ANIMAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTION versus DIRECT AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ANIMALS, SIXTH GREAT EXTINCTION,
NEWSLETTER #4, August 14, 2015.


Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Compassion, Justice, Peace for All Species.

(#1 March 26, 2011; #2 Feb. 4, 2012; #3 Nov. 12, 2012)

http://omnicenter.org/donate/

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/  For a knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry as the foundation for change.

From its inception, OMNI has been a defender of human rights, aligning itself with the ACLU, Center for Constitutional Rights, Amnesty International, United Nations (UDHR), and similar organizations. We are now redefining ourselves as a Species Rights organization. Join in with us. See Vegetarian Action Newsletters:

Contents #4
Sixth Extinction
Elizabeth Colbert
Human-Animal Relationships, What They Can Teach Us, How We Should Treat Them

Scully, *Dominion*, requires us *to* treat animals with simple dignity and compassion.

Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Animals Teach Us

French, “Our Animal Contradictions,” A Unitarian-Universalist Perspective

Organizations

Doris Day Animal League

PETA and *Animal Times*, an Extended Feature

Cross-Species Friendships (see previous newsletters)


PBS, “Saving Luna”

Movies about Animals

Local, State, National: Google Animal Rights

WAR ON PLANET’S SPECIES

SIXTH EXTINCTION

The Sixth Extinction: A Conversation With Elizabeth Kolbert

Humanity's "most enduring legacy" will be our effect on the rest of life on Earth.

By Robert Kunzig, National Geographic

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 19, 2014

There have been five comparable periods of mass extinction, according to the author, but this one is being caused by us.
In her new book *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, Elizabeth Kolbert describes traveling the world to document the mass extinction of species that seems to be unfolding before our eyes. There have been five comparable crises in the history of life on Earth, she writes, but this one is different: It's being caused by us.

Kolbert, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, is also a contributor to *National Geographic* magazine, and her new book is informed by reporting she did for this magazine on the Anthropocene, or "the Age of Man," ocean acidification, and captive breeding in zoos. She is drawn to gloomy subjects—her previous book, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, was on climate change—but what's exceptional about Kolbert's writing is the combination of scientific rigor and wry humor that keeps you turning the pages.

Her subject this time is what she sees as the tragedy at the very core of human nature: "The qualities that made us human to begin with: our restlessness, our creativity, our ability to cooperate to solve problems and complete complicated tasks," Kolbert writes, are leading us to change the world so rapidly and profoundly that other species can't keep up. National Geographic reached Kolbert in New York to talk about it.

The title of your last chapter is "The Thing With Feathers," an allusion to Emily Dickinson's poem about hope. But the message I got from your book was basically "The thing with feathers is dead." Is that a fair summary?

The focus of the last chapter is Kinohi, a Hawaiian crow, one of only about a hundred left on the planet. He's a very personable, charismatic bird. There's a breeding facility on Maui, and Kinohi's genetic material is crucial to this breeding effort—but he wasn't giving any up. He was refusing to mate. He doesn't see himself as a bird, is the theory, because he was raised by people.

So they took him to the veterinary hospital of the San Diego Zoo, and he has a really palatial setup you can walk into, lots of toys, and he hops over to say hi. Barbara Durrant, a reproductive physiologist at the zoo, spends many hours stroking Kinohi in a way that a male bird is supposed to find very exciting, so that he will come through with some of his genetic material, and she can rush to Maui and inseminate a female bird. When I was there, which was about a year ago, he had not yet come through.
That story seemed to bring together all these qualities of being human that in some sense are really the subject of the book. It's about people's amazing resourcefulness and concern, about people making more and more heroic efforts to try to save pieces of the natural world—and meanwhile it continues to be under greater and greater assault.

So the thing with feathers is hope, of which there's not a lot at the end of the book. But it's also Kinohi, which you can see as either hopeful or not, depending on how you want to look at that story.

There are other birds in the book. You climbed a tower in the Brazilian rain forest to listen for them with Mario Cohn-Haft, an ornithologist.

It was a meteorological tower, and it was a complete wreck when I was there—the maintenance work had not been done for some time. When you're there right at dawn, you're looking over this vast expanse of green treetops, and you're hearing a lot of birds calling, because that's when they're active. An inexperienced person won't see anything. But Mario has this amazing ear: He can identify virtually every bird in the Amazon rain forest—we're talking about 1,300, 1,400 birds—by their call. So he would hear something and could trace it back to where it was emanating from.

And he had this iPod loaded with birdsongs. When he would hear something he could flip through the tunes and play that song back to the bird to try to get it to call again, so that we could figure out where it was. I saw some extraordinary birds that way—through a very powerful scope, I should say.

Later you visited one of the patches of forest that naturalist Tom Lovejoy has managed to preserve, where he and other scientists have been studying the effects of fragmentation on the forest.

The result of that experiment has been to show that these patches just bleed species. We were in a 25-acre patch, all completely surrounded by land that had been cleared and burned several times. In fairness, we were there at high noon, which is not a good time to see or hear birds. But we only heard—I believe it was two birds calling at that point. And they were very
common birds.

What's the evidence that we're living through a mass extinction comparable to the one at the end of the Cretaceous period, when an asteroid impact wiped out the dinosaurs and three-quarters of all species on Earth?

One of the difficulties in looking at extinction rates is we don't know what the denominator is—we don't know what's in the rain forest. In the book I talk about this incredible array of estimates there are for insects, which make up the bulk of the species in the Amazon.

I think where we get the most powerful evidence that an extinction event is going on is from those groups that we know very well—mammals, or reptiles, or birds. Even though you occasionally find a new mammal, it's pretty rare. So you have a pretty good sense of what mammals exist in the world, and at what rate they are becoming endangered, critically endangered, and then extinct.

When you look at that you say, "Wow, something really big is going on." But there are a lot of pretty ominous signs even from invertebrates.

You write that we're putting other species in a double bind: forcing them to move by changing the climate, and at the same time making it harder for them to move.

Pretty much everything now is on the move or should be on the move. I think it's 30 feet a day you've got to be moving, toward the Poles or upslope, if you want to track the climate. Some things are moving very fast; some things are not.

