward relating to them as subjects with their own interests worthy of consideration, and protecting animals (at least to some extent) from what activists see as the deprivations and violence that have been historically inflicted on them by humans. For this reason, I refer to this vast field of activism under the umbrella terms of the “animal advocacy movement” or the “animal protection movement” (see Gruen 2011, 192). The philosophical history of this movement is over two millennia old, and the activist traditions that sprouted from this philosophical genealogy can be traced back to at least the nineteenth century in England.

The movement’s history is a history of praxis, for the movement has always been and continues to be about transforming ideas as well as actions. We are unfortunately limited in our ability to know what people were thinking and saying about human-animal relations before they started recording those thoughts in writing. But almost as soon as
they did, they were debating about how animals should be treated. Since that time, ideas about humans’ existential significance in relation to other animals have shaped the debate, especially the idea of human exceptionalism – the notion (introduced in the previous chapter) that humans are uniquely gifted with cognitive faculties that justify their supremacy over nature, including all other animals. 39 In order to trace the ideological roots of the contemporary animal protection movement, this chapter will provide a history of the philosophical genealogy of the debates over human exceptionalism and its normative implications for human-animal relations. It will then examine how these ideas eventually inspired early animal activism, tracing how the twin strands of philosophy and action continued to dialectically influence each other, leading to the conditions from which the animal sanctuary movement arose.

Greek Antiquity and Early Christianity: Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents

The contemporary US animal protection movement has ideological moorings in European philosophical traditions stretching as far back as Greek antiquity, as do many ideas about proper human-animal relations that animal activists seek to challenge. This chapter traces the European philosophical lineage of the contemporary US animal protection movement, but to a lesser extent the movement also draws inspiration from non-Western philosophical traditions. Some contemporary animal protection activists and vegans, for example, reference the Jainist principle of ahimsa, or non-violence toward all

39 As Donna Haraway defines it, human exceptionalism is “the premise that humanity alone is not a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies” (2008, 11; see Chapter One).
living things, in articulating their moral views regarding the treatment of animals. Possibly dating as far back as the sixth century BCE, the Indian religion Jainism may provide the oldest philosophical argument for non-violence toward animals, but its influence on the philosophical genealogy of the modern animal protection movement described in this chapter seems to have mostly been a relatively recent phenomenon. Satya, a US magazine that focused on vegetarianism, environmentalism, animal advocacy, and social justice (published from 1994 – 2007), also borrowed its title from a more recent Indian philosophical principle: satyagraha. A Sanskrit word that approximately translates as “insistence on truth,” the concept was formulated by Mahatma Ghandi as a form of nonviolent civil resistance inspired by ahimsa. This concept later influenced activists in other social movements as well, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela.

The earliest supporter of animals in European philosophical history may be the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 490 BCE). Most famous for discovering the Pythagorean theorem, Pythagoras is known as the “father of numbers,” but he was arguably also the father of animal advocacy. As a proponent of animism, he thought that humans and other animals shared the same immortal souls, which transmigrated back and forth across species barriers during reincarnation (Steiner 2005, 47). Although conflicting historical accounts make it difficult to confirm, he is alleged to have opposed violence toward humans and other animals alike and to have advocated vegetarianism. In her article “Pythagoras – The First Animal Rights Philosopher,” Mary Ann Violin – a representative of the Animal Action Information Service in Ohio – explains that Pythagoras
expressed horror of men who inserted the dead bodies of... creatures into their bodies, eating “the sad flesh of the murdered beast.” He warned them, “as you eat your joints of lamb and beef... know that your feast was of good friends and neighbors.” Butchers, said Pythagoras, are impervious to the pleadings of a lamb or calf despite the fact that their cries are similar to a baby’s cries. (1990, 123)

Pythagoras, she argues, “was the first to introduce these beliefs to Greece and the Western world” (ibid.). He may have even practiced the first acts of “animal liberation” from captivity, buying animals at markets so that he could set them free (see Angus 2003, 34; Ryder 2000, 17).

On the other hand, the far more influential philosopher Aristotle (c. 384 – c. 322 BCE) laid the conceptual groundwork for the anthropocentric ideology of human exceptionalism with his *scala naturae* (Latin for “ladder of nature”), a hierarchical biological classification scheme that placed humans at the top above all others animals due to their capacity to reason and use language. He further cemented this hierarchy with the philosophical justification for the human use of animals in the first book of his *Politics*, where he argued that human domination of animals is natural and proper and that an inversion of this hierarchy or even equality between the two would be harmful to the natural order – a logic he also applied to male domination over women and Greek domination of slaves (Serpell 1996, 151-4; see also Sorabji 1993).

After Aristotle, there were other philosophers who, like Pythagoras, opposed violence against animals. Theophrastus (c. 371 – c. 287 BCE), one of Aristotle’s students, opposed both meat-eating and animal sacrifice on the grounds that animals were like humans in their abilities to reason and experience the world (see Angus 2003, 35; Serpell

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40 Ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood employs the term “anthrocentrism” to highlight how in ecological theory this concept functions similarly to androcentrism and ethnocentrism in feminist and anti-racist theory, respectively (1993; 1996).
Diogenes of Sinope (c. 412 – c. 323 BCE), a contemporary of Plato and founder of the Cynics, lived a life of poverty, begging for food and sleeping in a large jar in the marketplace, which he compared positively to the behavior of dogs, holding them up as symbols of truth and virtue. In a book examining the cross-cultural history and moral implications of pet-keeping, animal behaviorist and ethicist James Serpell states that Diogenes “made the radical claim that animals were in fact superior to humans in most respects” (1996, 152), though there is no indication that Diogenes’ beliefs translated into explicit advocacy for better treatment of animals. Like Theophrastus, though, the Greek historian and moral philosopher Plutarch (c. 46 – c. 127 CE) advocated ethical vegetarianism on the grounds that animals possessed both intelligence and the capacity to suffer. In “On the Eating of Animal Flesh,” an essay in the twelfth volume of his fifteen-volume collection of moral essays called the Moralia, he laments that neither the “persuasiveness of the harmonious voice[s]” of animals nor “the unusual intelligence that may be found in the poor wretches” dissuades humans from killing them for food.41 Imploring meat-eaters to place more value on animals’ abilities “of feeling, of seeing, of hearing, of imagination, and of intellection; which each animal hath received from Nature for the acquiring of what is agreeable to it, and the avoiding what is disagreeable,” he passionately condemns the eating of animals:

Can you really ask what reason Pythagoras had for abstaining from flesh? For my part I rather wonder both by what accident and in what state of soul or mind the first man who did so, touched his mouth to gore and brought his lips to the flesh of a dead creature, he who set forth tables of dead, stale bodies and ventured to call food and nourishment the parts that had a little before bellowed and cried,
moved and lived. How could his eyes endure the slaughter when throats were slit and hides flayed and limbs torn from limb? How could his nose endure the stench? How was it that the pollution did not turn away his taste, which made contact with the sores of others and sucked juices and serums from mortal wounds? (Plutarch 1957, 12)

The rhetoric and graphic imagery employed by Plutarch sounds remarkably similar to what one would find in contemporary vegetarian outreach materials and video exposés of the violence inflicted on animals in modern industrialized slaughterhouses.

Approximately a century later, the Neo-Platonist Porphyry of Tyre (c. 232- c. 309 CE) synthesized these early strains of animal advocacy in a treatise entitled On Abstinence from Animal Food, in which he argued that animals were sentient and possessed a limited ability to reason and communicate. For these reasons, he strongly opposed the killing of animals for any reason other than self-defense, as he argues in book two of the treatise:

But with respect to other animals who do not at all act unjustly, and are not naturally impelled to injure us, it is certainly unjust to destroy and murder them, no otherwise than it would be to slay men who are not iniquitous. And this seems to evince that the justice between us and other animals does not arise from some of them being naturally noxious and malefic, but others not, as is also the case with respect to men. (1851, 29)

Notably, he extends the idea of justice to animals as well as humans, a principle underlying contemporary arguments for animal rights. Foreshadowing the influential role Christian thinkers would play in solidifying human exceptionalism as a dominant worldview, Porphyry also explicitly criticized Christian attitudes toward animals, among a range of other criticisms against the young religious movement in his fifteen volume treatise Against the Christians and in other writings. According to Serpell, for example, he “attacked the insensitivity of the Christian Jesus who drove a madman’s demons into a
herd of helpless Gadarene swine when he could just as easily have banished them from the Universe” (1996, 152-53; see also Sorabji 1993).

Despite these philosophical arguments on behalf of animals, the anthropocentric Aristotelian framework for human-animal relations seized European civilizations in a hegemonic grip that would last for almost two millennia as early Christian philosophers embraced and expounded on it. It is possible that without this influence, Christian teachings might have evolved along an alternate course regarding the animal question. The Old Testament provides ideological justifications for an anthropocentric worldview as well as arguments for compassionate treatment of animals. The tenet that provides the clearest parallel to Aristotle’s human-dominated *scala naturae* is the passage in the Book of Genesis that states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”43 This idea is reiterated following the biblical flood when the Judeo-Christian god tells Noah, “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.”44 These lines provide the canonical basis for the belief that the earth, its resources, and all the other living beings on it are intended by the Judeo-Christian god to serve the needs of humans.

This Judeo-Christian idea of human dominion over nature has found its way into contemporary conflicts over the environment and the treatment of animals. Many Christians interpret this dominion over nature to include a responsibility of responsible

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43 Genesis 1:26 (*King James Bible*).
44 Genesis 9:2 (*King James Bible*).
stewardship over nature. Some Christians refer to this stewardship as “creation care.” Organizations like the Evangelical Climate Initiative and the Evangelical Environmental Network are part of an increasing “greening of evangelicals” (Harden 2005). In 2015, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical exhorting Catholics to take action against the ecological crises facing the globe, invoking humans’ responsibility of stewardship over the earth. Specifically applying this principle to animals, Mathew Scully – conservative Republican and former speech writer for George W. Bush – wrote Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy (2002), a critique of the mistreatment of animals in factory farms, trophy hunts, and other contexts based on the idea that humans bear a responsibility to not abuse the animals over which they have dominion. There has also been a backlash against the doctrine of “creation care” from evangelical Christians who either believe that their god designed the ecosystem to function perfectly regardless of human activities or that their god provided the earth as a temporary resource to use up until the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Cornwall Alliance, an evangelical climate change-denying organization, provides an example of the former view in their declaration: “We believe Earth and its ecosystems — created by God’s intelligent design and infinite power and sustained by His faithful providence — are robust, resilient, self-regulating, and self-correcting, admirably suited for human flourishing, and displaying His glory” (quoted in Rudolf 2010). Mark Driscoll an influential former pastor at a Seattle-based evangelical mega-church provides an example of the latter with a comment he made in 2013 at Catalyst, a Christian conference, and that was later shared on twitter: “I know who made the environment and he’s coming back and going to burn it all up. So yes, I drive an SUV.”
In contrast to scripture supporting this kind of dominionism, there are also many biblical passages that suggest that if animals are going to be used for food and other human needs, then humans should at least make efforts to minimize their suffering. These include such rules as prohibitions against eating flesh from living animals\(^45\) and not harming mother birds that are brooding in nests (though this rule allows infant birds or eggs to be taken).\(^46\) Proverbs 12:10 states, “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast,” which has been interpreted to mean humans should at least treat the animals they own well.\(^47\) More recent versions of the Bible have stated the duty of care more explicitly. The New International Bible states, “The righteous care for the needs of their animals;” The New Living Bible states, “The godly care for their animals;” The New American Standard Bible states, “A righteous man has regard for the life of his animal;” The Holman Christian Standard Bible states, “A righteous man cares about his animal’s health;” and The International Standard Bible states, “The righteous person looks out for the welfare of his livestock.” This passage is also referenced by some contemporary animal activists. Proverbs 12:10 Animal Rescue, for example, is the name of a No Kill companion animal rescue organization in Tennessee.\(^48\) Tenets specifying compassionate treatment of animals are also now used by some animal activists to support a religious argument against the use of chickens in Kapparot rituals (described in the introduction). They argue that rules against tza'ar ba'alei chayim (causing animal suffering) should be interpreted to prohibit the use of chickens and advocate using coins as a substitute in the

\(^{45}\) Genesis 9:4 (King James Bible).
\(^{46}\) Deuteronomy 22:6-7 (King James Bible).
\(^{47}\) Proverbs 12:10 (King James Bible).
\(^{48}\) See http://www.proverbs1210rescue.org/info/display?PageID=15157. I did not conduct any fieldwork with this organization.
ritual. Some Jews who observe Shabbat also interpret pro-animal tenets to allow for violating Shabbat to a limited extent in order to help animals that are in pain or in danger.

Some contemporary animal advocates even find support for vegetarianism in the Bible. Taken together, Genesis 1:29 and 9:3 are interpreted to suggest that meat eating was not permitted by the Judeo-Christian god until after the biblical flood. The first passage states, “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” The specification that animal flesh can also be consumed as meat does not come until the second passage: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.” The idea that Jesus may have been vegetarian is also debated by some contemporary Christians due to both his general advocacy for compassion and the fact that there is no clear evidence in the Bible of him ever consuming meat. Porphyry of Tyre also criticized Christians of his time for departing from Jesus’ example by consuming meat.

Ultimately, biblical support for compassionate treatment of animals could not outweigh a more instrumentalist approach as an anthropocentric dominion-based ideology became the dominant perspective in Christian doctrine. The hegemony of human exceptionalism in Christian theology was significantly strengthened by the writings of the influential theologians Saint Augustine (354 - 430 CE) and Saint Thomas Aquinas.

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49 See the Alliance to End Chicken as Kaporos, http://www.endchickensaskaporos.com/a_heartfelt_plea.html.
51 Genesis 1:29 (King James Bible).
52 Genesis 9:3 (King James Bible).
Aquinas (1225 -1274 CE). Augustine addressed human-animal relations in his 22 volume work *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* (Latin for “The City of God Against the Pagans”), first published in 426 CE. In this comprehensive treatise on a range of Christian theological issues, Augustine specifically addresses the question of humans’ moral obligations to animals in a discussion of the commandment “Thou shalt not kill.”

Reinforcing Aristotle’s reliance on the capacity for reason as a basis for differentiating humans from other animals, Augustine argues that this commandment is only a prohibition against killing humans, and not “irrational living things, whether flying, swimming, walking or crawling, because they are not associated in a community with us by reason, since it is not given to them to have reason in common with us. Hence it is by a very just ordinance of the Creator that their life and death is subordinated to our use” (quoted in Serpell 1996, 152; see also Sorabji 1993; Matthews 1999). In contradistinction to Porphyry of Tyre’s critique of the story of Jesus using a herd of swine to banish a man’s demons, Augustine cites this story as evidence to further buttress his position that humans have no moral responsibility to animals. In the story, the possessed swine run into a lake and drown after Jesus performs the exorcism. Referencing the swine’s drowning, Augustine argues that “Christ himself shows that to refrain from the killing of animals and the destroying of plants is the height of superstition” (1966, 120; see also Singer 1990, 192). In a twenty-first century historical footnote to the story of the Gadarene swine that echoes the tension in Porphyry’s and Augustine’s conflicting readings, Phillip Frankland Lee – a California-based celebrity chef known for his meat-

53 Exodus 20:13 (King James Bible).
54 Variations of this story can be found in the Bible in Mark 5:1-13, Luke 8:26-33, and Matthew 8:28-32.
heavy culinary creations – opened an upscale vegan restaurant called the Gadarene Swine in homage to the doomed pigs.

Saint Thomas Aquinas – a Dominican friar and arguably the most significant theologian in shaping medieval Catholic doctrine – further reinforced this position with his explanation of potentially pro-animal biblical passages:

If in Holy Scripture there are found some injunctions forbidding the infliction of some cruelty towards brute animals . . . this is either for removing a man’s mind from exercising cruelty towards other men, lest anyone, from exercising cruelty upon brutes, should go on hence to human beings; or because the injury inflicted on animals turns to a temporal loss for some man. 55

Aquinas’ interpretation of these passages makes two significant arguments about the treatment of animals that still resonate today. First, he presents violence toward animals as posing a risk of predisposing or desensitizing the perpetrators to committing violence against humans as well – an argument made by some animal protection activists today. 56

Second, he makes an economic argument against injuring animals on the grounds that they may be somebody else’s property. Although both of these arguments support not inflicting violence against animals, they do so through a utilitarian calculus based on the benefit to humans rather than the animals themselves, underscoring the philosophical position that animals are objects intended for human use rather than subjects with their own self-interests. Informed by the arguments of both Aristotle and Augustine, Aquinas also expanded on the idea that animals lacked reason by linking reason to immortality. Arguing that only the reasoning part of the soul was immortal, he concluded that animal

56 Aquinas further elaborated on this argument in his Summa Theologiae, stating that “God’s purpose in recommending kind treatment of brute creation is to dispose men to pity and tenderness towards one another” (quoted in Serpell 1996, 153).
souls must die with their bodies since they do not possess the capacity to reason. As Serpell points out, this conclusion had far-reaching implications: “By denying animals an afterlife, Aquinas rescued Christians from the otherwise alarming prospect of encountering the vengeful spirits of their hapless victims somewhere in the hereafter. It therefore reinforced the notion that humans had no reason to feel morally concerned about the treatment of non-human species” (Serpell 1996, 153). Aquinas even addressed the idea of rights-bearing personhood as a category closed to animals due to their lack of reason, arguing in the *Summa Theologiae* that “only a person, that is, a being possessed of reason and self-control, can be the subject of rights and duties” (quoted in Serpell 2015, 19). Ironically, linking animals and rights-bearing personhood in this way would later provide a counter-argument for contemporary animal rights activists who argue that animals do in fact have the capacity for reason and therefore should be extended rights.

While this anthropocentric moral framework – derived from an Aristotelian understanding of natural hierarchies, buttressed with Judeo-Christian scripture, and coalesced into formal doctrine by Augustine and Aquinas – became the normative basis for human-animal relations for the next several centuries throughout Europe⁵⁷, alternative beliefs about the proper treatment of animals did not entirely lose their influence. St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181 – 1226 CE) is the most well known advocate for kind treatment of animals in the pantheon of Catholic saints. Considered the patron saint of animals, Francis preached that humans had a duty of care toward animals and the natural environment on the basis of both humans’ obligation to exercise stewardship over the

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⁵⁷ Historian and philosopher Richard Sorabji argues that the consolidation of this view in medieval theology “accounts for the relative complacency of . . . western Christian traditions about the killing of animals” (1993, 3; see also Serpell 1996, 2005).
Judeo-Christian god’s creation and their status as fellow creatures with other animals.  

Francis is often depicted in art with a bird in his hand or a wolf at his feet, referencing two famous legends in which he preached to a flock of birds and brokered a truce between a hungry wolf and the human citizens and dogs of the city of Gubbio, whom the wolf had been terrorizing. Francis’ influence can be seen today in the Blessing of the Animals performed at many churches throughout the world on Francis’ saint day, October 4. In 1979, Pope John Paul II officially declared Francis the Patron Saint of Ecology, and he is also referenced by Pope Francis as an inspiration for his 2015 encyclical on the environment. Pope Francis even chose to name himself after the saint in order to honor, in the pope’s words, “the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation” (Wooden 2013).  

With the advent of the Catholic Inquisition, more sympathetic attitudes toward animals were marginalized in the church as the anthropocentric view rose to dominance. The story of Saint Guinefort, the greyhound saint, provides a particularly remarkable example:

According to legend, this faithful animal was killed by his noble master who, finding the dog drenched in blood beside his child’s cradle, immediately assumed that it had devoured the infant. Only afterwards did he find the child sleeping peacefully, and the remains of a huge serpent torn to pieces by the dog’s bites. Overcome with remorse, the knight threw the dog, Guinefort, into a well, covered it with a great pile of stones, and planted a grove of trees around it to commemorate the event. During the thirteenth century, this grove, about forty kilometers north of the city of Lyons, became the centre of a pagan healing cult. Peasants from miles around brought their sick and ailing children to the shrine where miraculous cures were performed. Needless to say, the official church took a dim view of such proceedings. A Dominican friar called Stephen of Bourbon had the dead dog disinterred, and the sacred grove cut down and burnt, along with

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58 Derived from the Latin verb “creare” – to create – and meaning “something created” in Middle English, the word “creature” bears a religious connotation referencing the Judeo-Christian god’s responsibility for the existence of all animals, including humans.
the remains of St. Guinefort. An edict was also passed making it a crime for anyone to visit the place in the future. Despite these severe measures, vestiges of the cult were still in evidence as late as the nineteenth century. (Serpell 1996, 91; see also Schmitt 1983).

The cult of Saint Guinefort is just one example of the diversity of animal-sympathetic beliefs held by Christians throughout medieval Europe that church officials frowned upon. Another group called the Cathars believed, like Pythagoras, that souls crossed species-barriers during reincarnation, potentially going from humans to other animals and back again. In addition to minimizing the significance of species difference (since humans and other animals had the same souls), the cycle of reincarnation also largely negated gender difference since the same souls could be reincarnated in alternatingly female and male bodies (O’Shea 2000, 10-12). Cathars were opposed to killing, applying this precept to humans and other animals alike. As possibly the first practitioners of an organized form of veganism, some Cathars also refrained from eating any animal products, including dairy and eggs (Spencer 1993, 136-171). This practice was actually informed by an opposition to reproduction and its byproducts as well as to killing, since both killing and reproducing contributed to the cycle of reincarnation they sought to transcend (Johnston 2000, 252). The Cathars and other sects were viewed as heretical by the Catholic Church for a broad range of fundamental theological differences not limited to interpretations of humans’ proper relationship to animals and nature. These sects were early targets of the Inquisition starting in the twelfth century, and by the end of the fourteenth century the church had virtually wiped out the Cathar movement (Serpell 1996, 157). In addition to other practices and beliefs that were considered heretical, the Inquisition aggressively rooted out and punished animal- and nature-based cults like that of Saint Guinefort, effectively neutralizing any lingering influence more pro-animal
worldviews may have had in the church (Thomas 1983, 17-22; see also Schmitt 1983, 2-6; Serpell 1996, 156).

Aside from repressing heretical religious movements, the Catholic Church also policed the human-animal boundary through the regulation of more mundane practices like pet-keeping. Disapproval of companionate relationships with animals was even shared by disciples of St. Francis, like the Italian friar Salimbene di Adam (1221 – c. 1290 CE) who criticized the acts of his fellow Franciscans who liked to “play with a cat or whelp or small fowl” as a “a foul blemish” (quoted in Serpell 1996, 48). In 1260, the Franciscan Order adopted the official policy that “no animal be kept, for any brother or any convent whether by the Order, or any person in the Order’s name, except cats and certain birds for the removal of unclean things” (quoted in Armstrong 1973, 7; see also Serpell 1996, 48). This policy against pet-keeping by clergy started a trend followed by other Catholic religious orders throughout Europe. In an order sent to the nuns at Romsey Abbey in Hampshire, England, William of Wykeham (c. 1324 – 1404), the Bishop of Winchester, provides both an example of the church’s opposition to clergy pet-keeping and an indication of how prevalent the practice may have been in his description of the nuns’ conduct:

Whereas we have convinced ourselves by clear proofs that some of the nuns of your house bring with them to church birds, rabbits, hounds and such like frivolous creatures, to which they give more heed than to the offices of church, with frequent hindrance to their own psalmody and to that of their fellow nuns, and to the grievous peril of their souls, therefore we strictly forbid you, jointly and singly, in virtue of disobedience to us, that from henceforth you do not presume to bring to church any birds, hounds, rabbits, or other frivolous creatures that are harmful to good discipline. (quoted in Ritchie 1981, 64; see also Serpell 1996, 48).
The church’s anti-pet position took a violent turn in the fifteenth century when the crusade against heresy morphed into sporadic outbreaks of witch trials across Europe. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, approximately 50,000 people were executed for witchcraft. Courts interpreted close relationships with animals as evidence of keeping familiars or committing bestiality, a serious crime aside from its connection to witchcraft that was itself punishable by death.59

Familiars were believed to be supernatural companions or demons who took the form of small animals and assisted witches in their evil machinations. The accusation of keeping familiars was largely concentrated in the English witch trials (Serpell 1996, 57), where around half the cases involved evidence of interacting with companion animals used against the accused (Rosen 1969, 30-2). A transcript from the 1582 trial of an Essex woman who was executed essentially for caring for a lamb, two cats, and a toad (much like the sanctuary caregivers in this ethnography) provides an example of such “evidence” of keeping familiars:

Thomas Rabbet saith, that his mother Ursula Kemp alias Grey hath four several spirits, the one called Tiffin, the other Titty, the third Piggin, and the fourth Jack, and being asked of what colours they were, saith that Titty is like a grey cat, Tiffin is like a white lamb, Piggin is black, like a toad, and Jack is black, like a cat. And he saith, he hath seen his mother at times to give them beer to drink and of a white loaf or cake to eat. (Rosen 1969, 109-10, see also Serpell 1996, 57)

British folklorist Christina Hole describes how easily such evidence could be derived from human-animal interactions:

In an age when fondness for small animals was nothing like as general in England as it is now, the actual possession of any beast that might be supposed to be a familiar was a clear danger to anyone suspected of witchcraft, especially if he or she were known to treat it with affection. It was not even necessary for the

59 Bestiality was referred to in medieval law books as “offense cujus nomination crimen est,” Latin for the “offense the very naming of which is a crime” (Serpell 1996, 158).
creature to live in the house; a dog bounding towards a suspected person in the fields, or a cat jumping through a window might be enough to confirm an already existing suspicion. (1977, 40)

The church’s moral panic over relations with animals focused on these two different kinds of human-animal interactions – companionate interactions like pet-keeping on one hand and bestiality on the other – for opposite but complementary reasons. As Serpell points out, bestiality can be seen as the “ultimate anti-anthropocentric” act (1996, 158), with humans debasing themselves to the level of mere animals through sexual intercourse with them. As seventeenth century British moralist Richard Capel describes it, bestiality “turns man into a very beast, makes man a member of a brute creature” (quoted in Thomas 1983, 39; see also Beirne 1997, 321). Pet-keeping, however, threatens to do precisely the opposite by raising animals closer to the level of humans and incorporating them into human social dynamics (ibid.). Both kinds of relations threatened the idea of human exceptionalism that situates humans in an existentially and morally superior position to the rest of the animal kingdom.

In a reflection of the ambivalent and contradictory attitudes toward animals that continued to influence European societies throughout the Inquisition and European witch trials, animals were paradoxically also put on trial in European and colonial courts from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In cases of bestiality, animals were tried and executed at the same time as the human accused (see Hyde 1916, 711; Evan 1906, 146-57; and Serpell 1996, 158). There is also a long legal history of finding animals and other non-human things – including inanimate objects – culpable for the death of humans. Before the eleventh century, the term “bane” was used in English common law to refer to animals or objects that caused damage or human death. These things were then given by
the owner to the victim or her heirs in a practice called noxal surrender (Finkelstein 1973, 169). In the eleventh century, though, the concept of a deodand replaced the bane in English common law. A deodand (from the Latin phrase “deo dandum,” or “to be given to god”) is a piece of property responsible for the death of a human. Both animal and inanimate chattel property that was found by a coroner’s jury to have caused the death of a person was designated as a deodand. The owner of a deodand was then supposed to forfeit the deodand to the crown. In practice, owners instead paid a fine equal to the cost of the thing’s value.60

Aside from deodands and trials for bestiality, animals were also put on trial in both ecclesiastical courts and secular courts across Europe and in colonial America for a range of crimes, including murder and property damage (see Cohen 1986; Evans 1906; Hyde 1916; Humphrey 2002, 235–254; and Srivastava 2007). The trials had human witnesses, and animals could even have lawyers in the ecclesiastical courts. For example, in 1750, “a female donkey was acquitted of charges of bestiality after the local parish priest and several other inhabitants of the commune of Vanvres, now part of metropolitan Paris, attested to her virtue and good behaviour. No character witnesses appeared for her human co-accused, who was convicted and sentenced to death” (Srivastava 2007, 129; see also Evans 1906, 150). As evidence on the donkey’s behalf, a head abbot at a local priory wrote that she was “in word and deed and in all her habits of life a most honorable creature” (St. Clair 2010, 7). This long history of animal trials suggests that, despite church efforts to police the human-animal boundary, to some extent Europeans and

60 For discussions of the history of deodands see Berman (1999); Finkelstein (1973); and Pervukhin (2005); and for a discussion of how the concept of deodand applies to historical and contemporary treatment of animals see Dayan (2013).
European colonists continued to recognize significant similarities between humans and animals at least in their capacity to exercise agency and intentionality and exert their own will over events. Jeffrey St. Clair argues that these trials reflect the ascription of “rationality, premeditation, free will, moral agency, calculation, and motivation” to animals: “In other words, it was presumed that animals acted with intention, that they could be driven by greed, jealousy and revenge. Thus the people of the Middle Ages . . . were actually open to a radical idea: animal consciousness. As demonstrated in these trials, animals could be found to have mens rea, a guilty mind” (2010, 7-8). While these trials were largely employed to punish animals for perceived crimes, the underlying assumptions about animal capabilities that made the trials possible presaged future scientific discoveries and philosophical arguments that would challenge the ideology of human exceptionalism.

*The Enlightenment: Animal Machines Gain Sentience*

The human-centered theological view of the world reached the apogee of its influence over European philosophical thinking in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Thomas 1983, 17-22). Theologians and philosophers who emphasized that the primary purpose of animals, as intended by their god, was to serve humans, “found” evidence for this view everywhere: “It was suggested, for example, that fishes often shoaled near the shore because they were intended for human consumption; that the Creator made horses’ excrement smell sweet because he knew that men would often be in its vicinity, and that horse-flies were created so that people could exercise their ingenuity avoiding them”
(Serpell 1996, 154). Scientist and philosopher Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) summarized the anthropocentric perspective succinctly in this passage from his *The Wisdom of the Ancients*:

Man, if we look for final causes, may be regarded as the centre of the world, insomuch that if man were taken away from the world, the rest would seem to be all astray, without aim or purpose. . . . For the whole world works together in the service of man; and there is nothing from which he does not derive use and fruit. . . . Plants and animals of all kinds are made to furnish him either with dwelling and shelter or clothing or food or medicine, or to lighten his labor, or to give him pleasure and comfort; insomuch that all things seem to be going about man’s business and not their own. (1867)

As one of the intellectual progenitors of scientific empiricism and an early influential figure in the scientific revolution in Europe, Bacon’s uncritical taking for granted of this anthropocentric ontology is a particularly striking illustration of the influence of this worldview at the time.

The dazzling influence of Aristotelian anthropocentrism created a large blind spot in the logical reasoning of the seventeenth century pioneers of the scientific method. Rather than approaching the question of human-animal difference with the skeptical inquiry integral to scientific empiricism, thinkers like Bacon assumed *a priori* the validity of human exceptionalism. In formal logic, this is known as the “begging the question” fallacy – assuming as true a conclusion that has yet to be proven. A masterful question-beggar when it came to human exceptionalism, French philosopher René Descartes (1596 – 1650) is the figure most responsible for fusing Aristotelian anthropocentrism with the scientific study of animals. His theories about animal sentience⁶¹ (or lack thereof) had a profound impact on scientific understandings of animals over the following centuries, an

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⁶¹ Sentience here refers to the ability to feel or experience phenomena, whereas reason refers to the ability to think – an important distinction in much Enlightenment philosophy – although the Cartesian view holds that animals have neither.
influence that lingers even to this day. In his 1637 philosophical treatise *Discours de la Méthode pour Bien Conduire sa Raison, et Chercher la Vérité dans les Sciences* (French for “Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One’s Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences”), Descartes introduced the concept of the *bête machine*, or animal machine. Descartes thought that all animal bodies – including those of humans – were biological machines, divinely created clockwork automata made from flesh. Humans, though, were unique in that they also possessed a mind or soul, whereas animals did not. Descartes came to these conclusions in an attempt to follow the scientific principle of parsimony, which requires that an investigator start with the simplest explanation for an observed phenomenon. Not noticing any signs of rationality or language in animals, he deduced – like Aristotle – that they lacked the mental capacity for these abilities. Rather than questioning the reliability of such a conclusion given his inability to actually know what may or may not be happening inside animal brains, and rather than considering the simplest explanation for animal behavior may be that they share mental as well as physical similarities with humans (see Bekoff 2007), he instead assumed to be true what neither he nor the nearly two millennia of philosophers and theologians preceding him had proven: humans alone can reason. Combined with his dualistic view of material bodies and nonmaterial minds, this conclusion had major ethical implications for human-animal interactions. Since animals were merely flesh machines, it did not matter how they were treated. In its most extreme application, the Cartesian view of animals led to the kind of brutal treatment described by a secretary to

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62 This work is the source of Descarte’s most famous assertion: “I think, therefore I am.”
the seventeenth century Jansenists, a religious order housed at the Parisian monastery of Port-Royal:

They administered beatings to dogs with perfect indifference, and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they had felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck, were only the noise of a little spring which had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisect them and see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of conversation. (quoted in Guerrini 2003, 44; see also Cohen [1940] 1968, 54)

A Cartesian clergyman and philosopher named Nicolas Malebranche (1638 – 1715) provides another example. When a witness protested after seeing him kick a dog, he responded, “So what? Don’t you know it has no feeling at all?” (ibid.; see also Cohen [1940] 1968, 70). While most seventeenth century scientists conducting animal research accepted Descartes animal machine model, few of them believed that animals felt no pain at all (Guerrini 2003, 45). Nonetheless, the idea further reinforced the moral justification for using animals to serve human needs (in this case research) and helped to extend the hegemony of human exceptionalism from the realms of theology and philosophy to the rapidly developing natural sciences as well.

As with previous eras marked by influential philosophical arguments supporting the idea of human exceptionalism, the Age of Enlightenment and the scientific revolution that preceded it also saw new iterations of arguments in favor of more sympathetic treatment of animals, some of which provided significant philosophical seeds to the modern animal protection movement. French philosopher (1533 – 1592) Michel de Montaigne, writing several decades before Descartes, recognized the fundamental problem in the question begging around the existence of animal consciousness. In his essay “An Apologie of Raymond Sebond,” he writes:
If that which we have not seene, is not, our knowledge is wonderfull abridge. . . . It is through the vanity of . . . imagination . . . that [man] ascribeth divine conditions unto himself, that he selecteth and separateth himself from out the ranke of other creatures . . . . How knoweth he by the virtue of his understanding the inward and secret motions of beasts? By what comparison from them to us doth he conclude the brutishnesse, he ascribeth unto them? When I am playing with my Cat, who knows whether she have more sport in dallying with me, than I have in gaming with her? . . . That defect which hindreth the communication betweene them and us, why may it not as well be in us, as in them? It is a matter of divination to guesse in whom the fault is, that we understand not one another. For, we understand them no more than they us. By the same reason, may they as well esteeme us beasts, as we them. It is no great marvell if we understand them not: no more doe we the Cornish, the Welch, or Irish. . . . We must note the parity that is between us. (1908, 171-3)

Unlike Descartes, Montaigne recognizes that it is precisely humans’ inability to communicate with other animals that prevents them from knowing more about their mental capacities. He even allows for the possibility that this inability may be due to a deficiency in humans rather than animals, while also emphasizing that the similarities humans can observe – his cat joining him in play, for example – suggests at least the possibility of a greater mental capacity than Aristotelian anthropocentrism would allow. Recognizing the ethical implications of this reasoning, Montaigne opposed cruelty to animals.63

Responding directly to Descartes in a 1764 essay titled “Bête” (or “Animals”), the French historian and philosopher Voltaire (nom de plume of François-Marie Arouet, 1694 – 1778 CE) also criticized the philosophical weaknesses of human exceptionalism. He opens the essay with a denunciation of the animal machine concept: “What a pitiful, what a sorry thing to have said that animals are machines bereft of understanding and feeling,

63 Montaigne explicitly expressed distress at having to witness violence against animals: “If I see but a chicken’s neck pulled off or a pig sticked, I cannot choose but grieve; and I cannot well endure a silly dew-bedabbled hare to groan when she is seized upon by the hounds” (quoted in Thomas 1983, 254).
which perform their operations always in the same way, which learn nothing, perfect nothing . . . !” (1924, 21). He provides examples of animals adapting to different situations, learning from failures to accomplish certain tasks, and changing their behavior accordingly to counter the idea that animals are incapable of learning. He then challenges Descartes use of linguistic capability to distinguish humans from other animals, comparing himself to a dog to illustrate how they are both capable of communicating non-verbally:

Is it because I speak to you, that you judge that I have feeling, memory, ideas? Well, I do not speak to you; you see me going home looking disconsolate, seeking a paper anxiously, opening the desk where I remember having shut it, finding it, reading it joyfully. You judge that I have experienced the feeling of distress and that of pleasure, that I have memory and understanding. Bring the same judgment to bear on this dog which has lost its master, which has sought him on every road with sorrowful cries, which enters the house agitated, uneasy, which goes down the stairs, up the stairs, from room to room, which at last finds in his study the master it loves, and which shows him its joy by its cries of delight, by its leaps, by its caresses. (ibid.)

This comparison also clearly asserts the premise that animals are capable of experiencing emotions, an idea that is still controversial today though increasingly supported by scientific evidence (see Bekoff 2007), not to mention the personal experiences of many people who live and work closely with other animals. Following these counter-examples, Voltaire directly criticizes the violence inflicted against animals as a result of the animal machine concept:

Barbarians seize this dog, which in friendship surpasses man so prodigiously; they nail it on a table, and they dissect it alive in order to show the mesenteric veins. You discover in it all the same organs of feeling that are in yourself. Answer me, machinist, has nature arranged all the means of feeling in this animal, so that it may not feel? Has it nerves in order to be impassible? Do not suppose this impertinent contradiction in nature. (Voltaire 1924, 21)
By drawing attention to the anatomical similarities between human and animal nervous systems, Voltaire highlights the inconsistencies in Descartes’ application of parsimony – the assumption that the simplest explanation would be that animals have nerves for no reason rather that they may serve the same purpose in both. He ends the short essay by challenging Descartes’ denial of animal souls, arguing again that the similarities between humans and animals contradict this assumption. In the closing paragraph, he asks rhetorically “is there not a distinct soul in the machine” (ibid.), employing a phrase – “soul (or ghost) in the machine” – that still resonates in contemporary animal activism.

The documentary *The Ghosts in Our Machine*, for example, follows animal rights activist and photojournalist Jo-Ann McArthur as she documents the conditions of animals in various human industries, including the agricultural industry (Marshall 2013). The film includes footage of McArthur’s work on a farm sanctuary. Its title references the Cartesian mind(ghost)/body(machine) distinction and the idea that animal machines lack ghosts (that Voltaire criticizes), but the phrase “ghosts in our machine” also refers to how animals are caught up in (and die for) the value production machine of capitalism while their experiences largely remain invisible.

Like Voltaire, Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) thought that animals possessed sentience, though he also ascribed to the dominant Aristotelian view that they lacked the ability for reason. Nonetheless, he saw their sentience – especially the ability to experience pain and suffering – as sufficient reason not only to refrain from hurting but even to extend them basic rights against such harm. Arguing that, under natural law, people had an obligation to refrain from hurting others, he felt this obligation should extend to animals as well since they shared with humans the
ability to experience the negative effects of harm. In his 1755 treatise Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité (or Discourse on the Origin of Inequality), Rousseau states:

[Man’s] duties toward others are not dictated to him only by the later lessons of wisdom; and, so long as he does not resist the internal impulse of compassion, he will never hurt any other man, nor even any sentient being, except on those lawful occasions on which his own preservation is concerned and he is obliged to give himself the preference. By this method also we put an end to the time-honoured disputes concerning the participation of animals in natural law: for it is clear that, being destitute of intelligence and liberty, they cannot recognise that law; as they partake, however, in some measure of our nature, in consequence of the sensibility with which they are endowed, they ought to partake of natural right; so that mankind is subjected to a kind of obligation even toward the brutes. It appears, in fact, that if I am bound to do no injury to my fellow-creatures, this is less because they are rational than because they are sentient beings: and this quality, being common both to men and beasts, ought to entitle the latter at least to the privilege of not being wantonly ill-treated by the former. ([1755] 1992, 14)

The right Rousseau proposes here is a very limited negative right to not be “wantonly ill-treated,” and it is based as much on human obligation to not inflict harm on those who can experience it as it is on the idea that animals also possess sentience, but it is this significant moment in the history of animal protection philosophy that the idea of rights is first associated with animals.

Rousseau also followed Plutarch in advocating vegetarianism – at least for children – in his educational treatise Émile, or On Education (in which he quotes at length from Plutarch’s “On the Eating of Animal Flesh”). Specifically, Rousseau argues that meat-eating is unnatural and can have a negative impact on the development of character:

The indifference of children towards meat is one proof that the taste for meat is unnatural; their preference is for vegetable foods, such as milk, pastry, fruit, etc. Beware of changing this natural taste and making children flesh-eaters, if not for their health's sake, for the sake of their character; for how can one explain away the fact that great meat-eaters are usually fiercer and more cruel than other men; this has been recognised at all times and in all places. (1762)
English philosopher John Locke (1631-1704) took a similar view on the effects of violence against animals on children who were complicit in it. He did not think that children were naturally averse to such behavior (as thought they were to meat-eating), but he did think children should be dissuaded from acts of violence against animals, which he thought were capable of feeling, though – like Rousseau – not reason. In his own treatise on education, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke writes:

> One thing I have frequently observ’d in children, that when they have got possession of any poor creature, they are apt to use it ill: they often torment, and treat very roughly, young birds, butterflies, and such other poor animals which fall into their hands, and that with a seeming kind of pleasure. This I think should be watch’d in them, and if they incline to any such cruelty, they should be taught to contrary usage. For the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts, will, by degrees, harden their minds even towards men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind. (1693)

For similar reasons, German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) argues that while humans do not owe a moral duty to animals, committing violence against animals is a failure of a person’s moral duty to other people:

> If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog, for the dog cannot judge, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practice kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. (1997, 212)

For many contemporary animal protection activists, the clearest Enlightenment-era articulation of the “sentientist” view (see Gruen 2010) on humans’ moral obligations to animals came from English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832).\(^4^) Bentham is

\(^4^) Preceding Bentham, Anglican priest Humphrey Primatt (1736-1799) also made a sentience-based case against cruel treatment of animals, arguing in his *A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and the Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals:*
considered to be the founder of utilitarianism, arguably the branch of moral philosophy that has most shaped the modern day animal protection movement. Utilitarianism generally prescribes that the morally best course of action is the one that maximizes the most benefit, or utility, to the most sentient beings. According to Bentham, the primary principle guiding his utilitarian approach to ethics is that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" (Bentham 1977, 393).

Bentham did not support natural rights like Rousseau. He also did not challenge the assumptions that animals lacked the capacities for reason and language undergirding the ideology of human exceptionalism. Instead, he argued that the only factor that really mattered in determining humans’ moral obligations to other animals was their sentience:

Other animals, which, on account of their interests having been neglected by the insensibility of the ancient jurists, stand degraded into the class of things. [original emphasis] . . . The day has been, I grieve it to say in many places it is not yet past, in which the greater part of the species, under the denomination of slaves, have been treated . . . upon the same footing as . . . animals are still. The day may come, when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of legs, the villosity of the skin, Pain is pain, whether it is inflicted on man or on beast; and the creature that suffers it, whether man or beast, being sensible of the misery of it whilst it lasts, suffers Evil; and that Sufferance of evil, unmeritedly, unprovokedly, where no offense has been given, and no good end can possibly be answered it, but merely to exhibit power or gratify malice, is Cruelty and Injustice in him that occasions it. (1776, 7-8)

Bentham supported the rights created by legal systems, but saw “natural rights” as meaningless:

Hence he holds that natural rights are just imaginary rights by contrast with the real rights produced by actually existing systems of law. As he puts it, “from real law come real rights . . . from imaginary laws come imaginary ones.” The so-called rights of man are in fact merely “counterfeit rights.” Bentham's most famous slogan expressing this view is “nonsense on stilts.” (Harrison 1995, 87-88).
or the termination of the os sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps, the faculty for discourse? . . . the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer? (1781, quoted in Gruen 2010)

This last line is one of the most commonly quoted in the literature and outreach materials of the modern animal protection movement, largely because it so succinctly articulates the idea that animals can feel pain and no differences between humans and animals justify inflicting it on them. The preceding quote is significant as well, though, as it serves as the first articulation of the possibility of extending legal rights to (as opposed to recognizing the natural rights of) animals. Bentham also provides an early articulation of the analogy between human slavery and the human use of animals, a comparison frequently made by some contemporary animal activists, albeit a controversial one both within and outside of the movement.66

The Nineteenth Century: Legal and Scientific Paradigm Shifts

As the age of Enlightenment gave way to the Romantic era in the first half of the nineteenth century, concerns about animal welfare began to permeate European societies more broadly, leading to legislative efforts to protect animals from mistreatment. Previously, there were a few early examples of efforts to enact limited legal protections for animals. In 1635, for example, the Earl of Strafford, Thomas Wentworth (1593 – 1641), helped to pass an act against cruelty to horses and sheep in Ireland. The act, which banned pulling (rather than sheering) wool from sheep and what it called the “barbarous

66 See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of this issue.
custome” of making horses pull plows and carriages with their tails, was the first piece of animal protection legislation passed in European history (see Beirne 2009, 21-68). A few years later in 1641, the first law against animal cruelty in North America was passed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Article 92 in the colony’s legal code – “the Bodies of Liberty” – stated, “No man shall exercise any Tyranny or Crueltie towards any brute Creature which are usuallie kept for man’s use” (Collections 1838, 232; see also Beirne 2009, 69-96). There were only rare efforts in the intervening centuries leading up to the early 1800’s, when England in particular experienced a sudden proliferation of attempts at putting legal limits on animal cruelty. Bills were introduced in parliament against bull baiting in 1800 and against beating horses and cattle in 1809, though both failed (Phelps 2007, 96-98, see also Singer 1975, 204). In 1821, Colonel Richard Martin⁶⁷ (1754 – 1834), an Irish MP, introduced a bill to regulate the treatment of horses and was almost literally laughed out of parliament. According to a report in published in The Times, when the proposal to give “protection . . . to asses” was introduced, “there were such howls of laughter that The Times reporter could hear little of what was said. When the Chairman repeated this proposal, the laughter was intensified. Another member said Martin would be legislating for dogs next, which cause a further roar of mirth, and a cry ‘And cats!’ sent the house into convulsions” (quoted in Singer 1975, 204).

