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Pamela Susan O'Neill, University of Durham, Department of Anthropology.  
Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Social Anthropology  
Thesis Title: **Animal Rights & Human Identity: A Polemical Quest for Authenticity**

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the hypothesis that 'The conflict between animal advocates and animal users is far more than a matter of contrasting tastes or interests. Opposing world views, concepts of identity, ideas of community, are all at stake' (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 7). It is based on a year of anthropological fieldwork with a group of animal rights activists. The aim of the study is to develop an understanding of how these activists construct and experience community and a personal and shared identity which reflects their own world view which is in contestation with that of mass society, whilst remaining part of mass society. Analysis of activists' life histories and their discourse and practice highlights the activists attempts to negotiate a discrete identity of themselves through a sense of community in their interactions with mass society, using animals to think themselves *authentically human*.

This analysis contextualises Levi-Strauss's proposition that 'animals are good to think' within post-industrial Britain and links the activists's search for difference to an existential angst created by the conditions of contemporary life. Ever expanding communications in the post-industrial world present individuals with many opportunities for expressing identities of differing kinds in differing situations, but animal rights activists exhibit a need for structure and constancy in the formation of identity. They are reacting against a world where the constant and knowable appear redundant. The narratives and actions of the activists are investigated highlighting the areas of community, personal and shared identity and world view by analysis of their processes of rejection, reformation, construction and competency in their search for an authentic sense of identity predicated upon their own model of *authentic humanness*. It is contextualised within a background of the continuing discourse over the condition of humanity beginning with the periods of industrialisation and urbanisation of modern Britain.



17 JAN 2001

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## INTRODUCTION

**The conflict between animal advocates and animal users is far more than a matter of contrasting tastes or interests. Opposing world views, concepts of identity, ideas of community, are all at stake (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 7).**

### **Aim And Structure**

This thesis is an exploration of the above statement by sociologists Jasper and Nelkin, which they proposed after their examination of the growth of the Animal Rights Movement in America; The animal rights crusade: The growth of a moral protest (1992).

Jasper and Nelkin's suggestion, whilst informed by close examination of historical and contemporary literature, used little empirical support provided by animal rights activists themselves. The empirical evidence they did use was a survey they conducted of protestors at two demonstrations in support of animal rights for World Laboratory Animal Day in 1988 at New York University and at Berkeley (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 38, 67). I felt it would be useful to test their hypothesis with reference to contemporary British animal rights activists by undertaking a more detailed qualitative study within an anthropological framework. Traditionally anthropological analyses have concentrated on how members of small scale societies use animals to think themselves human in opposition to 'other animals' and human 'others', but very little attention has been given to the meaning of animals in contemporary British thought in the structuring of human identity.

This thesis will explore how a group of contemporary Animal Rights Activists uses animals to think, create and construct an identity based on its own model of what I will call *authentic humanness* through Community; and



how a culture is in turn produced through the Community's interaction with 'others', resulting from their own creations and constructions of 'difference'.

The thesis is for the main part an exploration of animal rights discourse which will be explored partially through the examination of the activists behaviour.

The study is based on research conducted with Animal Rights activists at a protest site in Yorkshire where they conducted a weekly 'vigil' for calves being exported for the veal trade. In addition to attendance at this site over the Winter of 1995 and Spring of 1996, the research is based on autobiographical accounts of involvement in activism and my attendance at other protest sites where I conducted many semi-structured interviews or 'guided conversations' and carried out the chief activity of the anthropologist, that of 'hanging about'.

For the purpose of clarity the thesis is divided into two sections, Parts I and II. This section, Part I, consists of an introduction to the study and an overview of the theoretical framework and methodology, it then moves on to an examination of the historical and philosophical background to the growth of the animal protection movement as a whole, Part II will cover the ethnographic study.

The theoretical framework I propose draws on issues from the study of anthropology about how human beings think themselves human using animals to think.

Chapter 2 is a description of the philosophical processes which contributed to the development of the animal protection movement and the definition of the *authentically Human* in different periods in recent British history. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the social processes which



produced the philosophising and illustrates the roots of the contemporary movement and a new model of the *authentically human*. Chapter 4 examines some theoretical analyses of the emergence of new human identities and groups in contemporary society and the relevance of history to these groups, in particular to the contemporary animal rights movement.

Part II of the thesis commences with Chapter 5 wherein I examine the concept of community and illustrate one animal rights campaign as an expression and experience of community. Together with this is an examination of the social structure of the Animal Rights group that I worked with and an exploration of the ritualistic aspects of the *vigil* as an expression of community. I will be discussing the construct of community prior to discussing the construction of the Animal Rights identity. During the process of research it became obvious that most activists did not share pre-existing social networks and had to turn to the community for guidance in the construction of a new personal and social identity. Chapter 6 examines the point of reformation and entry into the community, the beginnings of the construction of an Animal Rights identity and a sense of belonging mediated through processes of immersion and discard (expressed through pollution avoidance strategies). Chapter 7 is an analysis of Becoming, Belonging and Competency through the use of material culture. I will use ethnographic evidence to illustrate the processual nature of these efforts. As Turner (1974) points out:

the besetting quality of human society, seen processually, is the capacity of individuals to stand at times aside from the models, patterns, and paradigms for behavior and thinking, which as children they are conditioned into accepting, and in rare cases, to innovate new patterns themselves or to assent to innovation (Turner, 1974, 14-15).

We shall examine the processes involved in the rejection of one

world view to the building of another through an existential choice or what Anthony Giddens (1991) refers to as a 'fateful moment'. Such 'fateful moments' are normally prompted by what Jasper and Nelkin (1992) would call a 'moral shock'. We shall then proceed to examine the methods they employ in the construction of an identity which reflects this change, which is both informed by the community's expectations and in turn actively becomes a constituent part in the maintenance of the community, directed towards the creation of their own model of the *authentically human*.

As Lionel Trilling suggests, 'authenticity is implicitly a polemical concept, fulfilling its nature by dealing aggressively with received and habitual opinion ...' (Trilling 1971, 94). Throughout this thesis, the polemical concept of *authenticity* is vividly illustrated by the actions and rhetoric employed by the activists in the construction of *human authenticity*. The concept of Humanity is generally constructed through a polemic directed at what we are conceived *not* to be. Clifford Geertz points out that no matter what else the study of anthropology highlights it is convinced of the fact that the condition of Humanity is not uniform or constant, concepts of Humanity are a production of '... time, place, and circumstances, of studies and professions, transient fashions and temporary opinions' (Geertz 1973, 35). Geertz contends, following Max Weber, that Humanity, '... is ... suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' (Geertz 1973, 5). That the strands of this web are constructed in time, by place, circumstances, studies and professions is amply illustrated by the intellectual and social backgrounds which inform both the historical and contemporary debates concerning human treatment of animals, debates which reveal that 'It was as a comment on *human* nature that the concept of 'animality' was devised' (Thomas 1983, 41). Throughout this thesis the term 'animal' refers to all non-human species. In order to preserve their anonymity, all my informants have been given pseudonyms.

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

### Thinking with Animals

In 1962, in a response to the functionalist school of thought in anthropology, the structuralist anthropologist Levi-Strauss, proposed that animals in totemism are 'chosen not because they are 'good to eat' but because they are 'good to think' (Levi-Strauss 1966(b), 89). Levi-Strauss considered that what differentiates the human species from other animal species is its ability to make rules, use symbols and categorise. The human animal communicates symbolically and metaphorically and in conjunction with the structures of language conveys meaning through this. It was his contention that there is a polarity between nature and culture evident in the social behaviour of human societies which predisposed human beings to use the natural world to define themselves as 'we' in opposition to the 'other'. The 'other' is inevitably perceived as less than fully Human.

In his study of La Pensee Sauvage (The Savage Mind) (1966 (a)), Levi-Strauss explores this theme using evidence from 'traditional' societies and proposes that human beings have evolved categorising structures in the brain which reflect language structures, that in their turn facilitate the expression of these categorizing structures through symbolic thought. Human beings use symbolic thought in becoming self-aware through the use of metaphors that enable them to compare and contrast themselves with others. It was Levi-Strauss's study of Totemism, conducted amongst societies with a naturalistic world view in which the categories of the natural world dominated metaphorical thought, that led to his famous proposition that not only are animals good to eat, but also 'animals are good to think'

(Levi Strauss 1966(b) , 89).

Various explorations of this hypothesis have subsequently taken place within the world of anthropology. Anthropological examinations of Levi-Strauss' proposition were originally carried out with reference to those cultures that are far removed from our own. Mary Douglas, following Levi-Strauss, explored the symbolic use of animals in the structuring of human thought and social life within Lele society (Douglas 1969). Ralph Bulmer's ethnographic examination of 'Why is the Cassowary not a Bird', was carried out in the New Guinea Highlands amongst the Karam people. He explored the anomalous situation in which the Cassowary bird is not classified as a bird within Karam society, concluding that 'The cassowary is not a bird because it enjoys a unique relationship in Karam thought to man' (Bulmer 1967, 25). Stanley Tambiah (1969) examined the relationship between dietary taboos involving animal flesh among Thais and how animals were classified in relation to human marriage and sex rules. This led him to confirm Levi-Strauss's proposition that, although Thai society was not totemic, nevertheless, animals 'represent a systematic mode of thought that corresponds to other systematized conceptual systems in the society' (Tambiah 1969, 458).

Both Tambiah and Bulmer explore the classificatory positions of animals in relationship to human societies, such ideas were introduced by Levi-Strauss in his discussion of metonymical and metaphorical animals in relation to French society. Levi-Strauss had originally proposed a polarity between nature and culture used in the definition of humanity and 'self' and 'other, but in his discussion of French attitudes to animals he introduces further graduations of this. This idea was initially expressed by Edmund Leach (1964) in an analysis of Western attitudes to animals. Leach contends that;

In social classifications it is not sufficient to have a discrimination me/it, we/they; we also need a graduated scale close/far, more like me/less like me (Leach 1964, 166).

Roy Willis (1974) explored the theory that Human attitudes to animals could 'be used as a key to 'read off' certain otherwise inaccessible information about the way human beings conceived of themselves and the ultimate meaning of their own lives'(Willis 1974, 7), but this once again was restricted to an analysis of three African societies. Apart from an essay by Richard Tapper (1988) and a book by Nick Fiddes (1991) there appears to be a paucity of anthropological research exploring contemporary thought in relation to animals in post-industrial Britain. Tapper (1988) explores totemic thought cross-culturally and Nick Fiddes (1991) explores the role of meat in Britain as a symbol of human dominance over nature.

The question of whether in British society 'animals are good to think' appears to have been left for the main part to philosophers such as Mary Midgley (1983, 1988, 1993) and social historians such as Keith Thomas (1983), Harriet Ritvo (1987, 1994), Keith Tester (1991) and art historian Steve Baker (1993). Mary Midgley notes, when we think of the animal 'it names a class to which we all belong' but also 'one to which we do not belong, and whose characteristic properties can be used to supply a foil, a dramatic contrast lighting up the Human image' (Midgley 1988 :36). Both philosophers and social historians lean heavily upon anthropological theory in their analyses of human attitudes to animals and definitions of 'humanity' in Britain, but as Steve Baker points out;

anthropologists have continued to choose, almost without exception, to explore the topic only in relation to societies and cultures other than their own (Baker 1993, ix)

This study of a small group of British animal rights activists and their attempts to think themselves *authentically human* through 'thinking with animals' is a small contribution to a field which although the 'stuff' of anthropology has been sadly neglected by anthropologists studying post industrial Britain<sup>1</sup>.

The thesis combines philosophy, social history, and an analysis of the culture produced by animal rights activists within an anthropological framework.