In the past we know that some species have survived pretty dramatic climate swings by moving. But now you have the problem that where you might need to move is either bisected by a road or completely occupied by Los Angeles or São Paolo. So you're bringing both of those forces to bear.
Aren't we part of the natural world? Won't evolution allow organisms to adapt to us and our impact on the world?

Well, that is the $64 trillion question. If we were doing just one of these things, we could precipitate a mass extinction. It turns out we're doing several at the same time. We're not just warming the world, we're cutting down the rain forest. We're not just cutting down the rain forest, we're moving invasive species into the rain forest. So you just add these all up, and you say, that's a lot, and that's how you get to saying: We are the asteroid now. The asteroid also had a lot of different effects, and it didn't end too well.

Our ancestors did okay, though.

It ended okay for our relative, whatever that was—some little shrewlike creature who crawled through the end of the Cretaceous. So then the question is, What is going to crawl through this moment? That's the big question.

And to say that we are part of the natural world, or not—I think that is absolutely the subject of the book. What are we? To the extent that the asteroid is a part of the natural world, we are. And to the extent that the asteroid is not part of the natural world, then I guess you could say we're not. We occupy a very, very unusual position in the whole history of the planet. That is really the point of the book.

You don't write much here about the effort to conserve habitat—but your next assignment for National Geographic magazine is to write about the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Is there any chance that wilderness will be the preservation of the world?

In a period of rapid change, one of the few things we know how to do is to try to leave as many places alone as possible. Big places, so that if things need to move they can, so that evolution can take its course. If these things can adapt, they will—but the point would be to give as many organisms as possible a chance to make it through this moment, by leaving food webs as intact as they still are. Many people said the same thing to me: That's our best shot.
RELATED STORIES

1. Why Africa's Vultures Are "Collapsing Toward Extinction"
2. Pictures: The World’s Tigers—There Are Only 3,200 Left in the Wild
3. Beloved Storks, Emblems of Fertility, Rebounding in France

SIXTH EXTINCTION,

Google Search, AUGUST 14, 2015

The Sixth Extinction (book) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History is a 2014 nonfiction book written by ... as the great auk; and she includes the accelerated widespread extinction of ...

Anthropocene - The author - Discovery - Summary of Chapters

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History - Amazon.com

www.amazon.com › ... › Endangered Species
Amazon.com, Inc.
Rating: 4.6 - 532 reviews

A major book about the future of the world, blending intellectual and natural ... In The Sixth Extinction, two-time winner of the National Magazine Award and New ...

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History - Amazon.com

www.amazon.com › ... › Environment
Amazon.com, Inc.
A major book about the future of the world, blending intellectual and natural history ... Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, ...

Will Humans Survive the Sixth Great Extinction?

news.nationalgeographic.com/.../150623-six...

National Geographic Society

Jun 23, 2015 - Journalist Elizabeth Kolbert's book The Sixth Extinction won this year's Pulitzer Prize for general non-fiction. We talked with her about what ...
"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."--Genesis 1:24-26

In this crucial passage from the Old Testament, God grants mankind power over animals. But with this privilege comes the grave responsibility to respect life, to treat animals with simple dignity and compassion.

Somewhere along the way, something has gone wrong.

In *Dominion*, we witness the annual convention of Safari Club International, an organization whose wealthier members will pay up to $20,000 to hunt an elephant, a lion or another animal, either abroad or in American "safari ranches," where the animals are fenced in pens. We attend the annual International Whaling Commission conference, where the skewed politics of the whaling industry come to light, and the focus is on developing more lethal, but not more merciful, methods of harvesting "living marine resources." And we visit a gargantuan American "factory farm," where animals are treated as mere product and
raised in conditions of mass confinement, bred for passivity and bulk, inseminated and fed with machines, kept in tightly confined stalls for the entirety of their lives, and slaughtered in a way that maximizes profits and minimizes decency.

Throughout *Dominion*, Scully counters the hypocritical arguments that attempt to excuse animal abuse: from those ...

"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."--Genesis 1:24-26

In this crucial passage from the Old Testament, God grants mankind power over animals. But with this privilege comes the grave responsibility to respect life, to treat animals with simple dignity and compassion.

Somewhere along the way, something has gone wrong.

In *Dominion*, we witness the annual convention of Safari Club International, an organization whose wealthier members will pay up to $20,000 to hunt an elephant, a lion or another animal, either abroad or in American "safari ranches," where the animals are fenced in pens. We attend the annual International Whaling Commission conference, where the skewed politics of the whaling industry come to light, and the focus is on developing more lethal, but not more merciful, methods of harvesting "living marine resources." And we visit a gargantuan American "factory farm," where animals are treated as mere product and raised in conditions of mass confinement, bred for passivity and bulk, inseminated and fed with machines, kept in tightly confined stalls for the entirety of their lives, and slaughtered in a way that maximizes profits and minimizes decency.

Throughout *Dominion*, Scully counters the hypocritical arguments that attempt to excuse animal abuse: from those who argue that the Bible's message permits mankind to use animals as it pleases, to the hunter's argument that through hunting animal populations are controlled, to the popular and "scientifically proven" notions that animals cannot feel pain, experience no emotions, and are not conscious of their own lives.