The next year, Martin submitted a second bill, and this time he was successful in getting parliament to pass England’s first law making general cruelty against certain animals a punishable offense. The "Act to prevent the cruel and improper Treatment of Cattle” prohibited “wantonly and cruelly” beating, abusing, or ill-treating “any Horse,

⁶⁷ Martin was also known as “Humanity Dick,” a nickname allegedly bestowed on him by King George IV.
Mare, Gelding, Mule, Ass, Ox, Cow, Heifer, Steer, Sheep, or other Cattle,” a crime which carried a penalty ranging from ten shillings to five pounds or up to three months in prison in lieu of the fine. Martin successfully prosecuted the first case under the act against a man named Bill Burns for beating a donkey. He brought the injured animal as evidence, instigating jokes in newspapers and music halls about him having a donkey testify (Phelps 2007, 98-100), although it was only half a century earlier that donkeys like the one in Vanvres were being put on trial themselves. As moral philosopher Peter Singer points out, in drafting the law, Martin found it necessary to use the words “the property of any other person or persons” to describe the animals in order to “frame his bill so that it resembled a measure to protect items of private property, for the benefit of the owner, rather than for the sake of the animals themselves” (1975, 205). This law extended animals (limited) legal protection by reaffirming their property status. In linking animals’ protection to their property status in this way, Martin’s act provides one of the first historical instances of animals being rendered impropertied– protoperty subjects with protected interests – lending the term “improper” in the act’s title an unintended second meaning.

Realizing that the law needed some sort of enforcement mechanism – animals themselves could not bring cases, after all – he formed an organization in 1824 with other supporters (including William Wilburforce (1759-1833), leader of the English abolition movement) in order to document and prosecute cases. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was the first animal protection organization in European history (and possibly world history). In 1840, Queen Victoria granted it royal status, giving it the

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name that it is still known by today: the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or RSPCA. In addition to prosecuting animal cruelty cases, the RSPCA lobbied for even stronger animal protection laws. In 1835, they obtained an amendment to the original law in the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1835, which extended protection to other animals, including bears, bulls, dogs, goats, and sheep. The law effectively prohibited bear-baiting, bull-baiting, and other blood sports in which animals were chained in a pit where they were attacked by dogs for human entertainment.

The 1822 and 1835 acts were repealed and replaced by an 1849 act called “An Act for the more effectual Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,” followed by an “An Act to amend the Law relating to Cruelty to Animals” in 1876, limiting animal experimentation practices. English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873) – an influential proponent of Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism – noted an explicit connection between a utilitarian approach to the treatment of animals and these new laws against animal cruelty in his 1852 essay “Whewell on Moral Philosophy.” William Whewell – another prominent nineteenth century English philosopher – had written a critique of Bentham in which he quotes the passage from Bentham cited above regarding animals’ sentience in order to provide a *reductio ad absurdum* of the consequences of utilitarianism. Mill, however, points out that the views that Whewell found so ridiculous had already had a noticeable effect on English society, as evidenced by the anti-cruelty laws: “This noble anticipation, in 1780, of the better morality of which a first dawn has been seen in the laws enacted nearly fifty years afterwards against cruelty to animals, is in Dr. Whewell's eyes the finishing proof that the morality of happiness is absurd!” (1985, 186).
After England pioneered the legislation of animal protection, other countries started following suit. France was the first European country, passing a law in 1850 called the “Loi Gammont” after Jacques-Philippe Delmas de Grammont who worked diligently to get it passed (Brooman and Legge 1997, 50). This trend also spread across the Atlantic to the United States. In 1822, a New York court held that “wanton” cruelty to animals was a misdemeanor (Francione 1996, 7). Shortly thereafter, New York passed an actual anti-cruelty law in 1828 (Brooman and Legge 1997, 50). This law had little impact though until 1866 when, as described in the previous chapter, US philanthropist Henry Bergh drafted a “Declaration of the Rights of Animals” that garnered over a hundred signatures, helping him procure a charter to establish the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or ASPCA. Other states followed with their own animal protection laws later in the nineteenth century, with Washington passing a law in 1859, California in 1886, and Florida in 1889 (ibid.).

Back in England, around the same time that Martin and his colleagues were leading a minor revolution in the legal realm, English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) was laying the groundwork for a much bigger revolution in the realm of science, one that would radically undermine the theological basis for human exceptionalism (though, it is important to note, not human exceptionalism itself). Shortly after the first anti-cruelty act was passed, Darwin wrote in his diary: “Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work, worthy of the interposition of a deity. More humble and, I believe, true, to consider him created from animals” (quoted in Singer 1975, 205). Darwin was aware of the controversy such ideas would ignite, so he was strategic in how he framed his findings for the public. In 1859, when he published The Origin of the Species – in
which he finally presented his theory of evolution based on decades of data collection and analysis – he only hinted at the existential implication for humankind, writing that work would illuminate “the origin of man and his history” (ibid.) Fearing that publishing his theory that humans too had descended from other species would “only add to the prejudices against [his] views,” he waited until 1871 – after his theory of evolution had become widely accepted in the scientific community – to publish *The Descent of Man*, the work in which he finally laid out the evidence for the theory that humans share the same evolutionary origins as all other animals (ibid.). In addition to knocking humans from their divine pedestal, Darwin also made the case that the presumed cognitive differences between humans and other species were far smaller in degree than previously believed: “We have seen that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention and curiosity, imitation, reason etc., of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals” (quoted in Singer 1975, 206).

A year after *The Descent of Man*, Darwin expanded on the emotional commonalities between humans and other animals in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan (1881-1881), a contemporary of Darwin’s who was inspired by his work, had a similar view of animals’ mental faculties. Although far more famous for his theories on kinship and social structure and evolution, Morgan also conducted an extensive ethnographic study of beavers in Michigan, documented in his book *The American Beaver and his Works* (1868). Based on her archival research into the intellectual and personal connections between Darwin and Morgan, anthropologist Gillian Feeley-Harnik notes:
Both Darwin and Morgan were concerned with the instinct and intelligence in animals and their consequences for historical and evolutionary change. Darwin’s *Descent of Man* is well known for arguing that human beings are subject to natural selection like any other animal, and that nonhuman animals feel, remember, will, and reason like humans, just differently in degree; natural selection acting on instincts produces intelligence. Morgan’s *Beaver and His Works*, published in 1868 and sent to Darwin that same year, makes a similar but even stronger argument. Instinct is analytically meaningless. Human and nonhuman animals share intelligence variably according to their adaptations in life. (Feeley-Harnik 2014).

Unlike Darwin, though, Morgan saw a divine influence in humans’ and animals’ shared intellectual capabilities. For Morgan, “the beaver demonstrated the God-given unity of life” (Gewertz and Errington 2015, 20; see also Feeley-Harnik 1999, 2001). Perhaps influenced by this religious perspective, Morgan also shared the moral position of some of the earlier theologians discussed in this chapter who felt that a creaturely-commonality called for kindness toward humans’ non-speaking kin, whom Morgan referred to as the “mutes.” Criticizing cruelty toward animals, he even references the notion of animal rights (or at least their absence): “The present attitude of man toward the mutes is not such, in all respects, as befits his superior wisdom. We deny them all rights, and ravage their ranks with wanton and unmerciful cruelty” (1868, 281–282; see also Feeley-Harnik 2001; and Kirksey and Helmreich 2010).

The effect of Darwin’s theory of evolution on the future of animal activism was indirect but significant. It not only paved the way for future scientific research on animals that would even further dissolve the perceived barriers between humans and other species69, but it also shifted the ground of future philosophical debates over human-

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69 See, for example, Jane Goodall’s groundbreaking primatological work on the behavior and social lives of chimpanzees (1971; 1986; 1990); Goodall and Dale Peterson’s analysis of human-chimpanzee similarities and the moral implications for keeping chimps and captivity and chimpanzee conservation in the wild (2000); Griffin (1976; 1984) and
animal difference by definitively establishing humans’ biological kinship with other animals. Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) later argued that Darwin’s findings were one of two existentially wounding blows to human self-understanding inflicted on humans by science (the other being Copernicus’ displacement of the earth from the center of the universe). Freud made this claim in an effort to explain the backlash against psycho-analysis, positing his own theory of the unconscious as the third and most serious blow:

In the course of centuries the naïve self-love of men has had to submit to two major blows at the hands of science. The first was when they learnt that our earth was not the center of the universe but only a tiny fragment of a cosmic system of scarcely imaginable vastness. This is associated in our minds with the name of Copernicus, though something similar had already been asserted by Alexandrian science. The second blow fell when biological research destroyed man’s supposedly privileged place in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature. This revaluation has been accomplished in our own days by Darwin, Wallace, and their predecessors, though not without the most violent contemporary opposition. But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in the mind” ([1963] 2001, 284-5.)

Donna Haraway, in turn, added herself to this list of assailants to the “primary narcissism of the self-centered human subject, who tries to hold panic at bay by the fantasy of human exceptionalism”: “I want to add a fourth wound, the informatics or cyborgian, which infolds organic and technological flesh and so melds that Great Divide as well” (2008, 11-2). Given the history of anti-anthropocentric philosophical and theological views glossed in this chapter (let alone the myriad perspectives outside this specifically European genealogy), Freud’s assertion may be somewhat hyperbolic, but Darwinian evolution is surely a case of a Kuhnian paradigm shift in the biological sciences, if ever

there was one (see Kuhn 1962). Religion may still have been able to offer arguments for
the divine nature of humanity, but post-Darwin, science could only provide more
evidence of its mundane animality.

Concurrent with this radical shift in the scientific understanding of human origins,
a similar shift was occurring for non-human animals in the legal arena during the
nineteenth century. Following the founding of the RSPCA in 1824, the idea of extending
eights to animals became increasingly part of popular conversation in England and North
America as several books were published on the topic. For example, in 1824, Lewis
Gompertz (c. 1783 – 1865), the first secretary of the RSPCA, published Moral Inquiries
on the Situation of Man and the Brutes, in which he argued that a utilitarian ethical
system based on the maximization of happiness should be applied to animals as well as
humans and that all beings should have a right to the use of their own bodies (Gompertz
[1824] 1997). In 1852, he also published Fragments in Defence of Animals, and Essays
on Moral, Soul, and Future State, a collection of essays that had previously appeared in a
periodical of the Animals’ Friend Society, which he founded after leaving the RSPCA in
1833. These essays covered humans’ moral duties to animals along with more esoteric
topics such as the “sagacity” of spiders, horses, rats, dogs, and ants; the “mental power of
pigeons and magpies;” the “conjugal affection of the lion;” and the “boiling of lobster
and other fish alive” (Gompertz 1852). Edward Byron Nicholson (1849 – 1912), head
of the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford in the latter half of his life, wrote The
Rights of an Animal: A New Essay in Ethics (1879), in which he argues that humans had a
duty to seek the happiness of humans as well as animals, which – drawing on the work of

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70 See Wallace (2004) for a much more recent scientific, cultural, philosophical, and
ethical analysis of boiling lobsters.
political philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903) for his definition of happiness – would require extending to all animals the rights of life and personal liberty. He also specifically refutes the followers of Descartes, whom he calls “Neo-Cartesians,” since they take a more absolutist view of animal sentience than did Descartes himself. Nicholson makes a case for animals possessing the capacity for reason as well as sentience, but emphasizes that animal rights are contingent on their sentience since if they could not feel anything it would not matter how they were treated (34-40).

One notable contribution to the argument for animal rights came from German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860). Partially influenced by Hindu and Buddhist philosophical perspectives on the treatment of animals, Schopenhauer praised the shifting cultural attitudes toward animal protection in England:

Europeans are awakening more and more to a sense that beasts have rights, in proportion as the strange notion is being gradually overcome and outgrown, that the animal kingdom came into existence solely for the benefit and pleasure of man. This view, with the corollary that non-human living creatures are to be regarded merely as things is at the root of the rough and altogether reckless treatment of them, which obtains in the West. To the honor, then, of the English be it said that they are the first people who have, in downright earnest, extended the protecting arm of the law to animals. (quoted in Phelps 2007, 154)

Schopenhauer’s animal advocacy was skewed by his anti-Semitism (which may partly explain why he is not cited as a more influential figure in the contemporary animal protection movement). For example, he blamed Judaism for the anthropocentric view of human-animal relations outlined in this chapter:

It is asserted that beasts have no rights; the illusion is harbored that our conduct, so far as they are concerned, has no moral significance, or to put it in the language of these codes [the ethical systems of European philosophy], that “there are no duties to be fulfilled towards animals.” Such a view is one of revolting coarseness, a barbarism of the West, whose source is Judaism. (quoted in Phelps 2007, 153).

As animal rights theorist Norm Phelps observes (and as this chapter has illustrated), “[a]tributing the notion that animals are without moral significance to Judaism, rather than to Greek philosophy and Christian theology, is . . . bizarrely off the mark” (ibid.).
The legal transformation of animals from mere things into beings with interests worth at least limited protection to which Schopenhauer alludes here was a profound legal paradigm shift similar in magnitude to Darwin’s paradigm shift in the natural sciences. The treatment of animals did not change much following the institution of these laws, but the idea that animals could have limited legal protections was a Rubicon-crossing for the burgeoning animal protection movements in England and elsewhere.

As significant as this accomplishment was, some animal protectionists realized that there were still serious structural and cultural impediments to the obtaining actual legal rights – as opposed to minor and difficult to enforce restrictions on abuse – for animals. Specifically, many discussions of rights had also acknowledged that consideration of animal interests must be weighed against the interests humans have in their use. For example, Edward Nicholson argued that even though animals and humans have the same abstract rights to life and liberty, practical necessities also require that the rights of animals be limited (Taylor 2003, 60). Unlike many nineteenth century animal advocates, Schopenhauer did not even see a moral problem with killing animals for food:

For the rest, we may observe that compassion for sentient beings is not to carry us to the length of abstaining from flesh, like the Brahmans. This is because . . . capacity for pain keeps pace with the intelligence; consequently men, by going without animal food, especially in the North, would suffer more than beasts do by a quick death, which is always unforeseen; although the latter should always be made still easier by means of chloroform. (quoted in Phelps 2007, 154).

Concerned with this problem and wanting to “set the principle of animal rights on a consistent and intelligent footing,” English writer and social activist Henry Salt (1851 –

72 Given Schopenhauer’s anti-Semitism (see supra note 72), Phelps points out that it is ironic that he is essentially advocating the “Biblical Compromise” – using animals for human benefit while sparing them as much suffering as possible – which is derived from Hebrew tradition (2007, 153).
1939), pushed animal rights advocacy even further by publishing *Animals’ Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress* (1894), the first book that explicitly made the case for animal rights that were not limited to accommodate human interests (see Tester 1991). Salt had previously written a treatise advocating vegetarianism and in 1891 formed the Humanitarian League with the goal of putting an end to hunting sports. Aside from animal advocacy, he also campaigned for prison and education reform and was friends with other influential nineteenth century intellectuals and social activists, including Mahatma Ghandi (whom he allegedly introduced to the writings of Henry David Thoreau), Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, and Russian anarchist philosopher and animal behaviorist Peter Kropotkin. Opening his book with a critique of the current state of animal rights advocacy, he writes:

> And here, it must be admitted, our position is still far from satisfactory; for though certain very important concessions have been made, as have seen, to the demand for *jus animalium*\(^73\), they have been made in a grudging, unwilling spirit, and rather in the interests of property than of principle;\(^74\) while even the leading advocates of animals’ rights seem to have shrunk from basing their claim on the only argument which can ultimately be held to be a really sufficient one – the assertion that animals, as well as men . . . are possessed of a distinctive individuality, and, therefore, are in justice entitled to live their lives with due measure of that “restricted freedom” to which Herbert Spencer alludes. (1894, 7)

Like Nicholson, Salt was influenced by Herbert Spencer’s theory of rights as those freedoms that remain after absolute freedom has been restricted so as not to infringe on the freedom of others.

Having laid out the problems with the current state of animal protection legislation and the failure of his predecessors and contemporaries to push their claims far

\(^73\) Latin for “animal rights.”

\(^74\) Salt refers here to such factors as Richard Martin’s need to frame the 1822 anti-cruelty act in terms of protecting property interests in animals in order to get is passed.
enough, he unequivocally asserts that meaningful animal rights necessitate that they are not subordinated to human interests and, further, that animals are not seen as subordinate to humans:

It is of little use to claim “rights” for animals in a vague, general way, if with the same breath we explicitly show our determination to subordinate those rights to anything and everything that can be construed into a human “want;” nor will it ever be possible to obtain full justice for [animals] so long as we continue to regard them as beings of a wholly different order, and to ignore the significance of their numberless points of kinship with mankind. (ibid.)

Whereas previous advocacy for animal protection and even rights had still tacitly (if not explicitly) accepted the fundamental power hierarchy between humans and other animals, Salt’s radical argument was the first articulation of a robust animal rights framework that, if adopted, would potentially lead to the liberation of animals from human use altogether.

_The Twentieth Century: The Birth and Evolution of Modern Animal Activism_

At the turn of the twentieth century, multiple social movements intersected in a controversy over a brown dog that would set the tone for the more visible and audible animal activism tactics of the modern animal protection movement. What came to be known as the “Brown Dog Affair,” started in 1902 when Lizzy Lind af Hageby (1878 – 1963) and Leisa Katherine Schartau (dates unknown) – feminist and anti-vivisection activists from Sweden – attended the London School of Medicine for Women (see Kean 1995; Lansbury 1985; Mason 1997). After witnessing multiple vivisections – surgical dissections of live animals (with or without anesthesia) commonly used in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in English medical schools to teach students about
physiology – the two women documented what they saw in their book *The Shambles of Science: Extracts from the Diary of Two Students of Physiology* (2012 [1903]). Hageby and Schartau were pioneers of the common contemporary animal activist practice of going undercover to document violent or neglectful treatment of animals in factory farms, laboratories, and other facilities that use animals. In the twenty-first century, such practices have spurred the passage of “ag-gag” laws by state legislatures throughout the United States. These laws ban secret recording and photographing inside agricultural facilities, and some also make it criminal offense for job applicants at such facilities to fail to disclose if they are participating in undercover investigations. Animal advocacy organizations have sued to challenge some of these laws. In 2015, for example, a federal appeals court declared Idaho’s ag-gag law unconstitutional.

One of the most controversial claims in Hageby and Schartau’s book was that they witnessed the vivisection of a brown terrier that was still conscious during the procedure. They provide the following description of the procedure:

> Today's lecture will include a repetition of a demonstration which failed last time. A large dog, stretched on its back on an operation board, is carried into the lecture-room by the demonstrator and the laboratory attendant. Its legs are fixed to the board, its head is firmly held in the usual manner, and it is tightly muzzled. There is a large incision in the side of the neck, exposing the gland. The animal exhibits all signs of intense suffering; in his struggles, he again and again lifts his body from the board, and makes powerful attempts to get free. (quoted in Lansbury 1985, 126–127)

The dog had also allegedly been used in three separate vivisections. Repeated use of animal in experiments and failure to provide anesthesia were both violations of the 1876 anti-cruelty law. Stephen Coleridge (1854–1936), a barrister and anti-vivisection activist with the National Anti-Vivisection Society accused physiologist William Blayliss (1860

75 See Sperling (1988) for a history of the anti-vivisection movement.
violating the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act, which the doctor vehemently denied. Blayliss sued Coleridge for defamation and won after successfully convincing the court he had used anesthesia in accordance with the law. Coleridge was required to pay Blayliss £5,000 in damages (Mason 1997, 17-8). In response to the trial, anti-vivisection activists had a memorial statue of the dog erected in Battersea Park in 1906 with a plaque engraved with the following caption:

In Memory of the Brown Terrier Dog Done to Death in the Laboratories of University College in February 1903 after having endured Vivisection extending over more than Two Months and having been handed over from one Vivisector to Another Till Death came to his Release. Also in Memory of the 232 dogs Vivisected at the same place during the year 1902. Men and Women of England how long shall these Things be?” (Lansbury 1985, 14).

The bronze statue of the dog also had a water fountain for humans and a drinking trough for dogs and horses in its base (Mason 1997, 23). In November 1907, medical students began protesting and vandalizing the statue, and in December of that year started raiding women’s suffrage meetings as well (Lansbury 1985, 17-18). Though they were aware that not all suffragists were also anti-vivisectionists, they channeled their violent reaction against anti-vivisectionists (many of whom were women) into a broader misogynistic backlash against challenges to the patriarchal power structure. Opposition to vivisection actually started much earlier in nineteenth century England. In fact, Queen Victoria’s granting of royal status to the RSPCA in 1840 was influenced by her own strong opposition to vivisection. The movement’s ties to the women’s suffrage movement also stretched back into the nineteenth century. In 1875, Irish social activist and prominent suffragist Frances Power Cobbe (1822 – 1904) founded the first organization to oppose animal research, the Society for the Protection of Animals Liable to Vivisection. This later became the National Anti-Vivisection Society, the organization that Coleridge
represented. In 1898, Cobbe also established the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection.

The Brown Dog Riots continued to escalate as medical students clashed with the motley alliance of social activists who were concentrated in the Battersea neighborhood, including trade-unionists, suffragists, and anti-vivisectionists, until the Battersea council eventually decided to take the statue down in 1910. Both the coalition of different movements responding to the rioting medical students and the Brown Dog Affair more generally reflect the conflicting and contradictory value systems that have shaped human attitudes toward animals throughout European history. As Lizzy Lind af-Hageby (one of the two Swedish muckrakers) and Charlotte Despard (an Irish suffragist, anti-vivisection activist, 1844-1939) saw it, the Brown Dog Affair could be understood as a battle between feminism and “machismo” (Birke 2000, 701). Similarly, historian Hilda Kean argues that “the ‘moment’ of The Shambles of Science is significant” because the “protagonists are young – and female; the perpetrators of cruelty, in this instance, are male and older. In a sense the work and its circumstances epitomize the political mood of the times: new forces of civilization against age-old brutality” (1998, 143). Noting how closely intertwined the women’s suffrage and anti-vivisection movements became, literature scholar Coral Lansbury sees the affair as bringing together multiple symbols that resonated with women, the images of vivisected dogs on operating tables evoking images of suffragists being force-fed in Brixton prison, strapped to operating tables

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76 Animal studies scholar Susan McHugh notes that the dog’s mongrel status – as signified by the nomenclature “brown dog” – “mirrors this unique, even mongrelly political alliance among human groups” (2004, 139).

during child birth, or being subjected to forced hysterectomies as a treatment for “mania” (1985, 24). Many members of the medical establishment, on the other hand, saw the anti-vivisection activists as representatives of “ignorance, superstition, [and] sentimentality” for empathizing with animals (84). The affair exposed how discourses of scientific rationality and compassionate sentimentality are gendered, with the latter being subordinated to and dismissed by the former. It revealed the politics that had been unfolding inside and along with the blossoming animal protection movement as philosophical arguments against the rationality of Aristotelian/Cartesian human exceptionalism increasingly relied on an ethics informed by empathetic concern for the suffering of others and a questioning of the categories of difference that served as the support beams for the social power structure.

As the animal advocacy organizations that had formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued their work, two divergent trends in human-animal relations were unfolding. First, pet-keeping grew increasingly popular in the Victorian era and into the twentieth century on both sides of the Atlantic, bringing many people – particularly urban dwellers – into close regular contact with non-human animals. Most significantly, this trend exposed growing numbers of people to animal interactions that were structured by relationships of care and affection rather than instrumental relationships based on animal labor or the harvesting of animal bodies.⁷⁸ On the other hand, human use of animals in these other contexts also grew at a rapid pace in post-

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⁷⁸ For historical analyses of the practice of pet-keeping see Franklin (1999, 84-105); DeMello (2012, 146-54); Grier (2006); Irvine (2004, 57); Ritvo (1987; 1989); Serpell (1996). See also Mullin (2007, 277-304) for a history of the US pet food industry and an ethnographic analysis of how contemporary pet food marketing and consumer selection is shaped by ideas of “wild” and “domestic”.
World War II England and North America, largely as a result of the industrialization of animal agriculture and the vast expansion of the use of animals for biomedical and cosmetic research. The intersection of a more pervasive general affection for animals and this intensification of the use of animals – and, many activists would add, an accompanying intensification of animal suffering – set off a second wave of animal rights philosophy in England in the late 60’s.

Picking up where Henry Salt left off, philosophers at Oxford ignited a debate that still rages in the animal protection movement today. In 1964, animal welfare activist Ruth Harrison (1920 – 2000) made the initial ripple in this new wave with her book Animal Machines ([2013] 1964), the first detailed exposé of the conditions of intensive animal agriculture. A year later, British novelist Brigid Brophy published an article in The Sunday Times entitled “The Rights of Animals,” which psychologist and animal rights activist Richard Ryder credits with igniting the focus on animal liberation by moral philosophers in the second half of the twentieth century (2000, 5). Brophy did not mince words in providing perhaps the most forceful and clear condemnation of the treatment of animals articulated up to that point:

> The relationship of homo sapiens to the other animals is one of unremitting exploitation. We employ their work; we eat and wear them. We exploit them to serve our superstitions: whereas we used to sacrifice them to our gods and tear out their entrails in order to foresee the future, we now sacrifice them to science, and experiment on [them] in the hope—or on the mere off chance—that we might thereby see a little more clearly into the present. . . . To us it seems incredible that the Greek philosophers should have scanned so deeply into right and wrong and yet never noticed the immorality of slavery. Perhaps 3000 years from now it will seem equally incredible that we do not notice the immorality of our own oppression of animals. (quoted in Ryder 2000, 5-6)

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79 See, for example, Strifler (2005) for a historical case study of the industrialization of chicken farming in the United States.
Four years after it was published, the article inspired a group of philosophy graduate students at the University of Oxford to organize a symposium on the topic of animal rights (ibid.). Around the same time Ryder had written some letters to the London *Daily Telegraph* criticizing animal experimentation, which he had witnessed first hand as a psychology student. Brophy saw the letters and suggested he get in touch with the group of graduate students, which included Stanley and Rosalind Godlovitch and John Harris. Ryder contacted them, and they all started distributing leaflets and organizing small protests in opposition to vivisection and hunting (Phelps 2007, 205). In 1970, Ryder coined the term “speciesism” to describe the ideology underlying human use of animals. He put the term in a leaflet to pass out at one of their demonstrations, explaining that speciesism was “like racism or sexism – a prejudice based on morally irrelevant physical differences” (quoted in Phelps 2007, 205). According to animal rights activist and author Norm Phelps, speciesism became the core term – and core concept – around which the animal rights movement was organized from that point on (206). Two more philosophy graduate students – Stephen Clark and Peter Singer – and a theology student named Andrew Linzey (then secretary of the Oxford Vegetarian Society) joined the collective, which later came to be known as the “Oxford Group” (ibid.).

Along with the concept of “speciesism,” the Oxford Group generated some of the most formative ideas of the modern animal advocacy movement. In 1971, the Godlovitches and John Harris co-edited *Animals, Men, and Morals: An Inquiry into the Maltreatment of Non-Humans*, a book that came out of their symposium and included

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80 In 1986, the term “speciesism” was added to the Oxford English Dictionary (Phelps 2007, 206).
essays from them, Ryder, Ruth Harrison, and Brigid Brophy. In the introduction they laid out what Phelps argues would “become the credo of the animal rights movement for the next two decades”:

Once the full force of moral assessment has been made explicit, there can be no rational excuse left for killing animals, be they killed for food, science, or sheer personal indulgence. . . . Compromise, in the traditional sense of the term, is simple unthinking weakness when one considers the actual reasons for our crude relationships with the other animals. To argue that a lack of compromise is wrong-headed is merely to perpetuate various fantasies people have about the regard that should be had toward other species. (quoted in Phelps 2007, 206)

In 1973, Peter Singer wrote a review of the book for the *New York Review of Books* in which he coined the term “animal liberation” by declaring that the book was a manifesto for an animal liberation movement, introducing an idea that would have a profound impact on the future of animal activism. Singer opens the essay with an analogy to human liberation movements, a comparison that continues to cause controversy in the animal advocacy movement:

We are familiar with Black Liberation, Gay Liberation, and a variety of other movements. With Women’s Liberation some thought we had come to the end of the road. Discrimination on the basis of sex, it has been said, is the last form of discrimination that is universally accepted and practiced without pretense, even in those liberal circles which have long prided themselves on their freedom from racial discrimination. But one should always be wary of talking of “the last remaining form of discrimination.” If we have learned anything from the liberation movements, we should have learned how difficult it is to be aware of the ways in which we discriminate until they are forcefully pointed out to us. A liberation movement demands an expansion of our moral horizons, so that practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable are now seen as intolerable. *Animals, Men and Morals* is a manifesto for an Animal Liberation movement. (1973)

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81 Ryder and Linzey later organized the Cambridge Conference on Animal Rights – the first full conference on the issue – at Trinity College in Cambridge in 1977 and published the proceedings as *Animals’ Rights – A Symposium* (1979) two years later.

82 See Chapter Four for a more detailed discussion of this issue.
The New York Review of Books commissioned a full book on the topic from Singer, and *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for our Treatment of Animals* was published in 1975. It is not an understatement to say that *Animal Liberation* is the bible of the modern animal advocacy movement. In it, Singer makes an argument for animal liberation based on the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, particularly the principles that right actions are the ones that maximize good for the greatest number of beings and that in evaluating actions, the interests of all beings – both humans and animals – should be considered equally (1975). Singer’s book led to a proliferation of other major texts on the topic of animal rights and liberation. Notably, American philosopher Tom Regan wrote *The Case for Animal Rights* in 1983, drawing on Kantian philosophy to make his argument for animal rights, which is that animals should be understood to have rights because, like humans, they are “subjects-of-a-life” with intrinsic value (Regan 1983). Commenting in 2001 on the deluge of philosophical output on the topic, Regan observes, “Philosophers have written more about animal rights in the past twenty years than their predecessors wrote in the previous two thousand” (2001, 77). Even though this chapter’s description of the past two millennia’s contribution to human-animal ethics was necessarily selective, Regan is almost certainly correct.

As influential as the Oxford Groups’ work was to contemporary animal activism, the “official” history of late-twentieth century animal rights philosophy that started with them obscures a parallel history of philosophical work from feminist scholars on animals.

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that was equally pioneering, though not referenced as often. As feminist scholar Susan Fraiman points out, the same year that Singer published *Animal Liberation*, Carol Adams published an article in *The Lesbian Reader* that was the basis for her later book *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (Fraiman 2012, 89; see Adams 1975, 1990), an intersectional analysis of the links between meat-eating and patriarchy. Fraiman explains that Adam’s scholarship “contributed to a growing body of ecofeminist work, emergent in the 1980’s, on women, animals, and the environment. Adams alone would go on to write or edit more than half a dozen volume theorizing the relation between feminist and vegetarian issues” (ibid.) Elaborating on this history, Fraiman continues:

Three more books bear mention in this quick sketch of innovative, formative work on animals appearing across disciplines well before the new millennium: *Adam’s Task* (1986), by animal trainer and philosopher Vicki Hearne; *The Animal Estate* (1989) by historian Harriet Ritvo; and *Primate Visions* (1989), by feminist historian of science Donna Haraway. . . . [A] cohort of ecofeminists – including Adams, Josephine Donovan, Brian Luke, Connie Solomon, Marty Kheel, Andrée Collard, Deane Curtain, Alice Walker, Deborah Silver, Greta Gaard, Lori Gruen, Lynda Birke, and Karen Warren, among others – embarked several decades ago on the project of challenging deeply embedded humanist assumptions concerning gender and animality. Broadly speaking, these include the notions that women and animals are linked together as avatars of nature; that they are similarly debased by their shared association with body over mind, feeling over reason, object rather than subject status; that men are rational subjects, who therefore naturally dominate women and animals alike; that masculinity is produced in contradistinction to the feminine, animal, bodily emotional, and acted upon; that degree of manliness is correlated to a degree of distance from these and other related categories – physicality, literalness, sentimentality, vulnerability, domesticity, and so on (89-90, 99).

These scholars also directly critiqued the gendered discourses in animal rights philosophy like that of Singer and Regan. Josephine Donovan, for example, astutely analyzes how

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84 For more on ecofeminism see Gaard (1993); Donovan (1990); Donovan and Adams (2007); and Gruen and Adams (2014).
this work relies on philosophical traditions that historically helped to enforce animal subordination:

[U]nfortunately, contemporary animal rights theorists, in their reliance on theory that derives from the mechanistic premise of Enlightenment epistemology (natural rights in the case of Regan and utilitarian calculation in the case of Singer) and in their suppression/denial of emotional knowledge, continue to employ Cartesian, or objectivist, modes even while they condemn scientific practices enabled by them. (1990, 45; see Fraiman 2012, 101)

Although cited by activists less often than animal philosophy outside of this feminist tradition, the intersectional insights of these writers still influence the arguments of contemporary animal activists, particularly in critiques of links between patriarchal gender politics and what they see as the violent exploitation of animals.

As prominent animal protection organizations in the seventies focused on public advocacy campaigns, some members – influenced by the new work on animal rights, like Singer’s Animal Liberation – grew frustrated with their failure to more effectively impact the conditions of animals. This frustration led to the next significant milestone in the history of the animal protection movement: direct interference with the contested treatment of animals as a form of organized non-violent direct action. The Hunt Saboteurs Association is one of the earliest examples of an organization committed to such tactics. Founded in 1963, the Hunt Saboteurs Association was started by a group of animal rights activists who split off from the League Against Cruel Sports, an organization formed in 1924 to oppose sport hunting, particularly of foxes, hares, rabbits, stags, and otters (see Ryder 2000). Disagreeing with the League’s avoidance of direct confrontation with hunters, the Hunt Saboteurs Association engaged in tactics intended to sabotage hunts, such as using loud sounds or misleading scents to confuse hunting dogs.
This radical form of direct action became common across rural England, even though it sometimes led to violent responses from hunters against the saboteurs (Ryder 2000, 167).

The new approach to animal activism pioneered by the Hunt Saboteurs organization in turn spawned the organization that has become synonymous with radical direct action on behalf of animals: the Animal Liberation Front. In 1971, activist Ronnie Lee founded his own Hunt Saboteur Association group while attending law school in Luton. The following year, he and another activist named Cliff Goodman decided that the saboteur tactics were not effective enough, so they formed a new group called the Band of Mercy, named after a former RSPCA-affiliated youth group founded in 1875. Rather than trying to derail hunts that were in progress, the Band attempted to prevent them from starting by vandalizing hunters’ vehicles (Molland 2004, 67, see also Young 2010). In 1973 and 1974, they expanded their focus and tactical repertoire, burning down a building that was going to be used for pharmaceutical animal testing,85 burning two boats that were going to be used in a seal cull, and conducting other raids against animal labs, chicken farmers, and gun shops. In the summer of 1974, they also conducted their first “animal liberation” action when they took six guinea pigs from a guinea pig farm.86

The ALF’s use of property destruction as a direct action tactic caused an ideological split in the saboteur movement, leading the Hunt Saboteur Movement to disavow the Band of Mercy and even offer a £250 reward for information about their membership (70-74). Lee and Goodman were arrested in 1974 for participating in a raid on an animal lab. After a one-year prison term, Lee brought together Band members with

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85 This was the first documented case of arson by animal activists.
86 Contrast these clandestine animal “liberations” with the “open rescues” described in Chapter One.
other new recruits and, in order to better reflect their revolutionary agenda, renamed the organization the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) (ibid.). The ALF has a completely decentralized organization structure, intended to protect members from legal liability for particular actions by limiting it to the participants themselves. The ALF website lists the following organizational guidelines:

1. To liberate animals from places of abuse, i.e. fur farms, laboratories, factory farms, etc. and place them in good homes where they may live out their natural lives free from suffering.
2. To inflict economic damage to those who profit from the misery and exploitation of animals.
3. To reveal the horror and atrocities committed against animals behind locked doors by performing nonviolent direct actions and liberations.
4. To take all necessary precautions against hurting any animal, human and non-human.
5. To analyze the ramifications of any proposed action and never apply generalizations (e.g., all 'blank' are evil) when specific information is available.

In the third section it is important to note the ALF does not, in any way, condone violence against any animal, human or non-human. Any action involving violence is by its definition not an ALF action, and any person involved is not an ALF member. The fourth section must be strictly adhered to. In over 20 years, and thousands of actions, nobody has ever been injured or killed in an ALF action.

Technically anyone who follows their guidelines – especially their absolute prohibition on violence against humans and nonhumans (which does not apply to property) – can carry out an ALF action. This diffuse structure makes it difficult to accurately estimate the organization’s impact, but there have been thousands of ALF actions around the world since the late 70’s, resulting in millions of dollars in property damage and the taking of thousands of animals from various labs, farms, and other facilities where they were confined.

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88 See Pickering (2007) and Rosebraugh (2004) for detailed histories of the Earth Liberation Front, an offshoot of the ALF that started in 1992 and employs similar tactics to disrupt practices that they see as damaging to the environment. In an exploration of his own ambivalent positions on the use of animals in research, veterinarian Adrian Morrison, the former director of the Office of Animal Research Issues at the National
The ALF defines violence as “the use of force against sentient beings to cause injury or death” – as long as property destruction causes economic injury but not physical injury, they do not consider it to be violence (Gruen 2011, 193). To illustrate the counter-argument – that “intentions matter and that the ALF engages in property destruction with violent intentions,” Lori Gruen provides the following example: “Consider the difference between accidentally dropping a lovely vase and purposely picking it up and smashing it hard against the floor. In both cases, property has been damaged, but in the second case we might say the property was damaged with angry or violent intentions” (ibid.). To add to this point, ALF-style tactics arguably convey an element of intimidation, even if those carrying out the actions claim that they are only intended to cause economic harm. If one were to smash a vase to the ground in the midst of an angry argument with the vase’s owner, the owner may reasonably infer a veiled threat in the action, even if none were intended. Critics of such tactics see any form of violence to be antithetical to the values that inform animal advocacy and counterproductive to achieving its goals. For example, Wayne Pacelle, president of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), argues, “You do not topple billion-dollar industries by breaking a few windows. It may be psychologically satisfying to people who do it, and it may be true that at this time it doesn’t feel like there are many options. I understand this sense of urgency and

Institute of Mental Health, describes an alleged ALF action against his laboratories in 1990 (2009). Greenpeace (founded in Canada in 1971) and its more radical offshoot the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (founded in 1977) are two other organizations that have employed similar, though debatably legal, direct action tactics on behalf of animals – particularly marine animals. Earth First!, a radical environmental activist group founded in the United States in 1979, also has used property destruction as a form of direct action, though to a much lesser extent than the ALF.
impatience, but I . . . think there’s other ways we can get to a more compassionate society” (quoted in Gruen 2011, 193).

In the late 1970’s, ALF cells began conducting actions in the United States, where they allied on a few high profile cases with the early incarnation of what has become the most well-known animal rights organization in history: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Prior to this collaboration, activist Henry Spira (1927 -1998) had drawn attention to the issue of animal rights in the United States with a campaign in 1976 against animal experimentation at the American Museum of Natural History (which was conducting experiments on cats) and a full-page ad in the New York Times in 1980 that exposed Revlon’s use of the Draize test on rabbits to evaluate the safety of its cosmetics. The Draize test is a toxicity test that involves placing a small amount of a substance on an animal’s skin or eyeball to measure its effects. Animals often experience burns or blindness as a result of the test.

PETA and the ALF drew even more attention to the issue of animal rights during what came to be known as the “Silver Springs monkeys case.” PETA was founded in 1980 by a young group of animal activists that included Alex Pacheco and its current president, Ingrid Newkirk – both of whom were directly inspired by Singer’s Animal Liberation. Like the undercover anti-vivisection activists in the Brown Dog Affair, Alex Pacheco took a volunteer position at the Institute of Behavioral Research in Silver Spring, Maryland. A psychologist named Edward Taub was conducting experiments on monkeys that entailed cutting the sensory ganglia to the nerves in their arms and legs, and then using electrical shocks and other methods to see if he could induce the monkeys to move the unfeeling limbs. Pacheco documented and photographed the monkeys’ living
conditions, and PETA provided the evidence to the police, who raided the facility and charged Taub with multiple accounts of animal cruelty. He was eventually convicted on six counts of cruelty to animals for failing to provide adequate veterinary care, but the conviction was overturned on appeal (Pacheco and Francione 1985). The ALF allegedly helped relocate the monkeys to a safe house after Taub’s arrest, though PETA returned them upon learning that the monkeys were required as evidence (Guillermo 1993, 69-72).

As the first case of an animal researcher charged and convicted of animal cruelty in the United States, the story not only increased awareness about animal issues in the United States, it also brought PETA international attention.
Image 1. Domitian, one of the Silver Spring monkeys. This photo, taken by Alex Pacheco in the summer of 1981, was distributed by PETA with the caption "This is vivisection. Don't let anyone tell you different." (Photo is in the public domain.)
PETA is now the largest animal advocacy organization in the world with a 2015 operating budget of over $44 million\(^8\) and offices in Asia, Europe, and Australia. PETA’s activism largely consists of broad public education and advocacy campaigns focused on particular issues (such as opposing meat-eating, fur, and the use of animals in entertainment), campaigns targeted at specific companies to get them to end practices like animal-testing. PETA often employs a strategy formulated by Spira that he called “reintegrative shaming,” which entails working privately with companies to encourage them to change practices rather than drawing negative attention to them with publicity campaigns (Munro 2002). PETA’s ability and willingness to fallback on influential negative publicity campaigns and to encourage national boycotts of companies gives them a lot of leverage in persuading companies to cooperate.

PETA’s other major animal advocacy strategy is engaging in litigation on behalf on animals. In 2011, for example, PETA sued SeaWorld to have five orcas released, arguing that their captivity amounted to slavery and was thus prohibited under the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. A federal judge dismissed the case the next year. Several lawyers and animal rights activists I spoke to were critical of the case, arguing that PETA should not have filed the case because it established a disadvantageous judicial precedent for future litigation and that PETA should have known the case would not succeed. Others I spoke to felt that the real value of the case was in drawing more public attention to the idea that orcas are highly intelligent beings who deserve to not be confined in aquaria. It is difficult to measure how much (if any) influence this case had on what is now being referred to as the Blackfish-effect – the

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public backlash against SeaWorld following the release of the documentary *Blackfish*, which came out the following year (see Introduction) – but the concern over bad precedent seems somewhat overblown. PETA did not appeal the case, and without an appellate decision to make it binding at a higher jurisdictional level, the judge’s dismissal should not have a significant impact on future cases that may employ a similar strategy (although future judges could look to the case for guidance in deciding the issues if they so chose).