### **1.3 Fieldwork**

#### **1.3.1 Placing the Study**

The Animal Rights Movement is part of the larger Animal Protection Movement which involves animal welfarists and animal rightists and directs itself towards seeking out the ill-treatment of animals in many aspects of life and striving to stop this. Its most visible efforts towards the protection of animals manifest themselves in the form of organised protests which materialise at many sites and in many different styles. In order to set up my study I had first to find a group. From my own knowledge I was aware that an animal rights group had been very active in the town where I once lived. They had quite a high profile at the time I was living there where they frequently protested against a large chemical testing laboratory which used

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<sup>1</sup>Most of the background reading which was done in preparation for undertaking the study centred around research done in the United States with American animal rights activists, simply because of the lack of information about animal rights activists in this country. I, however, chose to concentrate on British animal rights activists without placing the study in a comparative framework by reference to those American groups or other European groups. I chose to do this because I had no access to primary data from those groups as my fieldwork was confined to Britain.

various animals, including primates. I therefore, proceeded to 'Spatown', a prosperous North of England town to see if I could make contact with the group. It was my intention to study the Testing Laboratories Action Group.

Although I was aware that animal rights activists are rather suspicious of people asking questions, in part because the media have tended to categorise them as extremists, I took the decision to conduct the research in an overt fashion. Not for me the intrepid covert operation which can be interpreted as spying and end in accusations of betrayal. My decision paid off, although it could have gone in a different direction, I could have met with rejection which would have delayed the commencement of my research, but instead I found that making an initial contact was relatively easy.

I introduced myself to the owner of a local health food shop as a post-graduate student in anthropology who was interested in animal rights activists and he gave me my first contact names, Mike and Bill. I made initial contact with Bill.

Bill, although willing to talk to me briefly, unfortunately did not want to be associated with grass roots animal rights activists as he now worked as a local representative for Compassion in World Farming. He had been very active in local groups in the past and was a close friend of Mike, but because Compassion in World Farming seeks to be known as a 'respectable' institution and grass roots activists are felt to be labelled as extremists, he had cut his ties. He felt that Mike would be a better contact for me to make. I duly made contact with Mike. We met at a vegetarian restaurant and later I accompanied him to his home where he told me about his involvement in animal rights issues.

Mike informed me that although the Testing Laboratories Action Group

was still in existence, the focus of protest at the moment was an anti-live exports campaign. Mike was at the time a well known local animal rights activist and perhaps conforms to what most people expect an animal rights activist to be. When I met him he had just been released from hospital after a suicide attempt and was anxious to talk about his life. I talked with him in his house which was in a very poor state. Mike was forty-seven when I interviewed him and had been long-term unemployed by choice for many years. He had spent most of his adult life rescuing animals and protesting through both peaceful and violent means for the rights of animals. He was surrounded by dogs that he was trying to home, most of whom were very elderly and very poorly and urinated freely over the carpet while we talked and he went in and out answering telephone calls in a highly conspiratorial manner.

Mike told me about his life as an activist and said he wanted to talk as 'it was all over' for him, he did not want to keep on fighting for animals as he felt he was up against a brick wall. Mike freely admitted to past violence towards property and plans to 'get his own back' on people he felt had betrayed him. He wanted to talk, but he said animal rights was now in the past for him and gave me the names and telephone numbers of other people who might help me and my introduction to Sandy and Alan came through this. When I eventually did come to know Sandy and Alan, Sandy told me that Mike, although known for violence in the past, was probably trying to test me out as he had told her 'I think I've scared her off'.

He had not, and subsequently I came to discover that although the militant animal liberationist alienated from society is one part of the animal rights movement, it is not representative of the whole. I mention him here as he does represent a small minority within a minority, but also because he was instrumental in allowing me to set up my study. He was also active in the



setting up of the protest group against the Testing Laboratories in Spatown and the protest at Heathcliff. Shortly after my interview with him he disappeared as he was being sought by the police and I later learned that he was working with a militant animal liberationist group in another town.

Sandy became my key informant. She had taken over the running of the Testing Laboratories Action Group, but was at the moment more actively engaged in the anti-live export campaign. This study was conducted at the site of a protest that the participants termed a vigil which took place once a week. The site was a village in the North of England where both animal rights activists and those concerned with animal welfare gathered to protest against the shipment of veal calves to Europe. The location of the vigil was outside the gates of a farm which was a staging post for the animals on that journey.

### **1.3.2 Some Considerations of Method**

The animal rights movement has successfully managed to engage mass society in a debate over our treatment of non human animals and as I will discuss in a later chapter, membership of their various organisations has been increasing since the late 1960s. In Britain, however, little interest in the movement has been shown by social scientists. This situation was also reflected in the United States until the late 1980s. Harold A. Herzog comments on this at the commencement of his research paper "The Movement is my Life' The Psychology of Animal Rights Activism" (Herzog, 1993:104). Herzog points out that it is only since the late 1980s that basic demographic information about activists in the United States has become available (Herzog, 1993: 104) and that there was still little known regarding what attracts people to the movement and the results on lifestyle of

involvement.

There is still a dearth of research attention directed at animal rights activists in Britain. Apart from ideological texts and historical overviews of the general animal protection movement there is very little academic attention paid to the movement in this country. As a result of this, whilst my primary data comes through my own research with British activists, the secondary data have been extracted from studies centred on American research.

Plous (1991) studied activists attending a demonstration in Washington DC and his findings were that the activists displayed a variety of lifestyles and viewpoints which did not conform to any particular stereotype. Herzog (1993; Galvin and Herzog 1992) concluded that activists underwent a transformative process which they compared to a religious conversion which changed their fundamental belief systems and their lifestyle. Sperling (1988) drew parallels between the Victorian antivivisectionist movement and the contemporary movement as responses to changing technological and scientific developments, and as with Keith Tester (1993) in this country, concluded that animal rights activism was not promoted by concern for animals, but that animals are symbols of something else. As Shapiro (1994) points out these are not mutually exclusive and animal rights activism can combine '... the animal as a symbol and as an object of concern ...' (Shapiro 1994, 147).

The conclusion reached by Jasper & Nelkin in 1992 that;

The conflict between animal advocates and animal users is far more than a matter of contrasting tastes or interests. Opposing world views, concepts of identity, ideas of community, are all at stake (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 7).

did, however, provide an interesting and testable hypothesis through which

a researcher could reach some answers as to how and why people become involved in the animal rights movement. An exploration could then be undertaken of to what extent their membership influences their concept of their own identity, their world view and if ideas of community are involved how this is constructed. The usefulness of using Jasper and Nelkin's statement as a methodological tool emerged from my observations of the group during the research process.

## **The Approach**

Approaching the problem of research design, the perspective I have adopted in the collection of data is a qualitative one which seeks to examine and comprehend individual conceptions of the world (Bell, J. 1993:6) and from this the effect on their individual life course and their interactions with others.

The method of data collection which was chosen was a combination of traditional anthropological participant-observation and life history analysis. As Johnston and Klandermans (1995) point out research into social movements carried out through participant-observation leads to the identification of 'key narratives' due to the 'immersion in group activities' which the researcher experiences and observes (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995:18). The method of participant observation is particularly useful when researching groups who seem to be 'at odds' with mass society and whose behaviour can seem inexplicable to those outside the group. As Erving Goffman observed in his study of behaviour in an asylum:

'It is my belief, that any group of persons, primitives, pilots or patients, develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable, and normal once you get close to it ... ' (Goffman, 1961:7)

Whilst the method of participant observation is believed to render more in-depth information than other methodologies, it is limited to the study of smaller groups or communities and because of this can be considered to be only representative of that small group. However, whilst this is not a comparative study, the findings which I will be discussing correlate well with the American studies, some of which were based on a quantitative paradigm eg. Jasper and Nelkin 1992.

Using participant observation in conjunction with life-history analysis enables the researcher to isolate several themes for further examination which highlight what has recently emerged about membership of new social movements, and that is '... their embeddedness in the everyday lives of the adherents' (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995:18). This embeddedness I describe as lived-inness and the processes which contribute to this have a major impact on personal and shared identity. The life-histories used in conjunction with observation of activities and the narratives which emerged at protest sites allowed me to link the cognitive processes to the social processes which both contribute to the building of identity and community.

The use of life-history places the emphasis of the research on the individual's understandings and interpretations of their own behaviour (McNeill, 1990: 86). The merit of the use of life-history is that each story plays a role in the creation of a portrait of the social life and times of the group being studied and enables the researcher to test what may theoretically be known about groups against the practice (McNeill, 1990:86). The life-histories consisted of biographical details compiled by the activists themselves. These life-histories do not cover the whole of the duration of the individual's lives, but are limited to their animal rights activities. This idea was one that was used to great effect by Terkel (1977) in his study of the

working lives of Americans, Working (1977). This book was subtitled 'People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do'. This study of animal rights activists details a discourse that activists have both with themselves and with mass society about what they are and are not.

The data were collected in a number of ways. I regularly attended the vigil over a period of three months and observed the ritualistic nature of the proceedings on twelve occasions. During this time I conducted unstructured interviews or 'guided conversations' with a number of people who attended at various times. These 'guided conversations' allowed me to ensure that the themes I wished to explore were discussed. In total I conducted around forty five interviews with these 'floating' participants. I also attended a British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) 'Walk for Animals' and walked the course with participants engaging them in conversations about animal rights activism, resulting in another fifteen informal conversational interviews.

Patrick McNeill (1990: 77) makes the point that a researcher is similar to any new member of a group, but what makes them different is that they are not only seeking acceptance as a member of the group, but also cataloguing their observations in order to write a description of the group's way of life, and in order to do this must keep meticulous and detailed notes of their observations and impressions. At the initial outset of the research my note taking was confined to my observations of the actions and conversations between the activists at the protest site, following the advice of Polsky (1967): 'Initially, keep your eyes and ears open, but keep your mouth shut' (Polsky 1967 cited in McNeill, 1990: 77). As I had been completely open about my reasons for being present, this was acceptable to the activists, but later in the research period during 'guided conversations' I kept my notes to the minimum, being aware that to be seen constantly taking copious notes might affect the behaviour of the group and their answers and

that given the nature of the group's activities I might be in danger of being viewed as a potential threat.

My method was to write basic notes and memorise conversational details which I would write up into my research notes as soon as possible, usually at the end of the day and whilst they were fresh in my mind.

During the many hours with Sandy, my main informant, in conversation about her life as an activist and on shopping expeditions under her guidance, she allowed me to openly take notes, I think because we were of a similar age and because I had also had the experience of being a single mother bringing up a young daughter alone at one point in my life.

I also attended three other protests against a chemical testing laboratory and met up with the same people who attended the live-export protests. In addition I had the experience of attending a 'home visit' where activists had found out where the Chief Executive of a chemical testing laboratory lived and visited him, setting up a demonstration outside his house, which I have detailed below. In all a period of a year was spent at different sites and in conversation with activists. Because of the nature of their activities and the perception of mass society of their activities expressed through the popular press I found that participants were reluctant to have interviews taped and the presence of a tape recorder at the protest site was not acceptable.

The heart of the research is, however, the life-histories written by the core group, in which they relay their experiences in their own words. Protestors' attendance at the site ebbed and flowed as it was a lengthy protest, lasting for more than a year. The informants for this study were this core group of protestors who regularly attended this and other protest sites

and who considered themselves to be animal rights activists rather than people simply concerned with the welfare of the animals. At the commencement of the research I handed out twenty five notebooks and invited people to recount their involvement in the animal rights movement in an autobiographical form within the books. The participants were given guidelines inside the notebooks of what I thought were the important questions which would allow them to express their involvement in a cogent way, without asking them to write a complete life history. The guidelines are presented in Appendix 2.

By the end of the research period the eleven core members presented within this text had completed their life-histories and returned them to me. The emergence of the core group grew through their own efforts. Each of the activists here attended regularly at the site where I was researching and in their endeavours to present their own views allowed me to interview them in depth. Each week they would ask me to explain what was required and what I intended to do with the information and through this process I was able to talk to them about their views and lives in a more meaningful way than just simply reading the completed life-histories. In this way I was able to produce a piece of qualitative research through which the multiple layers of identity could be examined.