The result is eye opening, painful and infuriating, insightful and rewarding. *Dominion* is a plea for human benevolence and mercy, a scathing attack on those who would dismiss animal activists as mere sentimentalists, and a demand for reform from the government down to the individual. Matthew Scully has created a groundbreaking work, a book of lasting power and importance for all of us.
Reviews
Praise for Dominion

"Scully's riveting account... shows how unspeakable and systematic animal cruelty is the currency of a soulless industry that has shattered American rural communities, poisoned our soils, air, and water, made family farmers an endangered species, and undermined our democracy. Scully's book gently questions whether we can foster human dignity in a society that treats other sentient beings as production units." --- Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

"Matthew Scully has set forth a case - in a wry and riveting manner - that will resonate with any reader who values logical reasoning and ethical conduct. I expect that **Dominion will be the most influential book on animal protection in the last twenty-five years.**" -- Wayne Pacelle, Senior Vice President, The Humane Society of the United States

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Lauren (New York, NY) · ★★★★☆</th>
<th>October 27, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I liked this book a lot more before I learned the author is the speech writer for Sarah Palin. I have a hard time believing that Scully is not passionate about vegetarianism. The book is incredibly dramatic. You can tell he is a speech writer -- he writes as if he is before 100,000 people trying... ...more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Eric (Anchorage, AK) · ★★★★☆</th>
<th>March 02, 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well. This was a shrewdly written book. Instead of arguing for animal rights he argues that humans have neglected to exercise care for animals in their use of them. In other words modern humans have forsaken a biblical and moral vision of dominion for a quite selfish and callous use of animals f... ...more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Stefani (Brooklyn, NY) · ★★★★☆</th>
<th>April 24, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although a bit tedious at times, Dominion is a series of powerful arguments against the assumption that man's cognitive superiority to animals is correlated with his ability to use them for any purpose he sees fit regardless of how it harms or causes them pain. One of the main assumptions that he... ...more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Dear (Phoenix, AZ) · ★★★★☆</th>
<th>October 29, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Dominion, Matthew Scully brings a <strong>conservative Christian perspective</strong> to the cause of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
animal welfare. He begins the book with profiles of the types of animal cruelty easy for the general population to disapprove of: big game hunting, whaling, and animal experimentation. After profiling these cr... ...more

By Calista (The United States) · ★★★★★ · August 26, 2009

Deeply disturbing. This book kept me up many nights thinking of the utter horrors that humans impart on the innocent creatures that call this world home. Thinking of the men with their guns on their hunting expeditions to Africa to take home what is to them just a trophy, like real "big game" --... ...more

By Lisamarie (The United States) · ★★★☆☆ · March 31, 2012

This, like so many books about the systematic abuse and widespread slaughter of animals, was a hard book to read. The raw truth can be devastatingly painful. Matthew Scully has done an excellent job writing a convincingly powerful, and absolutely moving argument for the rights of non-human animal... ...more

By Katie (The United States) · ★★★☆☆ · May 21, 2010

One of the best books on the subject... without the heir of condescension that many books on the topic have. Incredibly informative, compassionate, and full of stories and accounts... (sometimes overly-wordy or dramatic, but for the most part, beautifully written.)


Animal Lessons is a rigorous, engaging and thought-provoking account of our relationships with animals and how we learn from them what it means to be human. A well-known feminist philosopher, Kelly Oliver traces how this “animal pedagogy” functions, often in covert ways, across a number of discourses from the Continental canon. Her study culminates in an original and compelling account of what it could mean to evolve a sustainable, “free-range ethics.” Oliver demonstrates how even philosophers of alterity are surprisingly guilty of selling animals short, while simultaneously illustrating how animals often “bite back” in ways that undermine and upset attempts at their conceptual, intellectual and philosophical domestication and training.

The book is divided into six sections. The first section outlines how and why rights discourse and concerns with animal suffering are insufficient for building truly ethical philosophical accounts of our relationship with animals. Oliver’s Introduction and first chapter clearly establish that Animal Lessons goes beyond traditional arguments that
leverage either biological continuism and/or metaphysical separation to justify animal abuse or to promote animal welfare. Her work digs deeper to understand what motivates stories of sameness or difference between humans and animals, searching for a path that eschews the limits of either way of thinking. In the five sections that follow Oliver reads ten philosophers to show how their respective work engages animal pedagogy, critiquing how these thinkers often disavow the role that animals play in their own teachings and lessons. Her studies take up the treatment of “the animal, animality and animals” in Rousseau, Herder, Derrida, Beauvoir, Lacan, Heidegger, Agamben, Merleau-Ponty, Freud and Kristeva.

Several themes emerge as Oliver builds her argument. One of the strengths of Oliver’s text is its illustration of the complicity between animal oppression and the domination of women and other marginalized persons and groups (there might be more focus on race, but such want is perhaps supererogatory). Second, Oliver challenges our thinking on taste and eating, questioning what it would mean to eat ethically and examining the taste for purity that is integral to our philosophical inheritance. Finally, the third major theme is one of responsivity and responsibility. Man and animal are often distinguished based on man’s allegedly unique capacity to speak, a “response” that is cast in sharp relief to the instinctual reaction of animals. It doesn’t take Oliver long to blur these lines and to tie response-ivity to themes of ethical responsibility. These threads work to challenge our ideas about kinship relations, gradually building a case for a new ethics and politics that look to an ecological and sustainable model founded on the “strange kinship” with our animal others that comes from shared embodiment.

Section Two reaches back to address Rousseau and Herder, challenging the romantic myths that have been used to differentiate man and animals. Contra the received dogma, Oliver demonstrates how we cannot distinguish man from the animals based on the assimilation of food, language or logos so that we never really leave our animal ancestors behind. Being human becomes a form of response to the animals, but one that we must take up more ethically moving forward. Section Three offers a prolonged analysis of Derrida’s work on animality in keeping with his hyperbolic ethics. These twin essays engage two themes that will be integral to the evolution of Oliver’s overall argument: good taste or “eating well,” and the intersectionality of animal oppression and the oppression of women. This section also establishes the key role that Derrida’s hyperbolic ethics play in Oliver’s ecological ethics. Derrida’s taste for purity is revealed as a promise that offers an antidote to an absolutist ethics or to the quietism of an ethics that recognizes the impossibility of ever achieving a static good. Section Four’s essays on Beauvoir and Lacan are a somewhat awkward pairing; they seem to be joined as leftovers rather than because of some natural thematic continuity. Oliver reveals Beauvoir’s animal ambivalence by juxtaposing her attempt to highlight the challenges of the female animal while ostensibly arguing that women must disavow their animal nature in order to transcend their reproductive burden and truly exist in existentialist terms and
on par with men. The Lacan essay, perhaps the least robust of Oliver’s studies, plays on the themes of language, duplicity and the trace, building to an interesting but ultimately unrealized conclusion about how we must learn to be more cautious of our tracks, treading more lightly on the earth. Part Five’s three essays on Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Agamben intertwine to end on a surprisingly sweet and optimistic note. Oliver challenges Heidegger’s claim that his thinking about animality is non-hierarchical, pointing to the violence of the ontological distinction he uses to keep man and animal separated by an “abyss.” Her Agamben essay examines how the anthropological machine legitimates violence against animals and women, arguing that we must stop the machine for the sake of the planet and not just to save “man.” Finally, the essay on Merleau-Ponty leverages his idea of strange kinship to discuss the possibility of finding an opening or opportunity to put us in communion with our animal ancestors based on shared embodiment. This idea of shared embodiment becomes an important touchstone for Oliver’s emergent ethics. Section Six takes on psychoanalysis through two essays on Freud and Kristeva. Heavy on content, the Freud essay addresses how animal kinship works in Freud and how it ultimately serves to disrupt his tales of family romance. Her analysis unpacks a panoply of themes including animal phobias, dream interpretation, Freudian anthropology, the role of mothers and sisters in psychoanalysis and the challenge animal relations pose to the Oedipal family. In her final essay Oliver describes how Kristeva’s attempt to move psychoanalysis beyond its phallocentrist roots is ultimately won at the expense of the animals that often come to function as Other in lieu of woman.