Despite its prominence and influence, PETA is awkwardly situated in the larger movement, suspended between the two major factions of contemporary animal protection advocacy and aligning fully with neither. As discussed in the introduction and the previous chapter, many – though by no means all – animal protection activists identify with one of two predominant perspectives: animal welfarism and animal rights. Welfarists wish to end cruelty toward animals, whereas animal rights advocates seek an end to the instrumental use of all animals. Gruen describes the latter position as “liberationist” since not all who hold this position are seeking rights *per se*, even though they still think animals should be liberated from human control (Gruen 2011, 195). The rights/liberationist position is further divided over strategy into two more groups. Because they feel that animal advocacy should currently be focused on minimizing suffering and promoting well-being, the first group is sometimes derogatively labeled “new welfarists,” though Gruen more aptly describes them as pragmatists: “Pragmatists are generally committed to ending the use of animals and want to minimize their suffering while that long-term goal is being sought” (196). Abolitionists, on the other hand, feel that reforms merely guarantee the further perpetuation of the use of animals, so
they see the complete abolition of the property status of animals as the only legitimate goal. Legal scholar Gary Francione, one of the leading voices of the abolitionist position, argues:

[O]ur recognition that no human should be the property of others required that we *abolish* slavery and not merely *regulate* it to be more “humane,” our recognition that animals have this one basic right [not to be property] would mean that we could no longer justify our institutional exploitation of animals for food, clothing, amusement, or experiments.90 (Francione 2000, xxix; quoted in Gruen 2011, 196; see also Francione 1996; Francione and Garner 2010; Regan 2001)

On a panel focused on the future of animal rights at the 2016 annual meeting of the Association of American Law Schools, for example, there were both abolitionist- and pragmatist-oriented scholars on the panel and in the audience. However, based on audience questions and comments, it seemed that there was more frustration with than support for the more absolutist view. I have not found any data on the relative proportions of each group in relation to the larger animal advocacy movement, but based on my experience in talking with activists who identify with the rights/liberationist position, I encountered mostly people who expressed opinions that would fit with the pragmatist position. Indeed, the fact that sanctuaries are a form of captivity would make it very difficult to reconcile working at one as a caregiver with a hardline abolitionist position.

90 Gruen argues that abolitionists “cannot see that welfarist reforms can be consistent with liberationist ends,” but “pragmatists don’t view an abolitionist end as necessarily in conflict with immediate welfare reforms” (2011, 196). Philosopher Peter Singer provides a pragmatist counter-point to Francione’s argument:

It’s absurd to say that because we do one thing that is arguably bad for [animals] therefore it doesn’t matter what else we do to them and can just treat them as things. You might as well have said in the debate about slavery that we shouldn’t have had laws to prevent masters beating their slaves because as long as they are slaves they are just things and you might as well beat them as much as you like [until slavery has ended]. (quoted in Gruen 2011, 196).
PETA best fits into the pragmatist camp since some of its campaigns seek incremental improvements in the treatment of animals rather than taking an absolute abolitionist stance at all times. In fact, self-identified abolitionists criticize them for this approach. Francione, for example, argues that PETA creates the appearance of progress on animal rights issues when its accomplishments actually change little about the way animals are treated (Francione 1996, 67-77). Although not using the term pragmatist, at an animal rights convention in 2010 Newkirk described PETA’s approach as essentially aligning with this position:

Reforms move a society very importantly from A to B, from B to C, from C to D. It's very hard to take a nation or a world that is built on seeing animals as nothing more than hamburgers, handbags, cheap burglar alarms, tools for research, and move them from A to Z. If anybody wonders, “What's this with all these reforms?” you can hear us clearly. Our goal is total animal liberation, and the day when everyone believes that animals are not ours to eat, not ours to wear, not ours to experiment, and not ours for entertainment or any other exploitive purpose.91

At the same time that they are critiqued for not being radical enough by some activists, many people outside the movement see them as too radical. While this perception can negatively affect public opinions about animal advocacy, it may also indirectly help the movement by lending legitimacy to the goals of other organizations seeking relatively modest reforms in animal welfare. Journalist Michael Specter argues that PETA serves the social movement role of a radical foil for these more moderate organizations:

For every Malcolm X there is a Martin Luther King, Jr., and for every Andrea Dworkin there is a Gloria Steinem. Newkirk and PETA provide a similar dynamic for groups like the Humane Society of the United States, which is the biggest animal-welfare organization in the country and far more moderate than PETA. (2003)

When Specter asked Newkirk why PETA did not lobby on Capitol Hill for its positions like the Humane Society, she laughed and replied, “Are you kidding? Dear boy, we are the kiss of death. If we are involved, the legislation is automatically dead. We have members yelling at us, 'Why are you not working on these issues?' But activists just beg us to stay the hell out” (Specter 2003).

Nonetheless, PETA’s success has required it to tone down its early radicalism, as least when it comes to affiliating with organizations like the ALF. Predictably, the ALF is now considered a domestic terrorist organization by the US government which requires mainstream animal advocacy organizations like PETA to be careful in avoiding any direct links to ALF actions. The FBI describes both the ALF and its sister organization the Earth Liberation Front (see supra note 90) as “special interest extremism.”92 In 2006, the US congress passed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, which criminalizes any act that “for the purpose of damaging or interfering with the operations of an animal enterprise . . . damages or causes the loss of any real or personal property.” 93 In addition to further criminalizing damage of property connected to animal-related enterprises (any entity that profits from the use or sale of animals or animal products), the act also makes it a criminal offense to protest in a way that “places a person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to that person, a member of the immediate family of that person, or a spouse or intimate partner of that person by a course of conduct involving threats, acts of vandalism, property damage, criminal trespass, harassment, or

intimidation” (Gruen 2011, 190). The law expands on the 1992 Animal Enterprise Protection Act to include academic and commercial enterprises. 

Aside from the Silver Springs Monkey case, the ALF did indirectly collaborate with PETA in the 80’s on other high profile animal testing cases by providing PETA with video footage documenting the conditions of animals in raided labs, which PETA then publicized. More recently, though, there have been no such indirect collaborations. However, Newkirk has stirred controversy by vocally supporting ALF-style direct action and refusing to condemn the ALF. She believes that all successful social movements have needed a militant component, stating in reference to the ALF, "Thinkers may prepare revolutions, but bandits must carry them out" (2004, 341).

While PETA maintains its distance from the bandits, it has also offended people and frustrated other animal activists with what many see as sexist campaigns that garner attention with photos of naked women – as in their “I’d rather go naked than wear fur” ads that featured this message above images of naked female celebrities – and protests that include female protesters wearing nothing but body paint or lettuce leaves. At one point, PETA’s website addressed this issue, stating “PETA does make a point of having

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94 See Gruen (2011, 190-2) for a discussion of these acts and the case of the SHAC 7, the most famous prosecution of animal activists engaging in illegal direct action. The group Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, or SHAC, was formed to campaign against Huntingdon Life Sciences, an international product-testing lab that uses animals for research. The organization used cyberattacks to crash the company’s computer and phone systems, allegedly costing the company a total of $65,000 to fix. Seven activists were charged with animal enterprise terrorism, interstate stalking, and conspiracy to use a telecommunications device to harass others. Six of them were convicted on the latter two charges and sentenced to one-to-six year prison terms. Given these laws, as Gruen points out, the “animal advocacy movement now can be said to have a ‘terrorist’ wing” (2011, 191). For a history and analysis of the increased policing of animal rights and environmental activism and their subsumption into the War on Terror, see Potter (2011).

95 See Chapter One for a discussion of banditry as it applies to animal liberationists.
something for all tastes, from the most conservative to the most radical and from the most
tasteless to the most refined” (quoted in Gruen 2011, 201), though this text has been
taken down. Responding to this quote, Gruen highlights the potential problems for the
movement in narrowly focusing on animal issues instead of informing activism with an
intersectional social perspective:

And herein lies one of the problems with single-issue campaigns: the larger
political context in which the messages are presented is being ignored. Everyone’s
“tastes,” particularly those of the sexist, racist, or homophobe, should not be
catered to simply because those people otherwise support animal rights. Attitudes
of human exceptionalism, entitlement, and disrespect play a central role in the
social rejection of the idea that other animals matter, just as attitudes of male
superiority, entitlement, and disrespect play a central role in the perpetuation of
sexism. Challenging those underlying attitudes in the case of women, and other
traditionally disempowered peoples, may be a better strategy than perpetuating
them, in the hopes of communicating a different way of thinking about the ethical
attention that “others” deserve. (ibid.)

Newkirk is fully aware of the criticisms, though, and sees it as a worthwhile price to pay
for furthering PETA’s agenda. Seeming to embrace her single-issue determinacy as a
strength rather than a blind spot, Newkirk states, “I know feminists hate the naked
displays . . . I lose members every time I do it. But my job isn't to hold on to members, as
much as I'd like to – it's to get people who just don't give a damn about this issue to look
twice” (Specter 2003). Ultimately, with its influence and financial resources, PETA does
not need to please one side or the other in the welfarist/abolitionist debate, nor does it

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96 See also Adams (2004) for another ecofeminist critique of this controversial practice. Activist and VINE Sanctuary-founder patricie jones makes a related argument about the ALF: “[C]onfrontation of sexism can increase the ALF’s contribution toward total animal liberation. For example, ALF cells might elect to challenge sexism by questioning what Marti Kheel has called a “heroic ethic” in which the natural world and nonhuman animals are reduced to “damsels in distress” awaiting rescue by the muscular hero” (2004, 151).
need to worry about offending people with its tactics.\footnote{See Chapter One for a discussion of PETA’s euthanasia policies, another significant source of controversy for the organization.} PETA, one could argue, is its own side in the animal protection movement, and like a gas giant in a solar system, its gravitational influence affects the shape of the entire movement.

At the same time, PETA is only one particularly influential element in the vast field of US animal advocacy. Although the amount of popular attention it receives gives many people who are not in the movement the impression that PETA basically is the movement, there are now hundreds of animal advocacy organizations and millions of individual supporters and activists in the United States. In addition to the new wave of animal rights philosophy and activism that crossed the Atlantic in the late 70’s, this modern US animal advocacy movement is the product of a longer history of animal protection in North America shaped by more moderate positions on the treatment of animals. The Humane Society of the United States – the animal welfare organization that Specter described as the Martin Luther King/Gloria Steinem to PETA’s Malcolm X/Andrea Dworkin – is the biggest heir to this alternate US tradition, known as the humane movement. Following Henry Bergh’s founding of the ASPCA in 1866 (described in detail in Chapter One), independent local humane societies and SPCA’s sprang up around the country to take in homeless dogs and cats and advocate against animal cruelty. In 1877, several of these organizations from the Midwest and East Coast held a meeting to address animal welfare issues, during which they formed the American Humane Association (originally called the International Humane Association) to advocate for these issues on national scale.
The organization grew over the next several decades as more local animal welfare groups joined from across the United States and Canada, until 1954 when internal conflict over the humane movement’s failure to effectively address mistreatment of animals in laboratories and slaughterhouses led a group of members to split off and form the Humane Society of the United States (Unti 2005; see also Unti 2004). The American Humane Association still exists. It is the organization that provides the “No Animals Were Harmed” certification to films and television shows, although it does not have a sterling reputation among many activists I have spoken to. Controversy arose when whistleblowers revealed that animals were mistreated and killed in the production of several films to which the American Humane Association provided their certification.\footnote{See http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/feature/.}

Many activists now see the organization as a shill for the entertainment industry, selling meaningless certifications that do not reliably indicate how animals were treated during film and television productions.

The specific catalyst for the split between the Humane Society and the American Humane Association was a dispute over the surrender of animals from shelters to biomedical researchers, leading journalist Fred Myers and others who felt the American Humane Association did not do enough to oppose this practice to found the Humane Society (ibid.). They immediately started working to show how effective national animal advocacy could be by lobbying for legislation to establish humane slaughter requirements, leading to the successful passage of the Humane Slaughter Act in 1956 (ibid.).
Instead of the genealogy of animal rights philosophy outlined above, Myers and his colleagues developed their moral vision for animal compassion from sources like the German theologian Albert Schweitzer, who based his philosophy of ethics on the concept of “reverence for life” (Unti 2004, 16). Schweitzer developed this philosophy throughout his life based on his experiences witnessing suffering, including that of animals. He writes, for example, about going fishing as a child: “I have twice gone fishing . . . because other boys asked me to, but this sport was soon made impossible for me by the treatment of the worms that were put on the hook for bait, and the wrenching of the mouths of the fishes that were caught. I gave it up, and even found courage enough to dissuade other boys from going” (2005, 119). He continues:

From experiences like these, which moved my heart and often made me feel ashamed, there slowly grew up in me an unshakeable conviction that we have no right to inflict suffering and death on another living creature unless there is some unavoidable necessity for it, and that we ought all of us to feel what a horrible thing it is to cause suffering and death out of mere thoughtlessness. (2005, 119-120)

This ethical imperative to avoid inflicting suffering or death when possible guided the Humane Society’s mission toward a welfare agenda, in contrast with more organizations like PETA or the ALF. The organization’s approach to another early priority – the biomedical research issue that led to the split with the American Humane Association – highlights the difference between their welfarist approach to animal advocacy and the more liberationist approach of organizations like PETA. According to historian Bernard Unti:

[A]dvocates like Myers did not see the pound seizure as one of vivisection vs. antivivisection. To their minds, the major question was whether public pounds and privately operated humane societies ought to be compelled by law to provide animals for experimental uses. And they believed no animal care and control agency should hand over, or be forced to hand over, animals to laboratories.
Myers did believe, however, that animal experimentation should be regulated, and in the late 1950’s, he placed HSUS investigators in laboratories to gather evidence of substandard conditions and animal suffering and neglect. The HSUS was not an antivivisection society, he explained in a 1958 HSUS News article. Rather, it stood for the principle that ‘every humane society . . . should be actively concerned about the treatment accorded to such a vast number of animals.’ The HSUS position, Myers continued, was that "every individual person, and particularly everyone who endorses the use of animals in research, has a moral obligation to know the facts and to do all that can be done to protect the animals from preventable suffering.’ . . . In this spirit, Myers drafted The HSUS's first legislative initiatives in the early 1960’s, drawing heavily upon Principles of Humane Experimental Technique (1959) by William Russell and Rex Burch. In doing so, Myers associated the HSUS at an early stage with the core principles of this book—that scientists, policymakers, and the public should agree upon an active program of reduction, refinement, and replacement (the Three R’s) to alleviate the suffering and, where feasible, to eliminate the use of animals in experimentation. . . . His efforts helped to set the stage for the eventual passage of the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act [in 1966]. (ibid.)

Contrasting this focus on minimizing preventable suffering from animal testing and eliminating animals from testing when feasible with the ALF and PETA’s shared goal of ending animal testing altogether reveals the concrete differences between activism in the liberationist tradition and activism in the welfarist tradition. While PETA and the Humane Society would both back improvement in the treatment of agricultural or laboratory animals, PETA fundamentally opposes the practices altogether while the Humane Society pushes for the more modest goal of reducing animal suffering as much as possible within the current frameworks of animal use. The Humane Society takes the following stance on factory farming, for example:

The HSUS pursues the reduction of animal suffering in the raising, housing, care, transportation, and slaughter of animals raised or caught for food. Furthermore, we seek to ensure that animal production systems are humane, sustainable, and environmentally sensitive. The HSUS supports those farmers and ranchers who

99 This distinction can also be made in terms of each tradition’s position in relation to speciesism. As Gruen argues, “liberationists are moved by the arguments against speciesism whereas welfarists are more or less committed speciesists but recognize that an animal’s pain and suffering should be minimized” (2011, 195).
give proper care to their animals, act in accordance with the basic ethic of compassion to sentient creatures under their control, and practice and promote humane and environmentally sustainable agriculture. . . . The HSUS promotes eating with conscience and embracing the Three Rs—reducing the consumption of meat and other animal-based foods; refining the diet by eating products only from animals who have been raised, transported, and slaughtered in a system of humane, sustainable agriculture that does not abuse the animals; and replacing meat and other animal-based foods in the diet with plant-based foods. 100

PETA, by contrast, advocates a vegan diet and, while it does support humane improvements in factory farming practices, it does not claim to support the animal farmers or ranchers themselves. Activists on the ALF end of the spectrum not only advocate a vegan diet and support the destruction of animal farm or ranch property but would also likely see the Humane Society as an apologist for animal agriculture and therefore complicit in the suffering of animals.

**Conclusion**

The liberation-welfare spectrum running through the contemporary animal protection movement results from the intersection of divergent philosophical orientations regarding ethical obligations to animals and differing assessments of the possible. Liberationist-oriented activists and organizations seek to enact the visions for human-animal relations posited in various strains of animal rights philosophy rooted in the long history of opposition to the idea of human exceptionalism, while those toward the welfarist end of the spectrum push for a broad expansion in human attentiveness to the sentience of other creatures (specifically their capacities to suffer) but do not want to

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100 See www.humanesociety.org/about/policy_statements/statement_farm_animals_eating.html.
dismantle the fundamental species hierarchies of power and domination that shape human relations with other animals. Concurrently, estimations of how much transformation of human-animal relations is realistically possible and the timelines for achieving that change compel activists from all along this spectrum to temper their strategies with varying degrees of pragmatic incrementalism. The combination of these two factors – philosophical orientation and assessment of the possible – contributes to the diversity of different approaches to animal advocacy in the larger movement, and this is true within these organizations as well. I have, for example, spoken to activists who identify as liberationists, but who work for the Humane Society as pragmatists, hoping to achieve a more immediate improvement in the lives of captive animals while still holding total liberation as their ultimate goal. I have also spoken to activists who do not consider themselves liberationist but still support PETA campaigns or rescue operations that have been carried out by the ALF because they may lead to a reduction in the suffering of animals.

From this complex array of different philosophical commitments and approaches to activism, the animal sanctuary movement emerged. Like its progenitors, the animal sanctuary movement is a complicated knot of conflicting and complementary philosophical perspectives with diverse visions for the future of human-animal relations. The humane movement that defined animal protection and advocacy for a century-and-a-half in the United States produced the country’s system of shelters and pounds, which provided the prototype for the idea of rescuing and caring for animals. Farm Sanctuary, in Watkins Glen (see Chapter One), provided a new model for that idea when it became the first safe haven for rescued farm animals in 1986. Two decades later, sanctuaries and
shelters for companion animals, farmed animals, and exotic animals inform their practices of care with the same variety of philosophical commitments tempered by assessments of the possible that shape the larger field of US animal activism. At the same time, the dilemmas of care that limit sanctuaries’ abilities to fully realize the more radical activist visions for animal liberation point to important considerations for the movement about how (and perhaps even whether to continue) to pursue those goals.
Chapter Three: Creating and Operating Sanctuaries

This chapter examines the many aspects of sanctuary operations and maintenance that shape the possibilities and limits for caring for rescued animals in captivity. From funding, to administration, land needs and infrastructure, personal management, and overall mission formulation, it details the many different concerns that sanctuary workers regularly address while operating a sanctuary, as well as the considerations and preparation that go into founding new sanctuaries. Most importantly, it reveals how political economic constraints can conflict with sanctuary goals, and how caregivers try to navigate these conflicts – especially the contradictions that arise from enlisting animals in the fundraising process while simultaneously trying to shelter them from circuits of animal commodification. Finally, it describes how the political-economic challenges to sanctuary operation often require sacrifices of caregivers, turning them into sacrificial citizens within the sanctuary community.

The “Don’t Start a Sanctuary” Conference

Every fall, Farm Sanctuary hosts the Farm Animal Care Conference at their 175-acre facility in upstate New York. Founded in 1986, Farm Sanctuary provided a model that has been copied hundreds of times as animal sanctuaries proliferated across the United States over the last three decades. Their New York facility is located on wooded, rolling hills in the Finger Lakes region. Red barn-like buildings and fenced pastures with grazing cows evoke the bucolic family farms of the early twentieth century, farms that
have since been almost entirely replaced by large industrialized agricultural operations in
the US. After a half hour drive from the closest rental accommodations I could find, I
arrived around 8:30 in the morning just as the conference was about to start. A few dozen
attendees were already gathered in a small room in the administrative building, waiting
for the first presentation to begin. The audience consisted of a mix of caregivers from
sanctuaries that were already in operation who had come for further training, people who
rescued and housed a few animals and were now hoping to transition to actual
sanctuaries, and aspiring sanctuary-founders who wanted to learn more about what
sanctuary life entailed before trying to build their own. Most of the attendees were from
the United States and Canada, but at least one contingent of caregivers was from as far
away as a sanctuary in Australia.

The Care Conference was created to provide aspiring sanctuary operators with all
the information necessary to start and maintain a successful sanctuary. When I attended,
it cost $175 per person and spanned two days, consisting of nine hours of panels each day
covering every conceivable issue sanctuary operators would need to know. The topics
included sanctuary fundraising, sanctuary administration, animal care operations and
programs, visitor and volunteer programs, shelter farm equipment and barn cleaning, and
individual sessions specifically addressing the care needs of chickens, pigs, turkeys,
rabbits, cattle, sheep and goats, and ducks and geese. All the attendees received a binder
with printed copies of the presentations and other resources covering everything from
legal requirements to insurance and media relations. Each day also included a vegan
breakfast and lunch. The presentations related to fundraising, administrative organization,
and educational programs were given in the meeting room where the conference started
by the various sanctuary employees who oversaw these elements of Farm Sanctuary’s operations.

The animal care sessions took place in the second half of each day during walking tours of the sanctuary as we visited the living areas for each species being discussed. Susie Coston, Farm Sanctuary’s national shelter director, led all these sessions. Referred to as “the farm animal whisperer” by many involved in sanctuary work, Susie has been working at Farm Sanctuary for 15 years and currently oversees all of the New York facility’s animal care staff. Susie has never taken any courses in animal care. Long before coming to Farm Sanctuary, she earned a degree in fashion and was planning to go into advertising, but she quickly realized she hated it. After her brief foray in fashion, she followed in the footsteps of her teacher parents, and earned a special education master’s degree to work with disabled children. She found she did not like that either and started working with animals during her summer breaks. Finally, she had found a job she loved. She gained six years of animal care experience from working for a veterinarian and another sanctuary in West Virginia before starting at Farm Sanctuary. She has now been working with animals for over 20 years and could not be happier.

Susie is as well known in sanctuary circles for her generosity of time as she is for her expertise in the unique intricacies of farm animal care. Virtually every caregiver I encountered through my fieldwork at Roosevelt and visits to other farm animal sanctuaries not only knew who Susie was, but had called her at some point for advice or guidance in treating various animal health issues. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the unique needs and health issues of every species – and virtually every individual animal –
made each hour long session feel like an entire semester of vet school on whichever animal she was discussing.

Susie and the other presenters shared invaluable information for anybody who wanted to run a successful sanctuary, and its accuracy and effectiveness had been tested in the crucible of Farm Sanctuary’s three decades of pioneering work in farm animal rescue and care. But by the afternoon of the second day, as we walked through the sanctuary and listened to Susie explain all the requirements for maintaining the health of cows, goats, and sheep, I occasionally heard some conference attendees from other sanctuaries scoff under their breath at pieces of information – like the best materials and structure for cattle fencing or best practices for preventing parasites – that they seemed to think were unrealistically expensive or too difficult to carry out with their limited staff. Any tiny sprouts of interest in someday opening my own sanctuary were disappearing under the overwhelming amount of information packed into the conference’s two days. As I heard the quiet bits of critical response from these attendees, though, I realized there might be a good reason for this. I remembered something an acquaintance who used to work at Farm Sanctuary years ago told me: some of the sanctuary workers jokingly referred to this event as the “Don’t Start a Sanctuary” conference.

Perhaps a more accurate title than “Don’t Start a Sanctuary” would be the “Know What You’re Getting Into” conference. As intimidating as the conference’s presentation of the many difficulties of running a sanctuary was for some attendees, the overarching message was not one of discouragement so much as an emphasis on the serious responsibility running a sanctuary entails. Susie set the tone at the beginning of the first day. “Last year in the US 15 sanctuaries closed,” she told the audience. “Thousands of
animals were left homeless. This is not a glamorous job. It’s dirty, dangerous, hard work. You *have* to gain experience before starting a sanctuary. This conference serves as a reality check – just the tip of the iceberg this weekend. It’s *so* much work, it’s life consuming. I would not start a sanctuary. Seriously, that’s why I let somebody else do it and just walked in.”

One attendee raised her hand at this point. “I just started a sanctuary, and I’m now having second thoughts.”

“You’ll have so many more,” Susie replied. Later, while stressing the importance of adequate staffing, she added, “Everyone goes in with a big heart, but it can become overwhelming so fast, and you’ll close. You always have to do everything the same everyday for the animals, no matter what. So if you’re short staffed, you’ll be beyond exhaustion, running on nervous energy.”

While this annual conference is a part of the larger political economic network that links myriad types of animal rescue operations throughout the US, the major issues it addresses also reflect significant features of that political economy with which every sanctuary must contend. Although different sanctuaries focus their efforts on different social categories of animals – such as companion animals, exotic animals, and food animals – they are united by the common goals of animal rescue and care. Indeed, all animal sanctuaries are structured around particular ideas of the animal as a subject of care which both shape the political economy, governance, and policies of the sanctuary and are shaped by the larger political economic context in which they are situated. Due to the practical necessities of meeting their rescue goals, these institutions also share a common range of organizational and economic challenges. In this chapter, I will examine these
challenges through the framework of the Care Conference in order to illustrate the range of different responses across different sanctuaries and how these responses configure animal subjects.

Funding

The first session of the conference focused on the single most important element of sanctuary operation outside of actual animal care: fundraising. Samantha Pachirat, Farm Sanctuary’s national director of education and partner relations, led the session via a Skype video call projected on to a screen at the front of the meeting room. Originally from St. Louis, where she worked at the St. Louis Zoo for two years, Samantha started working at Farm Sanctuary in 2000 after witnessing the living conditions of cows at an allegedly “humane” dairy farm. Her previous experience at Farm Sanctuary includes stints in both the education department and the development department, which she drew on for her presentation that day.

“Fundraising is a thing that people tend to shy away from, but it’s a crucial foundation to a sanctuary,” she told the audience. “You need to find startup capital, build a membership base, manage donor relations, run successful fundraising events, fund capital projects, secure grant funding, and solicit in-kind donations.” Initial start-up funding for sanctuaries often comes from the personal savings of a founder, or potentially a benefactor. This was the case for Rainbow Haven, the exotic sanctuary introduced in the first chapter. Joan and her husband Sam built their sanctuary slowly, drawing on their own private savings to build the physical infrastructure that housed their first animals.
Rita and Ted, the founders of Roosevelt (introduced in the first chapter as well) also drew on their own savings to buy the land for their sanctuary and start building their care facilities. Unlike these two organizations, however, Texas Companion Rescue (also introduced in the first chapter) grew out of a local social movement rather than the vision of a few individual founders. As explained in the first chapter, Texas Companion Rescue coalesced from the No Kill movement in Austin and as a result drew its initial funding from an already established funding network of donors and supporters. By the time it leased its first facility for housing rescued cats and dogs, this initial network of financial support was already in place. Rainbow Haven and Roosevelt are more typical examples of sanctuary origin stories. Like Farm Sanctuary as well, sanctuaries often start with an individual or couple with a strong personal ambition to start rescuing animals. This means they often start by drawing from their own personal financial resources. Since owning multiple pieces of property is not feasible for most people, this also means they often build the sanctuary on their own private property where they also live.

This start-up model was the plan many of the aspiring sanctuary-operators I spoke to had in mind when they came to the conference, but it was not the one advocated by Farm Sanctuary. Echoing the conference’s emphasis on robust preparedness, the guide in the binder provided to attendees cautions, “For sanctuaries, the saying ‘if you build it, they will come’ refers to animals, not funding. It takes enormous amounts of time and expertise to raise the resources necessary for the operation of a sanctuary” (Farm Sanctuary 15). One important component of successful fundraising is a donor database. “Before you have a barn or an animal, you need a database in place,” Samantha explained. “A database is essential to fundraising.”
There are many tactics for building donor databases. Sanctuaries send representatives to table at events related to animal advocacy or veganism and vegetarianism, where they gather peoples’ contact information on sign-up sheets. They also collect contact information from sanctuary volunteers and visitors who come for tours or “open house” events hosted at the sanctuaries. While it’s an invaluable component in raising funding, database management can also be expensive. Some organizations use basic software like Microsoft Access to manage their databases, but there are also specific – more expensive – database programs designed for fundraising, which enable organizations to track donor retention and engagement levels and provide tools and guidance in designing and measuring the effectiveness of funding solicitation materials. Samantha recommended a program called Boomerang, which ranges in price from $99 to $499 per month, depending on the number of records in the database. She also suggested that sanctuaries should have a dedicated employee managing databases in addition to the requisite software. “It’s easy to prioritize animal needs over a database, but ultimately that database is part of animal needs too,” Samantha explained.

This statement about animal needs reiterated another component of the conference’s preparedness message, the idea that a desire to help animals – and even actually tending to the physical needs of animals – is not enough to run a sanctuary. Every aspect of running a functional non-profit animal care organization becomes an “animal need.” However, because these organizations are suspended in a larger political economy in which the needs of nonprofits are commoditized by for-profit corporations, “animal needs” can in turn become commoditized too, even when the goal of sanctuaries is to remove animals from economies in which they already function as commodities.
Though they may be able to remove the animals in their care from certain forms of economic exploitation, the need for funding and the resources it buys – such as agricultural animal feed and veterinary pharmaceuticals – ties sanctuaries and their animals to multiple circulations of capital within the larger economy that still relies on animal commodities as a significant source of profit.

A database is only useful if used in conjunction with fundraising efforts like direct mail solicitations. Depending on its size, individual donations will make up most to all of an organization’s annual budget. This is why Samantha emphasized the importance of a robust donor database. For most nonprofit organizations, direct mail is still one of the best ways to build and maintain a donor base, although many are seeing increasing success with social media. There are two categories of direct mail solicitations: acquisitions, which are directed at potential new people, and in-house appeals, which are directed at people who have already made previous donations. Acquisition is important to compensate for the natural attrition rate that occurs in any donor base. The goal is to be constantly maintaining – or even better, always growing – the number of active donors.

Conducting acquisition mailings is another way in which sanctuaries interface with the larger nonprofit political economy. Nonprofit organizations, including animal rights and animal welfare organizations like PETA and the Humane Society of the United States¹⁰¹, rent and trade their donor lists to list brokering companies, such as the California-based Names in the News. Organizations provide a sample of their mailing materials and a list of at least 5,000 donors if they want to trade, and the broker matches them with other organizations who may be willing to rent or trade their lists. For

¹⁰¹ See Chapter Two for a history of these organizations.
example, if an organization was not interested in a trade, then it may instead decided to rent their list for a fee along with specific contractual terms for one time use in a mailing. It might also reserve the right to approve letters or whole mail packages. Because the return rate is very low – often between one and three percent – organizations frequently send out acquisition mailings to hundreds of thousands of people at once. Acquisition mailings can lose money at first, especially with list rentals, but ultimately they can recoup costs as new donors stay on and continue to donate.

List trading and renting are the reasons why donating to a particular cause often leads to a deluge of solicitations from organizations focused on similar or related causes. Years ago, I donated $30 to Farm Sanctuary to sponsor a turkey. I was surprised to suddenly start receiving solicitations from a range of animal rescue-oriented organizations from which I had not previously received mail. Since I couldn’t afford to donate very much, it seemed to me to be a bad idea to share my information with other organizations that might channel my limited donation budget elsewhere. Careful evaluation of list performance, however, enables organizations to strategically employ list rental and trade to achieve a net increase in acquisitions. Evaluating list performance requires using a number of different organizations’ lists and tracking the results of every fundraising effort to see which lists perform best. Lists that perform well for Farm Sanctuary include lists from organizations with vegan education and anti-factory farming advocacy missions. They’ve also found some success using the Animal Legal Defense Fund by focusing their donor appeals on legal advocacy work they’ve engaged in. Lists

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102 The Animal Legal Defense Fund is a nonprofit legal advocacy organization that was founded in 1979 with the mission to “protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system.” They seek to accomplish this mission by:
from other kinds of sanctuaries, such as horse sanctuaries, work best, though. They’ve found that their mission is most relatable to people who already support sanctuaries, that their appeal crosses species better than it does other animal issues.

In-house mailings, targeted at proven donors, reliably bring in much more funding than acquisition mailings. The guide in the conference binder suggests sending out three or four in-house mailings each year and focusing each one on a different project or campaign donors can contribute to. Examples include requests for donations to support the building or renovation of new animal facilities or to fund expensive veterinary care for an injured animal. In-house mailings are also tested for effectiveness in message and design. To test a particular mailing package, an organization uses a control package and a test package to see which one works better. The test package may include a more graphic image of an injured animal, for example. If the test package elicits more responses, then its features can be incorporated in future mailings. These tests also require extra expenditures at first, but can more than compensate for the initial costs when they lead to more effective mailings.

Premiums, small gifts such as address labels or stickers, are sometimes included in these mailings to catch peoples’ attention and encourage donations. Farm Sanctuary has found through their testing that including premiums actually depresses responses, although they apparently work for other organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States since they continue to include premiums in their mailings. The exception to filing high-impact lawsuits to protect animals from harm, providing free legal assistance and training to prosecutors to assure that animal abusers are punished for their crimes, supporting tough animal protection legislation and fighting harmful animal protection legislation, and providing resources and opportunities to law students and professionals to advance the emerging field of animal law. (http://aldf.org/about-us/)
this for Farm Sanctuary is giving adoption certificates to people who sponsor animals through their adopt-an-animal program. Based on my own experience in sponsoring a turkey, adoption certificate premiums may work as an incentive because they are appealing to people who want to sponsor animals in other peoples’ names. I sponsored a turkey as a birthday present for an animal-loving family member, and the certificate provided the ideal medium to share the news. In general, though, Farm Sanctuary has found that when a premium appeared to serve as motivation for a donation, they were less likely to keep that donor than donors they get through a commitment to the organization’s mission.

Another tool used in mailings is the “gift string.” A gift string is a formula for requesting donations from previous donors based on the amount they last gave. There are different formulas for designing gift string requests, but Farm Sanctuary has found the best formula to be one and a half times the previous donation. So, if a donor gave $50 last time, then the mailing would suggest a few options starting with $75 and going up incrementally from there. This tool does not work well for many organizations, but for Farm Sanctuary it has been very effective. The fact that they have discovered a successful formula underscores the value of a database and good database software. Only through keeping track of previous donations from every donor and testing the results of various requests were they able to find such a productive formula.

Every detail of the mailing package can impact donor response, even postage. For Farm Sanctuary, donors who give $100 or more respond better when they get first class postage, and those who donate less than $100 respond better to bulk mail postage. The number of inserts in a particular mailing can also impact responses. Farm Sanctuary’s
testing has shown that less is more. Too many inserts can depress responses because too much information can be overwhelming. Sticking to one goal per mailing is thus also more effective than trying to save on postage by sending multiple pieces of information in one mailing, such as request for donation along with an event invitation.

Perhaps the most important component of any effective mailing is the writing style. The text in a mailing is crafted to catch and keep a reader’s attention long enough to get them to read through to “the ask,” whatever the mailing is requesting to be given. For this reason, mailings often employ bold font, underlining, bullet points, and large pull quotes. The language itself is often punchy and dramatic. People are unlikely to read the whole thing, so creating a sense of urgency helps to retain their attention longer.

The ask itself is most effective if it can grab people with a specific request that also relates more broadly to what it means to support the organization. Specific cruelty cases often work best for sanctuaries in this regard. For example, talking about the general conditions to which dairy cows are subjected in large factory farms a may be too abstract for many donors, but referring to a specific cruelty case of a cow that was rescued from a dairy farm with graphic details about its condition can elicit more responses. While the larger institutional conditions that negatively impact animals may seem too big to fix with a donation, personalizing these conditions with the biographical details of individual animals makes these subjects of rescue more relatable to donors, and thus more help-able as well. Images of the animals and the effects of their mistreatment can also elicit sympathy and further strengthen an animal’s relatability, but they lose their effectiveness if they are too graphic. They work best when they are just graphic enough to convey a sense of cruelty without causing the potential donor to be overwhelmed and
turn away. For Farm Sanctuary, urgency in the timing of the ask – like requesting funding for an animal that was just rescued with severe injuries that need immediate veterinary treatment – creates the biggest bumps in responses, though precisely because they are urgent they are often difficult to time with a direct mailing that takes time to prepare. These sorts of urgent asks usually work better in online appeals.

This strategy of employing descriptions of animal suffering to solicit funding for animal care highlights one of the central tensions of sanctuary work, a tension that arose repeatedly throughout the conference. While their personal stories can help to make animals more relatable as individual subjects worthy of rescue and care, monetizing their experiences through fundraising appeals also simultaneously reinscribes them as mechanisms for producing value. Interpolating donors into the experience of rescue itself aggravates this tension further. Acknowledging that thinking about fundraising opportunities in the middle of a rescue could be difficult, Samantha nonetheless stressed to the conference attendees that when you can involve donors in a rescue even before it occurs, “It’s a rare moment to seize if you can.” They’ve seen “extremely good results from people who really support rescue.” Practically, sharing animals’ stories of mistreatment and rescue is an essential fundraising tool for sanctuaries. At the same time it enables sanctuaries to care for these individual subjects of rescue, though, it simultaneously refuges them as objects of value, albeit a different kind of value than they may have generated in their previous lives.

The process of fundraising impacts the subjectivity of donors as well as animals. It sells donors the opportunity to become animal rescuers as well, at least by proxy if not directly. This does not mean donors’ support is motivated by selfishness or self-interest.
Most sanctuary supporters I’ve met through my research care deeply about the wellbeing of the rescued animals they’ve encountered and sincerely support the missions of the sanctuaries they fund. At the same time though, their financial support for the sanctuaries enables them to inhabit the subject position of animal benefactors, and the value of this experience to donors is something sanctuaries actively recognize. Effective donor relations are therefore crucial to sanctuaries. Many have an employee specifically dedicated to donor stewardship. Expressing appreciation for support is an essential component of that stewardship. Farm Sanctuary sends thank you letters within a few days to anyone who donates more than $5. Thank you calls or permanent onsite recognition – even if just a laminated sign – can also be a useful tool in solidifying donor relationships, especially with bigger donors. Major donors also appreciate being able to visit sanctuaries for special tours with more exclusive behind the scenes access to animals and other facets of the sanctuary. Staying in touch in general is important to many donors, which is why many sanctuaries also send out newsletters or e-newsletters with personal updates and photos of animals. It tells them, “You’re a part of the sanctuary,” Samantha explained. Donor databases also play an important role in donor relations as they allow sanctuaries to keep notes about personal interactions with donors as well as their donations. The ultimate goal of these donor relations tactics is to deepen the sanctuary’s relationship with donors. As Samantha told the conference attendees: “It’s less expensive to retain donors than acquire them.” Enabling them to see themselves and feel appreciated as co-participants in sanctuaries’ rescue missions – to make them a part of the sanctuary – is one of the most effective ways to ensure retention.
One of the guiding principles of fundraising is to “give everyone a chance to give,” as Samantha advised the conference attendees. Online fundraising is thus becoming an increasingly vital part of an effective fundraising strategy. As mentioned above, e-appeals are useful in urgent situations when it would take too long to use direct mail. Farm Sanctuary’s testing has shown that these are most effective when they are very succinct since people are willing to give even less attention to e-mail than paper mail. Websites, of course, also provide an easy way to donate. All of my field sites have prominent donation buttons on the homepages of their websites to make donating as easy as possible for anyone who visits the sites. In fact, Roosevelt and Texas Companion Rescue have “donate” buttons on both the top and bottom of their pages.

Offering an annual membership to donors is another common way to make them feel like they belong to the sanctuary community, while also offering benefits that function as premiums. Since sanctuaries’ annual expenses remain the same – or even increase – annual memberships also provide a means of building a permanent funding base to meet ongoing needs and lock in a long-term commitment from donors. Prices for memberships vary across organizations. PETA, for example, uses $18 because they’ve found through testing that that is a particularly effective price. Roosevelt’s memberships are $30 for an individual and $50 for a family. According to their website, benefits of membership include free admission to the sanctuary during visiting hours; discounts at sanctuary events and on branded merchandise in their online store; discounts at several vegan and vegetarian restaurants, a vegan tattoo parlor, and a vegan clothing and shoe store; and a “warm feeling knowing that you are helping out the most abused animals in the world—farm animals.”
Finally, fundraising events provide opportunities to make donors feel like part of the sanctuary by bringing them into direct contact with animals, caregivers, and other sanctuary staff and volunteers. Farm Sanctuary, for example, holds an annual gala where they honor celebrity guests for their commitment to farm animals. The 2015 guests of honor were the musician Morrissey – a vocal vegan and animal rights advocate – and Tracey Stewart and her husband Jon (the former host of The Daily Show), who are planning to start their own sanctuary in New Jersey. General admission tickets for the gala were $500 per person or $5000 for a table. Having a table option allows existing donors to introduce family and friends to the organization’s mission. The relatively expensive cost means many donors cannot afford to attend, but these events still sell out. These high-priced kinds of events create a space for wealthier donors to experience philanthropic sociality, participating in the sanctuary’s rescue mission while mingling with other wealthy donors and celebrities.

As explained in the previous chapter, many farm sanctuaries hold an annual fundraising event timed to coincide with Thanksgiving. As mentioned in Chapter One, Roosevelt, among other sanctuaries, calls their event “ThanksLiving.” Donors purchase tickets to the event – $150 dollars in 2015 – where they are served a catered multi-course vegan Thanksgiving-style meal. There is also a silent auction for items and gift certificates donated by artists, restaurants, spas, and other vegan-oriented businesses. After the humans eat and bid on auction items, they step outside to see the guests of honor: the sanctuary’s turkeys. Inverting the traditional Thanksgiving tradition of “serving turkey,” caregivers lead the turkeys into a courtyard constructed of hay bales where they serve them a cornucopia of raw vegetables, cranberries, and pumpkin pie. The
event not only brings in tens of thousands of dollars in funding every year, but it also helps to reinforce animals’ status as subjects of care as well as donors’ roles as active participants in the community of care that serves them. It also makes this experience available to less-wealthy donors who wouldn’t be able to afford a celebrity gala-style event. Roosevelt also provides the option to volunteer at the event – doing set-up, prepping and serving food, or cleaning – for people who can’t afford the ticket price or were not able to purchase tickets before they sold out.

Texas Companion Rescue hosts a range of smaller fundraising events throughout the year, often partnering with local businesses. Four local pubs in downtown Austin, for example, host the Pubs for Pups Pub Crawl. Participants pay a $30 fee and receive an event-themed t-shirt, a pint glass, and 4 beer tickets. Because Texas Companion Rescue focuses their rescue efforts on companion animals, the event relies on a different type of inclusiveness than other sanctuary events. Texas Companion Rescue supporters often become members of its rescue community through adoption of their own cat or dog first.

In fact, while the organization conducts a range of fundraising, its primary “ask” is for the in-kind donation – donations of goods and services rather than money – of providing a permanent home (or at the very least, a foster home) to rescued animals. As actual rescuers of their own animals, many supporters then expand their commitment to animal rescue through activities that support the shelters’ rescue and care of other animals. Since Austin’s warm climate allows most bars and restaurants to have outdoor seating areas, events like the Pub Crawl enable participants to socialize at fundraising events along with their dogs. As the crowd moves from bar to bar, all wearing the same brightly colored t-shirts emblazoned with the organizations logo, it also enables them to fold other bar
patrons into the fundraising event, educating them about Texas Companion Rescue’s mission and potentially eliciting more donations.

The conference session on fundraising ended with a question and answer period in which attendees expressed some of the concerns they had about sanctuary funding efforts. One attendee asked, “How do you handle pressure from major donors who want to steer mission?”

“The vast majority are not like that,” Samantha explained, “but it’s a fine line. You’re looking for people who support you, but there’s a partnership. It’s ok to adjust goals a little bit to fit donor interests, but you have to ask yourself does it still fit our mission and have honest conversations with them. Maybe they’ll be persuaded, but give donors a chance to be collaborators and have some agency. There’s no justification for contradicting your mission.”

Although organizations generally keep their relationships with large donors private, some major celebrity animal advocates have received a fair amount of media attention for their philanthropy. Former game show host Bob Barker and co-creator of The Simpsons Sam Simon have had ships named after them by the anti-whaling direct action organization Sea Shepherds in recognition of their generous financial support. There is no reason to believe that wealthy donors such as Simon or Barker have interfered with the missions of the organizations they support, but colleagues who have worked at organizations involved in animal rescue initiatives have told me off the record that donors of this magnitude can and do influence individual rescue cases by requesting organizations take on cases they may not have otherwise deemed a good use of resources. In general, these donors choose to give their financial support to organizations whose
mission they already support, so they may have little motivation to try to influence the mission to serve their own agenda; they are supporting the organizations precisely because they share a common agenda. However, the concern underlying the question also reflects an element of the political economy of animal rescue. It may not negatively impact organizations or their missions, but large donors are capable of buying enough clout to influence specific rescue cases that effect individual animals. If these cases end up in successful rescues, then this can be for the best for those animals, but it also raises concerns related to a tension – highlighted by the next few questions – between an organization’s rescue mission and its advocacy mission.

“What about considering vegan versus non-vegan sources in fundraising?” asked another attendee. “Where our sanctuary is based there are like two million people and only six vegans. Are donations from non-vegans like ‘blood money’?”

“Half of Farm Sanctuary donors are not vegetarian,” Samantha replied. “Veganism is mentioned in our materials, but not in our acquisition materials. The vast majority of people oppose factory farming cruelty, so we can find a common-ground in anti-cruelty messaging. We use a ‘big-tent pole’ kind of focus in acquisition. Donors may accept or even appreciate veganism as an aspiration and support organizations that promote veganism while not being vegan because they support the anti-cruelty mission.”

“Our organization has multiple mandates,” said the next questioner. “One is humane education and the other is rescuing animals, should we include both in our donation solicitations?”