Having solved the immediate and pressing problem of being introduced to a group, another of the problems which concerned me in the conduct of my research was that of the negotiation of an appropriate role. Whilst I was not an animal rights activist I had to negotiate a role which would enable me to strike up some sort of rapport with the activists which would facilitate an acceptance of my presence and the collection of meaningful data for the study. As I had been completely open about the reasons for my presence the role which I adopted for myself initially conforms to Gold's

(1958) description of a 'participant-as-observer, actively involved in the group, but they know the researcher is not really one of them' (Gold, 1958: 72). As the research progressed, however, my role processed through the classifications of Gans (1962). Initially I was an observer; later I participated in a way determined by the research; and thirdly I processed to the role of 'real' participant; reverting back to that of an observer analysing my own actions whilst a 'real' participant. The process of research is not always driven by the researcher, but sometimes by the researched.

This realisation confronted me on several occasions during the course of this study and on two notable occasions a role was created for me by the activists themselves which led to a degree of acceptance.

Activists are frequently suspicious of people asking too many questions. Having received a letter from one of my informants inviting me to attend a march which would culminate in a rally outside the commercial testing laboratory in Spatown, a desire to further my research easily persuaded me to attend. When I arrived at the protest site, there were only a few people who had been able to make it. This is a classic example of animal rights disorganisation, as was commented on at the time, but all those involved took it in their stride and decided to review their tactics. With only twenty people, a march appeared futile so it was decided that we would all drive to the laboratories and rally outside. I picked up some stragglers in my car on the way and followed the vans the rest were in. At this point I was a little worried as no-one I knew was there, but when I mentioned I had been attending the vigil at Victoria Farms, no-one seemed to question my presence, but no-one seemed willing to converse in any meaningful way or seemed prepared to answer many questions.

I was not only worried by the fact that I knew no-one, but also that the



individuals attending this protest were those that are commonly viewed to be involved in all types of protest. The men had dreadlocks or shaved heads and earrings, all dressed in black and some with hoods, which are useful when cameras are around. The women were also in the main typically 'new age' style dressers, which I am not. Although, as I have mentioned, no-one seemed to question my presence, some of the younger men seemed a little suspicious of me. One young man, who kept his hood up and his head down all the time, quite openly rebuffed any overtures of friendliness from me. But women in makeup and 'smart' clothes have their uses, which I was about to find out.

On arrival outside the laboratories, the usual banners and placards were set up demarcating the social space which we were to occupy. The police were already there and met us with their usual request for a named person as organiser and set out the rules which they expected us to follow. Shortly after our arrival, the television cameras arrived and it was at this point that I was given an indication of the uses that women in makeup and 'smart' clothes can be put to. The television interviewer was looking for a spokesperson and the group asked me if I would like to do it. I explained the capacity that I was there in and how I felt that this would be an inappropriate thing for me to do. Another of the group took on this role, again a woman, dressed in casual clothes, but older and not 'new age' in her style. This woman, Beatrice, was closely involved in the organisation of this protest and others all over the country. After an hour or so standing around outside the laboratories, with no sign of life inside, I asked Beatrice what the group intended to do, as what we were doing at the moment seemed so ineffective. She agreed with me and proposed that we should do a 'home visit'.

By this time, someone who was familiar to me had arrived. The man I had in fact occasionally travelled to the farm protest site with and one of my

main informants, Alan. Alan explained to me what a 'home visit' was. This is a fairly recent development in the tactics of the this group and involves following someone considered to be an animal abuser, such as a vivisectionist or as in this case the Managing Director of the laboratories, and finding out where they live and targeting them at home.

The protest at the farm had taken this form, because the farm was the home of the owner and this was where the animals were transported to. In this case they were taking their protest to a private home, where neighbours in the community had no idea what line of work the man was engaged in. They were just about to find out. Alan had made it his business to follow the Managing Director and find out where he lived, so armed with his address we set out to confront him at home. We fully expected to be followed by the unmarked police car which had been parked beside the police van outside the laboratories, but when we got to our destination, there was no sign of it. They must have thought that we had lost heart and gone home.

When we reached our destination, I had arrived fractionally later than the rest, who were discussing tactics when I got out of my car and on approaching them heard them say *'What we need is someone respectable looking'*. As one, all eyes turned to me and Beatrice said *'You'll do'*. I asked her what she wanted me to do, and she explained that they needed someone to draw him out of his house and asked me if I would go and knock on his door and ask him to engage in a discussion with us over the animal experiments going on in the laboratories. I realised that if I did not do this, then I would lose face with them and this might get around to my other informants and as we are always being exhorted as students of anthropology to 'see things from the native's point of view', this would perhaps facilitate that process. I agreed. I had to go alone as the others stayed in the background so that he would not see them. And so I set off on one of the longest walks

of my life, to do what in my every day life I would never do, knock on a complete stranger's door and challenge the morality with which he leads his life. I was given strength and courage, however, when the recalcitrant young man shouted '*Respect*' as I left on my journey.

When I reached the door I rang the bell and a feeling of complete relief entered my body, when my sixth sense let me know that there was nobody there. Encouraged by this feeling I began to bang on the door and look through the letter box. By this time everyone else had joined me and was congratulating me on my 'bravery'. Filled with a feeling of acceptance, I felt that I could now join in with events more and the result was that I performed a tiny 'action', but one which illuminated a feeling which I had written about, but not experienced. As part of this thesis, I had been describing the vigil at the protest site as a ritualistic happening involving Leach's ideas of the removal of the individual from ordinary life and space and its accompanying codes of conduct and rules and Turner's concepts of liminality and anti-structure, *communitas* and the 'transformative experience'. It was, however, the events of this afternoon which led to my own experience of them, rather than as a mere observer of others' experience.

As, John Smith, the Managing Director, had probably pre-empted our decision to make a 'home visit' and planned to stay out for the rest of the day, we were all feeling slightly cheated. However, we set up the banners and placards outside his house. Shortly after this, the police arrived and were asked '*what had kept you so long*'. It was then that I seemed to come to the fore. I was holding a banner, but at that moment was slipping in and out of identities and when the policeman began to talk to me, I was not aware that he was. At that moment I was Sue O'Neill student, not Sue O'Neill part of an animal rights protest. It was then that the policeman began to get rather annoyed with me. He was asking me to behave properly and getting no

response. Both he and my fellow protestors interpreted this as silent defiance, whilst I was wondering why he was asking ME to behave myself. The policeman gave up in exasperation, whilst my fellows seemed to admire this stand I appeared to be making. Surprisingly, instead of staying to supervise our behaviour, the police then simply drove off and left us to it.

Basking in the sunshine of my fellows approval, I then began to feel completely removed from normal life, and after consultation with them, began to construct a notice to suspend across Mr Smith's windows. After suggestions from them such as writing 'You are a B\*\*\*\*\*' on the notice, I persuaded them that perhaps this was not a good idea, because we were not here to have a one-sided conversation with him and it might upset his perfectly innocent neighbours. I asked them what they wanted from this visit as they could not converse with him and one thing they decided they wanted to do was to expose how he made his living to his neighbours. And so we decided that the appropriate wording should be 'JOHN SMITH ANIMAL TORTURER LIVES HERE'. We then suspended the notice attached to the drainpipes at each side of his house. Some neighbours did come out to see what was going on and the activists told them how Mr Smith earned his living. The neighbours were extraordinarily tolerant of all this going on outside their houses and after they were told about the animal research at the laboratories wished the activists good luck. The activists in their turn decided to set up for the afternoon and spent the rest of their time food sharing and chatting.

The experience of *communitas* and the empowerment felt by individuals involved in ritual then came clearly home to me. I did indeed feel a profound affiliation with my fellows, *communitas*, and the sense of power which this created. This had indeed been a transformative experience, one which I still carry with me and as a result of my perceived willingness to give back a little to the community in return for their co-operation I found that many

of the participants felt willing to help me with my research if they could. Following Bosk (1979) I realized that 'The privilege of being an observer is a gift presented to the researcher by his host and subjects' (Bosk, 1979 cited in McNeill, P. 1990: 71) and as we know gift giving requires reciprocity.

On the second occasion where I was given a role by the activists it was in a much more 'junior' position. I usually attended the protest site at the farm from the early evening until around 10pm. On one occasion when I knew that a contingent of activists from Brightlingsea would be arriving I felt that I would like to arrive much earlier in order to watch the dynamic of the two separate groups coming together. As a result I arrived at the protest site at around 10.00am one very cold November morning. I had not at that time had any great experience of protesting for long periods of time in the open air and as a result I had misjudged both the food and clothing requirements of such an endeavour. I also had to borrow a writing implement at one point in the day, an event which had surprising implications for my research.

I travelled alone to the site and upon my arrival found that no-one I really knew was there, but I did see some familiar faces including a middle aged lady who was a constant attender, but never willing to talk. From snippets of overheard conversation over the weeks and months, however, I did know that she was a significant member of this group and of many other animal rights groups and travelled large distances each week to attend protest sites. As the day wore on I wandered from person to person overhearing conversations and trying to strike them up, but on this day no-one was interested and so I was just writing down observations. The day drudged on relentlessly and although the Brightlingsea protesters had arrived and were bringing colour to a grey day for the protestors, for this research student things were not going well. The day became colder and colder and writing became more difficult as I had no gloves and although I had on what

I thought was a suitable jacket it was as sadly inadequate as I felt myself to be. By 3.00pm I was a sad pathetic frozen figure stamping my feet to keep warm and with no-one to talk to. It was around that time that a woman I had seen often, but had never spoken to, approached me.

The reason she had approached me was that the group had recently had a piece written about them in the local newspaper which had commented on the peacefulness of the recent protests and the commitment of the activists. She had mistakenly thought I was a reporter and that I had been the one to submit the piece. I corrected her and told her what I was doing and how I usually travelled with Alan or Sandy, but had decided to do it alone today.

For whatever reason, perhaps the good report in the newspaper or the feeling that I was a harmless idiot, she suddenly decided to take me under her wing. Although at first this took the form of having a great laugh with the others at my expense. 'Would you look at what she's got on to come out here - she's going blue!' she called to the others who joined in with similar banter. But then that moment came that famous anthropologists talk about - a sort of acceptance. They decided that I did not have the correct clothing for the look of an activist and decided to transform me. I suddenly found that instead of my flimsy coat I had been donated several others which they draped over me and in addition topped me off with a colourful hat covered in animal rights badges. I was then paraded around for everyone's approval including the watching police who also thought this highly amusing. Then this lady who was only about ten years older than me, said ' Now listen to your Ma, I know best'. She then took me around the perimeter of the farm as far as we could go and told me about her feelings for the animals and her numerous animal rights activities.

When we made our way back to the main entrance of the farm where the majority of protestors were positioned she introduced me to several other protestors, including some Brightlingsea protestors who included an elderly lady of sixty-eight who was a very enthusiastic supporter of the protest against live exports. She invited me to her van for a cup of tea and something to eat. As I was aware of the dietary taboos of the animal rights movement I declined the ham sandwich she offered me and chose cheese. At this point I also noticed that the other protestors did not join us. The close proximity of the ham sandwich was sufficient to deter them. This incident illuminated for me the idea that groups who gather around an idea from an outsider's point of view appear to be homogeneous when in reality within groups there is great heterogeneity. This lady whilst actively protesting against the live export of animals was willing to eat them and from this point of view could be classified as a supporter of this particular cause, but not a member of the animal rights community. She was accepted by the rest of the group as a supporter, but not acceptable enough to share food with or for them to even be in the presence of her food.

Whilst I was writing down my observations of this phenomenon a second incident occurred which illuminated more of my research. My pen ran out of ink and the lady offered me one of hers which belonged to her husband. I accepted the pen and then left the van to continue with my observations and questions. Whilst I was talking to another group of protestors one of the young men said 'That's a bookies pen!', and sure enough it was. Another of the taboos of the movement is that of the use of animals for sport, but at that point I had neither realised that this was a pen from a bookmaker's shop or that this was a taboo. I hurriedly explained the fact that it was not my pen and they explained their point of view.