Oliver is clearly dealing with a surfeit of material, inspiration and ideas, so that the essays can sometimes seem a bit busy and over-flowing. They are immensely rich, but they have a tendency to raise rolling bars of questions that could be essays in and of themselves (such as Oliver’s parenthetical remarks on Merleau-Ponty’s substitution of the machine for the animal other, opening important questions of the post-human or her speculations about how animals might become friends or family at the end of the Heidegger essay). I frequently found myself pausing and wishing that Oliver could flesh out and respond to such remarks, while yet realizing that to do so would invite her to write entirely new essays. In some ways this is a luxurious difficulty, but occasionally the feeling that Oliver was piling it on became overwhelming.

The real brilliance and potential in Animal Lessons comes with the much too short conclusion, wherein Oliver begins to sketch the alternate ethics that evolve from her animal studies and as a result of her own animal pedagogy. The sustainable ethics she innovates is based on “ecological subjectivity,” Derrida’s hyperbolic ethics, Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of strange kinship and shared embodiment and the fundamental but often forgotten childhood virtue of sharing. This ethics recognizes that it must be more than an ethics of sameness or difference and explores how these things are always intertwined. Taking on critics who argue that animal studies are indulgent distractions to more
pressing ethical concerns about human violence against one another, Oliver challenges that we can ever separate these two streams of abuse. Arguing that man/animal is the original binary structuring Western intellectual thought, she proceeds to say that its dismantling could yet offer the hope for a new and renewed ethics and a path to planetary healing. We are at a juncture in history where a sustainable ethics is an exigency. As Oliver argues: “We need an ethics born from, and nurturing, a transformation from the traditional image of man as conquering nature to one of human beings nourishing it.” (305) Cultivating our “ecological conscience” means sacrificing human greed for the sake of those others with whom we share the planet. Oliver argues that all living things are responsive and in this sense we all have a responsibility to one another. “Sustainable ethics is an ethics of the responsibility to enable response, not as it has been defined as the exclusive property of man (man responds, animals react), but as it exists all around us.” (306) Such responsibility is a hyperbolic demand, but one that nonetheless cannot be shirked. Oliver is on the cusp of some fascinating and original thought and research and I hope that this hasty conclusion is also a promise for the future since it opened many lines that had me writing “say more!” in my margins.

Animal Lessons is part of the “Critical Perspectives on Animal Studies” series from Columbia, which explores this nascent field from a cross-disciplinary perspective. The study of animality has become a cottage industry among continental philosophers in recent years and is becoming a popular course subject. Oliver engages not just the canonical texts, but also addresses key voices contributing to the ongoing conversation, including Lawlor, Calarco, Diamond and Toadvine. Her text is suitable for scholars reasonably familiar with continental philosophy who want to brush up on its treatment of the animal, but it is also sufficiently erudite to challenge those already engaged in such debates. Animal Lessons would be a great companion piece to more advanced undergraduate or graduate studies on animality.

Finally, Oliver casts Animal Lessons as a work of mourning dedicated to her cat, Kaos, but ultimately it proves a most worthy labor of love.

OUR ANIMAL CONTRADICTIONS:  How Unitarian Universalism can help us sort out our place in the animal world.

KIMBERLY FRENCH . Unitarian World . 9/9/2013 | FALL 2013
http://www.uuworld.org/articles/our-animal-contradictions

Published by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

When I first heard the words “animal” and “ministry” together, I had to pause. Really? What was this? Ministers who help animals with their spirituality? Animals who comfort
people, like therapy dogs? Or perhaps a spiritualized form of animal-rights activism?

As I learned more, I realized both my animals and my church community have spiritually fed me throughout my life. At one of the first classes I took at my local church, the minister asked us to list ten words that described us. I wrote “animal lover” at the top of my list.

I had just moved to a small rural town, to start a hobby farm on a few acres. Since then, scores of animals have been in my life—dogs, cats, sheep, goats, chickens, hamsters, and lots of wild creatures. I go to extreme lengths to care for some of these animals. Some I eat. Some I kill. Like most people in our culture, I live with contradictions in how I relate to the animal world.

My daughters roll their eyes when they hear me talking in my garden: “Mom and her snakes.” Seeing snakes—an often-endangered animal in the middle of the food chain, both predator and prey—makes me feel more hopeful about the environment. I appreciate their eating the slugs and beetles. I pet them if they’ll let me.

One morning I woke to find a colorful milk snake in my second-floor bedroom, and that did tighten my breathing. Two nets made simple work of taking it outside, just as I do with birds, bats, and chipmunks who find their way inside my farmhouse. Another summer day I noticed a long black snake living under the playhouse. I brought it mice I’d killed in my traps. I called my daughters to the window and we watched, fascinated, as the snake dislocated its tiny jaw to devour them.