“Direct mail is about emotion, urgency, catching attention,” Samantha replied. “It’s about sending the message that helping animals is a people problem, so that’s what
we’re doing. Education is an important strategy too, but it’s hard to get education funding through direct mail. ‘Animal people’ are more motivated by directly saving animals from cruelty.”

These two questions and responses point to a tension that arose multiple times throughout the conference: education and advocacy for better treatment of animals in general versus rescuing individual animals from cruel treatment. Rescuing and caring for individual animals requires financial resources that would be impossible to get if organizations severed all ties to the larger economy that still treats animals as commodities and natural resources. Given that many people who support animal rescue and oppose animal cruelty still consume animals and their byproducts in various forms, it would be especially detrimental to refuse donations from people who have not fully embraced a vegan lifestyle, as the second questioner implied. In addition to participating in a larger economy largely driven by animal-based industries, sanctuaries also have to make decisions about how to balance their dual missions of rescue and education. This is where large donors have the greatest potential to influence decisions.

Some rescue cases provide perfect media opportunities to further an organization’s education mission as well. In 2014, for example, Sam Simon – who died from colorectal cancer at the age of 59 on March 8, 2015 – worked with PETA to buy a Southern California chinchilla farm. The 425 chinchillas they rescued were put up for adoption while the media coverage provided an opportunity for PETA to further spread their anti-fur message. That year Simon also funded the rescue of an Indian elephant that had been mistreated at a temple in India and some bears in the United States. "I have a desire to help animals," he told reporters at the chinchilla farm. "The question of whether
it makes financial sense, it's my money and I get to do what I want with it. It's an
expensive hobby I picked up at the end of my life" (Graham 2014). From Simon’s
personal perspective the question of whether it makes financial sense may not matter,
especially since he already knew he was terminally ill. In the larger context of animal
rescue strategy, though, it still resonates. Considering the number of animals rescued and
the media opportunity it provided, the chinchilla rescue may have made good strategic
sense, but rescuing one elephant in India could potentially be construed as a waste of
resources compared to the larger number of animals or better media coverage funding a
different rescue may have resulted in. Choosing how best to allocate resources often
involves difficult choices like this for rescue organizations – choices in which saving
some animals means not saving others. Organizations must decide how to balance the
goals of their dual and potentially conflicting missions in making these choices, and the
influence of the financial patrons they necessarily must invite to join their missions can at
times be a significant factor shaping those decisions.

_Administration_

Following a short coffee break after the presentation on fundraising, the
conference attendees once again took their seats in the small meeting room for the next
presentation on sanctuary administration. Leila Moody, Farm Sanctuary’s chief operating
officer and chief financial officer led this session. Leila earned an MBA from
Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management and gained several years of experience
working as a director of finance and administration for a financial services company and
as an independent consultant for a range of for-profit and not-for-profit companies. She also volunteered at a cat rescue and rehabilitation organization in Chicago. She came to Farm Sanctuary in 2012 as the CFO and expanded to the COO position as well in 2014.

Leila started her presentation by focusing on how to establish a sanctuary as an institutional entity. The first decision sanctuary founders must make is whether to be a private or a public institution, which is primarily determined by funding sources. Those with access to reliable, long-term sources of income can afford to remain private, but they won’t legally be able to make public solicitations in the future. Sanctuaries that plan to depend on the public for financial support will have to incorporate as not-for-profit corporations. There are several steps in establishing a nonprofit. First, the sanctuary will need to incorporate in the state where it will be located. Incorporation regulations vary from state to state, but states usually provide instruction guides for establishing nonprofits.

One of the most important steps prior to registering with the state is formulating a mission statement. The conference binder cautions attendees to “[t]hink carefully about your purposes and goals, so you can establish the capacities you may need for future programs (such as the ability to have registered humane officers on staff, tax exemptions, etc.)” (3). Carefully planning how to define a sanctuary’s mission in advance is important because nonprofit tax status only covers the organization while it’s operating within its stated mission. It is thus easier to state the mission broadly enough to cover the range of things an organization will want to do rather than revising the mission statement later.

For example, Rainbow Haven’s mission statement reads:

Our mission is to positively impact the environment while educating Hawaii’s children about their place in the natural world. Our goal is to assist in the
development of an environmentally responsible generation of youth. We are licensed to rehabilitate and possess endangered species, allowing us to teach about the fragile ecosystem we impact on a daily basis, while giving visitors a rare chance to see the animals up close. Native animals brought to us with injuries are cared for and released when able. Our resident animals will live out their natural lives at the facility.

It broadly articulates a youth educational mission to foster environmental responsibility combined with a rescue mission to rehabilitate, care for, and house animals. The breadth of the statement enables Rainbow Haven to perform a wide range of educational or animal care-related activities with donor funds without falling outside the purview of their nonprofit designation.

Processing a state nonprofit application generally takes about six to eight weeks, and once it is established, states charge nonprofit corporations annual registration and filing fees. After establishing a state nonprofit corporation, organizations can then apply for federal 501(c)3 nonprofit status with the Internal Revenue Service. This allows donor contributions to be tax-deductible, gives the organization some tax exemptions, and makes it eligible for bulk mailing rates with the United States Postal Service. Importantly, obtaining 501(c)3 status also gives an organization legitimacy in the eyes of the public, especially donors. Following state incorporation and obtaining 501(c)3 status, an organization needs to then register with each separate state where they wish to solicit charitable contributions. Larger sanctuaries, like Farm Sanctuary, that solicit donations at a national level must register in every state.

Nonprofit corporations must also follow specific accounting procedures to maintain their nonprofit status. This is yet another reason why donor databases are useful since they record much of the financial information organizations need to report. If an
organization fails to file IRS tax form 990 three years in a row, its nonprofit status is automatically suspended. Making this information readily available to the public can also lend organizations further legitimacy. Texas Companion Rescue posted their last two 990’s directly on their website and both Roosevelt and Rainbow Haven provide links on their websites to where people can find their tax information on GuideStar.com, an online database of information about US nonprofits.

In order to incorporate, states require organizations to establish a board of directors, an election process for board members, and a set of bylaws. Leila advised the attendees that it is helpful to find people to join the board who can bring resources with them, especially professional skills. Many inchoate sanctuaries will have to start with a board consisting of the people already involved in building the sanctuary, but the guide in the conference binder cautions that this can inhibit a sanctuary’s growth and development in the long run and suggests that the ultimate goal should be “an independent board of directors whose primary responsibilities are to assess the overall effectiveness of the organization and to bring in financial resources” (5). An independent board of directors can also provide a “checks and balances” mechanism to prevent a sanctuary director from making decisions that could be detrimental to a sanctuary, such as taking in animals that the sanctuary does not have space for or cannot afford. Joan, the director of Rainbow Haven introduced in the first chapter, told me that she intentionally gave her board of directors approval over any new rescues because she recognized that if the decision were left up to her, she would take in every animal that came along.

Leila concluded her presentation on sanctuary administration by addressing budgeting, an essential tool in making responsible use of funding and resources.
“Organizations with small infrastructures,” she said, “can do a lot of good work with a relatively small budget.” But costs climb rapidly as organizations scale up. Farm Sanctuary, for example, had a $9.5 million annual budget in 2014, up from approximately $6 million in 2009. They saw a large increase when they acquired their second California location.

She acknowledged that an accurate budget can be difficult to estimate, but – echoing the earlier presentations’ emphasis on preparedness – she told the attendees, “It is critical to create a plan for spending and earning. Start slowly and watch your costs as they build. There are always unanticipated expenses, so if you budget your known expenses to break even with no wiggle room, you’ll run into problems. Things break on farms like you will not believe. Distinguish between ongoing and one time costs, plan fundraising so you’re receiving it before you need it. You should have income in advance of when expenses hit. For example, if you budget a barn, also consider the increased utility costs, labor for those additional animals, and so on. Budget for the lifetime care of animals. Some species are a lot more expensive than others, so you need to consider the lifespan of an animal and the ongoing expenses it will require, like bedding, feed, veterinary care, including the proximity of vets and how much transport might cost. Also consider housing, including heating, cooling, water, and sewage for barns and facilities. Be realistic about what you can take on.”

This last sentence about realism makes it clear that she is not only suggesting that the attendees make sure to have sufficient funding secured in advance of taking on the responsibility of a new animal, but that they also recognize the limits on how much responsibility they can afford to take on at any given time. It was the closest anyone at
the conference had come so far to addressing the idea that sanctuaries should not take in animals they cannot care for. In the section on budgeting, the conference binder adds, “Many well-intentioned sanctuaries have closed because of their failure to budget well. It is difficult to say no, but always saying yes can lead to financial crises” (13). The possibility of turning down a rescue opportunity adds another dimension to the figure of animals as subjects of care and rescue. When discussing donor appeals, Samantha encouraged attendees to share animals’ biographical details – particularly any cruel treatment inflicted on them – in order to elicit sympathy for individual animals and their plights. In this context donors ideally identify with animals as unique individuals in need of care. The imperative to be realistic about what a sanctuary can take on, on the other hand, encourages people who are already inclined to see animals as individuals in need of rescue and care to recognize instead that they are also members of a massive collective of other individuals in need of care and rescue, most of whom can not realistically be helped given the incredibly limited resources of sanctuaries. In other words, responsible sanctuary management can at times require rescuers to resist the sympathetic impetus to help that they simultaneously seek to foster in donors.

Another element of sanctuary operation that has a serious impact on budgeting is staffing. Many sanctuaries initially rely on volunteers. Depending on how large they grow, some even find it possible to run on volunteer work exclusively. Rainbow Haven, for example, relies entirely on volunteer labor. Nobody who works there, including Joan, the director, receives a salary. Joan is also the only full time volunteer, though she does run a residential internship program that brings vet students to the sanctuary for several weeks at a time. In general, volunteers’ availability and commitment can fluctuate, and
the need for a reliable labor force leads many sanctuaries to hire at least a few staff members. This means they must budget for staff wages as well as payroll expenses. Sanctuaries with employees also need to account for labor laws related to minimum wage, overtime, break requirements, unemployment, and workers compensation and to be aware of how workers’ status as employees or independent contractors will affect compensation. Likewise, they must conform to OSHA requirements by maintaining records of injuries and illnesses.

Again counseling attendees to be realistic about budgeting, Leila told them, “Don’t overhire for your budget.” Sanctuaries that rely on paid labor must worry about more than just budgeting costs, though. Quality of labor is as much an issue as quantity, and a failure to adequately compensate employees can lead to an unending cycle of training and rehiring. Providing benefits is one way of strengthening employee retention, though this can also place a larger strain on the budget. One of the primary dilemmas sanctuaries face with employees is that they need skilled labor – people with a robust understanding of the care requirements of a range of species – but they don’t always have the budget to adequately compensate that level of skill. One caregiver I worked closely with at Roosevelt, but who wanted to remain anonymous in relation to this issue, became an expert in farm animal care through years of experience but is seriously considering a career change because she only makes $14 per hour. As this example illustrates, relatively low wages work against building and retaining the kind of skilled and experienced caregivers sanctuaries most need. Increasing the employee budget would be one solution, but this would require shifting money away from other expenditures like
animal care, and that would require making more tough decisions about which animals can be rescued.

Sanctuary Property and Infrastructure

Susie spent the first half of the second day of the conference reinforcing points from the first day and addressing all of the other major issues with which aspiring sanctuary operators would need to contend, starting with choosing the physical property where a sanctuary is based. Ideally, she explained, this property should be owned by the organization rather than the founders. This helps create a protective barrier between founders’ personal finances and those of the sanctuary, so that if the founders encounter personal financial problems, they will not also impact the sanctuary and the animals.

A related concern to who owns the property is whether anybody will live there. Since some founders do start sanctuaries on their own property, then they sometimes end up housing the sanctuary on the same property where their house is. “If you don’t have anybody else,” Susie explained, “you can never leave. Continuously living on the property leads to burnout. It’s hard to let go.” Both the founders of Roosevelt and Rainbow Haven live in houses on the same property as the sanctuary and have different ways of coping with the risk of burnout. At Roosevelt Rita and her husband Ted mostly focus on administrative work in offices based in their house and allow hired caregivers to oversee the animal care operation. Because they have a paid staff, they are also able to travel occasionally without leaving the animals uncared for. At Rainbow Haven, Joan does oversee all the animal care herself. However, she and her husband Sam plan
vacations every year. Joan uses her internship program to make sure there are several trained vet students in residence at the sanctuary to run the animal care operation for the few weeks they are gone.

If the sanctuary is not going to be based on property the founders already own, then there are several factors to consider in choosing a location. Both urban and rural spaces come with benefits and drawbacks. Urban areas increase opportunities for education and outreach, but more expensive property and stricter zoning restrictions can limit the size of the sanctuary. Rural sites near farming areas afford access to much cheaper feed and bedding supplies and vets who are more experienced with farm animals, but they are more removed from potential visitors. Roosevelt has managed to find a good compromise between these two options by locating their sanctuary in a rural area that’s a little over 2 hours from New York City. They receive a steady flow of visitors and volunteers while also enjoying the perks of a rural location.

Building effective and safe infrastructure also requires careful advanced planning since species needs and capabilities vary widely. “I would love to wipe out buildings and start over now that I know what I know,” Susie told the attendees. “If you have the ability to start from scratch, have a strategy. Now that we’re not using haylofts, I wish we didn’t have them. If you have a downed cow, the only way to help her up is with a tractor, but you can’t lift a cow with a tractor in a barn with a hay loft.”

Appropriate fencing also varies by species and requires an informed understanding of different species’ capabilities to plan effectively. Fencing for chickens, for example, would be useless if used for cattle. In fact, “beef cattle can tear through anything,” Susie explained. “One time we introduced new cattle to the sanctuary. We had
a camera crew down there to film how wonderful it would be for them to enter their pasture for the first time, and these one ton animals tore right through the electric fences. I was like, ‘Run!’ Fencing is one of the biggest expenses a sanctuary has.” Sometimes individual animals need to be taken into account as well. “We had a pack of goats that would jump the fence all the time in California,” said Susie. “But then one day an old one got caught by his back legs, so we had to raise the fence. Lame animals will never stop trying to be with the herd, so you have to accommodate them.”

In addition to knowing which fencing works best with each species, it is also necessary to know what predators are indigenous to the area where a sanctuary is located and what fencing works best to keep them out. “You also have to make sure you have predator proof fencing for all animals, which is easier said than done,” Susie told the attendees. “There is no such thing as absolutely perfect fencing but knowing what you are up against is critical. They have big coyote kills in California because farmers don’t have barns. The mister fans in barns in would have to run 24/7 in California. So they need fencing that can keep out coyotes.” As this California example illustrates, the environmental conditions where a sanctuary is based also affect decisions about animal care and sanctuary infrastructure.

*Caregiver Management*

The theme of preparedness that ran through the first day of the conference came out even stronger on the second day. “Know how to care for the species you take in,” Susie told the audience. “Before even getting a chicken – know everything. One of my
biggest frustrations is when sanctuaries that have been in business 10 years call about the most simple thing that my one year interns could do with their eyes closed. Right now we have 130 animals on medication at Farm Sanctuary. There’s not one animal on this property my caregivers can’t restrain. If they can’t, they’re not a caregiver yet. To train a full caregiver here, it takes at least two years. Before taking on any animal of any species, you must be trained in the very basic care required to keep that animal safe and healthy. A lot of sanctuaries are not doing individual medical care, which they should be doing. At Farm Sanctuary, we do everything but major surgeries at this point.”

The sites where I worked evidenced a similar commitment to care capacity. Texas Companion Rescue employs vets and vet techs to treat injured or sick animals, while Roosevelt had between three and five experienced caregivers on staff while I was there who knew how to treat most minor injuries and administer a range of veterinary pharmaceuticals. They also had a local vet who would come to the sanctuary to treat large animals, and – like Farm Sanctuary – they have a close relationship with the Cornell Veterinary School in Ithaca where they take seriously sick animals they can treat in their own medical facilities. At Rainbow Haven, Joan has an extensive amount of self-taught veterinary knowledge, but she also runs her internship program for vet students in order to both provide them with opportunities to gain clinical experience and to have skilled assistants with prior experience in veterinary medicine. In addition, she has a close relationship with a veterinary office in Kona where the interns can work shifts as well as a condo near the beach that she offers to licensed vets who want to trade veterinary care for a free vacation spot.
Returning to the topic of budgeting from the first day, Susie advised the attendees to “plan ahead and create a budget for your first year, and then make a five year plan before you start taking in any animals. And have a contingency plan. If funds dried up, we’d start placing our animals – that’s part of our contingency plan. The number of sanctuaries that closed because of a failure to plan well is scary. One that recently closed was a one-woman-show with 250 animals. It’s not an easy choice if you’re in love with a pig and have to decide between $5,000 surgery and putting the pig down. You also need a plan in place if you die. A sanctuary run by just 1 or 2 people often has to shut down just due to injury or illness. Animals shouldn’t have to rely on you surviving – that’s not fair. If you take them all in, and they’ll have to be put down if you die, then you’re a bad person.” At Rainbow Haven, Joan has set up a trust to take over the sanctuary if something happens to her. “I left the sanctuary to the animals,” she likes to say.

Next Susie turned to issues related to staffing. “This job can be very repetitive,” she said. “I love what I do, but I’m really tired a lot. You have to take care of people to try to avoid burn out. Burnout and exhaustion is a big cause of injury.” To illustrate her point, she described an incident in which she was tired and failed to move out of the way quickly enough as a large cow slammed her against a wall. The cow slammed into her repeatedly, leaving her with broken ribs and an injured spleen. “Cows can kill people. They have killed farmers.” This story also illustrates another issue that Susie emphasized throughout her presentation: the need to have a thorough understanding of the personalities, temperaments, and physical needs of individual animals. After this incident, the caregivers altered the fencing set-up for this cow to keep her from having physical contact with people. “She eventually died of cancer, but she got to spend the rest of her
life living happily with her favorite cow friend.” The constant reminders of animal mortality in sanctuaries make emotional burnout as much a concern as physical burnout. “You never get over them dying,” Susie explained, “and you shouldn’t. I don’t want my staff not to cry. But burnout is the number one loss of staff, and you’re going to die inside every day.”

To counter the effects of burnout, Susie emphasized the importance of compassion and open communication. “Staff won’t necessarily tell you when they’re not comfortable doing tasks, so talk to them. Don’t have them do stuff you’re not willing to do. Compensate them fairly for their work and allow them to take days off and vacations even if you don’t feel there is time. Don’t be martyrs or expect them to be. If you cannot provide all of this, reduce animals or increase staff! It’s important to keep your staff happy – they’re as much individuals as animals are.”

This last comment highlights a tension that I’ve witnessed in my fieldwork as well as through past experiences in animal rights activism. Staff at animal advocacy organizations sometimes feel that they are expected to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the animals, working long hours without adequate compensation because there is always more to do for the animals. Caregivers I have worked with, for example, leave work late because they are the only ones on duty and they have to finish feeding all the animals. One caregiver, who wishes to remain anonymous, was chastised for letting the animals down when she ended up on a jury after reporting for jury duty. A lawyer acquaintance who worked at an animal advocacy organization was even reprimanded for taking time off work to take her dog to the vet after he was attacked and injured by another dog. Susie’s statement that humans are as much individuals as the animals are
foregrounds this paradoxical trend in animal rescue movements through which the figure of the individual animal subject can eclipse or partially erase the individual human subjects involved in producing those animal subjects. Without the attention to human individuality that Susie advocates, the humans in animal rescue can have a tendency to blur at times into mere mechanisms in the process of producing animal subjects.

For sanctuary founders, however, there can be an opposite effect. “Founders syndrome,” Susie warned the attendees, “is the number one thing that’s going to destroy this movement.” She was referring to the situation – found throughout the nonprofit world – in which founders exert excessive control over their organizations and refuse to listen to others’ advice. “I’ve never seen a pattern of founder’s syndrome like I have in the animal rights movement – it’s a massive problem.” It seems to happen most often when the organization is strongly identified with a particular person, she explained.

“The founders this happens with are the ones who are no longer directly working with their staff, especially ones who started out working with the animals. There are a lot of resources online for founder syndrome, but unless the board can intervene, there’s very little you can do to address it. The major symptom is that the founder makes all decisions without any formal process or input. This happens when key staff and board members are selected by the founder, and they are all friends and family – ‘yes men.’ Anybody who challenges the founder is gone. And then they’ll call other sanctuaries to trash the people they’re firing. The founder sees everything to be about them, and not about the mission, the animals, the cause. Don’t stay and destroy your staff if this starts happening. You need to surround yourself with people who will tell you when you’re wrong or when you’re being a jerk. You’re always learning. The day you think you know everything,
you should quit. It’s a small movement and there are five million celebrities, but none of us are actually celebrities. Do not lose sight of the cause – the mission. This is not about you – it’s about them! I love those animals with all my being, and I hope when I die other people do too.”

Taken in conjunction with her admonitions about treating both staff and animals as individuals, this impassioned denouncement of founder’s syndrome presents a complex critique of the interrelated constellation of subjectivities within a sanctuary. In asking potential founders to approach their rescue mission with humility, she is foregrounding the centrality of the animal subject to the sanctuary mission. But she is also decentralizing the position of the founders. In the dynamic Susie presents, animals are both individual rescue subjects and members of an endangered collective while human caregivers – founders as well as staff – are also both individual subjects and part of a caregiving collective in service to the animals.

Further, by relating to animals as rights-bearing subjects – as explained in the last chapter – human caregivers transform the sanctuary space into an interspecies community in which both animals and humans operate as citizens. The caregiving relationship creates a hierarchy in the sense that the caregivers serve the animals, but on each level of that hierarchy the individuals that compose each collective are equal – no one is more important than the others, and both levels are equally important to the equilibrium of the constellation. Together these two interconnected collectives form a post-human citizenry.

This ideal vision for the structure of a sanctuary serves as an aspirational goal for many caregivers I have spoke to, but in practice it remains elusive. To protect the anonymity of both the people and the institution involved, I will refrain from identifying
details, but during the course of my research I encountered staff at one sanctuary who were so frustrated with what they explicitly identified as “founder’s syndrome,” they were contemplating quitting en masse. Fortunately for the sanctuary, the staff and caregivers managed to reach a détente. Though not always this extreme, staff and management tension remains an issue throughout the animal rescue movement. As Susie suggested, relying on more collective decision-making is one way to ameliorate these tensions. One caregiver I worked with hopes to someday start her own sanctuary based on a consensus model in which all the caregivers will make collective decisions about animal care and sanctuary procedures, though she also worries about whether all sanctuary responsibilities can be best accomplished on this model. Emergency medical decisions, for example, may not allow time for a consensus process. Nonetheless, she cannot imagine it being worse than working for someone who is suffering from founder’s syndrome.

Continuing to emphasize the importance of preparedness, Susie next turned to other issues that founders will have to address. “Some of the other pitfalls you have to worry about,” Susie explained, “are taking in more animals than you can handle, taking animals you don’t know how to care for, an inability to raise funds, and attempting to do all the work alone. There are sanctuaries popping up all over the place run by one person with a full time job – they will close in a year. If you have more than a few animals, you need a staff. You can’t rely on volunteers alone. And it’s hard to find ones that can handle challenging tasks. You also can’t do it if you’re going to need a full time job. Ten billion animals die a year, you can’t save them all. You have to be able to say no. Farm Sanctuary says no to 800 animals a year. If you can’t sleep at night saying no to an
animal, don’t start. Taking too many animals too quickly is the number one mistake sanctuaries make. You need to build up slowly. There are sanctuaries I wouldn’t place with because of their inability to raise funds.”

While staff are necessary for any large sanctuary, Susie also went on to stress the value of volunteer and intern programs. Most volunteers at sanctuaries are at least partly motivated by a desire to interact with the animals. “They want to feed, pet, and brush them,” Susie explained, “but volunteer work often involves cleaning duties and physical work, so be very clear about what kind of work volunteers will be doing. Have projects ready for the volunteers before they arrive, and make sure you have all material resources you’ll need for volunteer work.” Farm Sanctuary used to allow volunteers to come whenever they want, but the lack of reliable consistency didn’t work well for them. So they implemented a system through which they asked volunteers to make a weekly commitment.

The sanctuaries where I worked all handled volunteer management differently. Roosevelt has the least formalized volunteer process. They request that people sign up in advance through their website and have a calendar where people can see which days do not yet have volunteers scheduled, but they do not require any kind of formal commitment. Volunteers can choose to help caregivers – which usually entails cleaning animal areas – or to work with administrative staff on other tasks. They also rely on volunteer support at their fundraising events.

Rainbow Haven has no formal sign up process, but most of the volunteers have regular days on which they come in the morning or afternoon to help Joan and the interns with animal feedings. Joan also requests some of the more experienced volunteers to be
on-call while she’s on vacation in case interns need help with anything. While I was working there, weather forecasts predicted a tropical storm might hit the island while Joan would be away. She asked me to be on-call to help the interns out with moving all the animals to secure facilities if it looked like the storm was going to be serious. In the end, the storm fizzled out and they didn’t need any help.

Unlike the other two, Texas Companion Rescue has a highly organized volunteer system. Potential volunteers must first submit an online volunteer application and attend a volunteer orientation, which are held once a month. The orientation has a $30 registration fee, with a $10 discounts for students, minors, and seniors. The orientation provides an overview of all the different areas where people can volunteer and ends with break-out sessions for people who want to work with either dogs or cats. Volunteers must commit to 6 hours of volunteer work per month, and most jobs require additional training after the orientation. Volunteers also log into a computer system to record their hours and can take on more responsibilities as they gain experience. This level of organization provides a large corps of skilled and reliable volunteers that enable Texas Companion Rescue to operate with a relatively small paid staff.

Intern programs are another way sanctuaries can supplement their labor needs. At Farm Sanctuary, interns work forty hours a week for stints that last from one to three months. Intern programs provide reliable labor while allowing for more training than regular volunteers could receive. “This gets more done for the sanctuary and gives the interns a more rewarding experience,” Susie told the attendees. “It also serves as a staff recruitment tool and helps to develop better activists.” Conversely, intern programs can serve as a filter. “People often say I’d do anything to work for Farm Sanctuary, but that’s
not always true. An intern program gives them a chance to see how they fit with the work, the organizational culture, and living in a rural place.” The application process for Farm Sanctuary starts with a written application, followed by a phone interview. If the application is successful, then the applicant has to sign a contract committing to the internship and pay a $150 deposit to hold their spot, which they get back after they complete the internship. The deposit is to make sure the applicants are serious. “Not every animal-lover is a good fit. People do back-out or come and leave after a week.”

Because the internships are unpaid, Susie stressed the importance of expressing appreciation. “Remember they’re not getting paid, this is a special time in their lives, so appreciate and connect with them on daily basis.”

Intern programs do come with potential costs as well as benefits, though. They take time from experienced staff to train and supervise interns, and occasionally interns bring their own problems with them to the sanctuary. Farm Sanctuary has had issues with interns using drugs, having personal conflicts with each other, and more serious problems like suicidal depression and anorexia. At Rainbow Haven, one intern got caught using ecstasy. After that, the board of directors created a more stringent screening process. Joan now does background checks on interns that entail investigations of their social media presence, similar to the ones conducted by universities and employers of their college and job applicants. If prospective interns proudly display their partying prowess on their Facebook profile, then they have little likelihood of landing an internship there.

Advocacy Mission
Finally, Susie focused on the topic of a sanctuary’s role as an advocate for animals. “By investing time in basic visitor program elements, you will greatly increase the impact your sanctuary has. The more we educate the public, the quicker we can make the world better for farm animals.” Farm Sanctuary sees between 4,000-5,000 people come through on guided tours each year. “That’s four to five thousand chances to get people to change the way they eat and live their lives, to go vegan or vegetarian or at least cut down on meat and save more animals. When someone pets Antoinette the turkey and says ‘I’ll never eat turkey again,’ we’ve not only saved Antoinette’s life, but all the lives of the turkeys that person would’ve eaten in their life.” This economics of rescue is a ubiquitous line of reasoning in the vegan movement, although critics argue that it would actually take a significant decrease in the consumption rate of any animal product before producers would decrease their output to compensate for the decreased demand. This does not contradict the underlying idea that a decrease in demand for animal products can lead to a decrease in animals used for food, but the idea that one person refraining from eating turkey meat is one turkey saved functions better as a symbol of vegan advocacy’s goals than an accurate economic calculation.

Farm Sanctuary offers tours Wednesday through Sunday, every hour on the hour. The tours have a standard fact checked script with breaks where guides can share individual animals’ stories based on which animals they tour happens to encounter. “They come in almost dead and then you tell their stories: who they are, where they come from, and how happy they are there now.” The best stories, according to Susie, are anything that shows animals have preferences and feelings, “like the pig who broke out of her dog crate to nurse her piglets in back of the transport truck. This shows that pigs
have maternal feelings too. Really, animals do most of the work of connecting with people.” At this point in the presentation, Susie showed the audience a slide of a smiling man nuzzling his face against a goat’s neck.

Both Roosevelt and Rainbow Haven conduct regular tours in which visitors meet and learn the biographies of individual animals. At Roosevelt tour guides also work in details about animal agricultural industries while tours at Rainbow Haven focus on issues related to the exotic pet trade and threats to wildlife. Texas Companion Rescue does not conduct formal tours, but their facilities are open to the public so visitors can interact with all the animals who are available for adoption.

As Susie’s explanation of tours suggests, many sanctuaries see their rescued animals as ambassadors who can educate the public about what they see as the abuse or mistreatment of animals. Tours at Roosevelt occur on the weekends during the spring and summer. The tour winds through the sanctuary, stopping at each of the housing areas for the different kinds of animals at the sanctuary – chickens, ducks, goats and sheep, cows, and pigs – while a tour guide describes the typical living conditions and treatment of each of these types of animals in the industrial food system. Tour guides also encourage visitors to consider reducing their consumption of animal products or adopting a vegan lifestyle, emphasizing what they see as a direct connection between consumption choices and the impact of those choices on the lives of farmed animals like the ones visitors meet on the tour. To minimize the potential stress to animals having to engage with lots of human visitors, some sanctuaries do not allow public tours of their facilities. They limit their public outreach to social media because they see the sanctuary space as existing solely for the animals in residence. They seek to resist what they see as a sort of
instrumentalization of animals that results from situating them as educational ambassadors to the public. Even for these sanctuaries, though, animals still function as ambassadors for the sanctuary in a fundraising capacity, as they use stories and images of individual animals on their websites and fundraising materials to compel people to make financial donations.

Tours do present some risks. All visitors to Farm Sanctuary sign liability waivers, which is true of Roosevelt and Rainbow Haven as well. People are not allowed near sick animals, and guides are trained to read behavioral cues in animals that could signify dangerous situations, such as cows stretching their neck and bugging their eyes, which can indicate agitation. Animals with patterns of aggression are also not on tours. For example, as Susie explained, “adolescent cows have a jerk-phase around two, they also can just play too rough, especially bottle-fed calves that weren’t disciplined by their mothers.” This is also true for bottle-fed puppies at Texas Companion Rescue that weren’t socialized by their mothers. Puppies raised by their mothers generally know not to bite too hard, whereas the bottle-fed puppies need extra training to make sure they don’t hurt people unintentionally.

Despite the safety precautions, visitors can have a distorted sense of security because the animals are cute and friendly, and many of them belong to species that are not considered dangerous. Susie described one incident in which a cow used its horns to throw an empty baby carriage up into the air. After that, no carriages were allowed on tours. “Another time, for some reason, a lady dumped popcorn on her child’s stroller so turkeys would eat off her baby. A male turkey jumped on the stroller, lost his balance, and started flapping the baby with his wings.” Farm Sanctuary now limits tours to
children who are twelve and older. “Groups of kids can change animals’ energy. Goats and steer will head-but kids even when they’re nice to adults. It’s important to educate kids and to introduce them to animals, but you have to do it safely.”

The decision to allow visitors access to animals is part of a calculus of safety and animal autonomy that sanctuaries balance differently. Giving tours during which visitors interact with animals affects both where animals are allowed to go in the sanctuary and how much choice they have in avoiding human contact. Take goats with a penchant for butting small children with their horns, for example. Since the goal of the tours is to educate people about the treatment of farmed animals, it would curtail the impact of their educational outreach to prevent children (and by extension adults who would not come without their children) from visiting the farm. To prevent goats from injuring children, it is thus necessary to have fences to keep the goats and children separated. Although fences at sanctuaries serve multiple purposes, including separating different species of animals that might injure each other or eat each other’s food, the architectural design and spatial segregation of animals in many sanctuaries is partially shaped by the decision to allow groups of human visitors near animals. The issue of visitor safety is only heightened at exotic animal sanctuaries like Rainbow Haven where potentially more dangerous animals like monkeys, zebras, and ostriches could seriously injure a visitor.

In addition to influencing the spatial organization of animals’ daily lives within sanctuaries, allowing public access in the form of tours also impacts animal autonomy by limiting animals’ ability to regulate their proximity to humans. This is the case for the chickens at Roosevelt. They live in several coops, each in a small yard enclosed by wire fencing. When a group of a few dozen visitors stands inside one of these yards listening
to a tour guide explain the typical conditions on an industrialized chicken farm, some chickens walk close to the visitors while others move to the other side of the yard from where the visitors are standing. However, the chickens who may want to avoid humans cannot put more than several meters distance between themselves and the visitors. Enlisting these chickens as ambassadors in the sanctuary’s mission thus comes at a cost for these chickens who are required to sacrifice some of their ability to move as far as they want from unfamiliar humans in order to facilitate the educational goal of tours.

“Don’t Start a Sanctuary” Reprise: A Case Study

An experience from the beginning of my fieldwork experience illustrates many of the problems that can arise when a sanctuary is unable to contend with all the concerns related to funding, administration, infrastructure, and management presented at the conference. Before conducting research at the other sites introduced in Chapter One and discussed above, I briefly volunteered at a sanctuary in Florida that struggled with many of the potential problems Susie and the other presenters cautioned against. On the first day I came to Quiet Glen Animal Sanctuary, about 20 miles outside of Ocala, Florida, I almost drove right past the entrance to the driveway, but I spotted the tattered flag and the carved wooden sign with the sanctuary’s name just in time. Quiet Glen has an unlocked gate blocking its driveway. The strip of sand that comprises the driveway just inside the gate is so loose that you need to park your car about 30 yards up the drive and walk back to close the gate if you do not want to get stuck. Inside the sanctuary, ramshackle fences formed lopsided corrals for ponies on one side of the dirt driveway and a large-horned
cow on the other. As I drove to the parking lot, I passed enclosures for dogs, birds, and coyotes. Although the coyote enclosures were new and solid looking, the other structures were made of tilting wooden frames supporting sagging chicken wire. Across from the large waterfowl enclosures with small concrete ponds full of murky water, the sanctuary founder Lynn’s home sat among a small labyrinth of dog kennels, a deer paddock, and a fenced off area for garbage. Next to Lynn’s house are some storage sheds and a small trailer. This is where two sanctuary volunteers, Donald and his wife Kim, live. Next to their trailer is an outhouse, which functions as both their private toilet and the sanctuary’s only public restroom. Donald and Kim moved to Florida from New Jersey in the late nineties. After Donald was laid off from his job, they were unable to pay their rent and became homeless. Lynn met them when they were living out of a tent in the nearby Ocala National Forest. Lynn, who I later learned was known for helping people in need as well as animals, offered for them to move into the trailer in exchange for helping with caring for the animals at the sanctuary. They had been there for about a year when I arrived.

Among the animals housed at the sanctuary were coyotes, ducks, geese, peacocks, pigeons, chickens, deer, cranes, pigs, a goat, an emu, horses, a cow, various reptiles, and a fox. In stark contrast to the other sanctuaries I visited, most of these animals lived in enclosures that did not look like they were cleaned very often. The fox’s enclosure stood out as particularly unsuited for him. He was brought to the sanctuary by somebody who found him with an injured foot, possibly from a trap. He had been nursed back to health, and now seemed to spend most of his time running in a tight circle inside a tiny fenced-in enclosure between the deer paddock and the garbage bins, where he has lived for over seven years. He was always visible to anybody who walked by because he had nothing in
his tiny enclosure to hide under or behind. The fox’s repetitive circular pacing was most likely a manifestation of stereotypic behavior, abnormal repetitive movements with no apparent goal or function that are sometimes observed in captive animals (Mason 1991). Stereotypic behaviors frequently occur in animals kept in especially confined or stressful environments, such as laboratory animals or animals in factory farms. Temple Grandin, a professor of animal science at Colorado State University and consultant to the livestock industry, believes that stereotypies may provide some form of comfort to animals under stress (2009).\textsuperscript{103} On the other side of Lynn’s house from the fox were several dogs living in kennels who would bark incessantly throughout the day. The sanctuary does dog adoptions, Donald told me, but these are infrequent since they do not have an active adoption outreach program like Texas Companion Rescue. “But the sanctuary isn’t even supposed to have dogs,” he added. “Lynn built it to take care of other animals, like exotics, but people keep bringing dogs here because they know they won’t be killed like they would at the local animal shelter, and Lynn can’t turn them away.”

My first task as a volunteer was to assist a man named Tim in moving three male coyotes to the large new cages he had built for them. The other volunteers called him Dr. Tim because he provides veterinary care to animals that are sick or injured. He has a biology degree from college, but no official veterinary training other than what he’d taught himself from books and the Internet. Tim lives with his wife in one of Florida’s

\textsuperscript{103} Grandin is a controversial figure in animal rights circles. As a person with autism, she applied her personal experiences of feeling severe anxiety from her surroundings to her research on cattle and how they respond to various stimuli. She used this research to design curved corrals to be used in slaughterhouses to reduce panic and injury in cattle. In 2004, she was honored with a “Proggy” award for her contributions to animal welfare from PETA. However, I have also spoken to some activists who criticize her collaboration with the livestock industry and argue that she has just used her knowledge of animal behavior to create a more efficient slaughter system.
many gated retirement communities, this one located about thirty miles from the sanctuary. He was bored with retired life, so he started volunteering at the sanctuary.

Nine-and-a half-years ago, Tim introduced himself to Lynn after seeing several of her solicitations for donations in the local paper. She asked him if he knew anything about reptiles. He told her he knew a bit about reptiles, and she said he was just the man she was looking for. Tim’s first task at the sanctuary was to look after a ball python, a skink, and some gopher turtles, and the responsibilities blossomed from there. Since then Tim has also become an amateur primatologist, spending hours observing and recording data on the wild colonies of rhesus macaques that settled on the nearby Silver River decades ago when they escaped from a tourist attraction.¹⁰⁴

As we tried to move the first coyote, cherry Kool-Aid-red blood trickled between his teeth. Tim warned me and the other volunteers to expect this. It was from the coyote biting down on the restraint poles, the kind with wire loops on the end that dogcatchers use to slip over the heads of stray dogs. “It makes their gums bleed,” he said. I hoped that the next two would not do the same thing, but they did. More unsettling than the blood— or their wide-open mouths as they writhed with the plastic-coated wire cords around their necks—was their silence. I expected coyotes to yip and howl when they were agitated or excited, but these coyotes made almost no sound at all, even as their eyes rolled wildly and they jerked against their restraints.

Tim had devised a plan to avoid dragging the “boys,” as he called them, across the sanctuary from their old cyclone fence enclosure where each sat cramped in small

¹⁰⁴ See Kirksey (2015, 105-33) and Riley and Wade (2016) for ethnographic analyses of the novel ecological entanglements that have formed between the macaques, humans, and other species that live in this riparian region.
kennel spaces to their new individual cyclone fence enclosures with slightly more space
than that afforded by the minimum dimensions for a coyote cage mandated by the state:
eight feet wide by twenty feet long by six feet high were the dimensions necessary to
avoid a fine. Tim had single-handedly designed and built three connected cages that were
eight feet high out of pieces of fencing from scrap piles near the parking lot. The cages
were so well crafted, that I did not even notice the wheel welded to what was formerly
part of a sliding gate until Tim explained where the materials had come from. To move
the coyotes, he built a litter out of pieces of plywood. The plan was for me and Tim to
slip the loops of our restraint poles over their heads and then maneuver them onto the
litter so two other volunteers could carry them to their new homes. Coyboy, the first and
fiercest, rolled off the litter almost immediately, so Tim carried him under one arm while
we each held our restraint poles with the loops pulled taught around his neck. Scrapper
and Myboy were either more cooperative or more petrified since they stayed on the litter
while the four of us carried them to their new homes with another volunteer opening and
closing the many gates that made up the triple level of security Tim designed for the new
coyote paddock. All three of the coyotes along with a young female were left near the
sanctuary gate as puppies, and the sanctuary had been caring for them ever since. No one
knew where they had come from or why they were left there, but a lot of the volunteers
thought they might have been orphaned by a hunter and left there by somebody who felt
sorry for them.

After we finished moving the coyotes, Tim told me that he had taken on the
coyotes as a special project. “I try to provide a comfortable, and psychologically
stimulating environment for them.” He showed me a bunch of old blankets and towels in
a big heap under a wooden frame covered in tarps. Tim explained that he gave these to
the coyotes to play with and told me that when I came to the sanctuary to volunteer, I
should swap out new, clean ones for the old ones, which the coyotes often left scattered
around their cages in shredded pieces. Tim also has a special stash of stuffed toys and
new tennis balls in a garbage bag that he saves for the coyotes. He hides it by the blankets
so other volunteers do not give them to the several dogs who live at the sanctuary.

After the move, the coyote housing consisted of the brand new triple-cage
structure for the boys, a similar adjacent single-unit structure for Minnie, a young female
coyote, and a third individual unit attached to the back of Lynn’s house for Winnie, an
older female. I asked Tim why the coyotes were all separated, and he explained that Lynn
thought the boys were displaying aggression toward each other. Tim believed they could
work out on their own, but Lynn did not want to take the risk. The girls, though, had been
living together previously. “They were separated because Minnie is more wild than
Winnie,” he explained, “and Lynn thought she was making Winnie less dog-like.” Lynn
did not like this because she enjoys being able to walk out her back door and play with
Winnie. She was also left as a puppy outside the sanctuary several years ago, but unlike
the other coyotes, Lynn had spent a lot of time playing with her as she grew into an adult,
and she now acted more like a pet dog than a wild coyote around Lynn.

Lynn’s influence over the sanctuary ran deep and extended beyond desired effects
such as domesticating Winnie. When I first started volunteering there, Lynn was
staying in a rehab facility for an unspecified illness. Tim was hesitant to discuss her

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105 See Cassidy and Mullin (2007) for explorations of historical and contemporary
processes of domestication and how they are continuing to transform relationships
between humans and other species.
financial situation because he wanted to respect her privacy, but he intimated her situation was somewhat tenuous because her insurance company was planning to quit paying for her care. “She’s kind of in the same situation as these animals,” he said, waving his arm to indicate he was referring to the animals at the sanctuary. When I asked them what he meant, he said, “Well, if she were to die, the sanctuary would have to shut down immediately. I don’t think she has much to leave behind to keep it running. And if she dies, I’m afraid all the animals would have to be put down.”

Conditions definitely could have been better at Quiet Glen, especially compared to the other sanctuaries I visited, and Lynn was aware that the sanctuary did not make a very good impression on outsiders. I was forbidden from taking photographs while there. Lynn made this rule clear to all visitors because she was worried that, in her words, “They’ll come after me.” Donald told me that while cruising the web, she once found pictures a visitor had taken at the sanctuary and was upset they had been posted without permission. This concern over judgment of the quality of care Quiet Glen provides to its animals was reflected by others as well. Though I said nothing critical about the conditions of the sanctuary, Tim seemed to guess what my first impressions were while he was showing me around after we were done with the coyotes. “It’s not pristine, but all the physical and mental needs of the animals are being met,” he said.

Quiet Glen could have served as a model at the conference to illustrate all the problems the presenters wanted future sanctuary operators to be prepared to address before founding their own sanctuaries. Aside from the general lack of cleanliness and dilapidated infrastructure, for example, the captive conditions of animals like the fox and the coyotes showed that the caregivers were not able to attend to the psychological
wellbeing of all their animals. Despite their new enclosures, the coyotes displayed stereotypic behavior similar to that of the fox, darting back and forth in a straight line from one end of their cage to the other. Even though there was more space in the newer enclosures, they were located in the center of the sanctuary and were made of cyclone fencing that left the coyotes like the fox, visible to anybody who walked by. The sacrifices of freedom of movement and the ability to avoid human proximity required from these animals were noticeably steeper at Quiet Glen than they were for most of the animals at the other sanctuaries I visited. Given how long the fox had been living like this, it seemed probable that these conditions would continue to be the status quo in these animals’ future, at least as long as the sanctuary continued to exist. Resting as it did on Lynn’s continuing survival, the existence of the sanctuary itself was also precarious. As Tim had pointed out, there was no contingency plan in place to guarantee the continued operation of the sanctuary if Lynn died. Unlike Rainbow Haven, for example, where Joan had set up a trust to enable the sanctuary to continue to operate in perpetuity, the lives of all the animals at Quiet Glen were tied directly to Lynn’s – a situation that, as Susie suggested, is poised for disaster, particularly for the animals. Sadly, a year after my time volunteering at Quiet Glen, I learned that Lynn died. Fortunately, state animal welfare officials and other sanctuaries in the area worked together to find new homes for all the animals. This, of course, would not be an option for facilities located in areas without the same safety net of other rescue organizations to lend assistance.