This incident, together with my treatment over not being prepared for

the day, was brought vividly back to me when I was analysing another of the themes which will be explored in the ethnographic section of this thesis, the vital component of identity which is competence. My own incompetence had proved to be an asset on this occasion in the negotiation of a role within the group. I may have been introduced as a researcher, but the glaring gaps in my practical knowledge had removed any perceived threat that I may have presented and I was transformed by them into an 'apprentice' and one who they perceived could be made use of by the group in negotiations with both mass society and with their opponents.

Jasper and Nelkin (1992) categorised individuals involved in the animal protection movement as welfarists, pragmatists and fundamentalists. The informants for this study generally belonged to the category of 'fundamentalist' and felt that human beings should not 'use animals for their own pleasures or interests, regardless of the benefits' (Jasper and Nelkin 1992, 9). The core group was defined by its involvement from the beginning of the protest at Heathcliff and its consistent attendance. A profile of the core group and their involvement with animal rights issues is outlined in Appendix 1 and a diary of a year of protest is recorded within Box 5.1 in Chapter 5. As noted before, in order to preserve their anonymity, all my informants have been given pseudonyms. The name of the farm and the name of the protest group are also both fictions to give a greater degree of anonymity.

The group has in fact undergone several changes of name, but for my purposes they are to be known as Live Exports Opponents. The farm is Victoria Farms and the village is Heathcliff. None of the group lives in the village of Heathcliff which is set in the agricultural heart of the North of England. The members of the group are urbanite in nature whose main contact with rural life is an ongoing polemic against what they perceive as



the uncivilised practices of cruelty and the avarice hidden beneath the peaceful pastoral veneer. However, some of the group had enjoyed a rural childhood which may have affected their views of animals. Most of the group also support an antivivisection group in a local town, which I shall call Spatown, where one of the largest chemical testing laboratories in Europe is sited. I shall call this group the Testing Action Group.

The analysis of the data centres upon the examination of the narratives which the core group have constructed about their lives.

narratives are a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience, and ultimately of ourselves. Narrative emplotment appears to yield a form of understanding of human experience, both individual and collective, that is not directly amenable to other forms of exposition or analysis (Kerby 1991, 3)

Persons not only have memories, histories, but also take certain attitudes toward them. We notice change - that things and acquaintances are not as they once were (Kerby 1991, 36)

The process of narrative allows individuals to contextualise their lives. Central to the construction of the animal rightist's identity is a point of reformation, the beginning of a particular narrative. Jasper & Poulsen (1995) refer to the recruitment of animal rights activists as being through a 'moral shock'. Giddens would term these 'fateful moments', moments which require the individual to confront existential questions (Giddens 1991, 203). After experiencing a 'moral shock', the individual is confronted with the questions 'How shall I live my life?', 'Should I change how I live my life?'. For Turner (1974) this would be a liminoid experience, the opportunity to step outside the norms of everyday life. If the answer is the abandonment of one lifestyle and the taking up of another, it is also part of the ongoing narrative of the self and ultimately of a community.

Carrithers (1992) points to narrative thinking as the means of interpreting and predicting the intentions of others, the present conditions of social life within a landscape of the past and a predicted future. This allows us to mediate our actions and responses to situations. These responses will be culturally and historically specific and supply us with an orientation within which we can act in a way which makes sense in our particular life 'story'. For Douglas (1996) this involves cognitive choices and thought styles which, when conjoined with the similar thought styles of others, form thought-worlds or communities. This involves Carrithers' notion of the ability of human beings to mind read the thoughts of others and the stories of others in a logical way. The human ability to mind read is one that was investigated originally by Schutz who termed it a 'scheme of interpretation' (Schutz 1972, 86). This 'mind reading' is illustrated by Cohen's theory that community exists in the minds of its members who 'make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things' (Cohen 1985, 16). At the point of reformation, the animal rights activist engages with others whose thinking they believe is similar to their own, in the construction of both a personal and shared social identity.

In so far as it is dominated by the core perspectives of modernity, the project of the self remains one of control, guided only by a morality of 'authenticity' (Giddens 1991, 225)

Social life within the context of the post-industrial era presents individuals with multiple choices of how to live their lives. Some people are content to answer the existential questions thrown up by contemporary conditions by a superficial multiple self. Others have a desire for the constant, essential and knowable. As Giddens points out:

Some individuals find it psychologically difficult or impossible to accept the existence of diverse, mutually conflicting authorities. They find that the freedom to choose is a burden and they seek solace in more overarching systems of authority ... an authority whose rules and provisions cover most aspects of his life

(Giddens 1991, 196).

It is at this point that 'authenticity' becomes central. Members of the animal rights community are not part of a geographically located community, but a relational community of meaning. Traditional face-to-face communities, in order to protect the integrity of the community, engage in the mutual monitoring of individual behaviour. Within relational communities, the self is the preeminent medium for monitoring behaviour to protect the integrity of the individual and the community. Whilst in relational communities the opportunities for face-to-face mutual monitoring of behaviour can only be engaged in under the circumstances of ritual activity. In order to maintain its own integrity and authenticity the self must continually engage in a process of eliminating any dissonance between the self and the community.

Narrative exegesis allows us to examine these processes consolidating context, behaviour and emotions in a holistic fashion. Through attendance at the protest sites and observing and listening to the narratives that they told each other and me, in conjunction with an analysis of their autobiographical narratives, I was able to isolate several themes that seemed to be common to all of the core group. These included the point at which their world views began to change, the discarding of the material objects which had supported their previous world view, the rebuilding of the material world to support their new world view and the gaining of competence in personal and shared identity through community and individual control.

### **1.3.3 Animal Rights Activists in 1995: Live Exports Opponents**

The core group which I studied were very different indeed from Mike, my first contact. Alan and John are both employed engineers, Tom a retired naturopath and Jack a scientist. Mary, Victoria, Priscilla and Anna are office

workers, Kit a retired teacher. Sandy was a nurse and now runs her own business. Joan is a teacher. None of these informants agreed with violent methods and felt peaceful protest was the way forward, although some did admit to understanding why others committed violent acts. Whilst I attended the protest site, in addition to the core group, people would drift in one week and not the next, but of all the people that I chatted to, I only came across one other person who could loosely be described as alienated from society, unless being an undergraduate is a condition of alienation. As can be seen from the Profile (Appendix 1), all were members of many different animal rights and animal welfare organisations and this multiple membership will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

In their quest for the *authentically human* all of the participants in this study had chosen to find 'solace in ... an authority whose rules and provisions cover most aspects' (Giddens 1991, 196) of their lives, the authority of the Animal Rights ideology, one of the chief expressions of this being the adoption of vegetarianism or veganism. All of the core group were either vegetarian or vegan and conformed to the Vegetarian Society and Vegan Society definitions of these states.

Throughout this thesis I will use the Vegetarian Society and Vegan Society's own definitions. A vegetarian is a **'person who eats no fish, flesh or fowl'** and avoids **'the by-products of slaughter'** (Vegetarian Society) and veganism is defined as **'a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practical, all forms of exploitation of and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose. In dietary terms it refers to the practice of dispensing with all animal produce - including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, animal milks, honey, and their derivatives'** (Vegan Society).

My core research group consisted of eleven animal rights activists, seven women and four men, a ratio which mirrors the greater presence of women in the movement generally (Plous 1991; Jasper & Nelkin 1992; Jamison & Lunch 1992). None of the activists was known to me before the commencement of the study. My interest in this subject is a product of intellectual curiosity rather than any involvement with the animal protection movement and in my conversations with activists and the analysis of their autobiographies I have tried to maintain an 'objective' view.

All of my informants volunteered to complete autobiographies and all considered themselves to be concerned with animal rights rather than, or as well as, animal welfare.

These are some of the protagonists engaged in the present day polemic surrounding their definition and construction of their own model of *human authenticity*, but before moving on to examine this in detail I feel it necessary to introduce the philosophical background of the characters in this social procession in Chapter 2.

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY AND TRADITIONS INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT OF THE RIGHTS OF THE 'ANIMAL' AND THE SEARCH FOR THE 'AUTHENTICALLY HUMAN'

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Levi-Strauss denies the importance of history within the world of metaphorical and symbolic thought, and proposes that the structured categories of the human mind are universal, determined by the structure of human cognition and uninfluenced by changes in material existence. But as can be seen in the following overview of the history of philosophical thought and social life with regard to animals and what it is to be truly or *authentically human*, the importance of certain symbols and metaphors ascends and descends in response to the conditions of material existence.

Marshall Sahlins (1976) following Levi-Strauss, discusses the culture of Western Society and *La Pensee Bourgeoise* (The Middle Class Mind) as equally structured and dominated by metaphor and symbol as the cultures of small-scale societies. Western culture also 'incorporates historical perturbations as structural permutations' (Sahlins 1976, 220). The implication of this appears to be that historical changes in material existence do not influence structured symbolic and metaphorical thought. In Islands of History (1985) Sahlins attempts to reconcile history and the structural method and argues that whilst historical events are symbolic reproductions of culture, structured symbolic thought can be reordered by people so that cultural change can be precipitated by historical events (Sahlins 1985).

In what follows we see such changes in symbolic thought produced by changes in material existence. For some people, using 'animals to think' brought animals from an oppositional polarity to being part of a continuum with human beings. Using 'animals to think' has reordered the structured

categories of certain people's modes of thought replacing the oppositional animal with oppositional humans who represent the 'other'. By creating a discourse around their relationships with animals people have created gradations between the opposition categories 'animal' and 'human' leading to perceptions of others being less *authentically human* than themselves.

## 2.2 Thinking with Animals in Industrial Britain

I wish to introduce the concept of how industrialised Britons have used 'animals to think' by giving an overview of the historical and philosophical backgrounds which have dominated the relationship between human beings and other animals in modern Britain. These processes have led to the evolution of a group of people who are involved with the construction of a particular identity, a community of meaning for that identity to operate within and a distinctive culture produced through a dialectic engaged in by themselves with themselves. This produces a cultural polemic against the received wisdom of the larger community.

The debate over the status and rights of animals in Britain could be perceived as recent and of a secular nature. What I hope to show here is that far from being new, the participants in the contemporary debate over 'animal rights' and the search for a definition of the *authentically human*, are following in a longstanding tradition of debate over our relationships with other animals and what constitutes the *authentic human being*. Present day concerns and attitudes can only be understood by reference to the past. In recent history this concern has found expression from the Enlightenment onwards, through both secular thinkers and the Non-Conformist Christian tradition which questioned orthodox interpretations of the Bible. Continuing on from the 1960s and 1970s, these questions are again being addressed by clerical thinkers such as Andrew Linzey as well as secular thinkers like Peter

Singer. But considerations of the *authentically human* and how we should behave towards non-human animals predate these events.

Considering animals is an ancient preoccupation that appears to concern, among other things, what we think about ourselves and how we define ourselves in opposition to 'others'. The historical episodes that are reviewed in this chapter clearly reflect Levi-Strauss's proposition that 'animals are good to think', but also show that the state of being *authentically human* is one that is constantly reviewed and revised.

The difference between animals and humans can be construed as obvious in outward physical appearance and social activity. However the human species in all places at all times makes strenuous efforts to differentiate itself from other animals and construct and maintain a human identity. These efforts manifest themselves for example as rules for social conduct and food taboos. Human beings are, nevertheless, animals and Keith Tester proposes that 'animal rights is one way in which the ambiguity can be confronted and reconciled' (Tester 1991, 88). To enable us to differentiate between ourselves and animals, whilst facilitating contact with them, human beings have had to construct both symbolic categories and physical gradations of distance between animals and humanity. As noted before, Edmund Leach has proposed, that to reduce social classifications to simple polarities is insufficient, a scale of gradations of difference and similarity is required (Leach 1964, 166).