Living in the world without killing other sentient beings, or being responsible for their deaths, is nearly impossible, so we have to draw lines. I happily share my homestead with snakes, but I’ve made peace with killing mice and rats—mammals like me—who rip open feed sacks in the barn, poop under the kitchen sink, and keep coming back and multiplying. I save spiders, crane flies, and antlions, but I may kill dozens of mosquitoes, ticks, flies, yellow jackets, beetles, ants, and moths in a day. I have loaded my car with lambs and chickens I have raised, and borne witness to the slaughter. When a desperate woodchuck was slashing its long incisors and claws into my frail elderly dog, I pinned it with a pitchfork then smashed its head with a sledgehammer—the most violent act I have committed.

I do think of myself as an animal lover, but it’s complicated.
We live in a culture that has a contradictory view of the animal world rooted in a religious idea: that humans are more important than other animals. We humans have had no trouble obeying the Genesis verse to “be fruitful and multiply . . . and have dominion . . . over every living thing.” At the same time, humans have a need to connect with the natural world—what biologist E.O. Wilson calls “biophilia.” It feeds our spirits.

As the human population has abandoned or built up the countryside to live in cities and suburbs, we have less and less contact with the animals that produce our food and clothing, and we have destroyed wild-animal habitats. At the same time, Americans’ consumption of meat has risen dramatically (now averaging 240 pounds a year), and our relationships with our pets have become closer than ever, even neurotically close.

Religion can give us a way to face our imbalance and our disconnection from the animal world. Unitarian Universalism may be especially well suited to break down the religious firewalls between divine, human, and animal. We can find guidance in both our First Principle (“the inherent worth and dignity of every person”) and our Seventh (“respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”). We can treat each other with respect as we struggle with ethical and spiritual questions about our relationship to animals, even when we come up with different answers.

Psychologist Dan Gilbert jokes that everyone in his profession dreams of writing a sentence that starts, “The human being is the only animal that . . .” Not just psychologists, but also religious thinkers have filled the blank with: “is moral,” “makes art,” “makes tools,” “has an imagination,” “knows it is going to die.” One by one, scientists are disproving these pronouncements.

Yet I cannot help but offer my own: the human being is the only animal that agonizes over what it eats. Eating is the most intimate and violent interaction most people ever have with other living beings.

My grandparents slaughtered steers, hogs, and chickens on their farms. Growing up in a suburb, I ate meat at every meal, and saw no contradiction with my passion for pets until I tried to make the pieces of my own homestead fit together. I spent an afternoon at the local slaughterhouse watching how animals were killed and converted into meat. I was prepared to be turned off meat entirely, but that’s not what happened. The killing was so quick, the workers had killed three hogs before I could figure out how they did it: they wrapped a chain around the hog's rear leg, raised it with a hydraulic lift, then stuck a
knife in the throat.

I can’t say I’ve resolved the tension in myself between loving and eating animals. I have, however, found three practices that help me to be more mindful as an eater of meat.

The first discipline is returning to the earliest religious practice I can remember: taking a moment to bless my food, to feel reverence and gratitude for what it means to take another life in order to sustain mine. I imagine that animal, just as I could picture my own sheep or chickens, along with the growers and workers who made it possible for me to eat.

Second, I eat far less meat than I did growing up, and I avoid factory-farmed meat. It feels right to eat meat from the goat farm whose nannies board at our place; to enjoy the eggs of my chickens, who run to me for treats; and to barter fruit for venison with my hunter friend at church. I find my health is better when I eat some animal protein. After years of reporting on health, my hunch is that in time we’ll see a diet that includes cleanly raised animal protein nutritionally vindicated.

A far more pressing ethical issue than whether humans should ever eat meat is our responsibility for factory farming on the scale required to feed the human and pet population today. The horrors of huge lagoons of animal waste, routine use of antibiotics, and animals so tightly confined they cannot stand have been well documented. The most compelling argument against eating meat, for me, is that farm animals contribute more greenhouse gases than all modes of transportation put together.

Third, I ask myself at each meal, “What is the best food choice I can make?” This trumps everything. The answer is different if I’ve selected and prepared my food, if someone else is cooking, or if I’m eating out. My choice may be based on health or the environment, or on my love of culinary pleasure or being in community. If someone has made me a meal, or invited me to celebrate with them, then it’s obvious: I eat what I’m served. Nothing is, so to speak, off the table.

Long before we get a whiff of the sea, Opal, my rescued greyhound, knows where we’re headed. With her deep chest, muscular haunches, and almost furless body, Opal was born to run. Every day I can, I take her to a beautiful spot where she can lay tracks at 30 miles per hour, spin in tight circles, and zoom around long ovals of her choosing.

My spirit soars as I watch her coursing flight. Hiking with my dogs through cathedrals of
tall straight pines, seeing them leap up granite boulders to a mountaintop or run along beaches that stretch forever are among my deepest joys. When I take a walk without a dog, it feels like a part of me is missing.

One day when Opal and I were finishing our beach walk, rain began to fall. A nursing-home van sat in the parking lot. The residents’ outing was ruined, and the driver had opened the door while they ate their lunches. Opal peeked in. “Oh, please let her come on.” “Here, doggie.” The driver invited her on board. She walked slowly from front to back, greeting each person, as if inquiring how they were, how they liked their lunch. Smiles and crinkly eyes lit up each face. I watched as the joy I get from my dog spread from person to person. This felt like animal ministry.

The openheartedness of many domesticated animals, their sensitivity to body language, can cut through to places we may not even realize we’ve shut away. Therapists know the value of animals in working with children, the elderly, abuse victims, people with mental and physical disabilities, the grieving, and anyone who feels misunderstood or lonely. Families with pets know the lessons animals teach about responsibility and kindness, about birth and death.

On the farms where my parents grew up, dogs and cats lived under the porch and ate table scraps plus whatever they could catch. Opal sleeps on the couch and wears a coat when it’s cold. Americans’ spending on pets keeps rising, and now totals more than $61 billion a year. The greatest growth is on items that would have shocked my grandparents: specialty foods, pet clothing, surgeries, dental work, daycare, and spas. I have no doubt my grandparents’ free-range dogs led better-quality lives than Opal does. Confining pets indoors or in fenced yards is safer for them, for us, and for the wild animals they may prey on. But twenty-first-century pets are more like captive animals we keep for our own pleasure than companion animals—and at a tremendous cost of resources.