Sacrificial Citizens
Toward the beginning of her discussion of a sanctuary’s advocacy mission Susie told the audience, “In practice, the first priority of a sanctuary is the animals’ comfort and safety.” However, she later confronted the attendees with a potentially controversial statement that seemed to contradict this earlier idea: “We’ve saved about 500 animals. Out of 9 billion killed every year that’s basically 0%. We’re doing what we’re doing to educate people to get them to stop eating meat,” she said. “There’s so many little sanctuaries popping up, but if you’re not doing education and outreach, it’s not a sanctuary – then the animals are just your pets. Don’t try to become a sanctuary if you’re not going to do advocacy. Sanctuaries play a very special role in this movement – we’re here to get people to stop eating animals, that’s our job, that’s our only job.”

Many of the people in the audience nodded in agreement, and nobody challenged this statement. Indeed, the idea that sanctuaries are a tool for educating people about better treatment of animals is common throughout all the sites where I worked. It also, however, highlights the deepest tension in the conflicting facets of the figure of the animal subject of care and rescue. The idea that getting people to stop eating (or otherwise mistreating) animals is the only (or even primary goal) of the sanctuary movement reflects a vision of its mission in which individual animal subjects are enlisted to a cause that they did not sign up for, even if it ultimately benefits them. It’s a tension that the sanctuary movement cannot resolve, but only reproduce. As the act of rescue transforms animal objects into animal subjects the sanctuary’s advocacy mission simultaneously reinscribes them as a different kind of object in service to an alternative value system. When Susie said that sanctuary animals’ wellbeing was their number one priority and that their only goal was to get people to stop eating animals, she was not
contradicting herself so much as reflecting the contradiction at the heart of the movement – the multifaceted figure of the animal that is simultaneously a subject of rescue and care in a co-constitutive relationship with human rescuing subjects as well as a sympathy-eliciting object suspended in financial and ethical systems of value.

There is also a second contradictory figure at the heart of the movement mirroring this first one, but often hidden by the focus on animals: the human rescuing subjects who are often expected to sacrifice time and even physical and emotional wellbeing for the benefit of the animals. In her conception of sacrificial citizenship, Wendy Brown articulates many of the same general issues faced by the caregivers Susie described above who are expected to dedicate themselves fully to sanctuary work:

While, in transition from liberal to neoliberal democracy, citizen virtue is reworked as responsibilized entrepreneurialism and self-investment, it is also reworked in the austerity era as the “shared sacrifice” routinely solicited by heads of state and heads of businesses. Such sacrifice may entail sudden job losses, furloughs, or cuts in pay, benefits, and pensions, or it may involve suffering the more sustained effects of stagflation, currency deflation, credit crunches, liquidity crises, foreclosures crises, and more. “Shared sacrifice” may refer to the effects of curtailed state investment in education, infrastructure, public transportation, public parks, or public services, or it may simply be a way of introducing job “sharing,” that is, reduced hours and pay. Regardless, as active citizenship is slimmed to tending one-self as responsibilized human capital, sacrificial citizenship expands to include anything related to the requirements and imperatives of the economy. (2015, 210-11)

The labor demands that can be made on sanctuary workers create expectations similar to those directed at Brown’s responsibilized human capital. If the caregiving relationship forged between humans and animals creates a post-human citizenry within the space of the sanctuary, then caregivers who are expected to behave as responsibilized human capital (albeit for the benefit of the animals and the furtherance of the sanctuary’s mission rather than the imperatives of the larger economy) are in effect sacrificial citizens.
Conclusion

Running a successful sanctuary requires a lot more than a passion for animals and
ing willingness to take them in. Financial concerns, in particular, place a range of limitations
on sanctuaries, especially the goal of removing animals from capitalist regimes of animal
commodification. Many sanctuaries find that they must enlist animals into the fundraising
process in order to garner enough donor interest and support to continue operating.
Financial constraints and inadequate staffing and management can also place limits on
sanctuaries’ abilities to fulfill their missions. As my experience in Florida illustrates, no
amount of good will can compensate for the deteriorating conditions of an overburdened
sanctuary, and the animals are not the only ones affected in such circumstances.
Caregiver sacrifice may become a necessity for sanctuaries struggling with too little staff
and resources or too many animals – two ways of describing the same dilemma, really.
Caregivers’ participation as sacrificial citizens in the sanctuary community plays an
essential role in making the kind of inter-subjective relationships that transform animals
from *bestia sacer* into sanctuary citizens of their own. However, animals’ use as
sympathy-eliciting mechanisms for generating funding also helps to keep them suspended
as improperty within the spectrum between property and subject-hood. As subject-
property hybrid citizens of the sanctuary community, animals are also expected to make
their own sacrifices for the benefit of that community, like the chickens who must
sacrifice their ability to move away from sanctuary tourists. A closer look at the daily
compromises of animal care reveals how animals too become sacrificial citizens.
Chapter Four: Rescue and Care

The primary existential purpose of any animal sanctuary is to care for the animals who live there. But what is care? In its most basic definition, care for another living being can be defined as the act of tending to that being’s needs. What care looks like in sanctuaries is the result of particular understandings of what animals need, understandings that are informed by ideas about who animals are and how they should be treated. The very concept of a sanctuary is premised on the idea that the animals who live there were relocated from spaces and situations in which they were previously endangered or at risk of some kind of harm. The malnourished and dehydrated chickens described in the first chapter, who were taken from the sidewalk before they could be killed in a religious ritual, are an exemplary model of what caregivers have in mind when they talk about rescued animals. They take for granted that animals in sanctuaries have come from contexts worse than the ones in which they now live. It logically follows, then, that the kind of care provided for animals in sanctuaries is intended to be a qualitative improvement over the kind of care they may have received before being rescued. As we will see, there are also common aspects and intersecting goals between sanctuaries and other kinds of facilities that care for animals.

Based on this view of sanctuary animals as rescued animals, care routines at sanctuaries are generally guided by the goal of giving animals better lives than they previously had. Underlying this goal, however, is the even more basic goal of just giving animals life, or as Foucault would put it, making them live. In the course of caring for animals, though, sanctuary workers face many dilemmas such as how best to serve
animals’ needs with limited resources, how to treat severely ill or injured animals, and whether and how to limit the exercise of animal agency through such practices as sterilization to prevent overpopulation or the segregation of dangerous or aggressive animals. These decisions often require certain sacrifices from the animals for the benefit of the greater sanctuary community of humans and animals. It is through these sacrifices that animals are made into their own kinds of sacrificial citizens. In this chapter, I will examine three main types of care that contribute to the transformation of sanctuary animals into sacrificial citizens. The first part of this chapter focuses on the treatment and care of injured and sick animals; the second focuses on the mundanities of care, including meeting animals’ dietary and sanitation needs; and the third section focuses on efforts to foster animals’ psychological wellbeing. Under each of these contexts, sanctuary animals must make sacrifices in exchange for the benefits of care, simultaneously creating the conditions of possibility for sanctuaries to operate and limiting the realization of total liberation of animal subjects.

* Caring for Injured Animals

One important part of care in sanctuaries is looking out for and treating physical injuries and ailments. Because many animals that come to sanctuaries and shelters have health issues related to the previous conditions in which they lived, veterinary care and physical rehabilitation of animals plays a central role in animal care. Sanctuaries, especially those for formerly farmed animals, also encounter health conditions that have not previously been a focus of veterinary intervention. Maximizing the production output
of animal bodies, for example, is the primary concern of industrialized agricultural operations, and this can lead to significant physiological problems for animals as a result of selective breeding, artificially accelerated growth-cycles, and the densely concentrated warehousing of animals. In the words of one caregiver, “factory farmed animals have it the worst; their whole lives are about dealing with the effects of how they were raised.” Joint and foot problems are common for most animals raised for meat as they are selectively bred for rapid gain but not for the other physiological changes they would need to adequately support that weight. Laying hens experience a range of health problems related to egg production, including impactions, infections, and cancer. In addition, many animals come to sanctuary with injuries they sustained in the facilities where they were previously housed. Many of these conditions did not previously have standardized procedures for treatment because animal agricultural industries either slaughter animals before these conditions can develop or do not need to treat them because they do not significantly affect output. As a result, sanctuaries’ need for new diagnoses and treatments has directly influenced the development of veterinary science, at least for certain kinds of animals. For example, Roosevelt took in a calf named Flower with crippled front legs. As Flower’s story will illustrate, the fact that farmers have not historically tried to do things like help crippled calves to walk means that the methods for treating Flower and animals with similar conditions are newly refined or still experimental in some cases.

When she comes stumbling out of the barn, Flower looks like a cyborg with robotic legs. This is particularly surreal because Flower is a two-year-old, female Jersey cow. She is still covered in soft, downy, reddish-brown hair, but she is starting to grow
little horns and already weighs a few hundred pounds. Her front legs are encased from hoof to chest in plastic braces held closed with several black Velcro straps. The left one is white and straight like a full-leg plaster cast. The right one is tan and articulates on hinges at her knee joint. Flower walks with a pronounced limp, swinging the left leg out to the side and then stepping forward with the right. The combination of her plastic-clad limbs, her stumbling gait, and her cute, inquisitive calf face give her the air of a Disney character from an animated sci-fi film about farm animals in space.

Flower was born in 2013 at a northeastern dairy farm, where her mother was restrained inside a building with concrete floors. When Flower’s mother gave birth to her, she fell onto the concrete and broke her left front leg, tumbling into the manure trough behind the row of chained cows in which her mother stood. A manager at the dairy found the calf with her injured leg already starting to swell. The administration of veterinary care at animal agriculture operations is generally determined by a calculus of costs and benefits, limited to veterinary procedures that will facilitate profit rather than cut into it. Flower’s injury would have been much more expensive to treat than any profit she could bring in, so from a business perspective the obvious choice would be to euthanize rather than treat a calf in her condition. Rather than euthanize her, however, the manager called a woman he knew who had expressed interest in raising a cow as a pet. The woman came to get Flower and drove her home in the back of her car.

The woman, who was named Jennifer (the only detail caregivers knew about her), cared for the calf inside her house, giving her blankets for bedding and feeding her with a bottle. She hired a vet to treat Flower’s injured leg. The vet gave her antibiotics but did not properly treat the fracture in her left knee. Despite the antibiotics, Flower developed
an infection in the joint, which never properly healed. Since the leg was too badly injured to support her weight and the uninjured leg also was not strong enough to carry her by itself, Flower taught herself to walk on her front knees. A video of Flower before she received her braces shows her swinging her spindly, crooked legs out to the side and pulling herself forward on her bent knees. When the vet examined her again, he told Jennifer that the calf would never be able to walk and suggested that she be euthanized.

For a second time, Flower was given a reprieve. Jennifer decided to ask for help from Roosevelt, the facility in upstate New York described in Chapter One. The sanctuary agreed to take Flower in and arranged to get her medical care at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. Although caregivers at Roosevelt feared Flower’s condition would be untreatable, they were pleasantly surprised when the vet staff said they could help her. Because the ligaments in her good leg had become shortened during months of pulling herself around on her front knees, they had to operate on that leg as well as the one with the broken knee. Over several months and multiple return visits to Cornell, a three hundred-mile round trip in the back of a truck for Flower, her condition has gradually improved. Flower received two surgeries at Cornell, one to reset the broken bone and a second surgery to repair the ligaments in the other leg. With the help of the special braces from a company in Florida that specializes in making braces and prosthetics for animals, Flower now wanders throughout the sanctuary during the day, using the legs that previously could not support her weight.

Theresa, one of the caregivers at the sanctuary, first introduced me to Flower. Theresa is a white woman in her early thirties who moved to the New York Hudson Valley in order to work full-time as an animal caregiver at the sanctuary. Originally from
a military family in Texas – both her brother and father are veterans – she lived in New York City while working on a degree in early childhood education. While attending a tour during a weekend visit to the sanctuary, she was deeply moved by the animals she met. She’d read about the lives of animals in the agricultural industries, but meeting them in person while hearing the tour guide explain the situations from which they had been rescued caused her to empathize with them in a way she never had before. “I couldn’t stop thinking about them after I left,” she told me. “Shortly after that, I became vegan.” Within a few weeks, she decided to give up her plans to be a teacher and applied to work as an intern at the sanctuary, working there for free while learning all the specific skills required for caring for formerly farmed animals. These included various animals’ dietary needs and the specific sorts of health problems common to different species and how to treat them. After several months of intern training, she was hired to fill an open animal caregiver position. When I met Theresa, she had been working at the sanctuary for almost two years.

Theresa told me about Flower as we stood together scratching Flower’s ears. The calf tilted her head to the side, closed her eyes, and stretched her neck, responding just as my dog does when I scratch behind her ears. Flower’s situation reminded me of my cat Panza (discussed in the first chapter) and my ambivalence about getting him surgery. It was hard to tell by looking at her if Flower was in any pain, but I wondered if she experienced an improvement in the quality of her life since her rescue and treatments or her injuries continued to impact her life to the same degree. Theresa felt that there was an improvement. “When I first saw Flower, I really didn’t think there was any chance she
would make it. It looked really bad. But now look at her. Nobody can tell me she’s not happy.”

Socially, Flower was relatively isolated while I was around her. For her own safety, Flower she was kept separate from the other cows at the sanctuary. The full-grown females are bigger than she, and she is not strong enough to support herself when they bump into her. Nonetheless, Flower makes frequent attempts to interact with the other cows. One day she managed to climb over a five-foot-high wire fence to join them where they were grazing in a pasture, a feat that would have been difficult for a calf with four fully functional legs. Hearing these stories again made me wonder about Flower’s quality of life. Flower’s isolation benefited her by preventing injuries from interacting with the other cows, but it also benefited the sanctuary more generally because additional injuries could drain financial resources. It also freed up time for other sanctuary tasks that caregivers might otherwise have to spend supervising her. Flower was sacrificing some of her own already limited mobility as well as the ability to interact with other cows for the requirements of the larger sanctuary community, even though her sacrifice also potentially benefited her by preventing further injuries.

Although Flower’s ability to socialize was limited, it was not completely curtailed. Another time, I was helping give the cows, sheep, and goats in the barn their evening feeding when Theresa asked me to see if I could lure Flower back to her pen so she could be closed in for the night. She gave me a large plastic scooper full of alfalfa pellets and a folded-over half of a peanut butter sandwich. “She loves peanut butter!” Theresa said. “She can be stubborn, but if anything will work, it should be this. It’s also how we get her to take meds – by hiding pills in the peanut butter.” (This may be as close
to a universal rule of thumb as there is in the world of animal care – although there are surely exceptions, I have yet to find an animal that did not love peanut butter.) Theresa and I found Flower standing outside by the fence around the pasture where the steers live. Bob, a large steer who is over six feet at the haunches and weighs almost a ton, stood staring at Flower from the other side of the wooden fence that separated them.

Bob, a black and white Holstein (a breed commonly used for dairy production), came to Roosevelt ten years ago, when he was only about a week old. Like Flower, Bob was born to a dairy cow. Male cows are not much use to the dairy industry since they can not produce milk, so they are typically sold by dairy farmers to be raised as veal calves. Veal production is actually a subsidiary industry to dairy production. Cows must be impregnated (most often through artificial insemination in modern dairy production) so that their bodies will start to produce milk. Female calves can be raised to become future dairy cows, during which time they produce milk for about 4 years before their production starts to decline. After that, they are typically sent to slaughter. Male calves, on the other hand, are usually slaughtered much sooner, making up the bulk of veal production.

Bob’s owner was going to auction him off for precisely this purpose, but a passing couple saw him tied to a tree and bought him before he could be sold at auction. The couple, unknown to the sanctuary workers, brought Bob to the sanctuary soon after buying him. Like Flower’s, Bob’s rescuers tried to care for him at home but found it too difficult and asked Roosevelt for help. So the sanctuary took him in when he was a week old. When he first arrived, he slept in a pen inside the pigs’ barn. Because there were no lactating cows at the sanctuary, Bob had to suck milk replacer from a bottle. Caregivers
also eventually started feeding Bob small portions of grain to help him gain weight. When Bob figured out that he could use his nose to knock the lid off the grain storage container next to where he slept, caregivers had to build a gated pen in which to store grain bags so that he could not get to them. Many cattle farmers use grain to fatten up cattle, but large amounts of grain can actually cause cramps, bloating, or even death. Cows, like other ruminants, digest plant matter like grass by fermenting it in a chamber of their stomach prior to digestion, regurgitating it as cud to chew it and break it down further, and then swallowing it again. This specialized process is not adapted to grain consumption, though, so cows can only eat it sparingly without developing problems.

While living in the pigs’ barn, Bob encountered Eloise the goat. At that point, Eloise was also a new arrival, only having come to the sanctuary a few weeks before Bob. Eloise had been abandoned by her owners after a house fire. They left her in their yard where the only water source was puddles of rainwater. She was there for a few months before she was rescued by a humane law enforcement official who brought her to Roosevelt. Eloise was malnourished and had a large parasite load when she arrived at the sanctuary. She also had leg problems. Domestic goats must have their hooves regularly trimmed so they can walk properly since their hooves are not subjected to the wear and tear of rocky surfaces that keeps the hooves of wild goats short. Eloise’s hooves were so long that they prevented her from walking properly – also like Flower – affecting the ligaments in her legs. After caregivers trimmed her hooves, gave her anti-parasite medication, and helped her regain a healthy weight, Eloise’s legs improved.

At first, Eloise showed no interest in other animals and did not socialize with other goats. Shortly after Bob’s arrival, though, they began leaning against each other
while separated by the gate between their pens, so caregivers opened the gate and allowed them to interact more directly. They became inseparable companions, grazing together throughout the day and sleeping together at night. As Bob grew rapidly, though, his playful young calf exuberance began to become dangerous for the older, more frail goat. Within a year, he had gained almost 800 pounds. To protect Eloise from injury, caregivers began putting Bob in a pasture during the day with the other steer at the sanctuary, allowing him to sleep with her at night after he had burned off his energy. Eventually, he had grown too large to do even that, and started living fulltime with his fellow steer. Even after the move, though, Bob and Eloise frequently grazed side-by-side, pressing against each other through the wire fencing that separated them.

Like Flower, Bob and Eloise were forced to sacrifice spatial mobility as well as the ability to socialize with each other without the impediment of physical barriers. But aside from providing another example of the sacrifices sanctuary animals make, their story is also noteworthy because it provides as example of the kind of voluntary contributions animals make to the greater interspecies community of the sanctuary and the roles they can play in their own care. Through the relationship they formed, Bob and Eloise provide each other with social enrichment. We may not know what exactly they gain from these interactions – and whatever it is could be different for each animal – but we can at least surmise from their intentional initiation of contact with each other that there is something they want from the interaction. As their relationship shows, the outcomes of care are not always determined by humans. Post-human citizenship in sanctuaries entails sacrifice, but it also creates opportunities for animal citizens to participate in each other’s care separate from the sacrificial demands placed on them.
Now, as Theresa and I watched, Bob was making a new acquaintance. “Oh wow – this is awesome!” Theresa said excitedly. “This is the first time Flower has interacted with the boys. I’m so excited to see how they react!” Bob stretched his neck over the top wooden crossbeam and breathed in deeply over and over, inhaling Flower’s smell. Flower sniffed back, almost touching his wet nose with hers. Theresa asked me to take photos with my phone so she could show the other caregivers how interested they looked as they greeted each other for the first time. I snapped some pictures from different angles, and we watched silently for several minutes as they continued to sniff each other and rub their muzzles together. Eventually, Flower seemed to lose interest and moved away from the fence to sniff at pieces of hay scattered in the mud next to the fence post.

Sure that I would no longer be interrupting their interaction if I tried to get Flower’s attention, I finally approached her with the scooper of food. “Flower! Come on, girl!” I called as I held out a handful of pellets. She sniffed at my hand and slurped the pellets out of my palm with a giant, wet tongue, leaving strings of white slobber on my fingers. I took a step back and held out another handful of pellets, and Flower took a stumbling step forward to get another mouthful. We continued like this, step-by-step, slowly inching closer to the barn. Every time she seemed like she was starting to lose interest in the food and turned to look at something else, I held out a piece of the peanut butter sandwich. She would then immediately flare her nostrils and swing her head back toward me to snatch the sandwich bits from my spit-glazed fingers. “It’s working!” Theresa cheered us on.
After fifteen minutes of slowly walking backwards and holding out handfuls of food to Flower, I eventually lured her all the way back to her pen in the barn. Theresa unfastened the Velcro straps that held her braces in place, and Flower lay down in her straw bedding with her front legs bent beneath her. As she munched on fresh hay I had tossed into her pen before luring her in, I asked Theresa about the high cost of her veterinary care – several thousand dollars at this point.

“Do you ever have reservations about how much it costs to care for an animal like Flower when that money could potentially be used to care for multiple other animals that don’t have her medical issues?”

“It’s true that her care is more expensive than that of a lot of other animals,” Theresa told me, “but we don’t think about it like that once we take in a rescue. When the sanctuary rescues an animal, we’re committing to do everything we can to give that animal the best life possible, including any vet care needed. Once an animal is here, there’s no question that we’ll do whatever is necessary to care for her.”

Theresa’s answer highlights what Flower gets in exchange for her sacrifices within the sanctuary: a citizenship that comes with full healthcare among other things. Flower is arguably not the only animal who must make sacrifices for these benefits, though. My question was motivated by another kind of sacrifice that is the basis for some criticism directed at certain sanctuaries by other animal advocates. The argument is that sanctuaries should not spend resources on expensive “special needs” cases like Flower’s because they would be better spent on helping more animals whose care was less expensive. The sacrifice this economy of care points to is not one of the demands of sacrificial citizenship because it precedes actual membership in the sanctuary community.
The potential animals that could take Flower’s place are sacrificing the very possibility of being sanctuary citizens, instead remaining consigned to the external world of *bestia sacer*. As Susie Coston explained to the Care Conference in the previous chapter, these animals number in the billions. Further, the same economic logic could really be applied to any animal in a sanctuary. Not only does every animal have the potential to incur medical costs that another one outside the sanctuary may not have incurred, but even if all the animals remained healthy, every sanctuary denizen occupies a space that could instead belong to another animal that was not so lucky. Based on this logic, the limited nature of sanctuary space and resources means that the animals who reside there are the beneficiaries of a virtually endless stream of sacrifice from the realm of *bestia sacer* outside the sanctuary.

*Mundanity of Care*

What does it mean to do what is necessary to care for animals like Flower, Bob, and Eloise? Aside from the importance of veterinary care, Flower’s, Bob’s, and Eloise’s stories also reflect other elements of animal care in sanctuaries. In the first chapter, I described how the word sanctuary comes from the Latin *sanctuarium*, a place where holy or sacred things are kept. If sanctuaries are places for the sacred, then it is perhaps ironic that everyday practices of care within sanctuaries are largely composed of the mundane, unglamorous tasks related to feeding and cleaning up after animals. All animals need food and water to survive. This sounds obvious, but caring for a variety of different animal species quickly complicates this simple goal since different species have different
nutritional needs. Most animals across all my field sites were fed in the morning and again in the evening. What they ate varied widely, though, and often required specialized knowledge about nutritional requirements and foods that could be dangerous to particular species, such as the danger excessive amounts of grain pose to cows like Bob.

The animals I encountered that required the least specialized knowledge about their dietary needs are the cats and dogs at Texas Companion Rescue Caregivers at the shelter feed them regular commercial cat food and dog food and give them fresh water twice a day. Many of the other animals I encountered, including both agricultural animals and exotic animals, can also eat certain commercial food products, like grain or alfalfa pellets that can be purchased from farm suppliers. Many of these animals cannot survive off of these products alone, though, and need their diets supplemented with other foods as well.

A cattle care guide produced by Farm Sanctuary illustrates the specificity of nutritional knowledge required to properly feed many sanctuary animals. As described in the previous chapter, Farm Sanctuary was the first farm animal sanctuary in the United States, founded in 1986 in Watkins Glen, New York. Also as previously mentioned, Farm Sanctuary is where Roosevelt’s co-founder Rita Johnson (introduced in the first chapter) interned in order to learn how to operate a sanctuary. It established a model that has been copied hundreds of times as new animal sanctuaries have proliferated across the United States over the last three decades, and caregivers at these sanctuaries – including Roosevelt – still often contact Farm Sanctuary when they have questions about animal care. These guidelines for cattle care come from materials they have produced for a range of farmed animal species as a resource for other sanctuaries.
Starting with cattle’s hydration needs, the guidelines suggest that clean, fresh water always be made available for cattle. Mature cattle generally consumes between 10 and 20 gallons of water each day, so sanctuaries need containers large enough to hold that quantity. “Consumption is based on weather,” the guidelines explain, “so more water should be available in hot weather. If you have animals who have difficulty walking, you must create an area to allow them to get to water easily. Dehydration in cattle can be fatal.” The salt and mineral guidelines suggest that salt and mineral licks also always be made available to cattle. “If you are in an area that has selenium-deficient soil,” it notes, “a salt block with selenium is recommended.” The feed guidelines go into more detail about cattle physiology:

As ruminants (animals with stomachs that have four chambers), cattle rely mainly on hay or pasture (fiber) to fulfill their dietary needs. Grain is very high in energy and fat, and therefore we do not recommend its use for healthy cattle. If you are caring for older animals who have difficulty keeping weight on due to bad teeth or health issues, however, you may need to supplement their hay or pasture with grain. Altered males can develop bladder and kidney stones when fed grain so other options include hay stretcher pellets, which can be made into a mash for older, thinner animals who have difficulty consuming hay.

Finally, the pasture guidelines suggest that pastureland should be plentiful and of good quality because it can provide most of cattle’s dietary needs when grass is available. If there is not adequate pastureland, cattle will need their diets supplemented with hay. “Before giving your cattle access to a pasture,” they caution, “be sure to remove all plants that are poisonous to them. Contact your County Agricultural Extension agent for a complete listing of poisonous plants in your area.” These guidelines reflect the actual provisioning of food, water, and mineral supplements that I observed.

I cite these guidelines to illustrate how the specificity of knowledge about cow’s physiological needs is based on knowledge produced through animal agricultural
practices. Farm Sanctuary and other sanctuaries draw on nutritional science that was largely developed to improve animal husbandry. The guidelines are tools of biopower for fostering the lives of cattle developed within the biopolitical regime of industrial agriculture. Roosevelt’s caregivers knew to prevent Bob from eating too much grain because of the knowledge produced by this regime. Sanctuaries have adapted this knowledge to their own needs, however, producing new kinds of care knowledge in the process. Consider the advice about creating an area to allow animals that have difficulty walking to access water more easily or the advice about making a mash from hay pellets for older, thinner animals who have difficulty consuming hay. These insights are based on concerns that agricultural facilities do not generally share. Animals do not usually live long enough at agricultural operations to develop difficulty walking or to need their food made into a special feed. And animals that do, like Flower, are not generally kept around to accommodate their needs. While many sanctuaries draw on agricultural knowledge to care for their animals, they also apply it in new ways to provide care to animals for reasons beyond the interests of the original knowledge regime. And, rather than applying this knowledge to the management of large populations of particular species, as industrial farms do, sanctuaries adapt it to address the interests of particular individuals with unique needs. Ironically, it is the farming of animals that has made farm animal sanctuaries both necessary (from the perspective of human caregivers) and possible.

For animals that are not from agricultural industries, veterinary knowledge may be even more limited. In these cases sanctuaries develop new care knowledge on their own, responding to and learning from problems as they arise. At Rainbow Haven, for example, caregivers collect hundreds of pounds of long brown seedpods from around the
monkey cages every summer. These pods fall from several large monkey pod trees, a
tropical tree in the pea family that grows up to eighty feet and produces seedpods similar
in appearance to tamarind pods. The monkeys like to eat the monkey pods, but as the
caregivers quickly learned, this makes them ill. One day while helping to pick up monkey
pods, Joan, the sanctuary cofounder, observed, “It’s ironic that monkey pods make
monkeys sick.” Sanctuaries also develop preventative strategies to avoid problems before
they occur. When bringing these same monkeys food bowls, caregivers dip the bottom of
their shoes in a puddle of chlorhexidine, an antiseptic chemical, before entering the outer-
cage area. They also put disinfectant gel on their hands before coming into contact with
the monkeys and wash the monkeys’ empty food bowls with chlorhex before placing
them in the sun to dry. These precautions are designed to prevent the monkeys from
contracting bacterial or viral infections from humans. If someone is sick with a cold or
the flu, Joan won’t let them go near the monkeys, and she requires any visitor to the
sanctuary who just flew into the island to wait three days before going near the monkeys
to make sure they are not sick with something they can pass to the monkeys.

Aside from the different issues that arise in relation to what animals consume,
there is one aspect of animal care with which all sanctuaries and shelters must contend
equally: what happens after the animals eat. Waste disposal is a never-ending task at
every facility I visited. The bulk of my actual work time volunteering at each field sites
was spent helping to feed and clean up after animals, and a significant portion of that
time was spent cleaning up feces.

At Roosevelt, it was not uncommon for me to spend hours each day using a small,
long-handled spade to scoop up pig feces from the muddy pasture adjacent to the pig


barn. Pigs are generally very clean, and usually go outside to defecate and urinate, but they did occasionally urinate inside the large barn where they slept. It was therefore also necessary to clean out urine-soaked straw that lined the barn floor and replace it with fresh straw. On other days, I spent hours cleaning woodchips and straw caked with chicken or duck feces out of the various bird coops. I also occasionally cleaned cow pies from the pastures where the cows grazed, but due to their larger size, these were actually the easiest to scoop up. One of the caregivers would park a tractor near the area I was cleaning with the large scoop on the front lowered to the ground so I could dump wheelbarrow loads of feces and soiled hay and wood chips into it. After the scoop was full, one of the caregivers would drive the tractor to a clearing in some trees on the south-eastern corner of the sanctuary. There they dumped the tractor onto the freshest heap of several large mounds of compost that sat in various states of fermentation. After cleaning out a coop or barn, I would spread fresh wood chips or hay across the floor so the process could start all over again.

At Texas Companion Rescue waste disposal was folded into socializing for the dogs. Cats used litter boxes that need to be scooped, but dogs would often defecate while volunteers were walking them or throwing a ball for them in one of the fenced-in dog runs (described in the first chapter). Garbage cans with poop scoopers sat near each dog run. When I walked dogs outside of the runs, I also took plastic poop bags with me to clean up any messes left on sidewalks. Paid cleaning staff emptied the garbage cans daily, and tossed the full bags in a large metal dumpster in the parking lot behind the shelter building. They also checked dog kennels throughout the day and cleaned out any dog feces they found inside kennels. Despite all this cleaning, the pungent odor of dog feces
and urine hung thickly in the air at various spots throughout the shelter grounds. If you were there for a few hours, you stopped noticing it, but it never actually went away.

After doing so much waste disposal at the other sites, I was surprised to find that many of the animals at Rainbow Haven did not need to be cleaned up after. For example, feces disposal was not an issue for the zebras. The hot, wet climate and lush vegetation that covered the ground in a large part of their paddock perhaps also helped the zebra feces to break down before it could accumulate. The rodents who live in cages do need their cages cleaned regularly, and some of the smaller exotic birds that reside at the sanctuary also live in cages with bottoms that slide out. Each day, one of the caregivers changes the newspaper lining the bottom of these cages. The bottoms of the large birdcages in the area of the sanctuary called “The Lawn” (described in detail in the first chapter) were just grass-covered dirt and, like the zebras’ area, never seemed to need cleaning. The only area where animals defecate directly on the ground that actually needs regular cleaning was the monkey cage complex. Like the large birdcages, the bottom of this enclosure was just exposed earth. To ensure that the monkeys did not become sick, one caregiver locks an internal sliding gate inside the cage to close the monkeys into one half of the cage, while a second caregiver goes inside the cage and uses a scooper to pick up monkey feces. The cleaner also uses a brush and disinfectant to scrub the foot-high stone and concrete barrier that runs along the base of the outer cage walls. Then the monkeys are allowed to go into the clean part of the cage, and the caregivers repeat the cleaning routine in the other part of the cage.

The mundane aspects of care tend not to demand much in the way of sacrifice from sanctuary animals. Instead, they make up the bulk of quotidian benefits that animals
receive as citizens of the inter-species sanctuary community, benefits in exchange for which animals must make sacrifices in other ways. Many of the instances of sacrifice I have identified so far relate to animals’ freedom to move through the sanctuary space and interact – or refrain from interacting – with other animals, including humans. Flower, Bob, and Eloise all must accept the limits placed on their ability to move around freely and socialize with other animals. The chickens described at the end of the previous chapter are equally constrained, but rather than finding themselves unable to socialize with other animals, they are unable to escape interactions with human tour participants. Caregivers are aware of these sacrifices, however, especially the potential psychological effects of captivity and forced interactions with humans.

*Keeping Animals Happy*

For sanctuaries, caring for animals is about more than just keeping them alive and healthy. Providing the basic necessities for life – such as food and water and a living space clean enough to avoid illness – are the minimum elements of care required in any context in which an animal is to be kept alive. Animal farms – such as the dairy farm where Flower the calf was born – must provide basic sustenance to their animals as well, at least enough to keep their animals alive and physiologically healthy enough to produce milk or eggs or grow big enough to be slaughtered. To the extent that they both seek to foster life to some extent, sanctuaries and farms share a major care goal: animals *need*
things like food and water. Unlike many agricultural operations, however, sanctuaries also identify needs beyond the basic ones required for life. These interrelated needs include socialization, mental enrichment, and freedom to move through and interact with or refrain from interacting with their environment.

Flower’s care reflects this concern for needs beyond basic sustenance and veterinary needs. Roosevelt’s co-founder Rita explains the rationale behind the decision to get Flower surgeries and leg braces in a video posted on the sanctuary’s website: “What matters is that she is happy, her life matters to her and to us.” In addition to food, water, and the medical procedures necessary to make it possible for her to walk, Flower’s care is shaped by this goal of making her happy. What happiness means for a cow with two crippled front legs is, of course, open to interpretation. Just as the idea that animal happiness should be a goal is determined by the humans who care for her, how her emotional state is determined is also shaped by the way she is understood by her caregivers. This concern for the affective and psychological experience of animals and the resulting recognition of an expanded pool of needs is an extension of caregiver efforts to engage with animals as fellow subjects, rather than the living means of production they are as bestia sacer.

Rita’s statement about Flower’s life mattering to her human caregivers as well as herself also reveals a second way in which meanings of care can diverge in accordance with different purposes in applying that care. One can think of the practices of care described in the first part of this chapter as caring for, but to care can also mean to feel

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106 However, as suggested by the manure trough Flower fell into when she was born, industrial agriculture’s standards for cleanliness are generally much lower than sanctuaries’ are.
concern about something or to assign importance to it. Rita’s statement about Flower mattering explicitly invokes this second meaning of care, caring about: the humans at Roosevelt are concerned with Flower’s physical and emotional wellbeing because they see her as important in and of herself. Generally, this care about animals and their wellbeing conflicts with a more instrumental caring about animals in other contexts. Industrialized dairy operators, for example, may care about the wellbeing of their cows because they want to maintain a certain level of milk production that would be impossible if their cows were too malnourished, but that type of care is tied to external outcomes separate from the cows rather than the intrinsic value of their wellbeing to the cows themselves.

Caring about animals obviously does not only happen within sanctuaries. The dairy farm worker who found Flower, for example, cared about her wellbeing enough to call the woman who rescued her rather than just euthanizing her. Although we do not know how he may have understood and valued Flower as more than an instrument for profit, the fact that he felt concern for her wellbeing and assigned her some importance beyond production value suggests that he did to some extent care about her in a way similar to the kind of caring Rita describes. At an institutional scale, however, facilities like the dairy farm that generally treat animals as bestia sacer are shaped by an instrumental approach to animal care while sanctuaries are guided by an ethos of care that treats the wellbeing of the subject for the subject’s own sake as its primary goal.

One of the primary problems sanctuaries face in trying to foster psychological wellbeing for animals is that, like the places from which many of them were rescued, sanctuaries are still a form of forced captivity that constrains animals ability to move
freely from the world as they may otherwise choose to. Even though animals may notice that the quality of their living conditions has improved in sanctuaries, they do not necessarily see their captivity as part of a reasonable exchange for those improvements. Ecofeminist philosopher and ethicist Lori Gruen describes captivity as “a condition in which a being is confined and controlled and is reliant on those in control to satisfy her basic needs” (2011, 133). Sanctuaries, although largely committed to minimizing control and confinement, nonetheless still fit this definition of captivity. As Gruen notes, the goals of “sanctuaries are to rehabilitate abused animals, nurture orphaned animals, provide companionship and enriched environments in which animals can express species-typical behavior, and to respect each animal (159),” but sometimes expressing species-typical behavior conflicts with the other goals of a sanctuary. For example, most sanctuaries are opposed to captive breeding, both because sanctuary resources are limited and there are already countless living animals that could fill sanctuary space and because allowing captive breeding would subject future generations of animals to the same restrictions on their freedom that their parents already face (160). Gruen argues:

the freedom to reproduce and to care for young is central in the development of important affiliative social skills that are necessary to build meaningful bonds with conspecifics and to enhance group stability. Denying captive animals the possibility to reproduce strips them of the chance to engage fully in species-typical behaviors, and this is particularly detrimental to females who are, in most species, primarily responsible for rearing young. Having infants born in captivity allows individuals to experience a full range of social relations, and it serves as enrichment for captive groups. Yet, allowing captive breeding perpetuates the wrongs that captivity poses. (ibid.)

Both Roosevelt and Rainbow Haven regularly confronted this specific issue with rescued birds. Based on their experiences with chickens, duck, geese, and parrots at these sites, several caregivers informed me, and I observed myself, that not all female birds seem to
have a desire to nest. Some lay eggs and immediately abandon them, while others will brood on their eggs until they are eventually taken away. Because male and female birds are not segregated to allow them to form as much as possible their own preferred social groupings, it is necessary to take away eggs to avoid a proliferation of baby chicks. With industrial laying hens, whose bodies have been altered through generations of selective breeding to maximize their laying output, recycling the eggs into a mash that is fed back to the hens also helps them gain back some of the nutrients – such as calcium – that constant laying depletes them of. Many caretakers expressed feeling guilty about taking away the eggs from brooding hens, but they also felt there was no alternative. While cleaning bird enclosures, I also felt bad about having to take eggs out from under squawking, agitated hens. One small Hawaiian chicken, named Mama, was so attracted to brooding that Rainbow Haven provided her with golf balls to sit on since she rarely laid her own eggs, but would brood on other birds’ eggs whenever the opportunity arose.

Trying to foster animals’ psychological wellbeing within conditions of captivity that can have the opposite effect is the sanctuary paradox. As mentioned in the introduction, philosopher Tom Regan summarizes the difference between the rights and the welfare approach to animal advocacy as “Empty cages, not larger cages” (2004, 78). The paradox of sanctuary work is that, although they seek to liberate animals from cages, in the end sanctuaries are still larger cages. One major way caregivers try to mitigate the negative effects of captivity is by avoiding stimuli that they think may cause animals stress. This is often done through either minimizing human contact with them or trying to provide social or psychological enrichment, such as toys to play with or opportunities to play or otherwise interact with other animals.
At Rainbow Haven, for example, Joan designed many of her methods for approaching or interacting with animals with the specific goal of minimizing any anxiety or stress she might cause. Maui, a female cockatoo, was probably the biggest beneficiary of this approach at the entire sanctuary. Joan actually purchased Maui as a pet, but when she started to learn more about exotic birds as they started coming into the sanctuary as rescue, she came to the conclusion that exotic birds should not be pets. She felt that their psychological and emotional lives were too complex for them to live happily in most pet situations because they became too dependent on emotional support that humans could not reliably provide. As she explained to me, “What people don’t understand is that exotic birds like cockatoos and parrots are highly intelligent birds, and they bond for life. People get them when they’re babies and form close bonds with them, and then if their personalities change as they get older and they get more difficult to care for or they outlive their owner, people just get rid of them. And they’re totally heartbroken and depressed. Exotic birds in particular will resort to self-abuse when they’re upset, doing things like pulling out their feathers compulsively.” There were examples of this behavior in other birds at the sanctuary. Magma, for example, is an eclectus parrot that lived in a cage near Maui’s. She was given to the sanctuary by relatives of her owner after her owner died. Native to parts of Melanesia, Australia, and Indonesia, eclectus parrots have striking sexually dimorphic plumage, which is rare among parrot species. The males are usually a vibrant green, and the females are scarlet with a bright indigo chest. Magma, however, had pulled out most of her feathers prior to coming to the sanctuary. The only part of her that really looked like an eclectus anymore was her yellow beak and red head and wings; the rest of her body was covered in wrinkly bluish skin, like a hatchling.
Magma got excited when people walked near her cage, prancing back and forth on one of her perches and saying, “Hello!” in that high-pitched voice all birds seem to share when speaking human languages. According to Joan, she preferred the company of men and would get particularly excited when certain male volunteers were nearby. Sometimes Magma would even break out in the chorus of “I Left My Heart in San Francisco.” She carried the tune well – Joan claimed that she had perfect pitch – though she usually trailed off after “I left my heart.”

Aside from the feather pulling, Magma also exhibited other behavior that caregivers interpreted as signs of stress or anxiety. Maternal nesting behavior is another common trait in eclectus hens, and they will often lay and brood on infertile eggs even when living alone. Eclectus parrots are even used to incubate other parrots’ eggs. Magma had one such egg in her cage with her. It was there before I arrived at the sanctuary and remained there for months. Caregivers left it there as a calming mechanism, a sort of security blanket that allowed her to engage in species-typical behavior that could alleviate some of the stress of captivity. One day, Joan had the idea to give her a baby chicken she could foster as her own offspring, hoping that this would provide an even better opportunity than the infertile egg to engage in species-typical behavior that could provide social and psychological enrichment. Joan was not sure how Magma would respond to the chick, but she was definitely not expecting what followed when she placed it in Magma’s cage. Rather than indulge her broody tendencies, Magma displayed a different tendency of eclectus parrots. In certain circumstances, wild eclectus hens have been observed committing infanticide against their male offspring when they have both a male and a female hatchling. Joan did not know the sex of the young bird, but even though
Magma was not wild, and she did not have two hatchlings, she “immediately shredded the baby chick,” a caregiver later told me.

Feeling extra responsibility because she had purchased the bird herself, Joan was determined to minimize Maui’s stress as much as possible and prevent her from becoming more like Magma and some of the other birds at the sanctuary. As a result, Maui quite literally ruled her roost. During the day, she sat atop a cage in an open barn area. Caregivers turned on the radio during the day for Maui because she seemed to like music. Sometimes she would even bounce up and down and fan her head feathers, dancing to songs with a good beat. (Dancing to music is not uncommon for cockatoos, as a YouTube search will quite entertainingly illustrate.) Maui also had a bell she could ring whenever she wanted a treat. Although she seemed to really like some caregivers, perching on their hands and saying, “hello” or “Maui’s a good bird,” others (including me) could not get too close to her cage or she would try to bite them. Occasionally, if she made her way to the floor, she would even chase the people she did not seem to like out of the barn, nipping at their ankles and flapping her wings. The primary rule in interacting with Maui, as established by Joan, was to avoid agitating her whenever possible.

To avoid upsetting Maui, caregivers were instructed to open the door to Maui’s room first thing in the morning before anybody spoke out loud, otherwise she might hear the voices outside and could become agitated and hurt herself in the cage where she slept at night. Sanctuary workers, particularly the ones she seemed not to like, were also supposed to generally avoid bothering her to prevent her from getting her too agitated. More than one caregiver privately expressed frustration with her since her daytime
location in the center of the barn made it difficult to do daily cleanings if she was acting excited. Cammie had been volunteering at the sanctuary since Joan first started taking in animals. She was a retired accountant, and started working at the sanctuary after her husband died. She loved her work there and relished the opportunity to be around all the other animals, but she told me she could not stand Maui. “She bit my wrist one time pretty bad, so I generally stay away from her. I don’t know why, but she really doesn’t like me. I swear, one time, she called me a bitch out of the blue. I’ve never heard her say it before or since, but I was sweeping near her cage, and my hand got too close, and she stuck her head out and tried to bite me. I pulled my hand away, and she clearly said, ‘Bitch!’” Maui was able to shape the conditions of her environment and daily care through a combination of her assertive behavior and caregivers’ willingness to respond in a way that intended to minimize her stress, not to mention theirs. In this particular dynamic, the caregivers’ role as sacrificial citizens in the sanctuary community came to the fore more than Maui’s. They went out of their way to avoid bothering her, working more quickly when they had to clean near her, talking quietly around her, and taking indirect routes to avoid walking through the barn when possible. These sacrifices may be relatively minor compared to the fact that Maui had to spend most of her life in or on top of her cage, but her relationship with caregivers stands out among all the ones I witnessed as being the most clear example of an animal so regularly inverting the power dynamic between herself and humans.