This type of classification is highlighted in the historical debates over cruelty and kindness to animals where closeness and distance to the human species became central to the various discourses.



### 2.3 Conceptualizing Humanity in History

At its core, the historical debate appears to involve two different but related strands of thought. On the one hand there is a need for improvement in our treatment of other species, based on their **difference** from us, and a recognition of human uniqueness. This imposes a moral duty on humanity, as 'moral animals' to recognize the 'other' animal's claim to right treatment from us. Humanity can recognize these duties and behave accordingly, because of culture and social knowledge, which the thereby unequal 'other animal' does not possess.

On the other hand, there is a plea to notice **the similarities between us and other species** which demands that we do not continue the practices of ill usage, on the basis of organic similarity. Once again, whilst recognizing that the human species is an animal, this view contends that humans are a different sort of animal. This argument contends that humanity is a naturally moral species which has been corrupted by culture and society, as opposed to the previous argument that viewed culture and society as the source of morality. From this viewpoint, a recognition of kinship with 'other animals' and a rejection of Society's present ill-treatment of them will elevate humanity to a purer 'natural' state from which we have 'fallen' and enable us to regain and live by our 'natural' morality. I am indebted to Keith Tester, who has elaborately drawn out these two threads of thought in his work Animals & Society: The humanity of animal rights. These themes are taken up in great detail by Tester who uses his own analytical models of the '**Demand for Difference**' and the '**Demand for Similitude**' in his analysis of human involvement in animal rights issues (Tester 1991, 88).

Both arguments stress human uniqueness and argue that, to be properly moral human beings, we must allow animals a right to justice. In

essence, it would appear from both sides of the argument that to define us as *authentically human* and to protect our human status we must remove ourselves from the animal and remove the animal from ourselves. In either case, we must not behave like them. 'Our animal nature exists already as a Trojan horse within the human gates. Only constant vigilance can stop it playing an active part in human life (Midgley 1988, 35). For members of the contemporary animal rights movement these concerns translate themselves into practices. These practices are an attempt to remove all traces of animal use or oppression from their lives in the construction of their own model of the *authentically human being*.

Historically the themes which have preoccupied those concerned with the subject of human and animal definition, and the relationships between these categories, have been those of the human capacities for reason, language, and the ability to suffer pain and experience pleasure. The debate also involves classification, although not always overtly. What is human/what is an animal and what do we do/what do we not do as proper human beings? Who are we as *authentically human beings* and who are the others who are not as we? The answers to these questions demonstrate unstable classifications in different historical conditions.

Richard Tapper contends that in urban industrial society animals are marginalized and in contemporary Western society all that remain are 'the animals of the mind' (Tapper 1988, 56). In modern British history it was the process of transition to an urban industrial society from a predominantly rural one that was the social background to the lengthy debate over animals, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. During this period, as animals became more marginalized from human social experience, they appeared to become conflated in the minds of certain members of society, with human 'Others' namely the emergent new industrial working class. In order to

elucidate this point, I propose to journey through the philosophical debate over the issues of humanity and animality in the following section and then turn my attention to the social and cultural backgrounds which inform and activate these discussions in the next chapter.

## **2.4 The Philosophical Debate**

Where has the modern Western debate over the status of the animal and any consequent rights, sprung from? For many people the discussion over animal rights began with the publication of Peter Singer's Animal Liberation in 1975. Singer however, was treading a furrow already ploughed two hundred years before, the ground for which had been prepared in antiquity. Some of the thematic strands of the debate introduced by such thinkers as Aristotle and Pythagoras in Ancient Greece and Plutarch in Ancient Rome have been reiterated from then on until the present day (Sorabji 1993,2). As my concerns here are with modern Britain, I can only acknowledge that the debates over animals capabilities for reason, speech and the ability to suffer pain and pleasure were addressed in the Greek world by Aristotle, and the Stoics who stressed the superiority and uniqueness of humanity and removed animals from the moral community. These views were opposed by Pythagorean and Platonist views, but the importance of this debate for my purposes is that it was Aristotelian and Stoic views which were adopted into pre-Christian and Christian thought, a thought style which still dominates today in Western attitudes to animals (Sorabji 1993, 8 Singer 1975 189).

Ideas of human uniqueness, and the perceived lack of reason and speech in animals were carried on into Christian attitudes, together with ancient Hebrew biblical notions of humanity's superiority to animals and the granting of dominion to man over animals by God, as exemplified in the

creation story a common motif in Judeo-Christian culture (Sorabji 1993, 8; Singer 1975, 186; White 1967, 1205).

#### **2.4.1 The Traditional Christian World View**

Genesis 1:26-28 grants dominion over the earth and its inhabitants to humanity and Genesis 9:2-3 allows humanity to satisfy their needs through the use and killing of animals without guilt. Powerful Christian figures such as Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas reinforced these attitudes 'It matters not how man behaves to animals, because God has subjected all things to man's power' (St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II, II cited in Singer 1975, 195). Contemporary theologian and animal rights activist, Andrew Linzey contends that the legacy of Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas has 'helped to support years of indifference and wantonness towards animal life' (Linzey 1987, 28). Professor John Passmore contends that the Hebrew interpretation and later the Christian interpretation, stem from humanity's concern to explain an ambivalent relationship with the natural world. Humanity's unique achievement in domesticating other species implied human superiority of capability and reason, but our own violence towards these other species reveals a baser nature. The biblical Fall of Man can be referred to as a justification for this brutality. If it were not for the Fall, human beings 'would have been vegetarians, they would not have had to live by violence ...' (Passmore 1974, 7). Genesis is a charter that allows human beings to forgive themselves, by portraying violence towards other animals as a quest for subsistence. For animal rights activists, however, this appears to be part of their own punishment for breaking faith with God.

The absence of guilt or moral questioning over the use of animals, held in place by a consensual acceptance of this divinely appointed dominion, began to be questioned by some Western thinkers from the seventeenth

century onwards (Maehle 1994, 81). Christians, who so far in this discussion, have stood accused as representing the ideological buttress upon which the exploitation of animals has been supported, entered into the debate in several defences of animals and defences of human treatment of them.

During the seventeenth century, the Christian interpretation of the Bible regarding the treatment of animals as part of humanity's God-given dominion still prevailed. It was during this century that 'the most painful outcome of Christian doctrine emerged' (Singer 1975, 200). The seventeenth century saw the publication of Rene Descartes' 'Discourse de la Methode' (1637), which theorised that human beings and animals could be compared to machines or automata. The response to Descartes theory was to propel a moral debate which continues to the present day.

Descartes pointed out two differences apparent to him between humans and animals. Following in the steps of Aristotle and Aquinas, Descartes opined that animals had no form of speech and no reason (and for him, therefore, no souls). 'In contrast to the human body, the bodies of animals were supposed to operate without the guidance of a non-corporeal principle' (Maehle 194, 86). According to Peter Singer, what persuaded Descartes to this view was the fact that whilst he was a modern thinker, he was also a Christian. As a result of this, whilst his theory was influenced by 'the new science of mechanics' (Singer 1975, 200), and was based on mechanistic principles, his Christian principles prevented him from attacking the uniqueness of humanity. Conceiving of human beings as only another part of the material world, governed by mere mechanistic principles, would be to diminish our position in God's hierarchical creation, to that of the animal.

Descartes, therefore, constructed a theory which protected the notion of human uniqueness. In essence he protected humanity's uniqueness by

equating the possession of a soul to consciousness. He contended that neither of these attributes had their origins in the material world, but were part of the spiritual world, God-given and unique to humanity. The result of his theory was that as a soul was unique to man and consciousness was part of that soul, then animals did not have consciousness and, therefore, did not feel pain. They were merely automata (Singer 1975, 200). Descartes had described the process of blood circulation, (only then recently discovered by William Harvey) and the suggestion that animals were without souls or sensation provided an opportunity for budding vivisectors to use animals without guilt in order to observe the phenomenon of circulation (Maehle 1994, 87). The actions of the vivisectors prompted a debate that proceeded into the eighteenth century, the themes of which involved the capacity for animal speech, animal feeling and the possession of an immortal animal soul (Maehle 1994, 87).

#### **2.4.2            The Enlightenment and Onwards with the Emergence of Diverse World Views**

Prominent protagonists in the debate during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were middle and upper class people educated in a Christian tradition, many of whom were clerics. The eighteenth century produced a revolution in human thought. The Rights of Man by Tom Paine, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman by Mary Woolstencraft, the Declaration of Independence, the Fragment on Government, The Wealth of Nations and the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, were all published during this revolutionary century (Passmore 1974, 115; Turner 1980, 10-11). In their company came several pleas for justice for animals. Although the Catholic position on the usage of animals remained that of Aquinas, certain Protestant and Non-Conformist thinkers entered into the debate over the morality of killing animals and inflicting unnecessary cruelty upon them. The

Reverend John Hildrop and the Reverend Humphrey Primatt, both used Proverbs 12.10 to argue for care and respect for animal life (Maehle 1994, 83). Maehle contends that writers such as Hildrop heralded discussions on animal welfare which were based on animal consciousness (Maehle 1994, 88).

James Turner cites the year 1776 as 'that revolutionary annus mirabilis' in which the Reverend Humphrey Primatt's Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals was published, as a turning point in the consideration of the treatment of animals. In Turner's view Humphrey Primatt revolutionised thinking about animals by negating all previous discussions of reason and speech as criteria admissible in the debate, and replaced them with notions of animal sentience (Turner 1980, 11).

Pain is pain, whether it be inflicted on man or on beast; and the creature that suffers it, whether man or beast, being sensible of the misery of it while it lasts, suffers Evil' (Primatt 1992, 21).

Primatt coupled animals' potential capacity to suffer pain and to feel pleasure, with the notion that they were God's creations. It was thus irreverential to God to inflict cruelty upon them and there was a duty upon humanity to show mercy. By the use of biblical exegesis Primatt also confronted Christians who did not respect and care for animals in the polemical language of accusations of heresy and atheism and of a failure to understand the gospel of Christ.

For, indeed a cruel Christian is a monster of ingratitude, a scandal to his profession and beareth the name of Christ in vain: and in vain will he plead the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, when he appeareth before the God of universal nature (Primatt 1992, 126)

The popular concept of the 'Great Chain of Being' also coloured the debate. Although hierarchical and anthropocentric in its nature, the notion of a 'Great Chain of Being' implied a varying degree of relatedness and similarity between different beings. Writers such as Hildrop and Primatt used this connection in the Great Chain to advance the notion of animal sensation and the compassion due to suffering beings who, although they may not have had the same intellectual capacities as ourselves, were involved in a type of mutual kinship. The proposal of an animal soul and a kinship created by the 'Great Chain' were attempts to breach the gap between human and animal created by Cartesian thought (Maehle 1994, 89).

During the eighteenth century the defence of animals based on the possession of a soul and a place in the 'Great Chain of Being' was taken up frequently, but the question of dominion over them, granted by God, was not challenged. However, a debate about animals' natural right to justice which began in the seventeenth century was continued into the eighteenth (Maehle 1994, 89). Following in the tradition of the Stoics, Augustine and Aquinas, the school of natural right in the seventeenth century had based their exclusion of animals from the moral community on the grounds that as animals lacked reason, they could not enter into contractual obligations and therefore did not have a claim to natural right or justice from humanity (Juchem 1940 cited in Maehle 1994, 90). The British philosopher Thomas Hobbes, also argued that, as animals lacked reason and speech they could not form a contract with human beings and this barred them from any claim to rights. However, the Scottish philosopher David Hume, in his Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (1751) put forward a view of indirect obligations to animals. He also excluded animals from a contractual moral community, due to their inequality to humans, but proposed that we 'should be bound by the laws of humanity to give gentle usage to these creatures' (Hume 1964, IV, 185 cited in Maehle 1994, 91). The notion that natural right



was the province of humanity, and animals were excluded from it, was not challenged until the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Frances Hutcheson, another Scottish philosopher, in his System of Moral Philosophy (1755) proposed that animals had a right not to suffer at the hands of humanity, as long as this did not interfere with human need (Maehle 1994, 92).