A woman in my church took the microphone from the minister. All of us sitting in the congregation knew from past Sundays how much she cared for the feral cats who flock to her back stoop. Now the town was threatening to evict her from senior housing if she didn’t stop feeding them. She wouldn’t stop. She lit a candle of concern.

If any group would understand her plight, our Unitarian Universalist congregation would. Sprinkled through the pews were others who give up rooms to foster difficult-to-place animals, spend weekends driving dogs to adoptive homes, and run equine therapy
workshops. Some years back, under cover of night, a church women’s group organized a mission to steal a neglected German shepherd with mastitis and mange from a cramped backyard kennel after legal attempts to get the dog away from its owner had failed.

Visiting a larger UU church, I listened to a parishioner whose dog had almost died in labor and had been turned away at an animal hospital. As a lay worship leader, I wonder how newcomers and members who aren’t animal people may react to these pet-related “joys and sorrows.”

Yet I know from experience these heartaches are real. I’m sure my unease comes from having a foot in each world—farming and pet owning—and from my own self-consciousness about how far I’ve gone down the pet-neurotic and unsustainable road myself. Our religion asks us to honor one another’s experiences with compassion. Who am I, or who is any of us, to question what brings a person joy, pain, solace, even moments of divinity?

Unitarian Universalism doesn’t draw a line at what counts as spiritual—and that aspect of our tradition is sometimes misunderstood, or made fun of. It has also, however, compelled us to push at evils rooted in conventional religious thinking such as slavery, racism, sexism, and homophobia. How we draw lines between the divine, human, and animal needs a push, too. We should be talking about this at church. The UU Animal Ministry started a conversation in the 1980s, focusing on animal rights and vegetarianism. As ministers have joined, including the Rev. Gary Kowalski (The Souls of Animals) and the Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner, who leads bird conservation projects in Central America, the group has created animal blessing liturgies, written curricula, and promoted rephrasing our First Principle to include “the inherent worth of all beings.”

It’s not our “relationship to animals” we need to rethink. We are animals, and just one small, very out-of-balance part of the animal world. The hubris of thinking that we are above other animals—denying our own “animalness,” our sexuality, the violence inherent in eating, the inevitability of death, and the limits of our control—has gotten us into serious trouble on this planet. The human-centered perspective is so entrenched in how we think, we may not even realize it: we speak of an alligator-“infested” swamp, rather than a natural habitat; fearful of mosquito-borne viruses, we demand aerial spraying that also affects fish, amphibians, and pollinators critical to the delicate web of life.

Our love for animals may be a way to help us change course. As my daughter Shaya
wrote in a college essay: “We won’t survive as a species with our current understanding and sense of entitlement toward the planet. We need a paradigm shift from owning the earth to being part of it. Understanding animals is one way humans can learn this paradigm.”

Unitarian Universalism can help us sort out our place in the animal world—how we find joy in other animals; how we bless, celebrate, and grieve our bonds with them; how we act on the ethical questions about animal products we consume and resources we devote to pets; and most important, how we can call one another to reverse the imbalance and damage we’ve done to the earth that all of us animals depend on.

These interlocking ethical and spiritual questions are complex. What guides me is a belief that we are all one. Life sustains itself by consuming other living things. Everything living reproduces, dies, and goes back to the earth. I will keep walking with my dogs, gardening with snakes, laughing at my chickens, and pushing toward answers.

Related Stories  http://www.uuworld.org/articles/our-animal-contradictions

Pet ministry Caring for all creatures

Eating ethically

Related Resources

http://www.uuworld.org/articles/our-animal-contradictions

Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry. Organization promotes the “inherent dignity and worth of all beings.” (uuam.org)

ACTION ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION
ANIMAL TIMES: THE MAGAZINE THAT SPEAKS UP FOR ANIMALS.

PETA is a comprehensive animal support organization. This number of its magazine promotes healthy food, rescuing distressed, abused, neglected, abandoned animals, vegetarianism, veganism, books on all aspects of animals, defenders of animals, sanctuaries, adoption rather than purchase; and it rejects animal use for cosmetic testing, killing animals for fur, killing ducks and geese for foie gras; and much more.

The Flick You Can't Miss This Halloween

Just because you can't see them doesn't mean they aren't there. READ MORE

- WATCH: Flesh-Eaters Are Everywhere!

Are you a flesh-eater? Run from the curse of the meat-eater this Halloween and go vegan! READ MORE

- PETA Goes All RoboCop on RoboRoach

Not only is a twisted mail-order company encouraging kids to torture bugs, it's also upping the ante by turning bullying into a high-tech "experiment." READ MORE

- PETA Pays Tribute to Scream Queen on Halloween

Karen Black may be gone, but the iconic actor is still helping animals from beyond the grave. READ MORE

- PETA's Office Cats Hard at Work

Catch a glimpse of PETA's office cats lending a helping paw. READ MORE

- Morrissey Walked Out on Date Because He Ate Meat

British pop icon Morrissey dishes on a meat-eating paramour in his tell-all memoir. READ MORE

- Help Stop Cruel Cosmetics Tests on Animals in the U.S.

The European Union, Israel, and India have made great strides in banning cosmetics tested on
animals, and now it's time for the U.S. to hop on the compassionate train. READ MORE

animals an even easier experience for you. READ MORE

Sign Up for PETA Updates

Urgent Alerts www.PETA.org

• Bulls Ripped Apart in Barbaric Ritual--Take Action Now!
• Urge the Rose Parade to Cancel SeaWorld's Float!
• Rats Used at Haunted House Need Your Voice!

See All Alerts www.PETA.org

For Youth

• Enter the Most Epic peta2 Contest Ever!
• World's Best Kids' Movies!