While starting from the same goal of trying to minimize stress, Joan took a different approach to other animals in the sanctuary. Lolly and Billie, for example, are the sanctuary’s two female zebras mentioned above. They shared a large grassy paddock
along the eastern side of the sanctuary. Due to spatial constraints, it is necessary to walk through their enclosure to get to other parts of the sanctuary. However, neither of the zebras seemed to want humans to get too close. They moved away from humans when they entered the enclosure and eyed them warily. Sometimes they even barked. The sounds, which resemble a loud cough, are intended as warnings, according to Joan.

Billie the zebra arrived at the sanctuary with her mother Molly as the first two animals Joan rescued. As described in detail in the first chapter, Joan first got the idea to start an animal sanctuary while recovering from a lightning strike. Her attempt to relocate two giraffes from an exotic animal park that was closing on the Hawaiian island of Molokai served as the catalyst for her animal rescuing enterprise, but she was unsuccessful in saving the giraffes. As previously mentioned, she eventually agreed to send the giraffes to the Honolulu zoo rather than bring them to her property on the Big Island, although they died in transit. She did, however, manage to rescue Billie and her pregnant mother Molly from the same park. Molly gave birth to Lolly shortly after their arrival. Molly would not allow Billie to come near the newborn zebra. She would chase her away, occasionally nipping or kicking at her. As the young zebra grew, though, Molly relented and allowed Billie to socialize with her young sister. Molly eventually died, but the sisters became inseparable. Despite the loss of the giraffes, bringing the zebras over from Molokai allowed Joan to continue channeling her energy into rescuing animals, which she credits with helping her to recover from the cognitive impairments

\[107\] In addition to physical injuries, the lightning initially caused expressive aphasia, a disorder affecting the speech center in the brain that causes sufferers to utter random words when trying to express themselves.
psychological depression caused by the debilitating lightning strike. For this reason, Joan says the zebras saved her life.

When entering the zebra enclosure, she always instructs volunteers “to think like a prey animal.” “They don’t know who you are or why you’re in there,” Joan explained during my first tour of the sanctuary. “So for all they know you’re coming to hurt them. The best thing to do is ignore them. Don’t talk to them or look at them or give them any reason to think you’re interested in them. Walk sideways to them so you’re not facing them, keep talking to each other in low voices like you don’t even know they’re there. You can even grab some tall grass as you walk by and pretend to eat it, so they think you’re just interested in grazing.” Like many prey animals, zebras are actually quite capable of defending themselves from predators. “Unlike horses,” Joan said, “zebras will charge predators to defend themselves, kicking with their front legs and biting with those giant teeth.”

One time while feeding the zebras their morning mix of alfalfa pellets and hay, I had a chance to experience firsthand the usefulness of Joan’s technique for avoiding injury from the zebras. I heard some voices speaking in Spanish beyond the rock wall at the back of the sanctuary property. The zebras heard it too, and moved away from their feeding area. Lolly continued to act particularly skittish as I fed the birds who live in an enclosed pond that volunteers refer to as “The Wetlands.” When I turned on the water to replace some of the pond water lost to evaporation, she trotted past me, looking agitated. The zebras had not scared me at first, but after repeated admonitions that they can be dangerous and Joan mentioning that Billie had bitten her shoulder once in what Joan interpreted as an attempt by the zebra to groom her, I was more nervous around them. I
followed Joan’s advice to try to think like them, to turn my shoulder to them, and to talk in a deep, reassuring voice. I pretended to bend down to eat grass, pulling clumps and holding them up to my mouth, while repeating, “It’s okay girls. I’m just grazing like you. Mmmm, yummy grass.” Lolly let me pass without incident, but she seemed to eye me warily.

Later I found out that earlier that morning volunteers had heard a feral pig on the other side of the rock wall dividing the zebra pasture from the adjacent property and the zebras had seemed agitated by the noise. These observations seemed to provide evidence in support of Joan’s justification for the constant weeding and grounds-keeping she insisted was necessary around the sanctuary. She said that preventing overgrowth of vegetation gave prey animals like the zebras a clearer line of sight and helped to reduce stress because it reassured them they were not being stalked by hidden predators. This is also the reason she rotates the alpacas, goats, and sheep who live at the sanctuary to different pastures around the property so they can chew down the tall grass that would otherwise take over.

Joan’s approach to minimizing zebra stress is a form of engagement that anthropologist Matei Candea calls interpatience. Based on his ethnographic study of meerkat researchers, Candea developed this concept to understand meerkat ways of being with each other and their human researchers that occupy a middle ground between intersubjectivity and the absence of relation (2010, 249). “[M]uch of the time people spend with animals, and indeed with other people, is not so much interactive as ‘inter-passive’ or, better still, ‘inter-patient,’” he explains (ibid.) Interpatience describes a seeming paradox: relationships that are based on mutual detachment or disengagement
If patience is understood as “the active cultivation of inaction,” then interpatience is “the mutual suspension of action, a cease-fire of sorts” (ibid.). Candea witnessed interpatience when he saw researchers refrain from certain actions that might disturb the meerkats they were studying, which the meerkats responded to by refraining from running away as they typically do when humans are around.108

By engaging in interpatience, both the zebras and humans create the narrow conditions under which each can be safe from the other while the caregivers feed the zebras or move through their space to care for the other animals at the sanctuary. Even while they seem to ignore each other, both sides are acutely aware of the other one’s presence. They engage with each other through inaction, allowing the zebras’ preference to shape the conditions of that engagement. And, although the zebras are forced to sacrifice their ability to leave the physical enclosure in which they live, within that space of confinement they are able to influence the behavior of the caregivers in a way that at least mitigates the effects of their forced proximity to humans.

Practices of human-animal engagement that could be described as interpatience were not as common at other sanctuaries, but there were many other examples of caregiver concern for animals’ emotional states creating opportunities for animals to have greater than usual influence over their own care. This was the case at Roosevelt for a male turkey named Alphonse. Alphonse was brought to the sanctuary as a chick along with his brother Barry. Little is known about their previous living conditions. Barry was a

108 For another example of animal-researcher interactions that might qualify as interpatience see Roger Tabor’s book *The Wildlife of the Domestic Cat*, in which he describes realizing that affecting a disinterest in the feral cats he’s studying while simultaneously reacting as he normally would to the sounds and other stimuli around him helped him to cultivate a similar dynamic with the cats (1983).
very calm turkey who wandered around the sanctuary grounds, approaching people and
standing quietly as they stroked his feathers. Alphonse was the opposite. He would
charge people and peck at anybody who came near him, so he was put in his own
enclosure where people could not get too close. Despite this general reaction to humans, a
farm sanctuary caretaker in her mid-20’s named Maria developed a close attachment to
Alphonse. Maria is an amateur bird expert. She raised her own parrots growing up in
New York City and has an encyclopedic knowledge of different bird species and their
individual peculiarities. One time she told me about parrots in the Amazon rainforest that
had started making cries that sounded like the chainsaws that were being used to cut
down trees around them for lumber. Maria described herself as a life long animal-lover.
She had already learned about the conditions of agricultural animals and had become a
vegan when she was younger. She applied for a job as a caregiver at the sanctuary
because she wanted to work with animals fulltime.

Whenever anybody besides Maria entered Alphonse’s enclosure, he would puff
up his feathers so that he appeared to double in size and charge at the intruder. Maria,
however, learned to imitate turkey sounds and entered his enclosure with a hunched over
posture intended to make herself seem smaller and less intimidating. Although neither
Maria nor any of the other caregivers could identify precisely why Alphonse developed a
tolerance, if not affection, for Maria, his behavior toward all other intruders to his
enclosure suggested to his human caregivers that he had a clear preference that she be the
only human to enter his enclosure.

Even though they did not know why the turkey felt the way he did about others in
his space, Alphonse’s actions stood as signs to his caregivers of his desires about who
should and should not come in his vicinity. Through this assertion of his opposition to other humans entering his living space and its effect on the actions of his caregivers, Alphonse exerted influence over who would clean his enclosure and give him food.

Further, through variations of degree in his refrainment from challenging Maria’s presence, he also influenced her comportment while near him. In effect, Alphonse both chose which caregiver would care for him and trained her to behave in a certain way while doing so. But in order for his preferences to translate into altered human behavior in this case, the caregivers had to be both open to his capacity to express preferences through his engagement with them as a subject and willing to respond to those preferences accommodatingly. In the economy of sacrifice between sanctuary citizens, Alphonse’s case is an example of caregivers yielding to Alphonse’s refusal to sacrifice control over who can enter his personal space. Summarizing her view of animal subjectivity, Maria told me, “What people don’t understand is that animals have their own sensibilities. People think they know what animals want, but they don’t realize that they have different sensibilities. It’s something you have to learn over time by being here and being around them.” Being open to the possibility of understanding these sensibilities creates a space in which caregivers like Maria can try to understand and respond to animal preferences. Of course, it is important not to romanticize or exaggerate the transformative potential of these interactions. After Maria left the sanctuary to have a baby, other caregivers once again had to enter Alphonse’s enclosure to clean it and feed him. Although they continued to try to respect his personal space by going as quickly as possible, they could no longer accommodate him like they did when Maria was able to be his primary care provider. Unlike Maui, Alphonse ultimately lost much of his influence
over the conditions of his care and was forced to sacrifice his ability to repel incursions by humans other than Maria into his personal space.

Responding to behavior that is perceived as aggressive by trying to leave animals alone is not always an option for caregivers. At Texas Companion Rescue, for example, it is imperative that dogs who exhibit behavior that appears aggressive – including growling, snarling, and nipping at people or other animals – quickly learn to curb that behavior or they will not be able to be adopted. At best, dogs who continue to exhibit such behavior may be forced to live at the shelter indefinitely since many adopters will fear that they are too dangerous to adopt. At worst, dogs that are deemed too aggressive to be rehabilitated may be killed. At the city shelter, killing was the standard response to animals that were deemed “unadoptable,” at least until Texas Companion Rescue started pulling many of these animals from the shelter and placing them in their own adoption program. Only in extreme cases of repeatedly violent behavior would Texas Companion Rescue even consider killing an animal for behavioral reasons, but there are some dogs who have lived at the shelter for several months because their behavioral issues have scared off potential adopters.

Despite treating behavior that appears aggressive as a problem to be fixed, Texas Companion Rescue caregivers do not necessarily see such behavior as unjustified, as Pablo – the volunteer who led my orientation at Texas Companion Rescue – told me. As explained in the first chapter, Pablo is a self-taught dog trainer who likes to work with the “problem” dogs that other volunteers are afraid to work with. He likes the challenge these dogs provide, and he loves the feeling of helping dogs get adopted. “Aggressivity is actually usually a reaction to the shelter environment,” he explained. “Dogs exhibit tons
of anxiety when first taken into a shelter. There’s a difference between really aggressive and predictable reactive behavior.” Recognizing the difference between dangerous aggression and predictable reactions to the stress of being enclosed in an unfamiliar place around unfamiliar dogs and humans is the first step in engaging with rescued dogs as subjects in the shelter environment. Pablo emphasized to me the need for shelter staff and volunteers to understand dog body language and pack behavior and the importance of trying to understand dogs on their own terms. “You don’t train a dog to be semi-human. The point is to open yourself to the possibility of becoming a dog. To do this, the most important thing to learn is dog language. There is no such thing as the perfect animal for every situation; we need to recognize and understand dog behavior.” Like Joan’s approach to engaging with the zebras, caregivers like Pablo try to see circumstances from the dog’s perspective: reactive behavior is actually the appropriate response to the unfamiliar conditions of the shelter.

Unlike Joan’s approach to the zebras, this attempt to understand dog behavior is the first step in trying to alter it. By engaging in interpatience, Joan attempted to conform to zebra etiquette, whereas dogs are the ones expected to change their etiquette in the shelter setting. In a sense, dogs that exhibit reactive behavior must sacrifice an aspect of their dog-ness to become citizens of the shelter community – they must learn to respond to unfamiliar or scary circumstances in a way that conforms to human standards of appropriate dog etiquette rather than in the ways that make sense to them. In fact, dogs who excel at their obedience training even receive “Canine Good Citizen” certificates. On the other hand, dogs who do not learn to conform to human standards of dog etiquette are not able to more fully integrate into the shelter community and remain relatively
isolated from dogs and other humans. This can become a self-perpetuating cycle as continued isolation can also contribute to further reactive behavior. A medium-sized, brindle-colored dog named Lamar happened to be one of these “problem” cases, exactly the kind of dog that Pablo likes to work with.

I first met Lamar while shadowing Pablo. I later learned he was one of the only people at the shelter – including staff and volunteers – who felt comfortable taking Lamar out of his kennel. Pablo instructed me to stand back as he approached the cyclone-fencing door of the kennel where Lamar calmly sat. Lamar started to move toward the door and Pablo stopped him with a quick “ehn” sound. Lamar sat back down, eagerly wagging his tail. Pablo fastened a lead-harness around Lamar’s head and guided him out of the kennel.

“Sit,” he said, and Lamar sat. He then told me to approach Lamar with my hand out while pretending like I just ran into them on a walk. This was to replicate the conditions Lamar might experience while on a regular walk with his potential future adopter.

“Hi, how’s it going? What a pretty dog you have. Can I pet him?” I said as I approached them.

One of Lamar’s main issues was that he exhibited reactive behavior toward people and other dogs that approached him while he was on a leash, baring his teeth and growling quietly. When Lamar sniffed my hand and wagged his tail, Pablo immediately praised him and gave him a treat from a treat-bag hanging off his belt. After this practice greeting, we took Lamar to a park trail with lots of dog-walker traffic and waited for other dogs to approach. As they came near, Pablo watched Lamar closely. If Lamar
looked away from approaching dogs, Pablo would immediately reward him to reinforce the non-reactive behavior. If Lamar stared at the dog, though, Pablo would watch him intently and listen for any vocalization. At the slightest growl or tensing of muscles, Pablo would give a quick jerk to Lamar’s leash and repeat a stern “ehn” sound. In these cases, Lamar would immediately relax and look up toward him.

Over the course of several training sessions with Pablo and Lamar, I saw that, except in rare situations with certain dogs that elicited a strong reaction from Lamar, the leash only seemed to be a safety precaution. Lamar could follow several different verbal commands and would stay, sit, or walk to a certain spot upon command from Pablo. After two sessions of working together, Lamar started responding to my verbal commands as well. Although many people expressed trepidation about interacting with Lamar, it was difficult for me to see why Lamar was so intimidating. Based on my observations of his training sessions with Pablo, he seemed to be incredibly intelligent, a quick learner, and very friendly to humans. Just as humans’ personalities are complex and contradictory, however, none of these traits meant Lamar could not still be dangerous. After the conclusion of my fieldwork at the shelter, I heard that he bit a volunteer on the leg, seemingly unprovoked, and that the shelter was evaluating whether or not he was too dangerous to be adoptable. After letters of support from volunteers (including myself) and Pablo’s dedicated advocacy on his behalf, Texas Companion Rescue ultimately decided that he had not yet proven himself untrainable. They decided to seek a foster home for him because they believe the shelter space was too stressful an environment for him to learn to fully overcome his reactive tendencies.
What stands out in Pablo’s interactions with Lamar is his attentiveness to Lamar’s subtle behavioral cues – the direction of his gaze or the tensing of his shoulder or neck muscles in a particular direction – in conjunction with a learned familiarity with the particular stimuli that provoke an aggressive reaction from Lamar. Like Maui’s and Alphonse’s human caregivers, Pablo does not know why Lamar expresses aggression in these contexts. He can guess that it means he does not want other dogs or humans to approach him in certain contexts, but why he does not want it and any more subtle nuances of that feeling are beyond Pablo’s ability to interpret. That these cues point toward a more aggressive response in the immediate future, however, is enough information for Lamar’s subtle bodily signs to cause recognition and a response from Pablo. Such efforts to recognize the specific intricacies of individual animal subjects help caregivers like Pablo attempt to alter behavior that in other circumstances may lead to the killing of animals.

As the story of Pablo and Lamar illustrates, efforts to understand the motivations of animal behavior do not always lead to accommodation of the desires or feelings the animals may be conveying, like they did for Maui, the zebras, or Alphonse. Even while attempting to understand dog language, Pablo felt he needed to reinforce a conventional human-dog power relation in order to modify Lamar’s socially unacceptable reaction to other dogs and humans. In order to make him “adoptable,” Jim used his understanding of dog language to alter the way Lamar expressed it. He opened himself to the possibility of becoming a dog so he could help Lamar become more like how humans imagine the ideal dog to be. Because Texas Companion Rescue seeks to alter rather than accommodate animal efforts to resist human proximity, Lamar was not able to influence the conditions
of his care in the same way that Maui, the zebras, or Alphonse did. However, in a more indirect way, Lamar was able to influence his care through the positive bonds he formed with me, Pablo, and a few other volunteers. Specifically, through these bonds he indirectly influenced – to his benefit – the bureaucratic process of deliberating whether he would be allowed to live.

The main reason sanctuaries and shelters confine animals within a captive space – other than making it easier to administer the other forms of care described in this chapter – is to protect them from external dangers, including potential predators as well as humans who might be afraid of the animals or just not want them trespassing on their property. However, to minimize the impediment to animals’ ability to be away from humans when they choose to, some sanctuaries weigh animal autonomy and safety concerns differently, choosing to allow animals as much freedom of movement as possible, even if it increases the potential risk from outside dangers. These sanctuaries do restrict animals’ autonomy of movement to some extent, even if it is just a fence to protect animals from trespassing on the property of unfriendly neighbors, but they try to avoid any unnecessary restrictions. VINE Sanctuary in Vermont, for example, is guided by this principle. Although VINE is not open to the public, I had the opportunity to volunteer at the sanctuary for a day as part of a fieldtrip organized for an Animals and Society Institute-Wesleyan Animal Studies (ASI-WAS) summer seminar in which I participated. The seminar group consisted of myself and half a dozen academics from various fields who also work on animal-related topics.

VINE Sanctuary actually started in 2000 as Eastern Shore Chicken Sanctuary in rural Maryland. It was founded by Miriam Jones and Patrice Jones, who were partners at
the time. Miriam and pattrice were both experienced activists prior to starting their sanctuary, working on a wide range of social justice issues, including women’s rights, gay and lesbian rights, and disability rights. One day, they found a chicken who had fallen off the back of a truck. Where they lived in Maryland, they were surrounded by large-scale industrial chicken farms and slaughter facilities. The giant poultry processing company Purdue is based near there. The truck full of chickens had presumably been on its way to a slaughter facility. Trucks loaded with chickens as well as dead chickens along the side of the road were both common sights in that area. They did not have previous experience with animal rescue, but after finding the chicken, pattrice and Miriam decided to research chicken care and eventually to start Eastern Shore Chicken Sanctuary.

Their founding philosophy when they first started rescuing chickens was “birds will be birds.” This meant that they would always try to make decisions based on what – to the best of their abilities – they thought birds, and specifically each individual bird, wanted for itself, rather than what they thought would be best for it as humans. This meant, for example, that when birds wanted to nest in trees at night, if they showed that they could avoid predators (by jumping away from an outreached human hand), then they could stay there for the night. If they could not (and instead stayed on the original branch), they would bring them in for the night, since this meant they probably would not jump away from predators either. They have heard criticism of such practices from caregivers at other sanctuaries because they could be “exposing them to predators,” but they have made the conscious decision to privilege animal autonomy over animal safety.
“Sure, a predator could get them sometime, but they can generally look out for themselves, and so we give them the freedom to do so,” Patrice explained.

In a chapter about sanctuary animals and captivity she contributed to an edited volume titled *The Ethics of Captivity*, Miriam discusses the qualified way in which caregivers at VINE understand autonomy as it applies to their animals. Humans at VINE use the term “as free as possible” to describe the conditions of the animals who live there, “as fences, enforced routines, involuntary medical procedures and regimes (including everything from forced sterilization to forced feeding), and other impositions certainly do not comprise a free state of being for those on the receiving end” (2014, 91). At VINE, she explains, choices regarding care in the sanctuary setting are made from the perspective that humans “live in a world that requires the rescue of members of certain species because other members of our own species will hurt and kill them if we don’t” and that for many of those animals “survival on their own is an impossible goal” (92). Thus, Miriam writes, “we do what we need to do, as ethically as possible, within the context of that reality” (ibid.).

In 2009 they relocated from rural Maryland to a lush, wooded valley in rural Vermont. Initially, their plan was to continue just caring for chickens. But a private donor encouraged them to start caring for rescued cows as well. The donor provided the funding needed to purchase a 100-acre parcel of land across the road from where they had relocated the chicken sanctuary. They also renamed the sanctuary VINE. Wild vines had climbed throughout the fencing and trees of the original sanctuary property in Maryland and grew throughout the new property as well. Vines serve as a poignant symbol for the sanctuary. As the sanctuary website explains, “Vines both enact and represent the power
of nature and the interconnectedness of all things. Vines pull down walls and snake through windows. They feed birds and serve as bridges between trees.” As an acronym, VINE also stands for “Veganism is the Next Evolution.” This refers to the idea, also explained on the sanctuary website, that in the “widest sense of the word, ‘veganism’ represents an essential next step for anybody who understands that the ‘intersection of oppressions’ of which social justice activists so often speak exists within and is supported by the matrix of beliefs and practices that promote and excuse the exploitation of animals and the despoliation of the environment.”

Now that they have expanded the mission of their sanctuary to care for cows and other animals, their guiding philosophy has also been extended to “cows will be cows,” “sheep will be sheep,” and even “emus will be emus,” since a pair of rescued emus lives at the sanctuary too. At Roosevelt, and other farm sanctuaries, cows have plenty of space to roam, but they are generally limited in their movements to barns and fenced-in pastures. This is both for their own safety and the safety of humans and other animals at the sanctuary, as was the case at Roosevelt when Bob the cow finally had to be separated from his goat companion Eloise. However, VINE’s approach to structuring the living space of their cows and sheep is truly unique among the sanctuaries I have seen.

The 100-acre parcel of land they purchased covers several forested hills. As you enter the property through a large gate across at the bottom of a hill, a dirt road leads up from the gate to the top of the first hill, where they have built a large metal-framed barn for the animals to use as shelter. The white structure is composed of metal arches with water-proof fabric stretched over them and shaped like a long half-cylinder lying on its side. The translucent fabric retains heat inside the structure when it is cold outside while
also allowing some daylight to pass through the walls. The barn is open at both ends to allow animals to exit and enter whenever they want. The area around the barn and on the hill slope next to the dirt road leading up from the gate is grassy pastureland. Although they felt conflicted about cutting down any trees, they ultimately decided to clear some of the woods to make pastureland for the cows and sheep to graze in. Past the barn, though, the dirt road leads up into thick forestland, with a few more clearings that serve as additional pastureland for the animals. What’s unique about this set-up is that VINE allows the dozens of cattle that live there (thirty-nine at the time of my visit) to roam freely over the hilly pasture and uncut forestland. The property itself is, of course, fenced in\textsuperscript{109}, so the cows don’t have complete freedom of movement. But on the sanctuary grounds themselves, the cows are free to wander wherever they want. This means that if cows wish to approach humans, they can. And if they wish to avoid humans, they never have to come near any (unless they need medical attention).

It is a surreal and enlightening sight to watch cows wander through the forest, scratching their sides against trees and munching on the small plants sprouting from the forest floor. I was several months into my fieldwork at Roosevelt when a friend asked me if all farm animal sanctuaries look like farms. Based on my experience at Roosevelt and at the few other sanctuaries I visited, I had to say they did look like farms, at least the kind of farms one might imagine as a child. They have big wooden barns, pastures, chicken coops, and pig wallows. And all the animals are housed in environments that look very much like how they would be drawn for a children’s book about farm animals.

\textsuperscript{109} A large portion of the back half of the property is also separated from the front half where the sanctuary animals live in order to provide a nature preserve for indigenous wild animals.
The word rustic comes to mind. Sanctuaries do not resemble modern, industrial farms at all, though. At most concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), as contemporary factory farms are called, tens of thousands of animals are housed very close together in large windowless buildings or packed into sprawling feedlots. VINE reminded me of this conversation because it looked like no farm I had ever seen or imagined. I had never even considered cows might want to spend large parts of their day grazing among trees rather than in an open pasture. It made me wonder what other unknown preferences domesticated animals might exhibit if given the opportunity.

The day the ASI-WAS seminar group visited the sanctuary, pattrice gave us a short tour before we started our volunteer work cleaning up animal droppings from the barn and weeding thistle plants from the pasture. As we walked through the upper-pasture near the tree line, we watched cows graze in the shade of tall trees. A shaggy, blond cow saw us approaching up the muddy dirt road. He turned from the large circular, metal hayrack where he’d been snacking and began to walk toward us. The cow’s name is Buddy. According to pattrice, Buddy was held in a small pen – “like solitary confinement” – where he lived before coming to the sanctuary. Buddy seemed much more interested in us than his food.

“He could’ve understandably come out psychotic or at least antisocial,” she explained, “but instead he seems to privilege relationships above all else, even food.” Buddy stretched out his large head, sniffing us and licking our hands. Like Flower the calf, Buddy reminded me of my dog. He was more calm and reserved than she is when she greets people, but no less determinedly interested in the greeting. “Buddy’s a peacemaker,” pattrice added. “He’s attentive to all relationship dynamics around him,
trying to calm other animals when they seem stressed by nuzzling them – cows as well as sheep, and even a squirrel one time.” Although there are multiple possible motivations for Buddy’s interest in interacting with others, what was clear is that his approach and expressed interest in us was facilitated by VINE’s effort to let cows be cows. Unlike my encounter with Flower, nobody had any food to entice Buddy with, and in fact he had abandoned a pile of hay to approach us. Buddy was initiating a human encounter in that moment for his own reasons, whatever they may have been. Through their approach to minimizing some of the negative effects of captivity, VINE created a space in which in this particular form of interaction animals and humans are able to engage with each other as fellow citizens in the sanctuary community without sacrifice. Still, as Miriam’s comments above make clear, the animals at VINE must make many sacrifices in other contexts.

Conclusion

Through the different dimensions of care described here, sanctuary caregivers strive to forge relationships with animals as fellow subjects, unmaking the property-based relations in which many rescued animals were previously entangled. These relationships are the foundation of the interspecies sanctuary community in which caregivers and animals both contribute to the formation of a post-human citizenship. As described in the previous chapter, this citizenship can require certain sacrifices from human caregivers, such as huge amounts of their time dedicated to the constant need for animal care with relatively little compensation in exchange for that time. As some of the human-animal
dynamics described above illustrate, caregivers may also have to sacrifice efficiency in how they approach their caregiving tasks in order to accommodate animal desires about who can engage with them and how they do so. As a result, some animals can at least partially invert conventional species power hierarchy and assert some influence over the conditions of their own care. In the sanctuary citizenship model, though, animals are often required to make more significant sacrifices than their human counterparts. Many of the sacrifices related to the dimensions of care described here require animals to lose freedom of movement and association in exchange for the benefits of care they receive. To put it bluntly, animals must accept confinement in the bigger cages of sanctuaries to partake in the benefits of life, health, and potentially even happiness that sanctuary care can afford. Similar to the liberal democratic model of citizenship, animals receive certain de facto rights or privileges within the space of the sanctuary, but in return they have certain obligations – in this case tolerating the conditions of captivity. In a radical divergence from that liberal democratic model, sanctuary citizenship can sometimes also require the most significant sacrifice of all from certain animals: their lives. The next chapter explores this final paradox of sanctuary care, the fact that saving animals’ lives sometimes requires sacrificing animal lives.
“It’s weird, but sanctuaries are actually full of death. A lot of things have to get killed at sanctuaries,” said Seth, the Rainbow Haven intern from Cornell (introduced in the first chapter). Responding to a question from me about what had surprised him most about sanctuary work, Seth immediately articulated one of the central paradoxes of animal care. Sanctuaries, by definition, are spaces designed explicitly to foster life, but death is as woven into the fabric of sanctuaries as the practices of care that keep animals alive. As examined in the previous chapters, care routines at sanctuaries are generally guided by the goal of giving animals better lives than they previously had.

Drawing on Agamben, I have argued that animal sanctuaries provide animals with zones of exception where animals can be protected to some extent from the deprivations of the realm of bestia sacer that exists outside of sanctuaries. Although sanctuaries may shield their chosen animals from the conditions of bare life, this does not mean that sanctuary animals are also shielded from the effects of biopower. Foucault describes biopower as the “power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault 1978, 138). As we have seen, in the course of employing a range of biopolitical practices, sanctuaries face many dilemmas which require them to make difficult decisions about how best to foster life. This chapter focuses on one of the most difficult dilemmas for caregivers to navigate: fostering the life of certain animals sometimes requires sacrificing the lives of others. The dilemmas arise in situations in which caregivers must kill animals to feed others, kill animals to protect others, and kill animals to “save” them from their
own pain and suffering. As this chapter will explain, caregivers respond to these dilemmas with a specific mode of care I have termed necro-care.

*Necro-Care*

The fact that sanctuaries are, in Seth’s words, “full of death” is counterintuitive since sanctuary activists oppose a range of modern practices that they see as relying on animals’ killability. From 2000 to 2014, approximately 9 billion animals have been killed each year for food in the United States (Humane Society 2015). Approximately 2.7 million un-adopted animals (1.4 million dogs and 1.7 million cats) are killed each year in US shelters (ASPCA 2015). The death toll is so large that many animal activists see it as a form of genocide, invoking comparisons to the Holocaust or the institution of slavery in the Americas (e.g. Davis 2005, Patterson 2002, Spiegel 1997). Expanding on these analogies, an anonymous quote often attributed to the Animal Liberation Front (see Chapter Two) situates “animal liberators” in an activist lineage with those who opposed slavery and the Holocaust: "If we are trespassing, so were the soldiers who broke down the gates of Hitler's death camps; If we are thieves, so were the members of the Underground Railroad who freed the slaves of the South; And if we are vandals, so were those who destroyed forever the gas chambers of Buchenwald and Auschwitz" (Schnurer 2004, 121). One controversial example of activist efforts to highlight similarities between the Holocaust and animal agriculture was a 2003 photo exhibit called “Holocaust on Your Plate” produced by Matt Prescott with the support of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The exhibit was composed of 60 square panels with
photos of animals in factory farms and slaughterhouses next to photos of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. Prescott explains that the “methods of the Holocaust exist today in the form of factory farming where billions of innocent, feeling beings are taken from their families, trucked hundreds of miles through all weather extremes, confined in cramped, filthy conditions and herded to their deaths” (quoted in Davis 2005, 8).

There are legitimate historical linkages underlying these analogies. Cary Wolfe notes that such examinations of the parallels between the technological manipulation of life in factory farms and Nazi concentration camps highlight how “practices of modern biopolitics have forged themselves in the common subjection and management of both human and animal bodies” (2014, 162). In fact, he elaborates, the organizational structure of the processes Nazis used to kill the victims of the Holocaust were “derived from production models developed by Henry Ford (a notorious anti-Semite), who in turn reveals in his autobiography that the inspiration for his assembly-line method came from a visit to a Chicago slaughterhouse and witnessing its mechanized disassembly line for making meat out of animal carcasses” (162-3, see Patterson 2002, 72).

However, there are a number of problems with such analogies. As a rhetorical argument intended to shift perspectives about animal treatment, they sacrifice some of their persuasive potential by offending people who see the comparison as trivializing these historical events. For example, in response to PETA’s “Holocaust on Your Plate” exhibit, Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League and himself a Holocaust survivor, said:

[The exhibit is] outrageous, offensive and takes chutzpah to new heights. . . . [T]he effort by PETA to compare the deliberate systematic murder of millions of Jews to the issue of animal rights is abhorrent. Rather than deepen our revulsion against what the Nazis did to the Jews, the project will undermine the struggle to
understand the Holocaust and to find a way to make sure such catastrophes never happen again (Teather 2003).

Furthermore, these comparisons also elide significant differences between modern treatment of animals and historical events like the Holocaust. Roberta Kalechofsky, a member of Jews for Animal Rights, makes this point in her response to the “Holocaust on Your Plate” exhibit:

While I sympathize with PETA's aim—and am a member of PETA—I objected to this use of the Holocaust. . . . The agony of animals arises from different causes from those of the Holocaust. Human beings do not hate animals. They do not eat them because they hate them. They do not experiment on them because they hate them, they do not hunt them because they hate them. These were the motives for the Holocaust. Human beings have no ideological or theological conflict with animals (2003, 34).

Despite the historical links between industrial animal slaughter and the Holocaust noted by Wolfe, as well as the structural parallels in both the magnitude of individuals killed and the techno-organization of the processes of killing, modern animal agriculture enterprises are unique from events such as the Holocaust in that they use death as a means of resource extraction. Agricultural animals are killed as part of the process of value production, not to exterminate their species from the face of the earth. And while these animals, much like enslaved humans, are treated as living property, the surplus value they generate – derived from the flesh and secretions of their bodies and the bodies of their progeny – comes not from productive animal labor as much as the reproductive animal labor invested in producing animal bodies. Animal agriculture is an extractive industry that treats animal bodies as self-replicating living resources. Their deaths are a means to the end of extracting value from their bodies, but – unlike the Holocaust – death of the population targeted with killing is not an end in itself. With recent breakthroughs in
efforts to create laboratory grown meat and genetically modified yeast capable of producing a substance chemically identical to cow’s milk, it is even possible to conceive of a future agricultural industry that does not require animal death at all.

Because they currently do rely on the production of both life and death, contemporary animal economies draw equally from both poles of biopolitics. On the one hand, as Wolfe argues, “the practices maximizing control over life and death, of ‘making live,’ in Foucault’s words, through eugenics, artificial insemination, and selective breeding, pharmaceutical enhancement, inoculation, and the like are on display in the modern factory farm as perhaps nowhere else in biopolitical history” (2014, 163). On the other hand, such practices also typify what political philosopher Achille Mbembe calls necropolitics, “the contemporary forms of the subjugation of life to the power of death,” or necropower (2003, 39). Feeling that the notion of biopower is insufficient to account for these forms of subjugation, Mbembe employs this notion to account for the contemporary creation of “death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead” (40, italics in original). Mbembe’s model of death-worlds is “late-modern colonial occupation” such as the contemporary occupation of Palestine (27), with its concatenation of multiple forms of power: “disciplinary, biopolitical, and necropolitical” (29). Although focusing their power on radically different populations of living beings, animal economies also combine these multiple forms of power in the creation of death-worlds in which animals are also made to live until and so that they can be killed in order to extract surplus value from their bodies, conferring upon them a similar status of living dead.
It is this status that sanctuaries seek to negate through their rescue of and care for animals. Yet even within sanctuaries death is inescapable. Sanctuaries in many ways function as life-worlds juxtaposed against the death-worlds of modern animal economies, but they too employ forms of necropower against certain animals in order to foster the lives of others. In his study of breeding programs for the endangered whooping crane, Thom Van Dooren writes that the care necessary for fostering the reproduction of future generations of cranes is often “intimately and inextricably entangled with various forms of violence,” sometimes even necessitating the sacrifice of other species for the benefit of the cranes (2014, 1981, 1522). 110 Care for certain animals often coincides with the “domination, coercion, and abandonment of” other animals, giving rise to what he calls “regimes of violent care” (1539). 111 Expanding on Van Dooren’s conceptualization of this interconnection between practices of care and practices of violence (1986), I have identified a more specific form of violent-care that actively employs death in the service of fostering life: necro-care.

Sacrificial Others

One significant component of violent-care that van Dooren identifies is the practice of sacrifice, although sacrifice in this context does not necessarily lead to death. In order to successfully breed whooping cranes, conservationists have found it necessary to require captive birds to live in “diminished environments and be exposed to ongoing

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110 All citations for this work are for locations in the Kindle edition, which uses location numbers instead of page numbers.
111 See also Srinivasan (2013) for an analysis of the entanglement of harm and care in turtle conservation practices in India.
stresses, including artificial insemination,” a potentially violent experience for birds, especially if they actively resist (1522, 1844-1891). These captive breeding cranes live a “sacrificial life” in the sense that it is a “life given, and not by one’s own choice, for the good of others” (loc 1935). Although they are not killed – indeed, they are intentionally kept alive through regimes of biopolitical care – their lives are nonetheless sacrificed as part of an effort to care for their species (ibid.). “Sacrificial surrogates” (1943) from other species are also enlisted into the breeding project. At one location, a quail colony was established to act as “royal tasters” to test new batches of feed for the whooping cranes “to ensure their desirability and safety . . . after an incident in which a new batch of food was contaminated by microtoxins” that sickened the cranes (1952). The use of individual animals in this way is the result of “species-thinking” (Chrulew 2011), a specific kind of sacrificial logic (Van Dooren 2014, 1998; see also Haraway 2008: 78; Derrida 1991) that “positions individual organisms of both the endangered species in question and numerous other species . . . as ‘killable’ in the name of the greater good of conservation” (Van Dooren 2014, 1998). This logic guides the choice to use “individuals from a range of other species of ‘least-concern.’” While “least-concern” is a conservation category designated by the International Union of Conservation of Nature to assert that “a species is not presently at risk of extinction,” it also functions as an “ethical taxonomic category” (Van Dooren 2011), “marking individuals of these species as available and expendable forms of life in the service of other, more needy, beings” (Van Dooren 2014, 1966).
Although not based on official designations, some sanctuaries also create categories of sacrificial others when caregivers weigh the interests of rescued animals against those of other animals of less concern to the sanctuary mission. Meeting the specific dietary needs of different animal species, for example, introduces a unique dilemma for sanctuaries that care for carnivores (see Bekoff 2010, Van Dooren 2014, 2779). Sanctuaries with carnivores must contend with the fact that some animals need to die so that others may eat. In these situations the sacrifice of some animals to foster the lives of others constitutes necro-care, a unique mode of care in which the death of certain individuals is an integral part of care for others.

At Texas Companion Rescue feeding animals does not require that caregivers kill animals themselves, though they do need to provide their animals with meat-based food. Cats are obligate carnivores, meaning they must consume meat to survive. Dogs are omnivorous, but their nutritional needs are most easily and affordably met with a meat-based diet as well. There are actually debates in vegan circles over the practicality and ethics of putting cats and dogs on vegan diets. Although more expensive than regular food, commercial vegetarian and vegan dog food products exist that can provide a nutritionally balanced diet for most dogs with no health complications. Whether or not a dog is content on such a diet is a more open question. Cats on the other hand generally do not do as well on vegetable-based diets. Some vegans claim to have successfully gotten their cats to adopt diets of specially formulated vegan food that meets all of their nutritional needs, but I have personally known vegans who had a difficult time getting their cats to even try vegan food. Vegan diets can also lead to serious health complications for many cats. The author of a book on raising vegan cats confided in me
that he had to put his cats back on a carnivorous diet after they developed health problems. My own cat’s bladder stone problem (described in Chapter One), for example, made a vegan diet impossible, even if I had been willing to impose it on him. The acidity of a vegan diet would have further aggravated his bladder stone production. Most cats and dogs at Texas Companion Rescue are therefore fed regular commercial pet food. Dogs and cats with special medical requirements eat prescription pet food, but these are also meat-based.

Roosevelt, on the other hand, is like most farm sanctuaries in that they have no carnivorous animals, aside from a few barn cats. Some animals, like chickens, ducks, and turkeys, hunt for insects and will eat meat if it is provided, but their health can be easily maintained with an all-plant-based diet. Pigs are also omnivorous, though Roosevelt’s pigs thrive on a diet of commercial grain pellets, produce donated by a nearby grocery store or traded for sanctuary-produced compost with a nearby farm, and leftover prepared food from a local Buddhist temple. Only the three barn cats at Roosevelt are provided with meat-based food since the relatively small amount of rodents they catch and eat are not enough to meet their nutritional needs.

However, Rainbow Haven, like other exotic and wildlife rescue sanctuaries, has several omnivorous and carnivorous animals. Like the barn cats at Roosevelt, these animals sometimes find their own sources of meat. For example, Conan is an extremely friendly capuchin monkey who came to Rainbow Haven after being taken by humane law enforcement officers from somebody who was keeping him as a pet on the other side of the island. Conan was malnourished and living in a small, dirty cage when they found him. They contacted Joan, the sanctuary director, and she agreed to take him in. He now
lives in a spacious, multi-roomed cage complex with slides, swings, grass-covered ground, and his own small cement pool of water. There is a small room immediately inside the cage that is separated from the living area by a locked gate. When feeding Conan and the two female macaques, Coco and Rita (also rescued together from a situation very similar to Conan’s) who live in the contiguous cage, caregivers enter this area through a locked gate and then lock the gate behind them to make sure there are always two locked gates between the monkeys and the outside, a double precaution against escape. This is for their safety as well as the safety of others. Monkeys would be extremely difficult to catch in the verdant rain forest vegetation around the sanctuary. Aside from being both dangerous to and at risk of injury from humans and dogs, they would also pose a potential danger to native animal species.

Each monkey gets a small sized metal dog bowl of various chopped pieces of fruits and vegetables, such as carrots, grapes, lettuce, bananas, avocados, and apples. Like Roosevelt, Rainbow Haven receives daily donations of old produce from a local grocery store. The monkeys’ meals vary by what’s in the donation boxes each day. Sometimes, the donations include expired Oscar Meyer Lunchable boxes, which usually include some combination of crackers, cheese, and lunchmeat. When this happens, the monkeys may also get a few small pieces of ham or cheese, though their diets as provided by caregivers are otherwise usually herbivorous.

The multiple levels of physical barriers to the monkey cages protect the monkeys from the outside world, but they do not necessarily protect the outside world from them. The sanctuary has a few dozen chickens who now live in their own fenced-in chicken yard, but they used to be allowed to roam free on the property. One day, Joan told me,
she was walking by the monkey cage with her mother, who was visiting from the mainland, when they noticed a curious chicken staring at the low stone wall that borders the cage. Conan had placed bits of food along the top of the wall outside the wire fencing of the cage and was patiently watching the chicken. As the chicken walked up close enough to the wall to peck at the food, Conan reached through the bars of his cage, grabbed the chicken’s head, and pulled it off. Joan and her horrified mother watched in surprise as Conan ate his prize.

The decapitated chicken was not the only bird to suffer an attack from Conan. Other times, when he was not quite quick enough, he only succeeded in scalping other chickens. Joan bandaged their heads, using a honey poultice to hold the flap of skin against their skulls until they could heal. One of these chickens had to be fed separately from the other chickens because she was no longer fast enough to compete with the other ones for food. In addition to the chickens, who are no longer allowed near the monkeys, Conan also uses his food bait trick to lure wild birds close enough to grab. Occasionally caregivers find feathers inside his enclosure, the only signs left from a successful ambush.

As Conan’s bird hunting illustrates, the monkeys will eat meat, even though their diets are mostly plant-based. One snack they particularly enjoy is spiders. Small, spiky crab spiders spin webbing throughout the sanctuary’s many birdcages. Every few weeks, the webs must be cleared out. During these cleanings, caregivers collect the spiders in plastic containers and carry them over to the monkey cage. The monkeys know what is coming and gather by the wall of the cage in anticipation. They reach through the fencing, grabbing little handfuls of spiders and tossing them in their mouths like popcorn.
Rainbow Haven also has resident carnivores who can not so easily catch their own prey and thus must have it provided for them. The sanctuary has a few birds of prey, who, like cats, are obligate carnivores. Siren is an ‘io, or Hawaiian hawk. She lost a wing after getting hit by a car. The veterinarian who tried to treat her decided it was better to amputate rather than try to set her broken wing. After that, she was given to the sanctuary where she has lived ever since. Hoot, a barn owl, and Pug, a pueo (a rare Hawaiian owl), also came to the sanctuary after being injured in accidents.

Pug, Siren, and Hoot all subsist on baby chickens and mice. Ideally, the birds would be able to hunt their prey before eating it. At least, this would provide them with the opportunity to engage in species-typical behavior that could potentially provide them with some psychological enrichment. However, to enable them to practice this species-typical behavior, it would be necessary to provide them with other live animals whose own subjective interests would conflict with those of the carnivores. In any situation in which animals are being fed to other animals, caregivers must make decisions about whose interests to prioritize. Joan tries to strike a balance between the interests of the birds and the interests of the mice and baby chicks she uses to feed them, even while ultimately prioritizing the birds of prey. Caregivers kill the chicks and mice first as quickly as possible and then feed them to the birds. Although the interests of the mice and chicks are of less concern than the interests of the birds within the sanctuary’s hierarchy of value, they are not entirely insignificant. They are a sacrificial population, but their interest in not suffering still influences caregivers’ actions. On the other hand, while the mice and chicks likely die less painfully or traumatically than they would in the talons of a bird of prey, they still lose their lives. And while the birds are able to eat
animals they might hunt in the wild, they are not able to experience the species-typical behavior of hunting prey. In this way, caregivers strike a compromise of sorts. Necro-care in this context requires the sacrifice of food animals, but it also allows for some consideration of their interests.