#### **2.4.3 Humanity - Morally Moulded by Society?**

Another strand to the eighteenth century debate was that indulgence in cruelty to animals could corrupt and brutalise humans (Maehle 1994, 83-84). This view was supported by Immanuel Kant (Maehle 1994, 91; Singer 1975, 203). Humphrey Primatt, whilst believing that inflicting cruelty upon animals was morally damaging to humanity, turned away from the notion of encouraging merciful benevolence towards animals for the sake of one's own humanity, and instead condemned cruelty because of the suffering experienced by the victim of the cruelty, the animal (Primatt 1992).

The seventeenth and eighteenth century view of the biblical granting of dominion was a view that humanity had been granted stewardship over God's creation, with a responsibility of care (Maehle 1994, 84-85). This was not challenged by Primatt, who considered that animals were subordinate to humans. In removing reason from his criteria of whether animals had rights, Primatt's method reflected his belief that humanity was superior to animals through the possession of reason and a soul. Linzey points out that in Primatt's view, animal suffering was in fact worse than human suffering, because they had no immortal soul. 'If animals are not to be recompensed with an eternal life, how much more difficult must it be to justify their temporal sufferings' (Linzey 1987, 57). As animals are without reason, then Primatt

proposed they could not perform immoral acts, nor understand or endure physical pain as a punishment (Primatt 1992, 97-100). Primatt's methodology reinforced human superiority, but granted the animal the right to freedom from cruelty from its superiors (Turner 1980, 12).

In introducing sentiency as a criterion for the extension of compassion to animals, Primatt introduced a criterion which was to be taken up by other thinkers. Primatt dismissed notions of difference or similarity in physical appearance and the absence of reason as criteria from excluding animals from rights to respect and care and denied humanity's natural right to ill use animals, as both had been created by God (Maehle 1994, 98). But as noted before, whilst Primatt maintained that both humans and animals were sentient beings and as such both could experience suffering, he continued a tradition of human superiority, based on a lack of reason in the animal, and maintained the discrete classifications of Human and Animal.

This line of reasoning preceded the more well known founder of the utilitarian movement Jeremy Bentham. Bentham too, dismissed rationality and speech as criteria for the acquisition of rights and replaced these with the capacity to suffer. In his Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789), he proposed;

The question is not, Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But Can they suffer? (Bentham [1789] 1960, 412)

Singer contends that whilst Bentham uses the term 'rights' elsewhere in the passage from which this quotation is taken, that what is meant is equality, as in later passages Bentham refers to rights as 'nonsense' (Singer 1975, 8). 'He talked of moral rights as a shorthand way of referring to protections that people and animals morally ought to have ... on the basis of

the possibilities for suffering and happiness' (Singer 1975, 8). Central to Bentham's philosophy were the capacities to feel pain and pleasure, and utility he expressed as 'that property in any object whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness ... or ... to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered' (Bentham [1789] 1968-84, 11.1: 11-12 cited in Maehle 1994, 91).

Bentham did not restrict the pursuit of utility to human beings, but also contended that animals had interests in the pursuit of utility. Bentham appears to have negated difference between Human and Animal on the basis of the common pursuit of utility by both, and their common capacity to suffer, making them 'morally comparable' (Tester 1991, 97).

Tester, however, contends that what Bentham is actually doing is asking a question that only Bentham and like minded humans can answer. Bentham is thereby, stressing the difference between Human and Animal, subordinating 'animals to the benevolence of those humans who 'know best' , like himself (Tester 1991, 97). The Human has knowledge and the animal has not, the Human can act upon that knowledge to improve himself, the animal cannot. Human and animal are sentient, and therefore similar, but the Human has knowledge and a society, giving the Human the ability to become different from the animal and to morally improve. 'Bentham wanted to embrace animals whilst exterminating animality ' (Tester 1991, 98).

Both Bentham and Kant reflected a growing concern during the eighteenth century over the status of humanity. Bentham sought to differentiate Human from animal by superiority of knowledge, both moral and social. The avoidance of cruelty to animals was an indirect obligation due to that superior knowledge and defined for Bentham what was *authentically*

*human*. Kant, developed his concept of indirect obligations to animals because of the detrimental effect on human behaviour towards other humans, which cruelty to animals may encourage. Bentham also strongly and actively opposed slavery and equated the oppression of the slaves with that of animals (Passmore 1974, 114)

For Bentham, Kant and Primatt, then, social knowledge and the ability to overcome the animal part of humanity, differentiated Human from Animal, making the human unique. For these thinkers the *authentic human being* is a social being - apart from Nature and moulded by Culture. For another set of thinkers, led by the philosopher Rousseau, it was society and culture that had polluted the true nature of humanity and corrupted our relationship with animals.

#### **2.4.4 Humanity - 'Naturally' Moral?**

During the early eighteenth century Rousseau presented his definition of the *authentically human* as 'Man' the 'Noble Savage' corrupted by society into becoming cruel and selfish (Tester 1991, 125). For Rousseau, humanity was organically similar to animals and both were sentient, but animals were without reason or free will. The inability to understand natural law or justice, however, in his view should not exclude animals from natural right:

It seems, in fact, that if I am obliged to refrain from doing any harm to my neighbour, it is less because he is a reasonable being than because he is a sentient one; and a quality which is common to beast and man ought to give the former the right not to be uselessly ill-treated by the latter (Rousseau 1984, 71 cited in Tester 1991, 131).

For Rousseau, humanity in a natural state was good, and culture and society corrupted this nature. His concept of the *authentically human* as the

'Noble Savage' was eagerly adopted by certain individuals such as Joseph Ritson and John Oswald who have heavily contributed to the history of Animal Rights activism. These thinkers were disillusioned by society and argued for revolution. Joseph Ritson an eighteenth century pamphleteer, John Oswald a Scottish soldier who had been influenced in India by Hindu beliefs and who fought for the French Revolution and Percy Bysshe Shelley the radical Romantic poet were greatly influenced by Rousseau's theory. It is with these thinkers that we see the appearance of one of the most important aspects of contemporary Animal Rights, the concept of vegetarianism or the 'natural diet' as a source of moral evolution and enactment of civilization in producing the *authentically human*.

Tester contends that the protagonists such as Bentham, Primatt and Kant who defined the properly human as different from animals, as cultural and knowledgeable social beings, were those most involved with society and moulding humanity into proper habits. Those who defined the properly human as similar to animals, and culture and society as the pollutants which corrupt true human nature, were intellectuals who had turned their back on society such as Rousseau, Ritson and Shelley who rejected urban life (Tester 1991, 145)

Whilst both discourses are manifestly involved with the treatment of non-human animals by human beings, latently common to them both is the pursuit of a definition of the *authentically human*. In examining the philosophical roots of the animal rights movement, we discover a search for a definition of what it is to be *authentically human*, informed by utilitarianism and notions of brotherly love amongst humanity extended to encompass other species. The 'rights' expressed in the debate, so far, were those of a right of the animal to compassion from Humanity, such compassion being a necessary ingredient for *human authenticity*. This compassion was based

upon utilitarian claims which recognized animals as sentient but unequal in comparison to humanity.

Animal Rights, in short, included only the enjoyment of possible pleasure and freedom from unnecessary pain. Moreover, they always remained subject to the superior rights of people (Turner 1980, 131-132)

The discourse over whether the rights of animals could be considered as equal to the rights of human beings did not appear until the late nineteenth century.

#### **2.4.5 The Appearance of the Contemporary 'Animal Rights' Debate**

None of the previous debates fully concentrated on animal rights per se, only on what is Human in opposition to what is animal and what that means with reference to our relationships with animals. The issue of animal 'rights' appeared at the end of the nineteenth century with the appearance of Henry Salt's book Animal Rights in Relation to Social Progress which gathered up the threads of the previous traditions into an all encompassing theory (Tester 1991 149-150). In 1894 Henry Salt took up the concepts expressed in the eighteenth century and from these constructed a new theory of animal rights (Maehle 1994, 100-101). Salt 'preached neither petting nor persecution, but benevolent neutrality. Let animals lead their own, natural lives rather than act out human wishes (Turner 1980, 136).

Tester proposes that Salt was transformed from the life and world view of a typical Victorian gentleman when; 'He began to see with the alien eye of the anthropologist' (Tester 1991, 151). What provoked this transformation is unclear, but Salt a master at Eton did hold amongst his social circle, George Bernard Shaw, a noted vegetarian and Salt's wife, Kate Joynes was

an avid admirer of Shaw. She was also an exponent of the simple life which allowed one to keep 'in touch with the countryside and true human sensibilities' (Tester 1993, 151). Salt's wife's attempts to keep in touch with 'true human sensibilities' or what I would term the *authentically human* may have affected Salt's own views. In his own words over the years he had accepted the social order in England 'as part of the natural order' (Salt 1921: 8-9), until his own 'fateful moment' or 'moral shock', which Tester proposes presumably arrived when he was at the dinner table (Tester 1991: 150).

Salt's autobiography of his life in England Seventy Years Among Savages, reveals what Tester sees as an anthropological view, but this title also reflects the effect of having one's world view totally changed. Once civilized Eton masters become revealed as uncivilized due to their blood diet, their *unauthenticity* is revealed and Salt's search for the *authentically human* begins.

Thus gradually the conviction had been forced on me that we Eton masters, however irreproachable our surroundings, were but cannibals in cap and gown - almost literally cannibals, as devouring the flesh and blood of the higher non-human animals so closely akin to us (Salt 1921, 64)

Salt resigned from Eton in 1884 and retired from the world to live in simplicity. In 1888 he published a monograph on Shelley publicly supporting his views on the 'natural diet'. By 1894 Salt had produced a theory for the rights of animals which usurped the exalted place of humanity and reconciled the contradictions revealed in previous discourses. (Tester 1991: 151)

For Salt, human relationships with animals were dominated by 'that old anthropocentric superstition which pictures Man as the centre of the universe, and separate from the inferior animals ... by a deep intervening gulf' (Salt [1894] 1980, 13). Salt sought to breach this gulf by persuading human

beings to recognise a kinship with other animals contending that 'the basis of any real morality must be the sense of Kinship between all living beings' (Salt 1935, viii).

Salt proposed that, humans and animals were essentially the same, each were sentient, each had individual inherent value. Humanity may be the moral animal, but as such is no more morally relevant than any other living creature. Salt dismissed the discrete categories of 'Human' and 'Animal' and in the language of his times, referred to animals as the 'lower races'. Central to humanity's disregard for the moral relevancy of animals, for Salt, was the use of language which objectified them; 'the common use of such terms as 'brute-beast, 'livestock' etc., which implicitly deny to the lower races that intelligent individuality which is most undoubtedly possessed by them' (Salt 1980, 17).

Salt took the two opposing arguments put forward in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and reconciled them. Salt, in effect, condemned all social relationships with other animals unless it was on an equalitarian basis (Salt 1980). This he based on his view that all living creatures have an individual and inherent value and are therefore morally relevant. Following the tradition of Bentham and Kant, he also echoed the view that the ill usage of animals by humanity would lead to an ill usage of our fellow humans. Whilst abhorring the killing of animals for human food, Salt also viewed 'sports' such as hunting as a rehearsal for the abominations of war and in reviewing the carnage of the First World War commented:

As long as man kills the lower races for food or sport, he will be ready to kill his own race for enmity. It is not this bloodshed or that bloodshed, that must cease, but all needless bloodshed - all wanton infliction of pain or death upon our fellow beings (Salt cited in Adams 1990, 126).