Popular Resources www.PETA.org

• How to Go Vegan in 3 Simple Steps and more
• Almost all of us grew up eating meat, wearing leather, and going to circuses and zoos. We never considered the impact of these actions on the animals involved. For whatever reason, you are now asking

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

501 Front St., Norfolk, VA 23510 | 757-622-PETA (7382) | 757-622-0457 (fax)

The latest issue of PETA's Animal Times magazine just rolled off the presses, and the PETA Files is offering you a sneak peak inside. In addition to campaign news and updates, investigative reports, and tasty recipes, this issue includes an exclusive excerpt from PETA President Ingrid E. Newkirk's latest book, The PETA Practical Guide to Animal Rights. In this excerpt, Ingrid talks about a personable rooster named Lucie, who changed the lives of the family that had the good fortune to adopt him:

A man selling chicks under a bridge sold Lucie for a dollar to a little girl. ... She put him ... in the basement in a shoe box with air holes and a tissue for a blanket .... The next day, the girl's mother
Barbara Munroe, realized that the chick was freezing. She made a bed in her night table drawer .... Finally, Lucie went to sleep.

Barbara took to carrying Lucie around in her hand. He always wanted to be with people. "The most amazing thing to me," says Barbara, "was the way Lucie adapted to suburban life, sitting in a car like a perfect gentleman or on the sofa while the family read or watched television."

When Barbara would come home from work, she often saw Lucie sitting on the back of a chair in an upstairs window, watching for her. By the time that she got in, he was down in the kitchen, jumping up and down, greeting her.

If people in the house raised their voices, Lucie chimed in loudly. It was almost impossible to shout over him, and usually everyone ended up laughing.

Barbara's daughter kept her bedroom door closed. Lucie hated that .... Every once in awhile, the girl forgot to close the door. Lucie would run in and jump on her bed but remain very quiet, so as not to alert her.

All chickens have the potential of Lucie or more, if allowed to live a natural life—by which I mean, not confined to a tiny wire cage or to a filthy, ammonia-filled shed crammed in with thousands of other birds. The same is true of all animals we think of as "food." It is just that we never get to know them.

Want more? An annual subscription to Animal Times can be yours for just $16. What a bargain!

Written by Alisa Mullins

For those of you who receive PETA's quarterly magazine, Animal Times, you're in for a treat (as always) when the latest issue hits mailboxes this month. If you haven't gotten around to subscribing (it's free with your PETA membership), here's one of the many great articles you'd find—an exclusive sneak peek at PETA President Ingrid E. Newkirk's newest book, The PETA Practical Guide to Animal Rights. Don't say we never gave you anything:

Man's best friend isn't, in many parts of the world. In Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and China, among other places, dogs are kept in the burning sun in small cages behind restaurants, often with tin cans shoved over their muzzles and their broken forelegs tied behind their backs. They are "tenderized" by being beaten while alive and then strangled to death and skinned for their flesh. In Thailand, dog-hide factory trucks prowl the streets, offering to trade plastic buckets for live dogs, who will be slaughtered and made into bags, drum skins, and golf-club covers.

I grew up in India, where—although dogs are not eaten—mange-covered and starving stray animals
are so common and so pathetic that they can't help but capture your attention. In the pounds, death was courtesy of a crude electrocution machine that seared the animals' skin and often set their fur on fire or via blows from men wielding billy clubs.

In Taiwan—which has a robust economy as well as a large Buddhist population—one would think that animals would fare much better. The reality is quite the opposite. In Taiwan's pounds, death for dogs can come from live burial (digging a pit and throwing the dogs into it), electrocution, poison-laced food, starvation, or drowning. In April 1998, I rescued 11 dogs from the Keelung city pound's drowning tank and extracted a promise from the minister of the environment to immediately stop drowning animals. The city administrators have been good to their word, but all these years later, animals in Sanchung, Tu Chung, and other cities continue to suffer, confined to cramped, filthy cages at severely crowded pounds. Pressure is still desperately needed to bring about reforms.

I used to harbor the illusion that all animals in Europe and North America were well-treated. But we have plenty of room for improvement too—to say the least.

A Baltimore, Maryland, rescue group called Alley Animals has seen it all, right here in America: animals with festering wounds from slingshots and bottles, cats with elastic bands embedded in their necks, kittens blinded and used as bait in pitbull fights, abandoned Easter rabbits, a rooster wearing a broken ankle leash, and even a green iguana—now the most common exotic throwaway pet, according to news reports.

Alley Animals operates simply and on a shoestring. When dusk falls on Baltimore, the group's volunteers drive into the sprawling old city's most rundown areas. Their job is to find the animal waifs and strays who creep out from their hiding places when the city grows quiet, knowing that they are less visible to juveniles armed with free time and a rock or a firecracker.

One evening, volunteer Alice Arnold and her partner for that night's trip, Eric, were just leaving an alley after putting out food when Eric said, "Did you see that puppy?"

He pointed to an overturned reclining chair amid the trash, where a tiny head was sticking out ever so slightly, the puppy's reddish-brown fur almost blending in with the color of the old chair in the alley's black shadows. The stuffing had come out of the chair, allowing the dog to claim its interior as her shelter from a world that had rejected her.

Within a week of her rescue, it was obvious that the puppy—now known as "Stuffing"— was very intelligent and lovable. After a few weeks, Stuffing had gained weight, was paper-trained, and spent every night snuggled up in bed with her new human friend. Alice says that to look at her now, no one
would ever guess that this happy little girl spent the first months of her life eating from trash cans and sleeping inside an overturned chair in a dark alley.

Most people don't think that the problems of strays and chained "backyard" dogs have anything to do with them. But they do. The biggest nightmare plaguing domesticated animals in our society does not involve the wanton acts of violence directed toward them by cruel humans. Rather, it involves thoughtlessness by otherwise intelligent and caring people who simply do not understand what or who dogs and cats really are, and what they need to thrive.