Pug and Siren are fairly shy around humans and are fed their mice and chicks in a tray, but Hoot, who does not seem to mind the presence of humans, gets to at least approximate the experience of hunting. Whoever is feeding her sticks the first body through the mesh of her cage, and she swoops over to grab the food with her talons. She then flies back to a branch in her cage to tear off pieces of meat. The person feeding her then opens the door to her cage and closes it on the neck of the second body, leaving the head sticking out of the cage. When she’s ready, Hoot swoops back over and grabs the second body, pulling it loose from the head, which falls to the ground outside the cage. The next day, whoever comes by in the morning to feed other nearby animals tosses the decapitated heads into a small turtle pond at the bottom of Hoot’s cage, where one of two eager turtles who live there immediately gobbles it down.

In addition to the turtles, Hoot also shared her cage with two pheasants. Kristin, the veterinary intern from UC Davis (introduced in the first chapter) told me that Joan also tried housing some quail with Siren, but one of the quail landed on a branch next to her, and she promptly ate it. While feeding the pheasants under Hoot one day, I was distracted by Seth talking to me from outside the cage. Standing in the enclosed space between Hoot’s cage and a second pheasant cage, I turned to face Seth with my fingers still holding on to the door to Hoot’s cage. Suddenly I felt something hit my fingers. Hoot had flown over and grabbed the wire around my fingers in her talons.
“What the hell?!” I was startled but uninjured.

Seth chuckled. “Oh, she’s just hungry. We didn’t feed her yesterday. Birds of prey don’t need to eat every day.”

Several weeks later, I made the same mistake again. While Kristin was feeding Hoot a mouse, I leaned against the outside of the cage with my hand and suddenly felt a sharp pain in one finger. I pulled it away and turned to see Hoot clinging to the cage on the other side of where my hand had been. Although seemingly drowsy during the day, she gets quite alert when it’s time to feed. There was a small bloody spot on one finger where I assumed she pricked me with the sharp tip of one talon. Although I at first thought this was an accident, I later saw Joan demonstrate how she trained Hoot to land on an outstretched arm before receiving her food. She could land directly on bare forearms without breaking the skin. This led me to suspect that perhaps Hoot had intentionally pierced a finger that she had considered (rather than mistaken for) food. It was a good reminder that humans, too, can be food, even if the owl posed no real threat.

The killing of mice and chicks so the hawk and owls can live reflects a difference in how these animals are valued. There are multiple dimensions to how this valuing unfolds. Siren and Pug both belong to endangered species, which from a conservation perspective could make them more valuable than the mice and chicks. All three birds of prey are also beautiful, majestic animals. They may not be big enough to qualify as charismatic megafauna – widely popular large animal species, like the giant panda, that are the zoological equivalent of celebrities – but the three birds do have an undeniable aesthetic appeal. On a more personal scale, Joan helped save each bird from a medical condition that would have led to death in the wild. She named them and developed a
personal connection to each bird as an individual. Joan definitely derives encounter value from their interactions, and the same may be true for the birds as well. All of these factors no doubt contribute to the birds value vis-à-vis the mice and chicks. However, the biopolitical organization of the sanctuary also plays a significant role in shaping its hierarchies of value. The sacrificial element of necro-care employed in the feeding of carnivores creates two categories of animals: the sacrificed and the saved. As targets of the sanctuary’s life-fostering biopolitical practices, the birds, as saved animals, are imbued with a kind of care value that cements them as animals of “most-concern.” The mice and chicks, on the other hand, are too useful to the project of saving these animals to be saved themselves.

As suggested by the weighing of prey interests against the interests of the birds, being members of a sacrificial group of lesser concern does not mean that the mice and chicks are of no concern at all. Killing animals is not easy, no matter what category of care they belong to, as I will explain further later in this chapter. Joan has the baby chicks flown in from another island. She wraps a plastic bag around their shipping container and puts them in the large deep freezer in the barn. “They’re killed with carbon dioxide and cold to make it painless and quick,” she explained. Joan breeds the mice herself, although mice do not actually need much help breeding. In addition to raising mice as bird food, she is also running a genetic experiment with the mice to show young visitors how heredity works. She’s selecting out and crossbreeding mice with curly hair and a trait that causes them to contract muscles in their tail to curl it around a finger when somebody touches the tip of it. The fact that the mice are bred and cared for at the sanctuary until they are killed for food illustrates how flexible these categories of care can be. Mice cross
over from a target of biopolitical care to an instrument of necro-care when their sacrifice becomes necessary for the care of the birds. To make their deaths as quick and painless as possible, Joan or one of her interns kills mice by using their fingers to snap the mice’s necks at the base of their skulls. They then put the mouse and chick bodies in Ziploc baggies and store them in the freezer portion of a refrigerator in Joan’s garage. They alternate feeding the birds mice and chicks, laying the baggy on the hood of a car to defrost in the sun before feeding them to the birds. The mice and chicks are members of a sacrificial population of food for other animals, but they are also subject to the life-fostering effects of biopower until their bodies are needed.

As mentioned, employing necro-care while navigating the dilemma posed by the conflicting interests between the saved and the sacrificed is not necessarily easy for caregivers. One time, I was in the barn and Kristin called me over to help her in the room where the mice lived. She was “graduating” mice, which entailed choosing which mice were ready to be killed and putting them in a separate terrarium to await their deaths. She needed me to take the mice she was choosing and put them in the terrarium. While we worked, I asked Kristin if she had ever killed anything before coming to the sanctuary. “Yes,” she said. “The lab where I worked does animal testing. I used to have to kill mice there when they needed to be euthanized.” It was actually this work that had sparked Kristin’s interest in veterinary care. She sees many forms of medical animal experiments as necessary and valuable research, but she was hoping to become a lab vet so she could work in labs to try to ensure animals suffered as little as possible.

Kristin’s mouse selection process was partly guided by age – mice rarely die of old age at the sanctuary – and partly by which mice had cancer. As I helped her with the
mice, she saw one that had a small tumor on his leg and handed him to me so I could
place him in the terrarium. Tumors were very common, and Kristin kept an eye out for
them, reasoning that it was good to try to weed cancer genes out of the breeding
population and that these mice were going to die sooner anyway. She had killed several
tumor mice, and their bodies were laid out in a line. She pointed out some of the bulging
little tumors to me. She encouraged me to touch one. It was harder than the surrounding
tissue, but still furry and soft on the surface. The use of eugenics in the selection process
is another aspect of necro-care at Rainbow Haven. On one level, the mice are being killed
to foster the lives of other species, the various birds of prey who rely on them for
sustenance. On another level, though, some of the same mice – the ones with cancer – are
also being killed to improve the health of the overall population of other mice. The same
act of killing, or sacrifice, simultaneously contributes to the biopolitical care of multiple
groups.

In one sense, the eugenics rationale may also help further justify the act of killing,
creating yet another ethical category to guide necro-care: the unhealthy genetic contagion
in addition to the source of food for others. But this category also produces its own
dilemmas. One mouse Kristin killed had two large tumors on her sides, but Kristin
realized right after killing her that she might have been the mother of a new batch of
“pinkies,” as the altricial, hairless, pink newborn mice are called. She showed me the
dead mouse, a drop of blood trickling from her nose. She had one visible lump on her
side, and Kristin pointed out that her nipples appeared to have been recently nursed. I
could not see any milk, though, and did not have a frame of reference to compare them
too. Kristin was concerned about the pinkies that she may have just orphaned, worried
that they would have no mother to care for them now. However, the ethical category created by the logic of eugenics also provided a way of coping with the dilemma it produced: “On the other hand,” Kristin said, “I guess we don’t want cancerous mice to be passing on their genes anyway. We’ll have to wait and see what happens with the pinkies. If she was the mom, then we’ll probably find them dead soon.”

Kristin is also conflicted about using the mice for food. She likes them and genuinely feels bad for them when she finds tumors. Shortly before Joan left to go on vacation with her husband for a few weeks, Kristin even put aside two older mice that were being bitten by the others in a small retirement cage. Joan, smiling and mildly apologetic, told her they were still going to be food when she got back. Despite – or perhaps because of – this compassion, Kristin also has seemingly no hesitation in killing them with a quick neck snap as soon as she spots a tumor. Nobody named the mice (their sheer numbers would have made this impossible even if anyone wanted to). But Kristin’s ambivalence about killing them at times created moments of inchoate individuality. The retirement home for the two old mice, the concern over the potentially orphaned pinkies – in these moments particular mice became subjects of concern beyond their status as living food. These moments are temporary ruptures in the parallel mechanisms of sanctuary biopower. The care for rescued individuals that is at the core of the sanctuary’s mission bled over into the necro-care directed at the population of bird fodder, blurring the boundaries between the two.

Such ruptures occurred at other moments as well. One time I was helping clean the other rodent cages near the mice, which contained several chinchillas, a few guinea pigs, and a rat, all of whom are permanent residents, not potential food. I was replacing
the uneaten hay in their food trays and the sawdust in their toilet trays – the sanctuary composts all the rodent droppings and urine soaked wood shavings. While I was working, Kristin was cleaning the mouse terrariums – six in total – and at one point a mouse escaped. I helped her catch it, but I knew it was going to be killed eventually anyway. At that moment, I felt firsthand the friction between the two modes of care. In capturing the mouse rather than letting him get away, I was preserving him to be sacrificed as a subject of necro-care. I helped clean the mice again the next day, this time with Seth. I found a one-eyed mouse – normally the kind of injury that would be grounds for “graduation” – but rather than calling Seth’s attention to him, this time I slipped him back in with the others before anybody could kill him. I was only deferring an inevitable death rather than the more permanent escape I could have allowed the escaped mouse, but it in this case it felt like the equivalent of the choice I resisted the previous time. Seth later told Kristin, and she teased me about it, but she was also quite serious about wanting to find it so she could kill it. She felt that it would be putting him out of his misery. Following the one-eyed mouse incident, Kristin would not let me help with the mice again the following day. She did not discuss it further with me, but I realized that by breaking the rules that one time, I was destabilizing the logic of sacrifice that enabled these practices of necro-care. By making such an exception for one mouse, I implicitly challenged the process that helped to remove personal responsibility from the decision-making process about when to kill a particular mouse. Whether or not it was her intention, removing me from the process also guaranteed I would not similarly disrupt the process again.

Ethical choices about how to apply necro-care are also influenced by understandings of animal behavior derived from ethological knowledge about how
animals act and hunt in “the wild.” After Kristin had finished her internship, I learned that when the caregivers cleaning the terrariums find dead pinkies, they often feed them to Dot, the rat. A few days after I learned this fact about Dot and the pinkies, I off-handedly mentioned to Joan that I was curious to see Dot eat a dead mouse. Joan immediately said, “Ok, I’ll find one,” and reached into the terrarium.

“She’s going to give her a live one,” Amy said. Amy was a new intern who replaced the three veterinary interns introduced in the first chapter after their internship ended. She was a short, energetic Jewish woman in her late teens from Queens. Amy had finished high school and was now in the middle of a volunteer-traveling expedition before starting college. She found Rainbow Haven doing Internet research on places in cool locations where she could volunteer. Unlike the previous interns, she is not interested in becoming a vet. She still wanted to work with animals someday, though. Amy is considering getting a license to someday do animal-assisted therapy with humans.

“Oh no, is it a live baby?” I asked.

Joan turned around quickly and was raising her hand up toward the rat cage as she came around. “Not anymore,” she said. “I dispatched it.” She handed the now dead pinky to Dot, who snatched it and went inside an empty toilet paper tube to eat it in privacy. I must have looked shocked because Joan became more serious and said, “In the wild, a rat would naturally eat them. If a rat finds a mouse nest, it clears it out. They’re competition for food.” In this case, ideas about what is “natural” for rat-mouse interactions helped to justify this sacrificial act of necro-care. Unlike the birds of prey, Dot did not need mouse protein to survive, but ideas about rat predation practices on mice further expanded the category of animals to whom the mice could be legitimately sacrificed. Dot got to eat the
mouse both because she is a member of the category of saved animals to whom others could be sacrificed and because her eating mice is justified by scientific understandings of rat behavior privileged by caregivers, even though she did not actually need the mouse for nutrients.

In the context of killing animals for food, I also found that necro-care was not used only to feed sanctuary animals. At Roosevelt, virtually all the volunteers and employees I met identified as vegan. None of them would ever consider eating an animal at the sanctuary. I have heard a range of different opinions about whether it would be okay to eat the eggs laid by the sanctuary chickens, but I’m only aware of one employee who actually ate them (which was generally accepted by the other sanctuary employees since he was doing it in lieu of buying them at the store and supporting the egg industry). The sanctuary does sell animal manure, but other than that, all the animals at the sanctuary have been permanently removed from the agricultural consumption chain.

Many of the volunteers I met at Texas Companion Rescue were not vegan or vegetarian, and the organization has fundraising partnerships with restaurants that serve meat to raise money for the shelter. It surely goes without saying, though, that none of the animals in the shelter are killed for human consumption. However, Rainbow Haven caregivers differ over the politics of eating meat. Upon first coming to the sanctuary I mentioned to Joan that I was vegan. She replied that she only eats meat that she raises. She told me that she had raised two cows and a pig at the sanctuary. Rather than having them slaughtered, she personally shot each one in the head while it was eating from its food container. “I cried the whole time, but I wanted to make sure they didn’t experience any pain or fear.” The veterinary interns also told me about Morton, one of the cows Joan mentioned. “Joan
raised the cow for food. The interns and volunteers who worked at the sanctuary then and helped take care of him were upset about it, but Joan made sure that he didn’t experience any suffering or pain. She brought him out to a ranch and shot him herself.”

At a Fourth of July barbeque the interns hosted, we discussed what they regularly ate for meals. According to them, it was a lot of meat. Every night, Joan cooks them beef or pork from the cow and pig that she killed. She still has a lot of the meat frozen in her refrigerator, although she eats very little herself. They also told me a new detail about Morton. She served his meat at the going away party for the interns who were there while he was still alive without telling them in advance. They were quite upset when they found out they were eating the cow they had been taking care of throughout their internship.

Although this could obviously be seen as insensitive to the interns, it also struck me that from Joan’s perspective it could be the horrified interns who were behaving inappropriately. Why eat beef, she might ask, if you have a problem with killing cows? It is worth noting, though, that Joan’s failure to foresee how the interns would respond to eating Morton could be as much a result of her own assumptions about ethical consistency as it could be a result of a failure to empathize with them. The shock of eating Morton confronted the interns with the realization that an animal individual they thought was protected by the sanctuary’s life-fostering care regime – an animal that had care value – was instead subjected to the sanctuary’s regime of necro-care. Over the course of caring for Morton, they understood him as belonging to the category of saved animals. The conflict arose from the fact that Joan understood Morton as belonging to the same flexible category as the mice: a subject of limited biopolitical care until it was time to be sacrificed for food as a subject of necro-care. Unwittingly, the interns committed,
from Joan’s point of view, what philosophers would call a category mistake, a logical error in which a thing that belongs to one category is assumed to belong to another.

Within Rainbow Haven’s regime of care, Morton was not like Dot or Hoot; Morton was instead like the mice used to feed them, except his death ultimately benefitted the human citizens of the sanctuary rather than other animals.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia – the killing of animals that are too incurably sick or untreatably injured in order to put them out of their misery – is the most direct form of necro-care when considering how it affects the individual it is supposed to help; it literally transforms death into a form of care for that individual. Derived from the Greek words *eu* for “good” and *thanatos* for “death,” it means “good death.” For a being who can no longer live any semblance of a good life, a good death may be the best kind of care one can provide.\(^\text{112}\) As I will explain in this section, though, euthanasia can also function as a form of sacrificial necro-care for the benefit of others.

\(^{112}\) Environmental humanities scholar Deborah Bird Rose argues for an ethics of care that does not exclude death: “An ethical response to the call of others does not hinge on killing or not killing,” but on what constitutes a good death (quoted in Kirksey 2015, 61). Anthropologist Eben Kirksey describes an ethnographic encounter with a frog biologist in which he mentioned this idea of a “good death” in relation to the systematic “euthanasia” of hundreds of excess tree frogs in a zoo-based conservation program. The biologist, he writes, “told me that a ‘good death’ cannot come from euthanasia at the hands of a zookeeper. Amid a sedate and melancholic conversation about biodiversity loss, financial woes, and zoo overcrowding, she suddenly slammed down her glass, spilling margarita on the table. Lifting her hand in a parody of a revolutionary salute, she shouted, ‘Live free or die!’” (ibid.). Whether an animal can truly have a “good death” while in captivity is an important question. Assuming the animal’s life is significantly negatively impacted by captivity, though, an equally important question is whether the
Kristin’s reaction to my giving a temporary reprieve to the one-eyed mouse, as described above, provides one example of how euthanasia contributes to the larger system of sacrifice in sanctuaries. As I explained, by breaking the rules for determining which mice would be killed, I implicitly challenged the process that helps to remove personal responsibility from deciding which animals are to be killed. This process protects individual caregivers from having to bear too much emotional weight for the necessary work of killing. In this context, the mouse needed to be sacrificed so as not to disrupt this responsibility-diffusing mechanism – he may have been euthanized in a literal sense because he was old and infirm (although it is debatable if his quality of life was so impaired that it justified a mercy killing on its own), but he was also euthanized as a sacrifice to the maintenance of the system that determines when euthanasia is applied.113

Euthanasia can also function as a form of sacrificial necro-care in relation to the material wellbeing of the larger sanctuary community. Roosevelt Farm Sanctuary intentionally tries to avoid this dilemma by aspiring to always privilege the veterinary needs of their animals over concerns about resource limitations. As illustrated by the story of Flower, the calf with leg braces described in Chapter Four, Roosevelt commits to spending whatever resources are necessary to give the best lives possible to each animal in their care. They do eventually decide to euthanize animals with untreatable medical conditions that severely impair their quality of life, but I did not hear of financial considerations ever influencing a decision to euthanize an animal while I was there. I was

impossibility of being free from captivity could make the prospect of death better than it would otherwise be. Or in other words, at what point does providing death become a more ethical response than providing an impoverished life? 113 See Arluke and Sanders (1996, 82-106) an DeMello (2012, 225-6) for analyses of how caregivers in open admission shelters use institutional rules and blame-shifting strategies to cope with participating in the euthanasia of dogs and cats.
never present during a euthanasia procedure, but some of the animals I met while there were euthanized over the period of time I volunteered. For example, one day after arriving at the sanctuary, I learned that Rude Boy had been euthanized. Rude Boy was an elderly pig who had been brought to the sanctuary several years before by some anonymous rescuers who did not disclose where they found him. At first, I assumed he was euthanized because of his arthritis, which often forced him to crawl on his knees and required daily medication. The discomfort may have been a contributing factor to his general surly disposition – Rude Boy seemed to prefer to be left alone and would sometimes nip at volunteers who got too close. From occasional exchanges with different caregivers about his condition, I gathered that the staff was generally concerned about his quality of life, but they all seemed to agree that his joint pain was not so severe that euthanasia should be seriously considered yet. I assumed that his condition had worsened, and that they had changed their minds. But Theresa (the caregiver who introduced me to Flower) explained that they had taken him to the vet because he lost his appetite, and the vet discovered that his abdomen was full of inoperable tumors. This is when they finally decided to euthanize him, not because it would have been too expensive to treat his condition, but because they thought it would have been impossible to alleviate the severe pain and discomfort caused by the cancer. Nonetheless, Rude Boy’s death did free up space and resources at the sanctuary for other animals to be rescued in the future. Even when the sacrifice is not intended, the economies of limitation that structure sanctuaries infuse all deaths with benefits for others.

Finally, euthanasia can function as a form of sacrificial necro-care when caregivers see keeping an animal in captivity as doing more harm than good. In Chapter
Four, I described how I participated in a letter writing campaign on behalf of the dog Lamar, who had bitten a volunteer at Texas Companion Rescue. Although the organization eventually decided not to euthanize him, I later learned that another dog named Broxton who came into the shelter after I finished my fieldwork there was killed following a similar incident in which he bit another volunteer. A volunteer named Matea, a retiree who immigrated to the United States from Italy in the 80’s, tried to rally members of a private Facebook page for volunteers to lobby on his behalf, but this time the lobbying was unsuccessful. Killing an animal for aggressive behavior is very rare at Texas Companion Rescue. The organization is explicitly guided by a No Kill philosophy and a mission to reduce the kill rate for shelter animals in Austin as much as possible. This means they never kill animals due to resource or space limitations like open admission shelters do. However, they also endeavor to minimize the amount of time an animal has to be in the shelter before it can be adopted to a permanent home.

If an animal has been deemed too aggressive to be adoptable, then this necessarily means the animal will spend her whole life in the shelter, and, moreover, the animal will likely have less mobility and social stimulation than other animals in the shelter because only staff trained to deal with dangerous animals will be able to interact with her. In these circumstances, the animal’s quality of life is a significant factor in the decision-making process. Dogs, in particular, do not do well living in a shelter environment for long periods of time. Some become noticeably despondent while others that were previously amicable start to develop more aggressive reactions to humans and other animals. But once it has been decided that a dog is too dangerous to adopt, the shelter’s economy of limitation suddenly becomes a factor in the decision making process.
as well. Permanently housing an unadoptable dog not only takes space and resources from adoptable dogs – essentially sacrificing those dogs instead if they cannot be pulled from the city shelter before they are killed – but it also takes human resources away from other animals in the shelter by requiring caregivers to spend time caring for the dog that could instead be used to care for other animals.

While I was not present for the deliberation over Broxton’s fate – in fact, no animals were euthanized while I was volunteering there – based on conversations with staff and administrators about the euthanasia policy, it is most likely that the decision was primarily an ethical one shaped by the idea that a permanent shelter life could not be a good life and that, in fact, killing a dog in that situation would truly be an act of euthanasia. However, like the death of Rude Boy the pig, Broxton’s death was also a sacrifice for the wellbeing of other animals in the shelter as well as future animals who had not yet been rescued. Indeed, the economies of limitation in shelters and sanctuaries together with the vast populations of as yet unrescued animals outside of sanctuaries create a second economy, an economy of sacrifice in which every death in the sanctuary is a sacrifice for another animal that has yet to be rescued, while every life in the sanctuary is an ongoing sacrifice of all the animals that will not survive to take its place. The very limited finitude of sanctuaries’ capacities to rescue and care for animals makes sacrifice unavoidable. Put simply, sanctuaries cannot save everyone, which means acts of euthanasia will always distribute care beyond the individual being euthanized. In this sense, the death could be understood as good for others as well as the one who is dying.

External Threats
Necro-care also plays a role in regulating how sanctuaries deal with animals outside their sphere of care, particularly uninvited guests who pose a threat to the safety of their rescued animals. For captive-bred animals repatriated to the wild from conservation programs, other animals are sacrificed through “habitat modifications,” such as the killing of predators as well as competitors “to give released animals a better chance of survival” (Van Dooren 2014, 2779). “Predator control” (ibid., Fischer and Lindenmayer 2000) plays an important role in the care practices of sanctuaries as well. The first line of defense is sanctuary architecture, which shapes animal spaces both to segregate animals that could harm each other within the sanctuary and to segregate all the animals within a sanctuary from potentially harmful external threats. When architecture is not sufficient to protect sanctuary animals though, “predator control” may also require the sacrifice of certain animals.

The monkey cages at Rainbow Haven illustrate how the physical architecture of the sanctuary restricts the movement of animals to prevent them from endangering the welfare of others. Material infrastructures are equally important in preserving the safety of the animals they contain by keeping other animals out, though. Take, for example, the Norwegian brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), a member of the muroid family of rodents. One of the most widely dispersed mammals on the planet, the brown rat can now be found virtually everywhere where humans have settled. The name is a misnomer derived from mistaken assumptions about its origins in the late eighteenth century. The brown rat most likely originated from central Asia. Brown rats are omnivores and thrive in close proximity to human habitations. Including their tails, they grow to an average of sixteen
inches, and they reproduce quickly. They have a gestation period of about three weeks and have litters of six to ten pups, who are ready to reproduce after three to fourth months. As a result of this fecundity, their populations can grow rapidly. In addition to the common “sewer rat,” laboratory rats and rats sold in the pet trade are members of this species.

Rats and their fellow muroids, mice, are perhaps the most common uninvited guests in sanctuaries. For these expert scavengers, the constant supply of grains, hay, and seed mixes needed to feed most herbivorous sanctuary animals are the ultimate jackpot. Rainbow Haven has a strict policy requiring that the door to the food storage closet remain closed whenever somebody is not in there filling food dishes. As Joan warns, “It only takes a second for a mouse to run in when you’re not looking. And then, when we find mouse poop, we have to clean out the whole closet and check every bag to be sure she hasn’t had babies anywhere.”

Unlike small mice, rats’ appetites extend beyond the pillaging of animal feed. They will also kill for meat. Caregivers at Roosevelt occasionally see rats, but they’ve had nothing like the rat problem that plagued Farm Sanctuary, where the Care Conference described in Chapter Two was held. They discovered that rats were gnawing their way into the chicken coops and dining on chickens at night. With the ability to exert approximately 24,000 pounds of pressure per square inch, rat teeth are capable of chewing through solid materials such as wood, brick, cinder blocks, concrete, and aluminum. Rats are also capable of slipping through openings half an inch wide. To protect their chickens, the sanctuary had to construct chicken coops with a layer of steel mesh in between the outer and inner wooden walls and floor, and even then the coops
were not impenetrable. Caregivers exercise constant vigilance, checking the coops for holes morning and night to ensure that no invaders came in while the chickens were sleeping and that they aren’t trapping the chickens with a predator when shutting them in for the night.

Rainbow Haven also has to take precautions against outside predators. In their case, it’s mongooses. Mongooses are cat-sized mammalian carnivores that look similar to their relative, the meerkat. In one of the many examples of humans trying to alleviate an invasive species problem by fighting fire with fire, only to ignite a second equally destructive fire, humans introduced mongooses to Hawaii in the mid-1800’s. They hoped the mongooses would hunt rats, multiple species of which had come to the islands centuries before by boat with Polynesian settlers and later with European explorers. However, rats are nocturnal, while mongooses are diurnal. Rather than forming a predator-prey dynamic that could rid the islands of rats and save native bird species from their predation, rats and mongooses together made bird hunting a 24-hour affair, with rats on the night shift and mongooses on the day shift.

Shortly before I arrived at the sanctuary, a mongoose sneaked into an area at the sanctuary that caregivers called “The Wetlands.” The Wetlands consists of a fenced-in pond where several different waterfowl lived, including a gray crowned crane named Kramer, three nenes (a species of goose native to the Hawaiian islands), a duck named Dewey, and Billie the swan. Most of these birds were injured at various points in the wild and brought to the sanctuary by good Samaritans. They were nursed back to health, but did not recover to the point where they could be safely released back to the wild. When the mongoose sneaked in, it killed a duck.
As a facility that does endangered species rehab (of which the nenes are beneficiaries), the state requires the sanctuary to have a plan in place to deal with predators. Predator control is thus an integral aspect of the larger legal framework that shapes sanctuary practices. Since mongooses are also an invasive species with no legal protection, addressing the problem of predator control with practices of necro-care is not only an efficient solution, but also a legally sanctioned one. Joan therefore sets traps for the mongooses. As Seth explained to me, “When Joan finds out there’s one in there, she gets a gun and shoots it in the head and throws it over the fence.”

On one of my first days at the sanctuary, I helped Seth bait the mongoose trap with dry cat food. The trap was a “live trap,” a rectangular cage with an open end. When an animal entered the cage to get the bait at the closed end, the animal’s weight on a platform in the middle would cause a door on the open end to close behind it. The bait was supposed to be placed on the ground in front of the trigger so an animal would have to enter the cage to eat it. Like my rat, an animal had managed to steal the bait the day before without getting caught. It seemed to have snatched the cat food where it had been placed too close to the side of the cage without tripping the trap. Joan showed us how to set the trap properly and put more food in for bait. She explained that once you shoot a mongoose in the trap, you don’t need any more bait for awhile after that. “The blood from the first one will attract the rest of its family.”

The next morning, I was responsible for feeding all the birds in The Wetlands their breakfast. As I carefully poured out the swan’s food, making sure that I was not close enough to be walloped by one of his wings, I saw a movement in the mongoose trap outside the wetlands fence. A dirty blonde mongoose was pacing in tight circles inside
the rusty, long, shoebox shaped cage. I was not sure what to do. For a moment, I considered going up to the front to tell Seth and Joan we caught a mongoose, but it felt unfair. As far as I knew, this mongoose had not yet killed any sanctuary animals. They had caught at least one mongoose since the most recent duck attack, but there was no way of knowing which mongoose had been responsible. Of course, the point of predator control is not to get retribution for past attacks; it is to prevent future ones. Even if he had not yet killed any Wetlands birds, it was possible that he still could. When I caught a glimpse of the mongoose’s eyes, though, I could not bare the idea of turning him in to be killed.

I exited The Wetlands enclosure and knelt down next to the mongoose trap. A small growl vibrated in the mongoose’s throat, very much like the growl of a small dog. I lifted the door and let him out, hoping he would not bite me. He darted into the grass. Back at the main barn, the interns asked me if I had seen anything in the trap. “No,” I lied, suddenly worried that I should have reset the trap. On my next feeding errand, I swung by The Wetlands again and propped the trapdoor back open. But then I realized that the bait was gone. I returned to the barn and told Joan and the interns that the bait was gone but the trap was empty. Joan said that I probably did not set it right, and that Seth would help me redo it. I worried later that I was enabling more bird deaths at the jaws of a hungry mongoose. I hoped I was not leaving Dewey, whose nighttime cage was closest to the mongoose trap, to be a literal sitting duck.

The next morning, when I arrived at the sanctuary, Kristin told me to help Seth with The Wetlands. I walked across the sanctuary and saw that Seth was feeding the ostriches. I was hoping to have already missed out on The Wetlands since I did not want
to see another mongoose in the trap. I turned around and went back to the bathroom, trying to foot drag as much as possible. When I got back to The Wetlands, I saw that they had already been done and that Seth had moved on to feeding the birds on the lawn. Later, I found out from Seth that there had indeed been a mongoose. Glumly, he explained that he had shot it with the bb gun Joan stores in the main barn and thrown its body in the tall grass along the property line. I thought about Joan’s explanation that you do not need to re-bait the trap after the first killing because mongooses live in family units of parents and offspring. The blood from the first kill will attract the other family members night after night until they are all dead.

The following day, one of the interns told Joan that there was yet another mongoose in the trap. I heard Seth tell Joan that he did not think he could kill them anymore. She told him, “We have to; it’s part of our predator control plan.” “I know,” Seth said unhappily.

Joan later took John, the intern from Washington (introduced in Chapter One) and Kristin to show them how to shoot the mongoose while Seth and I held back. Later I asked him why he did not want to shoot the new mongoose. “I had an epiphany last night that I just don’t feel right about it,” he told me. I remembered how glum he seemed about shooting the mongoose the day before, which had surprised me because I thought Seth was excited about shooting the bb gun. He had been bragging earlier about how he shot the tail feathers off of one of the many wild doves that swarm the chicken yard to steal bits of food. I had seen both Seth and John using the bb gun to shoot at the doves, per Joan’s request. I was not sure if they ever hit them because I never saw any dead doves,
but John told me that the carcasses were just left in there to be devoured by the chickens:
“They’ll eat anything.”

Seth said, “If the gun were an automatic, I’d be okay with it, but the bb gun requires reloading. It only takes a couple of seconds, but that’s too long if you’ve already hit the mongoose with a shot that didn’t kill it.” This is what happened the previous day – Seth missed the mongoose’s skull the first time, and had to shoot it again to kill it. “They probably can’t feel anything at that point, but it still doesn’t feel right to me. I decided I can’t do it anymore. It’s for me, so I can sleep at night.” I told him I understood how he felt. “It’s a losing battle anyway,” he added. “For every one you kill, there’s 20 waiting to take its place.”

Like the mongooses, the doves are not protected, and are therefore killable since they are also a nonnative species. Because the Hawaiian islands are, geologically-speaking, relatively new volcanic formations, a large amount of the animals on the islands are nonnative. If they pose no ecological or financial harm, they are not categorized as “invasive,” but they are also not protected like indigenous species. These conservation-oriented legal designations establish a framework for the taxonomic ethical categories that the sanctuary fills by targeting mongooses and doves as objects of necro-care. “Species-thinking,” legal requirements, and the privileging of saved animals in the sanctuary hierarchy of value all work together to make the logic of sacrifice easier to implement in the application of necro-care: killing predators and competitors preserves the safety and well-being of rescued animals. But as my experience and Seth’s experience illustrate, the slippage that can occur in trying to apply ethical taxonomic categories to
individual encounters sometimes make it difficult to follow through on the act of killing one being for the benefit of others.

Aside from the significant threat to the actual safety of sanctuary denizens posed by animals like rats and mongooses, the other big issue related to uninvited guests is the stealing of food. All of my field sites have ongoing rodent problems. Like the doves at Rainbow Haven, Roosevelt also has a large flock of pigeons that roost in the barns and steal food when they get the chance. Unlike Rainbow Haven, however, none of the other sites take overt action to kill their invaders. Instead, they outsource pest control to their cats. Aside from cats, Roosevelt’s only other method of pest control is the use of live traps to catch (and release away from sanctuary property) an occasional rodent. This is because the vegan principles that shape the sanctuary’s mission conflict with the intentional killing of other animals, even animal considered to be pests. Cats, however, provide a sort of loophole since they cannot be stopped from hunting unless they are locked inside. Roosevelt has a few barn cats who spend most of their time hanging out in the visitor center and purring on people’s laps, but they do sometimes catch rodents or birds. Roosevelt also has some issues with predators such as bears who have wandered onto the sanctuary property and broken into chicken coops in the past, but all the chicken shelters on the property are now bear-proofed with fences and solid doors. Texas Companion Rescue also has a few free roaming cats who catch the mice that live around the kennels, while the cats inside the cat adoption area probably rarely see a mouse brave enough to wander inside.114

114 Unless, of course, the rodent has toxoplasmosis, which is caused by a parasite that spends half of its lifecycle in cats and half in rodents. It rewrites a part of rodents’ brains to make them sexually attracted to the smell of cat urine, so that they congregate in places
In addition to its other methods, Rainbow Haven also has a mouser. Joan told me the story of how she came to the sanctuary. She was assisting with a feral cat-neutering program that she donates time and resources to on the island, and they were neutering a very young kitten. Per the technicians’ request, she took him home to make sure he came out of the anesthesia with no complications. When he woke up, he went completely wild and clung to her side with his claws. So she hung out with him in their bathroom until he finally mellowed out. She had not been planning to keep him after he recovered, but he endeared himself to her so much that she decided to adopt him. While relating this story, Joan also mentioned that she got into an argument with representatives of the Hawaiian Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) over their feral cat control methods. They told her that as a wildlife rescuer, she could not be in favor of saving feral cats.

“Yes, I can!” she said. “You just have to do it responsibly with public education about feeding and a good trap-neuter-return program.” People are going to feed them anyway, she reasoned, and DOFAW’s alternative was to kill them with trays of antifreeze, a solution she found completely unconscionable. It was easy to see why – antifreeze contains ethylene glycol, a sweet-tasting chemical that can cause kidney and brain damage, blindness, and ultimately death when ingested.

The use of certain sanctuary animals as agents rather than targets of necro-care blurs the sacrificial categories of food and pest. Aside from the cat, whom Joan rescued and incorporated into the sanctuary regime of life-fostering care, Rainbow Haven has other animals who benefit from their own participation in rodent control. One day while feeding the birds in the cages on the lawn, I noticed holes in the ground inside some of where they are more likely to get eaten, enabling the Toxoplasma gondii protozoan to continue its lifecycle inside the cats.
the cages. Mice were darting out of the holes and grabbing bits of birdseed that had fallen to the ground. I saw two mice inside the cage of Sadie and Squawker, a pair of eclectus parrots like Magma (introduce in Chapter Four). Squawker is green and featherless on his body, a result of self-inflicted feather damage like Magma’s. Sadie is red and blue but still has all her feathers. Sadie has a southern accent she picked up from her previous guardians, and Squawker makes lion sounds he learned to imitate when he was kept near the lions at that Honolulu zoo. One time I touched Sadie’s back while I was in their cage refilling their food and water dishes, and Squawker showed me how he got his name by blasting a deafeningly loud shriek directly in my ear. Kristin told me that she walked by the cages one night and heard Squawker say, “Hey!” in a man’s voice and Sadie follow with a sultry “Mmmhmmm.”

“It was really creepy,” she said.

When I told Seth about the mice, he said, “We’re going to have to kill them. I’m not happy about it, but Joan said that’s what we have to do.” Kristin and I cleaned out the old food and feathers in the bottom of the cages to minimize mouse attractants, but that alone was not enough to address the problem. The interns employed a method Joan calls Whack-a-mole. To get rid of the mice in the bird cages, they flooded the mice holes with a hose. When the mice ran out, Betsie, Joan’s Rottweiler, caught them and killed them with her teeth. Joan trained her to bite them but not eat them. During this process Betsie looks like she’s chasing a ball, wagging her tail and making a game of chasing the mice. Seth explained that when Joan does this, she steps on the ones that Betsie does not catch. “But I can’t do that,” he said. “It just doesn’t feel right.” He also felt bad that he had to kill a couple mice in their holes with a hand-held gardening spade – but he said that it at
least was better than having to reload a gun, implicitly referencing his botched mongoose killing. The next day I saw another mouse on the ground of Squawker and Sadie’s cage, though like the mongoose incident, I was hesitant to say anything now since I did not want to cause more killing. Turning the killing into a game and enlisting the participation of other animals can add more purpose to the act of killing – necro-care in this context does not only prevent the spread of vermin in the sanctuary, it also provides enrichment for Betsie. However, as Seth’s ambivalence shows, it can also enhance discomfort with the act of killing by not affording it what some may consider the appropriate tone, such as one of somber necessity. In other words, for some participants it risks making too light of an unsavory task even while for others it makes the task more palatable.

As the story of Conan the bird-hunting monkey illustrated, fatal conflicts can also arise between animals without human prompting. Wild turkeys, another nonnative species, thrive on the island. They wander around the neighborhood down the hill from the sanctuary in large flocks, foraging for food in people’s yards and resting on their roofs. When I first arrived, I asked Joan if the wild turkeys ever come up to the sanctuary. “Oh, yeah,” she said, smiling. “I eat them.” I was incredulous, but she confirmed that she did indeed kill them and eat them. She shot one through the eye with a bb gun - a difficult shot – she told me. She smoked the turkey meat before eating it. Eventually I saw them at the sanctuary myself, though I never witnessed Joan kill any. A mother turkey with several small poults had been hanging around the zebra enclosure, pilfering bits of the zebras’ food at meal times. Lolly and Billie, the zebras from the previous chapter, do not seem to be threatened by the turkeys, but they also do not seem completely tolerant. After I fed them one morning, I saw an adult turkey skulking around without poults. She edged
her way up to one of the food trays. She pecked a bite from one tray and then darted over to the other. One zebra snapped at the mother turkey with her large front teeth, and the turkey jumped back. The zebra then seemed to go back to ignoring the bird as she ate. According to the interns, this has happened before. They tolerate the family stealing for about a week and then they get tired of it and attack the turkeys. The two zebras cooperate with each other to corral and stomp a turkey mother and her poults to death. “They’ll just stomp the chicks into the ground, leaving bloody feathers and not much else behind,” Seth explained. Caregivers could, of course, attempt to chase the turkeys away, but there are reasons not to. This may actually do little to dissuade the turkeys, and it could also put the caregivers at risk of being injured by the zebras. The turkeys are also outside animals, and thus not subjects of the sanctuary’s regime of life-fostering care.

Also as illustrated by the case of Conan, some conflicts arise between animals who are subjects of care. While I was volunteering at Rainbow Haven, Joan purchased a Briard puppy from breeders in New Zealand at a cost of around $4000, including travel and quarantine related costs. Briards are large, shaggy herding dogs. Joan’s hope was that the puppy, named Grapenut, could be trained to help herd animals like the sheep and goats. Though not even a year old, Grapenut was already huge. She has shaggy dirty blond hair that hangs over her eyes like a cartoon sheepdog. One day while we were feeding the chickens, Grapenut came trotting up to the gate to the chicken yard, her tail wagging back and forth.

“What’s the body count?” one of the interns asked Joan.

“Nine,” she replied, “Eight chickens and a duck.”

“Grapenut ate 8 chickens and a duck?!” I asked incredulously.
“Yeah, the Darwin brigade. They got too close to her,” Joan said. Joan’s comment implied that the birds had lacked the intelligence to recognize Grapenut as a threat. Since Betsie the Rottweiler had already lived at the sanctuary for years, though, it was also possible that the chickens and duck had learned to be trusting of other animals within the safe space afforded by the sanctuary environment. They may in fact have died as a result of their trust rather than their ignorance.

Joan’s gallows humor was not a reflection of her lack of concern for the chickens, but more her exasperation with the difficulty in preventing fatal encounters. Seth later told me that when she first got there, Grapenut would race up and down next to the chicken yard barking and trying to get at them. And Joan would yell, “Grab her by the tail! You got to tell her to stop!” One afternoon, all the volunteers were looking for a missing adolescent chick who had gotten out of the chicken yard. We eventually found his dead body along the fence surrounding the yard. Joan said he was probably chased out of the yard by the older chickens, and then killed by Grapenut. She held the chicken corpse in Grapenut’s face and yelled “No! No chicken!”

The difference in how Joan responds to Grapenut’s engagement with sanctuary animals and outside animals again illustrates the influence of the taxonomical ethical categories that guide care practices. Although she still tries to discourage Grapenut’s chicken hunting when such a teaching moment arises, she later told me she also let Grapenut stalk one of the wild turkeys. She almost caught it, but only ended up chomping at the tail feathers. Joan is impressed with Grapenut’s stalking ability. “It’s the wolf in her!” she kept saying as we watched Grapenut slowly creep up behind Betsie while they were playing, which they do incessantly around the barn, Betsie often rolling on to her
back as Grapenut chomps on her neck. She does show signs of at least having the potential to become a good herding dog, if she does not get herself injured or killed first. Grapenut also likes to try to chase the miniature horses on the neighboring property up the hill, running after them along the fence line that separates them and then running back in the other direction as they chase her. Ben, one of the volunteers, has also seen her try this with the less playful zebras, though. Ben had been volunteering for about a year. He and his wife moved to the island shortly before that after he retired from the plumbing business he ran in the San Francisco Bay Area. While Ben had both a pet dog and a pet cat at home, he would not describe himself as a serious animal lover like many of the other volunteers I met. But he did enjoy interacting with the many different kinds of exotic animals at the sanctuary, and he lived only a few blocks away, so he volunteered two mornings a week. As he told me about Grapenut and the zebras he shook his head and smiled. “They clearly want to kill her,” he said. “They nip and kick at the fence with their front hooves while making those weird zebra barks and trying to get at her. And she just keeps jumping around next to them like it’s a game.”

Despite these escapades, she always has time for the chickens. I would frequently see Grapenut standing outside the chicken yard staring at the chickens and even occasionally sticking a paw through the fence. Whatever herding skills she may develop in the future, the combination of Grapenut’s avid prey drive, her youthful energy, and the mixed messages about whether stalking birds and other animals is okay has thus far only provided Joan with a very expensive chicken-killer.

To minimize the risk of further fatal encounters, caregivers also take precautions with the chickens. Chickens mostly seem to avoid going near the fence when Grapenut is
there, but they still occasionally get out of the chicken yard, so caregivers clip their wings. I helped Seth do this with a chicken that hopped over the fence while I was feeding them. I held her – upside down, with her legs grasped in one hand and the other hand supporting her back. She let her head loll to the side and seemed to relax, as she had been squawking in alarm prior to that. Mike trimmed her wings with a pair of safety-scissors with a bent rounded end, like a doctor would use to cut gauze at the hospital. He left the few long feathers at the tip of her wing alone because “it looks better when they’re closed, and she can’t fly with them anyway.” The rest of the huge feathers that made up the bulk of the wing he clipped about half way up to her wing bones with the scissors. It looked like he was essentially trimming the lower half of the wing off. When we were done, I tossed the chicken back into the pen, not realizing that she could no longer stall her descent as easily without her wing feathers. She fluttered and sort of fell on her face, but then got up and seemed okay.

“She was surprisingly relaxed while you were cutting her wings,” I observed.

Seth replied, “Birds actually like to be trapped; it makes them relax when they realize they don’t have any other option.” I thought about the difference between calm and despair and how the birds acquiescence could signify either. If Seth was right, though, this also had interesting implications for sanctuary approaches to minimizing the stresses of captivity. Whereas many of the efforts I described in the previous chapter focus on allowing animals to avoid confinement and close human proximity, this suggested the possibility that other animals could prefer the opposite treatment. And if that is the case, then perhaps being confined to cages may not be a sacrifice for certain animals. Of course, the “if’s” in this thought process emphasize just how contingent
sanctuary practices of care are on interpretations of animal behavior that may not always be accurate.