Henry Salt in his search for the *authentically human*, produced a theory that emphasized a compassion for all things. Thinking, as Levi-Strauss would put it, with animals, he constructed a model for the *authentically human*, which has been taken up by contemporary philosophers. In the main unread other than by the intellectuals of his day, Henry Salt, is now recognized as the father of contemporary animal rights by the present day philosophers Tom Regan, Peter Singer and Andrew Linzey and has been republished. In Chapter 4 I will discuss how the discovery of Salt's works helped to authenticate the intellectual stance of the present day animal rights philosophers.

#### **2.4.6 The Contemporary Debate**

Henry Salt's text, Animals' Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress was first published in 1894 and after a long silence on the subject by intellectuals, it again began to be discussed in learned circles during the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies. Peter Singer's book Animal Liberation was published in 1975, its popularity leading to it being reprinted in 1990 and 1995. Following Bentham in a utilitarian tradition, Singer avoids any notion of rights and prefers a principle of equality. 'The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a prescription of how we should treat human beings' (Singer 1975, 5). Singer proposes that this principle of equality be extended to non-human animals based on the possession of interests, interests based on sentience. 'The capacity for suffering and enjoyment is, ... not only necessary, but also sufficient for us to say that a being has interests - at an absolute minimum, an interest in not suffering' (Singer 1975, 8).

Following Bentham, Singer claims that this is the sole criterion which can be judged to be authentic. He contends that criteria such as physical

appearance or intellectual capacities are irrelevant. As the use of skin colour as a criterion for moral relevance is racist, so for Singer to discriminate against animals because of physical appearance is 'speciesist' (Singer 1975, 9). Again, following both Bentham and Salt, Singer declares 'all animals are equal', but we can see that there is an animal more equal than others, the human moral animal. Because animals are unable to protest for themselves, the *authentic human being* must refrain from all exploitation of animals and must become an advocate for them. Singer's book is a searing indictment of human uses of animals in both laboratories and factory farms and combines ethical philosophy with expose and a 'call to arms'. Whilst Singer does not explicitly condemn pet keeping as Salt did, his condemnation of it is implicit in the preface of the book. (Singer 1975, ii).

Singer's "Animal Liberation" was followed by the publication of American philosopher Tom Regan's book The Case for Animal Rights in 1984. Whereas Singer's book can be read both as a philosophical work and a handbook for action, Regan's book is a far more profound examination of the question and criticises Singer's utilitarian argument. In Regan's view the utilitarian position is one that, whilst taking account of individual sentient beings' preference not to suffer, subsumes it to the preference of the many. This position overrides the preference of the individual not to suffer, which removes protection from that individual. Regan concentrates on the defence of the individual. Regan's view is a 'rights' view based on intrinsic individual value, not a utilitarian one. All life that has preferences, sentience, emotions, goals and an identity over time has an intrinsic value (Regan 1984, 264).

Regan addresses reason and, like the Stoics, Hobbes and Primatt before him, concedes that animals are not moral agents, like human beings. They cannot enter into contractual obligations with humanity, they are moral patients, in need of moral guardians, as are some human beings, who we do

not exclude from the moral community, such as infants, coma victims, the mentally ill and disadvantaged.

Following Salt and in opposition to previous thinkers such as Bentham, therefore, he considers animals are not of less inherent value than human beings, as human beings can be both a moral agent and a moral patient. To cause harm to any subject of a life whether a moral agent or a moral patient 'causally detracts from their individual welfare' (Regan 1984, 243). Regan agrees with Singer that human beings are animals, and 'all animals are equal', but he bases it on inherent value, not preferences. 'All animals are equal, when the notions of 'animal' and 'equality' are properly understood, 'animal' referring to all (terrestrial, at least) moral agents and patients, and 'equality' referring to their equal possession of inherent value. Inherent value is thus a categorical concept' (Regan 1984, 240).

Like Singer, Regan eschews meat eating, animal experimentation or using animals towards any human ends, because this denies their inherent value (Regan 1984, 350-351). Again we find the *authentically human being* leaves animals alone, because to do otherwise means entering into an unequal relationship with them which pollutes the *authentically human*.

Andrew Linzey, the last member of the triumvirate of present day animal rights philosophy, published Christianity and the Rights of Animals in 1987 and attempts to answer accusations from such sources as Peter Singer (1975) and Lynn White Jr (1967), that Christianity has neglected any responsibilities for the welfare of animals and been so heavily responsible for the oppression of the natural world, as to threaten the whole eco-system (Linzey 1987, 23). Linzey does not deny traditional Christianity's past, but attributes it to a misguided view of the Bible. Following in the tradition of Humphrey Primatt, Linzey uses biblical exegesis to promote his view that

under Christianity, animals should be due certain rights.

Linzey agrees that past and present Christian teaching has been anthropocentric and dwelt largely on the relationships among human beings and the relationship between humanity and God. Interpretations of biblical 'Dominion' have been hierarchical, with humanity in a position of absolute power over nature. The traditional notion of 'Dominion' is rejected by Linzey who contends that what is meant is 'Stewardship', which involves responsibility. Where Dominion has been stressed, Linzey contends that God's covenant with humanity and the natural world has been neglected. This covenant allows for Spirit 'which is the basis of all life' (Linzey 1987, 31). For Linzey, humanity has no rights over animals only duties, and animals have the right to live in freedom filled with God's Spirit. (Linzey 1987, 29). Linzey takes a viewpoint shared with Regan, that animals should not be harmed because of their individual intrinsic value. 'All creatures, large and small, intelligent and unintelligent, sentient and non-sentient have worth' (Linzey 1987, 9). For Linzey respect for animal rights involves all of the behavioural actions expected from the Singer and Regan views. He condemns pet keeping, meat eating, experimentation and any exploitative social contact with animals. To indulge in these practices damages our status as the moral animal or the *authentically human being*.

#### **2.4.7 Conclusion**

Singer, Regan and Linzey are the pre-eminent intellectual advocates for animal rights of the present day in Britain at least. Interestingly, the substance of their arguments contains nothing persuasive enough actually to change the dominant views of mass society in our relationships with animals. The themes which occupied the eighteenth and nineteenth century are repeated in the present. The question to address here is why these themes

have arisen in a cyclical way. The debates over animals contributed to the birth, in the nineteenth century of the American humane movement (Maehle 1994, 100), and the debates when set in the social and cultural constructs of their times, clearly demonstrate that 'animals are good to think'. In the next Chapter I will be addressing the social and cultural background which informed the discussions of humanity and animality during the periods covered in the previous discussion, and prompted the protagonists to think as they did.

As I noted above Clifford Geertz points out that no matter what else the study of anthropology highlights it is convinced of the fact that the condition of humanity is not uniform, concepts of humanity are a production of '... time, place, and circumstances, of studies and professions, transient fashions and temporary opinions' (Geertz 1973, 35). Geertz's contention, following Max Weber that humanity '... is ... suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun.' (Geertz 1973, 5). That the strands of this web are informed by time, place, circumstances, studies and professions are amply illustrated by the social background which informed the philosophical debates.

## CULTURAL WARFARE

### 3.1 Introduction

The philosophical debates over cruelty and kindness to animals and whether animals had any claim to rights were closely related to the changes taking place in Western European human society resulting from changes in the economic production of peoples' lives. The ever increasing pace of industrialization and urbanisation and a changing social order heavily influenced the emergence and influence of the debates. In the year 1700, three quarters of the people in Britain were rural dwellers, only 13% of the population lived in towns with over 5,000 inhabitants. By 1800 the proportion living in towns was 25%(Thomas 1983, 243). By 1881 70.2% of the population of England and Wales lived in towns (Best 1971, 24).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the town had been considered the home of the civilized and sophisticated and the country that of the uncouth. By the mid- eighteenth century, the country and the natural world had begun to be idealized in the minds of urbanites and its virtues expounded by poets like Shelley, Burns and Pope. Removal from traditional agricultural production and an increasingly industrial and capital economic base, which necessitated a concentration of the human population in towns, also saw the rise of a new 'class' of people, prepared to engage in a battle for cultural supremacy.

### 3.2 The Rise of the Pensee Bourgeoises

In the native conception, the economy is an arena of pragmatic action. And society is the formal outcome. The main relations of class and politics, as well as the conceptions men entertain of nature and of themselves, are generated by this rational pursuit of material happiness (Sahlins 1976, 167)

thinking with animals' in the cultural complexity of Western societies needs to be related to the historical processes of class formation and conflict, cultural hegemony and resistance, as well as to a discussion of the material experiences behind the production, reproduction and change of such cognitive systems over time (Lofgren 1985, 186)

In the pursuit of material happiness, people transform their worlds. Keith Thomas, in his discussion of 'Man and the Natural World', contends that to understand present day environmental concerns in Britain and concerns over humanity's relationship with other animals 'we must go back to the early modern period' (Thomas 1983, 15) where the social world was in transformation. 'It is impossible to disentangle what the people of the past thought about plants and animals from what they thought about themselves' (Thomas 1983, 16). It was during the period 1500-1800 that changes in the social lives of people in Britain led to a re-evaluation of their attitudes to nature, to themselves and specifically to animals (Thomas 1983, 15). During this period we see the rise of what Sahlins terms the '*Pensee Bourgeoise*' (The Middle Class Mind), the educated, urban male middle class capitalist, seeking a place in the social order and constructing a model of the *authentically human* which reflected their own cultural categories.

Thomas considers that Lynn White Jnr's (1967) accusation that Christianity had brought about the rape of the natural world is an exaggeration. In reality it was the advent of capitalism and industrial society supported by a religious ideology that stressed humanity's God-given superiority, and the dominion give to humanity, which allowed the plunder of the planet (Thomas 1983, 23). The main protagonists in the debates over cruelty and kindness to animals during this period were drawn from an emergent middle class, in its nature both urban and intellectual. Orvar

Lofgren discusses the parallel rise of Sahlins's Pensee Bourgeoise in Sweden during the same period of social and cultural change and how 'thinking with animals, ... reflected their culture-building, their self-representation and their cultural warfare with other groups' (Lofgren 1985, 186).

Lofgren contends that the rise of the educated middle class male as the paradigm for the properly human and the middle class world view as a dominant world view in Europe, was not solely due to a changing mode of production and ideology, but was inextricably linked to the struggle of the new middle class to achieve political and social supremacy over the feudal aristocracy and the lower classes. As Thomas points out 'it was almost impossible to reflect on animals' during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'without being distracted by the conflicting perceptions imposed by social class' (Thomas 1983, 184).

The hunting pursuits of the aristocracy and its militaristic overtones were considered by the middle class professionals as decadent, time-wasting and expensive. The working classes saw such pastimes as symbolic of the privilege of aristocracy and the animals involved with such privilege, such as dogs and horses, frequently became the targets of cruelty by the working class in protest at their own conditions (Thomas 1983, 184). The leisure pastimes of the working classes such as bear-baiting were also viewed by the emergent capitalist middle-class as brutal and time-wasting in a world which the middle-classes were actively engaged in moulding, the world of urban industry. The entrepreneurial middle class began to engage itself with their own definition of the *authentically human* through its own discourse over cruelty and kindness to animals.

Central to the eighteenth century European Enlightenment's



interpretation of history, was the notion of the rise of humanity over the natural world and other species which was intrinsically interwoven with ideas about 'civilization' (Thomas 1983, 28). In Britain, this had led to a jaundiced view of the animal world, as a mere foil to illuminate the brilliance of certain sections of humanity: 'It was as a comment on *human* nature that the concept of 'animality' was devised' (Thomas, 1983, 40). As Thomas points out, this had huge repercussions on the social relations between people (Thomas 1983, 41).

For if the essence of humanity was defined as consisting in some specific quality, then it followed that any man who did not display that quality was subhuman, semi-animal (Thomas 1983, 41).

Certain sections of humanity appeared, at this time, not to conform to the *authentically human*, the 'Negro', the Irish, children, young men of all classes, women, the mad, and particularly in Britain, the working class (Thomas 1983, 43). The definition of the *authentically human* at this time was personified by the educated, middle-class, middle-aged Englishman. The working class, devoid of education and living in abject poverty fell far below this definition, encouraging a classification of the poor as animal-like (Thomas 1983, 43).