Want to read the rest of Ingrid's new book? You can order your very own copy at PETACatalog.com. In the meantime, you can find out what you can do to help strays and other neglected and abused animals here. Written by Alisa Mullins

ANIMAL CROSS-SPECIES FRIENDSHIPS

- Episodes
- Animal Odd Couples
- Full Episode

Animal Odd Couples
Watch the full film Animal Odd Couples:

Despite the odds, there are countless stories of the most unlikely cross-species relationships imaginable: a goat guiding a blind horse; a doe who regularly visits her Great Dane surrogate mother; a juvenile gibbon choosing to live with a family of capuchins, and so on. Instincts gone awry? The subject has mystified scientists for years. Now, NATURE investigates why animals form these special bonds. Informed by the observations of caregivers and noted scientists Temple Grandin and Marc Bekoff, the film explores what these relationships suggest about the nature of animal emotions. Buy the film. Animal Odd Couples premiered November 7, 2012. (Video limited to US & Territories).
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes/animal-odd-couples/full-episode/8009/

Saving Luna (2007) [Shown by PBS August 12, 2015. –Dick]
Documentary about Luna, a lone baby killer whale who gets separated from his family in a remote Vancouver Island fjord. When Luna seeks companionship from people, he breaks a fundamental barrier built of mutual fear and ignorance that normally exists between humans and wild beings. This shattering of convention leads to joy, confusion and anger. In a magnificent landscape, different groups of people fight over their wildly differing views of who Luna is, and what we need to do to save him. To natives he's the spirit of a chief. To boaters he's a goofy friend. To conservationists he's a cause. To scientists he's trouble. To officials he's a danger. To the filmmakers, Suzanne Chisholm and Michael Parfit, he's a lone, lovable street kid whale. Eventually, as more and more people advocate Luna's death, Michael and Suzanne become intricately involved in the efforts to protect him. They believe he can be protected if he is simply given the friendship he seeks... Written by Anonymous

SAVING LUNA the Movie

www.savingluna.com/

SAVING LUNA is an award-winning documentary produced by Mountainside Films, and directed by Michael Parfit and Suzanne Chisholm. It tells the true story...

Reel NW: Saving Luna | KCTS 9 - Public Television
Saving Luna: Previous Broadcasts | KQED Public Media for ...

The Lowdown · Morning Edition · PBS NewsHour · All Programs ... Saving Luna ... It begins when Luna, a baby killer whale, gets separated from his family on the ... 

Luna (killer whale) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

After being separated from his mother while still young, Luna spent five years in Nootka ..... The documentary, Saving Luna, produced by Suzanne Chisholm and ...

MOVIES ABOUT ANIMALS

ANIMAL RIGHTS (Animal Welfare, LOCAL, STATE, NATIONAL), GOOGLE SEARCH, August 14, 2015

1. ASPCA Official Site - Help Protect Animals From Cruelty
   Ad www.aspca.org/donate
   Make a Monthly Gift Today!
   Tax-Deductible Donation · Impact an Animal's Life · Help Animals in Need
   ASPCA has 460,907 followers on Google+
   o Pledge to Fight Cruelty
   o Memorial Donations
2. World Animal Protection - Help The Poor Animals - us.org
   Ad worldanimalprotection.us.org/
   End Needless Suffering To Animals. Donate Now.

3. Animal Protection - awionline.org
   Ad www.awionline.org/what-you-can-do
   Help AWI as we seek better care and treatment of all animals.

Humane Society of the Ozark
   2 reviews
   · Animal Protection Organization
   South One Mile Road
   Website
   Directions

Washington County Grants Administration
   No reviews
   · County Government Office
   College Ave
   Website
   Directions

Fayetteville Animal Services
   7 reviews
   · Animal Rescue Service
   S Armstrong Ave
   Opens at 10:00 am
   Website
   Directions

More ANIMAL PROTECTION
Following a successful adoption event, the remaining animals from our massive Alabama rescue are being transported to animal welfare agencies in 10 states...

Our vision is a world where animal welfare matters and animal cruelty has ended - together we can move the world for animals.

The Animal Welfare Act was signed into law in 1966. It is the only Federal law in the United States that regulates the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, ...

Since its founding in 1951, Animal Welfare Institute has sought to alleviate the suffering inflicted on animals by people. We seek better treatment of animals ...

Dedicated to promoting animal rights in New Mexico, and now the internet community.

World Animal Protection. 421888 likes · 16433 talking about this. We move the world to protect animals We put animals on the global agenda Together we...

Animal welfare is the well-being of animals. The standards of "good" animal welfare vary considerably between different contexts. These standards are under...
Washington County, AR: Animal Shelter

judemaryn@co.washington.ar.us

Washington County

Jul 1, 2015 - Judge Marilyn Edwards and her staff of the Washington County Animal Shelter are pleased to announce the first quarter euthanasia rate of ...

Humane Society of the Ozarks | Animal Welfare ...

https://hsozarks.org/

Works with the Springdale and Fayetteville Shelters, as well as local no-kill shelters, to promote pet adoption. Adoption policies and contact information.

Fayetteville Animal Shelter - View Site - Petfinder

awos.petfinder.com/shelters/fayettevilleanimals.html

Advice on choosing and keeping a friend for life, adoption procedures, education programs, companion animal care, City laws and ordinances, problem solving, ...

Contents of #1 March 26, 2011

Animal Rights

Film: Earthlings

Books:

Operation Bite Back
The Bond

Humane Society Global Work: Haiti, Reefs

Essay by Steve Best

Contents of #2

Winograd: No Kill (see OMNI newsletters versus killing)

Catalonia Bans Bull Fighting Center for Biological Diversity

Ben Franklin: Up with Wild Turkeys

Books: Holland, Hutto, Pacelle, Rudy

Books: Slaughterhouses:

Striffler, Chicken
Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds*

Henry Bergh, Defender of Animals
Center for Biodiversity
The Fund for Animals

**Contents of #3**

Fayetteville Animal Shelter and Society

ASPCA

Born Free

WSPA

Urban Sprawl versus Animals: Sterba, *Nature Wars*

Animal Consciousness, Sentience: Cambridge Declaration

Human/Animal Friendships (4 books and a film)

- Hutto
- Holland
- Pacelle
- Rudy

Trapping Wolves

---

**END ANIMAL RIGHTS NEWSLETTER #4**

--

Dick Bennett

Newsletters


index:


Facebook: www.facebook.com/OMNIPeaceDept
j.dick.bennett@gmail.com
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703