Sometimes sanctuary architecture and techniques of necro-care are still not enough to prevent external threats to sanctuary animals. After I left the sanctuary, I heard that Squawker had died from an unknown illness. The theory around the sanctuary was that one of the wild birds that occasionally rest on top of the cages on the lawn had defecated into Squawker and Sadie’s water. Squawker may have contracted a zoonotic infection from the bacterial contamination in his water. If so, he died from an unwelcome invader that is too small to trap, by means of a vector that cannot be blocked by cage wire. Unlike the safety precautions in place around the monkey cages, it is extremely difficult to prevent wild birds from getting close enough to sanctuary birds to pass on contagious diseases.

Some uninvited guests, on the other hand, pose almost no problem at all and are allowed to coexist with the sanctuary animals. Despite their thievery, this is the case for the pigeons at Roosevelt. One day I spotted a nest in the rafters outside the pig barn, and I told Jean, a caregiver from France. He worked on vegan outreach campaigns in France before immigrating to the US, where he taught French at the elementary and middle school levels before moving to Roosevelt to work at the sanctuary. He looked in the nest to see if it was empty, in which case he might have moved it. But there was already an egg in it, so he left it alone. In the case of Roosevelt, ethico-political principles directly conflict with techniques of necro-care that could be used to keep out external threats. Choosing to not kill does not necessarily mean that death is avoided, though. Pigeons pose no threat to farm sanctuary animals, but as mentioned above, rats do. Allowing a rat
to live could lead to the death of chickens. In this context, choosing not to exercise necro-care would nonetheless lead to a fatal result.

At Rainbow Haven, there is one intruder who causes minor annoyance but is still mostly ignored: the bufo toads, also known as cane toads. Another nonnative species, bufo toads are large nocturnal brown toads that can grow up to nine inches or more. They have paratoid glands running down their back that secrete a toxin that can cause convulsions, paralysis, and death in other animals if left untreated. Dogs, in particular, are at risk of bufo poisoning since the toads are about the perfect size to fit in a curious dog’s mouth. I never saw any live ones during the day, but at night they were suddenly everywhere, sitting in the wet grass staring straight ahead. They seemed to be afraid of nothing, hopping languorously if you bumped one with your foot, but otherwise oblivious to any other animals around them.

None of the sanctuary animals seemed to care about the frogs, but the very first step in the morning feeding routine was to rinse out the dog bowl that sat outside the barn. The toads would rest in the dog bowl at night, leaving behind enough toxin to sicken the dogs if they drank from it. Because they were so slow and oblivious to things moving around them – or perhaps because they had no natural predators – one would also accidentally end up under a car tire occasionally. In the morning, while walking up the long driveway to the barn, it wasn’t unusual to see a flattened toad stuck to the concrete with its tongue stuck straight out in front of it. Usually whoever found the toad would pick it up by the tongue and fling it into the bushes. If nobody moved the carcass though, it would bloat in the morning heat, re-rounding out the toad’s body like a balloon. Then, if a car happened to drive over it again, it would explode with an audible pop. The toads
are not direct targets of necro-care. Indeed, since they pose no threat or competition to other animals, killing them could not contribute to the care of sanctuary animals in any meaningful way. Nonetheless, their status as part of the ethical taxonomic category of pest renders them necropolitically vulnerable. There is no reason to actively try to kill them, but neither are they legitimate subjects of life-fostering biopolitical care. Within the sanctuary, toads are neither savable nor sacrifice-able – they are instead bestia sacer.

**Conclusion**

Joan once told me “The best part of the sanctuary is giving these animals the chance to be happy now. They’ve been through so much, and it just puts a huge smile on my face to be able to give them the chance to be happy.” For a long time, I was not sure how to reconcile this with all the animals who died as a result of being at the sanctuary, like the cows, pig, mice, and baby chicks all killed for food or the wild doves, mongooses, and mice all killed as pests. I was also confused about how the interns felt about killing animals. At times, they expressed ambivalence about it, but at other times seemed to be quite comfortable with it. When first meeting them, I naively assumed aspiring veterinarians would be committed to maximizing animal welfare in all circumstances. I did not anticipate that they would be willing to kill mice, shoot doves and mongooses, and, at least in Kristin’s case, work at an animal-testing facility. They revealed that a commitment to animal care can coexist with complex attitudes toward animals that simultaneously allow for compassion, concern, and empathy along with an ethical gradient upon which different animal lives have different values in different
contexts. Their use of taxonomical ethical categories of sacrificial and saved animals to guide decisions about how to practice necro-care – the use of the deaths of certain animals to facilitate the care of others – illustrated how complex hierarchies of value arise to make killing possible, if not unproblematic, within sanctuaries. The realization that there was a range of complex views and attitudes animal caregivers can simultaneously hold, forced me to question my own presuppositions about animal death. I still feel most comfortable at farm sanctuaries where the death is generally something to be avoided when possible, but this feeling is a luxury that caregivers at other kinds of sanctuaries do not always have.

Seth is right. It’s weird, but sanctuaries are actually full of death. And sometimes, even in sanctuaries, it is necessary to kill animals so that others may live. Death suffuses these life-fostering regimes of care. One day while we were scrubbing out the large flexible rubbery water troughs that the alpacas, llama, and goats drink out of, Seth taught me a term from vet school that serves as an apt metaphor for the interpenetration of life and death that occurs in sanctuaries: *nidus*. Derived from the Latin word for nest, *nidus* has several meanings, but he defined it as a site or foreign body around which minerals accumulate. A nidus provides the nucleus for formations such as bladder and kidney stones or pearls inside oysters. The inside of each trough was roughly textured from bits of string-like material that were embedded in the rubber. These pieces of fiber provided a perfect nidus for algae growth, requiring us to scrub the troughs several times a week. The conflicting needs of different animals both within and around sanctuaries – including humans – also provide a perfect nidus, in this case for the accretion of death.
Animals may go to sanctuaries to escape certain deaths, but once there, they often encounter other deaths. Because – as any ecosystem across the planet will show – life cannot exist without death, and life-fostering care often depends on necro-care. And as practices of necro-care make the interspecies communities that form within sanctuaries possible, they also require different kinds of sacrifices from both the human and nonhuman citizens of those communities. Whereas caregivers may be required to sacrifice the comfort of simple moral convictions for the complex evaluations and decision-making that go into implementing necro-care, some animals – sanctuary citizens and external animals alike – are required to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of other citizens of the community. This may at first seem to be an impossible to reconcile contradiction with the mission of many sanctuaries, but it actually reveals precisely how sanctuaries manage to accomplish rescuing and caring for thousands of animals: by working toward a more liberated world for animals while responding as best they can to the political, economic, and social limitations with which they regularly contend. Although they may have different visions for what “animal liberation” would ultimately look like, they each work toward their vision through a pragmatic-orientation toward maximizing benefits to animals, and – if it helps us find a way to live better with other animals – perhaps humankind as well.

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115 See Chapter Two for the distinction between pragmatic liberationists and so-called abolitionists.
Conclusion: Why Do Sanctuaries Matter?

In the contemporary United States, animals who have been entangled in property relations now have two possible modes of interfacing with human society: either as living property vulnerable to the deprivations of *bestia sacer* or as improperty suspended within the web of rights and obligations tied to sacrificial citizenship. As zones of exception to the bare life of *bestia sacer*, sanctuaries provide spaces where animals can gain social and political lives as participants in interspecies communities formed around the unmaking of property-based human-animal relations. However, in unmaking these relationships, sanctuaries replace them with inter-subjective relationships of care that are still embedded both in a larger political-economic context fueled by multiple circuits of animal capital and in a larger socio-legal context in which animals remain classified as property. While sanctuary animals cannot be fully unmade as property, within the spaces of sanctuaries they also do not remain rights-less. Through these inter-subjective relationships of care, humans afford animals basic rights to life, sustenance, and freedom from harm – although animals often access these rights unevenly and inconsistently.

As we have seen, different kinds of rescue facilities have different approaches to the care of animals that influence this access in different ways. As a model of a No Kill companion animal shelter, Texas Companion Rescue focuses on the temporary rescue of companion animals so that they can be adopted out to live with human families in their homes. Because adoptability is central to this mission, animals in these kinds of facilities may have to sacrifice more autonomy than animals in other facilities because they must be socialized to humans and refrain from engaging in behavior that would make them less
adoptable, even if that behavior is normal for their species (e.g., chasing prey). The primary benefits animals in these facilities receive are an ironclad guarantee that they will not be killed for lack of space (although, as the case of Broxton in the last chapter illustrates, they may still be euthanized for other reasons) and that all of their physical needs will be met. Caregivers also work to socialize with the animals as much as possible to provide them with psychological stimulation and help them better adapt to living with humans.

The second kind of facility examined in this ethnography was the sanctuary for exotic animals, Rainbow Haven. Unlike companion animal shelters, exotic animal sanctuaries provide permanent homes for animals that were purchased as pets or used for entertainment purposes. While facilities like Rainbow Haven try to provide the best lives possible for the animals in their care – meeting all of their physical needs, trying to minimize stress, and providing them with psychological stimulation – the fact that many of the animals in these facilities might hurt each other if they were to interact requires them to segregate the animals and restrict their movement more than facilities without predatory animals would. These facilities also must make decisions about which animals are not protected by their commitment of care, since some of their wards eat meat, which requires the killing of other animals to feed them.

Finally, farm sanctuaries like Roosevelt Farm Sanctuary focus their efforts on caring for rescued farm animals. Unlike the animals at exotic sanctuaries, the species in farm animal sanctuaries are all herbivores and do not require the killing of other animals for their food. Because of industrial agricultural practices, though, these animals often develop injuries or illnesses that require invasive veterinary treatment. These kinds of
sanctuaries tend to be the most committed to a liberationist view of human-animal relations (whereas the other two often fall closer to the welfare side of the spectrum), so caregivers are usually vegan or vegetarian and espouse explicit support for animal rights. The necessities of caring for animals in captivity, however, still place restrictions on how much autonomy they can afford the sanctuary animals, and most farm animal sanctuaries choose to privilege safety over freedom of movement in designing sanctuary infrastructure.

By extending limited de facto rights in these various contexts to animals that are still entangled in larger property-based relationships, sanctuaries are in effect affording animals property rights in themselves, creating hybrid property-subjects, or improperty. Further, by relating to animals as rights-bearing subjects, human caregivers essentially transform sanctuary spaces into interspecies communities in which both humans and animals operate as citizens. But sanctuary citizenry comes with costs. Navigating the many post-rescue dilemmas of care requires certain sacrifices from both humans and animals. Humans may be expected to sacrifice time (and by extension potential wages) and physical and emotional energy, while the potential sacrifices required from animals may be much more significant. In the post-human citizenship of the sanctuary, inequalities still exist. The sacrifices animal citizens may have to make that humans do not include bodily autonomy (e.g., the ability to avoid veterinary interventions); freedom of movement and association (e.g., spatial confinement and forced proximity to humans or other animals); and sometimes even their lives.

Despite the almost insurmountable odds sanctuaries face in transforming human-animal relations beyond their borders – the number of rescued animals makes up less than
one percent of the number killed for various human purposes each year – the sanctuary movements’ efforts are not folly. While they provide concrete benefits to many animals, it is true that under current political-economic and social conditions, sanctuaries can only function by excluding most animals from care. Further, while they may hope for a world in which animals are liberated from human control, sanctuary caregivers are currently committed to a course of action in which complete liberation is impossible as long as animals can only be rescued and cared for in captivity. And within those captive spaces, the rights-bearing dimension of animals’ subjectivity is drastically curtailed from what many animal rights philosophers have envisioned. Nonetheless, the animal sanctuary movement is doing tremendously important work in creating new possibilities for living with animals as subjects worthy of ethical regard. Yes, sacrifice plays a significant determinative role in these relationships, but as alternatives to relationships in which more totalizing sacrifices are regularly demanded from animals, they also create ethical departure points for further challenging these sacrificial demands. They do the important symbolic work of prodding people to think seriously about what proper relationships should be, and to ask, as I have been throughout this ethnography, who benefits – *cui bono*\(^\text{116}\) – in these relationships?

Wendy Brown’s analysis of the political effects of late global capitalism again provides a useful lens for understanding sanctuaries – this time how they relate to the future rather than how they work in the present. She describes a ubiquitous exhaustion and despair under which most people “have ceased to believe in the human capacity to craft and sustain a world that is humane, free, sustainable, and, above all, modestly under

\(^{116}\text{See Kirksey, Schuetze, and Helmreich (2014), Star (1991), and the Introduction.}\)
human control,” making it almost impossible to develop, “in ideas or institutions, a realizable alternative future trajectory” (2015, 221). Describing what she sees as the last vestiges of resistance to this despair, she writes:

Insistence that “another world is possible” runs opposite to this tide of general despair, this abandoned belief in human capacities to gestate and guide a decent and sustainable order, this capitulation to being playthings of powers that escaped from the bottle in which humans germinated them. The Left alone persists in a belief . . . that all could live well, live free, live together. (222)

Similarly, the animal sanctuary movement persists in a belief that humans and animals could live well and free together. That future remains only a vision at this point, and may never be attainable under the political-economic and social conditions that still shape contemporary human-animal relations, but their efforts to reach that future are an insistence that another world is possible. In both ideas and institutions, the animal sanctuary movement provides an alternative future trajectory for a more humane, sustainable world based on the very idea of making human control over that world significantly more modest (if not ending it altogether). This vision for the future is important not just for our relationships with the species we have entangled in human social relations, but for all nonhuman species on the planet, particularly in the age of the Anthropocene, as the planet earth is experiencing its sixth mass extinction (and its first as result of human activity). In trying to create on a small scale the world they want, sanctuaries do have to make compromises. Despite sanctuary efforts to relate to them as subjects, sanctuary animals still remain entangled in property-based relationships with

117 Scientist Paul Crutzen first proposed that this current epoch in human history, in which humans have so drastically altered the global environment (and continue to at an accelerating pace) should be called the Anthropocene (2002).
118 See Elizabeth Kolbert’s The Sixth Extinction (2014) for a sobering analysis of this unfolding catastrophe.
humans. Despite efforts to respect their autonomy, animals must still make sacrifices. And despite efforts to give them the best lives possible, animals still remain killable. In accepting these compromises, though, they also build on the pragmatist tradition in animal activism of seeking to achieve immediate improvements for the animals living now while simultaneously endeavoring to bring about a more fundamental transformation in human-animal relations in the future. As far as these current relationships are from the ones sanctuary activists aspire to for the future, they are valuable in the present both for the qualitative difference they do make in the lives of animals that have been saved and for the symbolic power these experiments in alternative species relations have in countering the despair that corrodes belief that a better world is possible.119

If, in working through the dilemmas of care, humans and animals are co-creating emergent forms of animal ethics that are adapted to the realities of trying to live differently with other species, then – aside from maintaining hope for a better world – what implications do these new models for living with animals have for the future of animals? More specifically, can the kinds of political subjectivities some animals have accessed in sanctuary spaces continue to expand, moving beyond the zones of exception in sanctuaries to affect the vast majority of animals outside those zones of exception? The animal advocates who run sanctuaries definitely hope so. And many signs suggest that this is already starting to happen. While animal-based industries produce and capitalize more animal bodies than at any other time in human history, public attitudes about the treatment of animals may reflect more pervasive concern for their wellbeing than at any

119 See Kirksey, Shapiro, and Brodine for an analysis of a similar future-oriented opposition to despair, which they describe as “hope in blasted landscapes”(2014, 29-63; see also Tsing 2014).
other time in history. The fate of captive chimpanzees used for research is just one example. After years of growing public condemnation of the use of chimpanzees in medical research, the National Institute of Health retired most of their research chimps – about 360 – to sanctuaries.

In November 2015, though, even activists who had been advocating on these animals’ behalf were surprised when the NIH announced that it would also be retiring the last 50 chimps it been planning to hold in reserve to a sanctuary. However, the case of these last 50 research chimps also highlights one of the main problems for the future of captive animals. Just as resources and space are limited within sanctuaries, sanctuaries as a collective resource for rescuing animals are even more limited. A federal law requires the NIH to retire chimps to accredited facilities of which there is only one: Chimp Haven, a federally-funded chimpanzee sanctuary in Keithville, Louisiana. The problem is Chimp Haven is almost full, although they have agreed to immediately make space for 25 chimps. I had the opportunity to visit Chimp Haven briefly in 2013, and at the time they were constructing a new building to house chimpanzees that had been used in infectious disease research. Since these chimps were infected with potentially communicable diseases, such as HIV, they need to be quarantined from other chimps. This means these new facilities cannot also be used for the last 50 reserve chimps. Following the decision to retire these last chimps, NIH director Francis Collins said that the organization was discussing how to house the retired chimps in light of the sanctuary space shortage, “especially since the animals’ eventual deaths will make sanctuary space unnecessary” (Reardon 2015). In other words, there are two possible outcomes for these chimps: sanctuary or death. While certain companion species, such as the cats and dogs at Texas
Companion Rescue, have the possibility of being integrated into private human households, the majority of animals caught up in the realm of *bestia sacer* are currently faced with only these two possible exits.

Sanctuary space is no more plentiful for other animals than it is for these last research chimps. And as Susie Coston made clear to the Care Conference attendees in Chapter Two, when sanctuaries take on more animals than they can handle, the sacrifices required of the rest of the sanctuary community balloon rapidly. In extreme cases, overburdened organizations implode, sometimes quite dramatically. This was the case in October of 2011 in Zanesville, Ohio, when Terry Thompson released 56 exotic animals from his property – including lions, leopards, tigers, wolves, cougars, and bears – before committing suicide. Police killed all but six of the animals. Less dramatic, but far more common, well-intentioned animal rescue operations that take on more than they can handle often end up in the news as hoarding cases. In August of 2015, for example, officers from the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PSPCA) removed 122 cats from a “filthy, flea-infested” house in Henryville, Pennsylvania (NBC10 2015). The cats were transported to a facility in North Philadelphia where they could be given medical evaluations and then put up for adoption. The homeowners, who voluntarily surrendered the cats, told authorities they were planning on opening a shelter but were overwhelmed by the cats’ swift rate of reproduction. The CEO of the PSPCA, Jerry Buckley, told the media that while it was admirable that these people wanted to help homeless animals, they “were clearly overwhelmed.” As this story suggests, a lack of proper infrastructure and resources can undermine even the best of animal rescuing.
intentions, creating conditions for animals that may even be worse than the ones from which they were rescued.

When resources are stretched thin, so is the line between a sanctuary and a hoarding case. And as sanctuaries proliferate in order to expand the possibilities for animals to gain political and social lives outside of the animal-property system, the potential for more failed sanctuaries also increases. My experiences at Quiet Glen Sanctuary, as described in Chapter Three, illustrate how precarious the sanctuary vision for animal futures can be, both for the specific animals already in their care and for animals more generally. This case also points to a related issue affecting animal futures. The fox and the coyotes at Quiet Glen are examples of animals that have lived in the wild and could be feasibly returned to their original habitats. For companion animals, agricultural animals, and exotic animals living far from their original habitats, repatriation to the wild is not a realistic option. Companion animals and agricultural animals could not survive outside of captivity because they either would not be able to meet all their needs or could pose a potential danger to humans. Exotic animals like the monkeys and birds at Rainbow Haven would face similar challenges, but in addition they could also negatively impact ecologies to which they are not indigenous. In fact, this has been a significant issue for states like Florida and Hawaii that have hospitable climates and environments where nonnative species can thrive.

In Florida, for example, a laissez-faire approach to regulating exotic animals, combined with a keen interest in them as pets and exhibits at tourist attractions throughout the state, has resulted in a widespread proliferation of exotic species in captivity, creating ideal conditions for their human-assisted or self- repatriation to the
wild. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) “Over 500 nonnative fish and wildlife species . . . have been documented in the state.” FWC defines “nonnative” or “exotic” species (the terms are used interchangeably) as “animals living outside captivity that did not historically occur in Florida.” Of course, how far in the past a species must have had a presence in the region to qualify as “native” is determined by how one understands the idea of history. For FWC, historical refers to a pre-Columbian presence. Anything that first arrived in the geographical area that now comprises contemporary Florida prior to European contact is therefore considered exotic. Interestingly, this means that the temporal prerequisite for indigeneity is consistent across all animal species, both human and non-, but this consistency appears somewhat arbitrary when considering how some of these exotic species arrived in Florida. According to FWC, most exotics “are introduced species, meaning they have been brought to Florida by humans.” However, it notes, “a few of Florida's exotics arrived by natural range expansions, like cattle egrets, which are native to Africa and Asia but flew across the Atlantic Ocean and arrived in Florida in the 1950s. Several common nonnative species, like coyotes, armadillos and red foxes, were not only introduced by humans but also spread into Florida by natural range expansions.” This means that some of the exotic species in the state actually arrived the same way the indigenous humans arrived, including foxes and coyotes. It is merely when they arrived that determines their exotic status.

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Exotic status has repercussions for the future of any animal that finds itself in human captivity because no exotic animal can be legally released back into the wild in Florida. This is why the coyotes and fox at Quiet Glen will spend the rest of their lives in captivity, not because they cannot be returned to the wild, but because they are legally classified as alien species to Floridian ecologies. The state’s real problem, however, is with nonnative species determined to be invasive: these are species deemed to pose an ecological or economic threat. State wildlife management officials and private conservationists are concerned that the ability of certain “exotics” to quickly adapt and thrive in Florida’s incredibly hospitable ecologies could pose a danger to indigenous flora and fauna as well as human safety and economic interests. The Cuban tree frog, for example “was introduced in 1931 . . . and has invaded Florida's natural areas, preying on . . . native tree frogs.” Green iguanas, on the other hand, do not pose a clear ecological threat, but are still considered invasive because they cause “significant economic damage to landscape plants, primarily in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties,” according to FWC.124

One way the State has tried to ameliorate this problem is with the designation of conditional and prohibited species. People can obtain permits to possess or import conditional or prohibited species, but only for exhibition or research purposes. FWC also issues permits for people to capture and remove conditional exotics from state land. Most recently, this practice was encouraged with a contest called the 2013 Python Challenge. The contest targeted the Burmese python, an invasive exotic snake that has gained a bellyhold in the Florida Everglades, posing a risk to native birds, bobcats, foxes,

raccoons, and other animals. The contest offered a $1,000 prize for the largest python and $1,500 for the person who brought in the most pythons over the 30-day period of the event. In addition, according to FWC’s website: “permit holders may sell the hide and meat, thus providing a type of compensation.” According to an FWC press release, nearly 1,600 registered for the competition and 68 Burmese pythons were “harvested” from January 12 to February 10.\textsuperscript{125} It is not clear how many, if any, of the pythons survived their harvesting, but FWC states that the permit allows for “humanely euthanizing” them on site.\textsuperscript{126} Specifically, contest participants were encouraged to kill pythons with a bullet, shotgun blast, or captive bolt to the head. Decapitation by blade is considered inhumane because constrictors can survive for several minutes afterward. A less violent, and arguably more preferable solution for the animals, are the dozens of private sanctuaries – like Quiet Glen – and private zoos across the state that house and care for exotic animals, which FWC licensing procedures have made possible.

The future of nonnative animals in places like Florida is deeply intertwined with ideas of the exotic. On the one hand, exoticness imbues particular species with an “encounter value” (Haraway 2008, 46) that makes them especially desirable to humans as subjects for cross-species interactions. The appeal of the exotic is not only what attracts sanctuary workers and visitors to these particular species, but also the reason why many of these animals (or their ancestors) were brought to Florida in the first place. On the other hand, their exoticness also marks them as dangerous invaders threatening ecological harm. Paradoxically, the same quality that gives these wild animals encounter value also drives their removal from the wild. Unlike exotic encounter value-generating experiences

\textsuperscript{126} http://myfwc.com/license/wildlife/nonnative-species/python-permit-program/.
like the Python Challenge, which led to the death of exotic animals, the sanctuaries and zoos provide a form of exotic encounter-value that at least allows the animals opportunity to survive, albeit in exchange for certain sacrifices. However, many of these facilities – such as the Untamed Beasts (the private zoo where the Mystery Monkey lives, described in the first chapter) – are deriving use value and exchange value as well as encounter value from the exotics they house. Indeed, the state licensing system encourages exhibition because it only allows exemptions for exhibition and research. And with fairly lax oversight of conditions at exhibition facilities, this also increase the possibility of animals living in the kind of conditions that contributed to the fox and coyotes’ stereotypies at Quiet Glen. Furthermore, a revenue-generating exhibition model and a market for trade with other facilities of animals with exhibit-appeal creates incentives for breeding more animals. This means less space and resources for animals that do not have homes, which is why most non-profit rescue sanctuaries sterilize all their animals and discourage breeding as much as possible. Nonetheless, sanctuaries, like their animals, need resources to survive. Tourism may in fact be necessary for a sustainable sanctuary model, even if it only consists of free tours to attract donations from wealthy patrons. Although sanctuaries that wish to focus on maximizing the wellbeing of animals may feel ambivalent about the potential negative impact for animals on exploiting them for their encounter value, the future of exotic animals that has been imagined in the cooperation between state and private actors in Florida may be hinged on the maximization of encounter value, especially as the idea of preserving some form of human-unadulterated nature becomes increasingly unrealizable. While the situation in Florida is fairly unique,

127 “Stereotypies” is another term for stereotypic behaviors.
the entanglement between sanctuaries and their external political-economic contexts are universal. The ongoing need for funding locks many sanctuary animals into a future in which they will have to continue to generate value to subsidize their own care.

Another factor affecting the future of many animals in captivity is the idea of conservation. Conservation of various animal species is the primary goal of accredited zoos throughout the United States, but some private facilities use conservation as a justification for increasing exhibitionary revenue. Untamed Beasts, for example, sells up-close “encounters” with baby animals for $10 to $20, or private encounters for around $125. Visitors can also pay to swim in a pool with a baby tiger ($200 per swimmer, $10 per spectator) or an alligator ($100 per swimmer, $10 per spectator). These encounters are a lucrative source of revenue. One Bengal tiger pair at the park has had seven offspring and are grandparents to at least two other cubs, all born at the park. Since the “encounters” are exclusively conducted with the young offspring, no offspring would mean no encounters and thus no animal encounter profits. Just prior to my visit to Untamed Beasts, two tigers had been born in separate litters at the facility. On the tour group I joined, three people – a couple and an unrelated boy who was there with his family – had paid for a “petting encounter.” The tour group sat on bleachers and watched as the three people entered the enclosure with a young female trainer and two other male employees supervising. The three people were in awe as they touched and bottle-fed a 4-week-old cub while an employee took their photos. The couple cooed over the cub, and the young boy’s eyes bulged with wonder as he patted her head. After the encounter was over, the trainer tried to get the cub to chase a stuffed animal tied to a rope. The cub was not interested, but they tried several times to make her perform. Eventually they gave up,
and the trainer carried the cub by the scruff of her neck while she cried loudly and tried to swat at the trainer with her paws. Even though we could not go in with the three paying participants, the rest of the tour group sat in rapt attention as we watched the fuzzy baby tiger mostly refuse to cooperate with the performance, choosing instead to behave much like a very large domestic kitten absorbed in its own kitten-interests. When I asked the cashier who gave me my entrance ticket about the baby tigers, she informed me that breeding the animals was essential to conserving the species. What contribution privately breeding tigers makes to conservation goals is unclear, though. Accredited zoos carefully document animal lineages and breed different pairs with careful attention to fostering genetic diversity, sometimes loaning out individual animals to other zoos to make this possible. Private zoos like Untamed Beasts and individual collectors – who do not participate in the international conservation network of accredited zoos – simply breed animals they already own. As a result of these more indiscriminate breeding practices, captive tigers in the United States now outnumber tigers in their natural habitats, at approximately 5,000 to 3,200 (World Wildlife Fund 2014).

Dubious claims of virtuous conservationism are not uncommon in the world of private big cat breeders in the United States. Ex-drug-lord Mario Tabraue and his for-profit organization the Zoological Wildlife Foundation (based in Miami) has garnered media attention for lobbying against the Big Cats and Public Safety Protection Act, first introduced to Congress in 2012 by Rep. Buck McKeon (Murphy 2014). This bill was motivated by the 2011 incident (referenced above) in Zanesville, Ohio, in which the owner of a private exotic animal facility released 56 animals – including 18 tigers and 17 lions – from their enclosures before committing suicide. The bill was intended to “restrict
the acquisition of big cats to accredited zoos and require private owners to register their animals” (ibid.). An earlier version of the bill “faced fierce opposition from the powerful circus lobby,” leading McKeon to carve out an exemption for accredited circuses before reintroducing the legislation in 2013 (ibid.). Traveling road shows, “private exotic-animal preserves and what activists derisively call ‘roadside zoos’” were still uneasy about the potential effects of the legislation, so “companies including Tabraue's ZWF joined Feld Entertainment, the parent company of Ringling Bros., in opposition to the bill” (ibid.). In an interview, Tabraue claimed the bill "would destroy conservation programs that we, as private individuals, have created" (Wilson 2013). Tabraue features white lions and a tabby tiger – animals he claims are extinct in the wild – on his website’s list of wildlife “success stories” (Zoological Wildlife Foundation 2013). However, “tabby tigers and white lions are just regular tigers and lions whose recessive genes give them rare colorations; virtually nonexistent in the wild, their populations are sustained by (often deliberate) inbreeding by exotic-animal owners” (Murphy 2014). Although the American Zoological Association “banned such deliberate breeding by its members in 2008,” these claims of contributing to the conservation of rare animals are a common marketing tactic: “‘Everybody wants to be a conservationist,’ says Tracy Coppola, campaigns director for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, a leading supporter of the McKeon bill. ‘To toss around the term ‘conservation’ in that context is really unfortunate’” (ibid.).

Even if the conservationist motivations of some of these institutions are suspect, this does not necessarily mean they are purely commercial endeavors. Like the sanctuaries where I volunteered, they are tied to and influenced by both political-

128 See Braverman (2013) for an analysis of the biopolitics of zoo-based conservation efforts.
economic systems of animal capital and collective values related to caring for – and
caring about – animals. In her study of SeaWorld, Susan G. Davis describes this complex
dynamic:

Sea World expresses, in part, its customers’ desires for nature and their worries
about the future. But the job of the theme park is also to transform these longings.
Customers want to see the amazing, performing killer whale and the pristine
Antarctic wilderness, of course, but they also hope to feel agency, that is, that
however indirectly, a visit to the theme park is an act of caring. That they can do
so is, in part, a result of the fact that in the late twentieth century, American
business has worked hard to define consumption as a form of concern, political
action, and participation. At Sea World, customers are explicitly asked to see
consumption in this way. As one of the killer whale show scripts puts it: “Just by
being here, you’re showing that you care!” In this logic, a visit to the nature
theme park is a form of action on behalf of the environment (1997, 39).

For many visitors at places like Untamed Creatures, spectacular consumption is similarly
experienced as an act of care, even if the facilities themselves may in fact prioritize profit
over conservation. In fact, this is also true for visitors to the sanctuaries where I
volunteered. The attraction visitors feel toward animals is based on engagement that goes
beyond commodification or spectacular objectification. In the case of for-profit facilities,
commercial and spectacular logics are not derailed, but are nonetheless channeled by an
ethical regard that places significance on the wellbeing of animals.

While some formerly wild animals can be re-released to their native environments
(see Collard 2013), the vast majority of animals entangled in relations with humans –
whether they are born into captivity or captured from their native habitats and brought
into it – are destined to remain in captivity. The question is what kind of captivity will it
be? The bare life of bestia sacer, or some form of care-based captivity such as those
found in sanctuaries, shelters, and zoos? Since living with humans in some way is a
necessity for the minority of animals that do end up in care-based forms of captivity,
sanctuaries would ideally extend their approach to animal care over as many animals as possible. The finite resources of sanctuaries limit this aspiration, though, while as I have described above, other kinds of care-based facilities have different ways of valuing the animals in their care. In her analysis of the biopolitical governance of captive zoo animal populations, Irus Braverman argues that zoo animals are subjected to a specific form of power theorized by Foucault as pastoral power (Braverman 2013; Foucault 2009).

Foucault sees pastoral power as a fundamentally beneficent power since its essential objective is the salvation of the flock (2009, 171-2). Sketching the historical development of zoos as they transformed from exhibitionary institutions to educational institutions and finally to conservation-oriented institutions, Braverman argues that the modern manifestation of zoos “as institutions that practice control through care . . . are uniquely grounded in the Western pastoral tradition that Foucault explores” (36). When it comes to the application of this power, Foucault distinguishes between two types of actors: “The bad shepherd only thinks of good pasture for his own profit, for fattening the flock that he will be able to sell and scatter, whereas the good shepherd thinks only of his flock and of nothing else. He does not even consider his own advantage in the well-being of his flock” (2009, 172). Like the sanctuaries where I volunteered, the zoos in Braverman’s analysis are closer to the latter category, whereas some of the facilities I described above probably have more in common with the bad shepherd model. Although it is impossible to care for animals without at least some concern for financial resources, Braverman makes it clear that for contemporary accredited zoos, their “extensive power to govern zoo animals is driven by a desire to care for and save animals” (2013, 35).

Despite the commonalities in their goals, there are of course significant
differences in how sanctuaries and zoos approach their missions. One of the most
significant ones is how they approach a central paradox to pastoral power identified by
Foucault. “Pastoral power is an individualizing power,” he claims (Foucault 2009, 173).
Although the shepherd directs the whole flock, Foucault argues that “he can only really
direct it insofar as not a single sheep escapes him” (ibid.). The shepherd “does everything
for the totality of his flock, but he does everything also for each sheep of the flock,”
looking “after each of them individually” (ibid.). This is where the paradox arises. By
simultaneously looking out for all animals and each individual animal, the shepherd
creates a potential dilemma in which it may be necessary to consider the sacrifice of the
flock as a whole – “since he must save each of the sheep, will he not find himself in a
situation in which he has to neglect the whole of the flock in order to save a single
sheep?” (ibid.). For zoos, this pastoral paradox manifests in a range of various everyday
conflicts between their concerns for individual captive animals and their concern for the
collective populations of those animals’ species (Braverman 2013, 36). Because modern
zoos’ primary mission is to foster species conservation, “zoos more readily sacrifice the
individual animal for the benefit of the flock, rather than the other way around” (ibid.).
However, Braverman notes that “animal activists offer a different balancing scheme,
based on the assumption that the individual animal should not be sacrificed in the name
of its species” (ibid.). Foucault, she explains, frames this contention between various
groups as the “great battle of pastoralship” (ibid.; see Foucault 2009, 149).

It is true that a significant difference between the zoo-based conservation
approach and the sanctuary approach to “good” pastoralship is in how they balance the
individual and the flock in navigating the paradox of pastoral power. Sanctuary practices
of care are intended to benefit specific individuals. At times this may even lead to potential risk to the flock, such as a controversy described by Braverman related to the case of Timmy the gorilla, whom activists wanted to remain at the Cleveland Metropark Zoo with his infertile companion Kate. At the same time, “concern for the collective zoo gorilla population dictated and justified the zoo’s decision to move Timmy to the Bronx Zoo, with its fertile female gorillas” (37). Describing the pastoral battle between “the two groups that claim to be the sole expert authorities on the captive animal’s well being: zoo people and animal protection activists,” Braverman states that this war can be boiled down to the questions: “Who cares more, and more properly, about animals? Who is the better pastor?” (2013, 203, 38). Based on the range of different ways of caring for and relating to animals that I have encountered across different sanctuaries, I would argue there are almost as many ideas about the most proper way to care for and about animals as there are caregivers trying to implement them. A more useful question, most – if not all – of these caregivers would agree, is how can humans help animals in captivity live the best lives possible? As many sanctuaries see it, one important part of the answer is fostering a greater recognition of and concern for animals as relational subjects.

In addition to the many dilemmas and paradoxes sanctuary caregivers try to navigate in pursuing the goals of “good shepherds,” there is one final paradox they must confront. In addition to sacrificing the flock for the individual, Foucault also claims that another “form taken by the paradox of the shepherd is the problem of the sacrifice of the shepherd for his flock” (2009, 173). Foucault meant that the shepherd’s dedication to care is so absolute that even self-sacrifice is possible in service to the flock. If caregivers were able to follow this logic of pastoral care to its endpoint, then it could ultimately mean the
abolition of sanctuaries. This is because the current models for functional sanctuaries all require certain sacrifices from the animals in their care, and these sacrifices are all compromises to the ideal vision of animals as subjects capable of truly acting in their own interests and based on their own desires. As improperty, animals instead remain suspended between property-based relationships and subject-based relationships with humans. They accrue many benefits as members of the sanctuary community, but they can only participate in it as sacrificial citizens. If animals are to be fully liberated from these human-imposed obligations, then might “good shepherds” need to sacrifice themselves in the future?

Subjecting animals to relationships of care and their related sacrificial obligations in perpetuity must be weighed here against a stark alternative, the withholding of such interventions even if this means the death of these animals, as some abolitionists and other animal rights proponents would advocate. Many sanctuary activists are acutely aware of the concerns underlying this question. In the words of Joan, the director of Rainbow Haven, “My ultimate goal is for this place not to exist. But until the world changes, it has to.” Aside from the current impossibility of an absolute liberation from human dependency that would not lead to death for these animals, this question also assumes the same totalizing schema of human-animal incommensurability at the heart of the Aristotelian anthropocentric worldview described in Chapter Two: two opposing sides, one of which must be sacrificed in order for the other to thrive. In his reading of the literal pastoral relationship between shepherds and their flocks in Valentina de Marchi’s 2009 ethnography *Hunger for Grass*, Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos presents an alternate possibility. Rather than an unbridgeable divide between human and animal, the
flock-shepherd relationship can be understood as an assemblage: the shepherd “becomes his beast more and more, never totally one or the other, and his becoming never following one or the other direction only. The sheep becomes human as much as the human becomes sheep” (2013, 162). This becoming generates its own animal law, “a law that does not subscribe to the given prescriptions of legality, but withdraws from it, creating its own atmosphere of legality” (161). Human and nonhuman animals in sanctuaries form similar multispecies assemblages through which they share intersubjective experiences with each other, generating their own atmospheres of animal legality, or post-human citizenry, in which oppositions between human/animal, freedom/captivity, care/control, and subject/property are reconfigured. These alternate zones of exception in which animals do have political lives do not fix or erase the conditions that sanctuary activists oppose, but as stated above, they provide models for alternative ways of living with other species that point toward future trajectories in which those conditions can be more drastically altered. Achieving broader transformation in the way humans treat animals may not be possible at this historical moment, but until it is, sanctuary activists and other animal advocates will continue to work toward a future in which animals’ subjectivities are valued in ways that relating to them as property is impossible.

Returning to the question of who benefits, or cui bono, when it comes to sanctuaries, I think the answer is all of us, humans and other animals alike. The world would be a worse place without sanctuaries, both because of the animals that could not be rescued and because of the poverty of visions for other possible worlds their absence would deepen. But beyond their symbolic value for inspiring struggle toward better
futures, they are also doing the important and necessary task of working through the difficulties and contradictions of realizing those futures – the pragmatic labor that must be done before any sort of liberation is possible. Human-animal relations cannot be radically transformed without a reciprocal radical transformation in a wide array of other social relations, not the least of which is a political-economic system that requires serious sacrifice from any of its citizens. So, if there is going to be change now, it has to be the hard fought, slow, incremental kind that comes from striving to improve conditions now rather than waiting for the grand rupture of an ever out of reach future. But even if the only thing sanctuaries could accomplish was to save a few animals out of the billions that cannot be saved, they would still be a worthwhile endeavor. In the words of a social media post from pattrice jones (one of the co-founders of VINE Sanctuary): “I think giving sanctuary is an important form of direct action. It’s an action that actually does something about a problem. If there is no direct action of this kind, you get either demoralized doing animal advocacy work, or you become abstract, abstraction as a defense against demoralization. Will our educational efforts make a difference? This is purely speculative, but saving that chicken is saving that chicken.” For that rescued chicken and other individual animals in sanctuary, a better future is arguably already unfolding.

Sanctuaries’ efforts to work through the dilemmas of captive animal care and the small but significant successes that come with saving individual animals are also important because they constitute tentative steps beyond the insufficient politics of consumption that characterize the current response to the Anthropocene in the contemporary United States. Slow food movements, locavorism, backyard and urban
farming, hybrid and electric cars, and venture capitalist start-ups focused on creating plant-based alternatives to animal products are just some of the many ways people are attempting to contend with global environmental crises. They are to some extent unified in their effort to “reform” consumption practices as the overarching rubric informing political action on behalf of the environment. Yet there are signs as well of frustration with consumption-oriented politics that have been shown to only modestly slow the intensification of some of the myriad crises of life that characterize the Anthropocene. Tentative experiments in moving beyond these politics of consumption have emerged in recent decades, from land rehabilitation and rewilding projects aimed at restoring ecosystems to activist direct action against poaching of whales and other endangered animals. Rather than just softening the impact of human consumption practices, these efforts seek to actively transform human relationships with other species. Sanctuaries are one such effort. They open the door, however tentatively, to new possibilities for the planetary transformation of contemporary social relations shaped by systems of violence and inequality, especially between humans and other species.

Importantly, sanctuaries are also making pragmatic moves beyond the limits of the rights paradigm in the animal protection movement. The goal of rights for animals can be understood as an example of what Lauren Berlant describes as a cruel optimism. According to Berlant, “A relation of cruel optimism is a double-bind in which your attachment to an object sustains you in life at the same time as that object is actually a threat to your flourishing” (Seitz 2014; see also Berlant 2011). Often failing to provide their promised benefits to humans who can make a formal claim to them, rights have in many cases proved to be an illusory goal that nonetheless diverts efforts away from other
possible means of fostering human flourishing. Similarly, the ongoing struggle to extend rights to animals has consumed much of the energy and resources of many factions of the animal protection movement while only contributing modestly to the limited flourishing of some animals. Like politics of consumption, a rights-based approach to animal protection accepts and reinforces a biopolitical system of social relations that can still demand significant sacrifices from its subjects, including their lives. Beyond the simple practicalities of saving particular animals from death, torture, or suffering (which is no small accomplishment), sanctuaries also point the way toward alternative configurations of human-animal communities that are not rooted in formal investments in rights, property, or ownership as the political or ontological foundation for “protection” or “care.” In this sense, they may unsettle conventional political forms that establish human sovereignty over animals as the primary means for saving them even as they rely on this, especially in its property form, as the practical legal basis for establishing zones of protection, care, and mutual flourishing.

Despite this hope for the future, though, sanctuaries also pose a significant danger: the possibility that they will become fixed as insular, self-contained enclosures for experiments in alternative ways of cohabitating with other species, functioning as negotiated zones of lived sovereignty for new human-animal communities. This raises the further possibility that they could operate indefinitely more or less as refugee camps for animals who were fortunate enough to escape circuits of animal capital but have no actual home to return to. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries are marked by perpetual humanitarian crises that have produced permanent human refugee camps around the world, spaces in which children were born and grew into adults without ever knowing a
home other than their camps, and where a humanitarian logic enacts divisions between those who “save” and “care” for refugees and those who receive that care (see Boltanski 1999; Fassin 2005, 2010; Malkki 1996; Redfield 2013; Ticktin 2005, 2011). Are sanctuaries rooted in the same humanitarian logic? Are sanctuaries becoming permanent states of exception to the state of exception that is *bestia sacer*? Avoiding this requires that they move even further beyond the critique of the politics of consumption and of rights paradigms, hardly an unthinkable possibility for many who are deeply involved in sanctuary work and animal advocacy activism.

The best strategies for navigating through this current planetary crisis of life are still far from clear, though there are many movements around the world struggling against the destructive forces at play in the current conjuncture – forces that are intimately tied to, but not exclusively the consequence of late capitalism, and that are rooted as well in systems of racial inequality and violence and other systems of inequality that have brought the vast majority of the world’s human and animal populations to the brink of extinction. There are many political paths forward, some easily commensurable with each other, others in seemingly unresolvable tension and antagonism. What is clear, though, is that a concern for the wellbeing of other species must be an important element of those strategies. Indeed, a future in which sanctuaries are not permanent refugee camps is as unlikely a possibility as it is an essential feature in a radically different world not structured by violent systems of inequality. Political scientist Claire Jean Kim highlights one potential path toward collaborating outside of the sanctuary movement in her work on the intersection between racial politics and conflicts over the treatment of animals. Kim argues that by being attentive to how human-animal inequality synergistically
articulates with other forms of domination, social justice activists and animal advocates could together create an “ethics of mutual avowal” that acknowledges the validity of each others’ interests and provides a basis for intersectional collaboration and mutual support (2015, 20). Of course, forming such connections would eventually require a reciprocal effort on the part of other social justice activists, but sanctuaries can begin to foster that reciprocity by continuing to extend their ethics of avowal beyond the politics of consumption and rights toward the goals of the larger planetary movement for social and environmental justice, which has the capacity to make species justice a central objective. At the same time, activists must not lose sight of the sanctuary project as only a provisional step on the path to achieving this objective – saving animals is a process that will only be complete when animals no longer need human care.
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