For the English sensibility at this time, high culture was central to humanity, those human groups who appeared devoid of this were consigned to the realm of animality. Thomas notes the eighteenth century London goldsmith who offered for sale 'silver padlocks for blacks or dogs' (Thomas 1983, 45). The accoutrements of animal domestication were sold for the disciplining of women who transgressed male laws, bridles for the scold and halters for wives dispensed with at auction (see Thomas Hardy's novel The

Mayor of Casterbridge where the unfortunate wife and daughter are sold to a sailor by the future mayor in a moment of drunkenness). At all times, the poor were to be kept at bay and controlled (Thomas 1983, 45).

In an attempt to establish the world view of the Pensee Bourgeoise as the dominant one, the middle class gentleman began to interest himself in structuring both the natural world and the social world into classifications which he himself constructed. Systems of classifying the 'natural' world were appropriated through the rise of new sciences created by the Pensee Bourgeoise and systems of classifying the social world were created by this new class whose image of the *authentically human* became a mirror image of themselves.

### **3.2.1 Classification**

During the early Modern period, systems of classifying the natural world began to change. With the rise of the science of natural history, more detailed and less anthropocentric classifications began to develop. Although the perspectives of clerics and philosophers generally remained anthropocentric, the study of natural history began to erode these views, along with peoples' actual experiences of animals.

It was the actual social relationships of people with animals which began to inform intellectual activity. At the beginning of the early modern period, the agricultural worker was recognised as having a wide knowledge of the natural world and native systems of classification of that world that at its inception, the science of natural history depended upon. By the late seventeenth century, however, rural classifications of nature began to be dismissed as simply utilitarian and irrational (Thomas 1983, 70-80).

Rural knowledge having been appropriated by the scholarly middle class was transformed into classifications only accessible to the formally educated middle class. The nomenclature for use in the classification of plants and animals was also transformed from the native language to the scholar's language, Latin, using the Linnaean system of classification (Thomas 1983, 86). Thomas points out that by the end of the eighteenth century, communication regarding pests attacking crops had become impossible between rural workers and naturalists as they no longer spoke the same language and more than this, the rural worker's language was regarded as ignorant and ill-informed (Thomas 1983, 87).

In addition to the appropriation and transformation of rural knowledge into 'sciences' accessible to only the educated middle class, Thomas points to another theme which threads its way through the middle-classes battle for dominance conducted through the naming of things: their project of moulding both the social and natural world into their own image of how it should be. The rural names for many plants and animals were considered to be too vulgar, many being based on human anatomy and bodily functions. Thus, they used Latin terminology and their own common names to suppress vulgarisms which revealed too much of the baser nature of the rural worker such as the evocative term 'bum-towel' for the long-tailed tit-mouse (Thomas 1983, 85). To a certain extent they succeeded, but some terms for wild plants which Thomas contends were around in the seventeenth century were not completely expunged. The 'pissabed' (dandelion) is still referred to in contemporary Scotland and parts of Northern England as 'peethebed' and in France 'pisenlit'.

We can thus see how middle class appropriation of the classifications of the natural world also involved classifying the social world, widening the gap between the uneducated rural dwellers and the educated urban middle

class. For the educated urban middle class the natural world was increasingly being seen through the science of natural history and latterly of zoology as independent of humanity and of value in its own right and no longer as a yardstick for the measure of humanity (Thomas 1983, 91). The development of science, technology and engineering throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century had enabled human beings to perceive the natural world as manageable and under human control, removing human beings from its power and enabling human beings to take a more sentimental view of nature (Ritvo 1987, 3).

Prior to this period, the separation of humanity and nature was demanded by the Church, but the reality of 'ordinary' peoples lives conflicted with this, and the reality of these people's lives left little room for sentimentality. Whilst domestic animals were kept either to eat or for work purposes, their proximity to humanity was much closer than is the case with modern husbandry. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe it was common practice for animals and humans to share the same 'long-house', where people and animals slept under the same roof (Thomas 1983, 95; Lofgren 1985, 187). James Turner points out that prior to industrialisation, people in the every day production of their lives were intimately involved with animals. They worked with, cared for and slaughtered animals for food, clothing and sport as part of the harsh realities of their lives (Turner 1980, 1).

Even with the advent of urbanisation, the new town dwellers who had moved to the towns from rural areas to work in the new factories carried their rural habits with them and kept pigs and cows in the street, poultry and horses inside their houses (Thomas 1983, 95). Prior to urbanisation relationships between working people and their domestic animals was one of mutual symbiosis where the animals, whilst perhaps in the position of

servants, were part of a community involving themselves and human beings (Thomas 1983, 96).

Up to the opening of the nineteenth century London's streets were full of dogs and horses engaged in working for human beings and crowds of human beings often mingled with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle on their way to Smithfield market (Ritvo 1994, 106). The suffering of these animals was highly visible and little regarded. Slaughterhouses had not been removed fully from the public gaze and no attempts to ease the painful end of the animals' lives were made. The pastimes of the working class involved various blood sports using domestic animals such as dog-fights and cock-fights. Wild animals were used in baiting. The upper classes continued to hunt foxes and stags and wear out horses in steeplechasing (Ritvo 1994, 106). It would appear that the philosophical debates of the previous century had little effect upon the lives of ordinary people or animals (Turner 1980, 15)

As late as 1853, the English disregard for the sufferings of animals was reported upon and in 1868 Queen Victoria commented on the cruelty of her own subjects in their relationships with animals (Ritvo 1994, 107). However, by the end of that century kindness to animals had become known as a national trait (Ritvo 1994, 107).

Why this should have become so, is often explained by the idea that industrialisation and urbanisation somehow promoted a new interest in the welfare of animals, perhaps due to a new sentimentality generated by the absence of animals in the cities and greater human control over nature. Whilst the notion of the 'Great Chain of Being' which was influential during the eighteenth century portrayed all forms of life as interconnected links in a chain, without a huge chasm between animals and human beings it was hierarchically ordered with humanity at its head, just below the angels.

Charles Darwin's Origin of Species and The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex published in the mid-nineteenth century heavily influenced both professional and amateur scientists and his evolutionary theory which proposed human beings are animals became the subject of discussion amongst the 'chattering classes' of the time. When Darwin's theory combined with the long history of debates over compassion for animals, the already wavering belief in humanity's 'majestic isolation' was completely overthrown (Turner 1980, 6-7). On the Origin of Species (1859) removed the 'natural' hierarchy with humanity at the head and The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex (1871) proposed that not only was the human body animal in origin, but also the mind. (Ritvo 1987, 39). As a result of this a new era began where the educated middle class; 'As they sat by the fireside, examining fossils and stroking the dog ... could see that anthropocentrism was a myth' (Tester 1991, 54).

An alternative explanation may be found in the response of the new capitalist, educated middle class, whose re-ordering of material existence from the rural to the urban industrial resulted in the reordering of the symbolic world. For 'La Pensee Bourgeoise' the metaphorical animal rose to ascendance in the realm of symbolic thought. James Turner offers the explanation that the world of factory life was dominant in the city, the rural workers who had worked within the seasonally dominated natural world or who had worked as rural outworkers setting their own rhythm had now to work to the beat of the factory clock and machine (Turner 1980, 25).

The continuation of the rural habits of living in close proximity with animals and enjoyment of traditional rural 'sports' within the urban environment may certainly have contributed to the middle class's view of the working class as animal like. More importantly the longevity of 'sports' such as bull baiting and the drunken behaviour which went hand-in-hand with the

'sport' threatened the efficient running of the factory system. Together with the longevity and perceived debauchery which accompanied sports such as bull baiting, rural sports had no physical space within the urban environment as the human population increased and buildings expanded (Turner 1980, 27).

With the growth in urbanisation animals which had supported the agrarian economy such as cows, sheep and pigs began to disappear from the urban landscape and working animals such as the dog and the horse also disappeared with increasing mechanisation. If, however, the relationship between humanity and the domestic animals who were their co-workers and their source of food, declined, another relationship with animals was on the rise.

### **3.2.2 Pet Keeping**

Pet-keeping was increasingly becoming more and more popular (Thomas 1983, 104). Whilst the incidence of pet-keeping in Britain rose dramatically during the last two centuries and has been associated with urban living, Serpell (1986) and Tuan (1984) provide evidence of pet-keeping as a cross-cultural practice in many different cultural settings. So that whilst a rise in affluence and a retreat from nature in modern Britain goes partly to explain the rise of 'pet culture', the cross cultural evidence diminishes these factors as a full explanation. However, the increasing habit of keeping animals as 'pets' is considered to have influenced the increase in interest in and compassion towards animals and a growing 'sentimental anthropomorphism' of them in the Western mind (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 17; Thomas 1983, 121).

The arrival of certain favoured animals into the domestic sphere,

animals without a practical function, coincided with a change in the naming of animals, ever more frequently pets were given human names, which stressed the intimacy between them and their human owners and increased their status within the human community. Jeremy Bentham was the owner of a cat called Sir John Langborn, whilst a close friend of Joseph Ritson named his dog, Ritson (Thomas 1983, 115).

Levi-Strauss describes animals who are a part of human society in modern French culture, such as horses and dogs, as metonymical humans. Those animals, such as wild birds, who play no part in human society, but appear to have a developed social life which mirrors human social life, are classified as metaphorical human beings (Levi-Strauss 1966, 203-207). His contention is that the naming of things indicates how these things are classified in the human mind. Domestic animals, who are metonymical humans, cannot be given human names as their physical and social distance from humans is too near and the use of human names would blur the boundaries between human and animal. Metaphorical human beings, animals of the wild, however, can be given human names as they are so physically and socially distanced from ourselves. Whilst mirroring our own society, they provide us with a parallel society to use as a metaphorical referent. Hence, his contention is that domestic animals such as dogs cannot be given human names. This may be true for modern French society, but of course we know this to be untrue in British society where domestic pets are frequently given human names.

In Britain, it was during the eighteenth century, that domestic animals ceased to be named after innate characteristics or attributes and began to be given human names. The giving of human names to certain domestic animals can be interpreted as the beginnings of a special intimate social relationship between human beings and certain animals that indicated a



blurring of the boundaries between human and animal. Pets became animals 'more like me' (Leach 1964, 166). This heavily influenced all our relationships with animals and consequently our relations with each other as the definition of the *authentically human* increasingly became that of one who was kind to animals and betrayed no animal-like tendencies.

Contrary to Levi-Strauss's theory, during the period of urbanisation and industrialisation in Britain, it was the metonymical which became the metaphorical. Pet keeping was the catalyst, according to Turner (1980) and Tester (1991). This is not the sole answer, however, because pet-keeping in itself became part of the cultural battle of the new middle-class.

Who were these pet keepers? Predominantly it was the urban middle class. Those who in their everyday lives had become removed from contact with most animals. During these times of increasing urbanisation and industrialization the 'urban middle class was the enthusiast for compassion and the protagonist for the Romantic view of nature' (Tester 1991, 55). Whilst sentimentalism grew, where a 'mythical' pastoral life became a symbol of a lost innocence, the pets of the middle class also became such a symbol. A familiarity with their pets' habits, in conjunction with a greater interest and knowledge of natural science led to a growing moral repugnance over the ill-usage of all animals within the world of the middle class and intellectuals.

Love was not, however, the whole story (Ritvo 1987, 86)

Social aspirations and a desire to mould the social world are reflected in the middle-class pre-occupation with pets, in particular dogs (Ritvo 1987, 86). Prior to the emergence of the urban middle-classes, pet keeping amongst the aristocracy had been recorded since the Middle Ages and the British monarchy were well known for their love of their pet dogs (Ritvo 1987,

85). Outside the ranks of the aristocracy, pet keeping was relatively unknown until the eighteenth century and sentimental attachment to them was an upper class distinction up until the beginning of the nineteenth century, but by the mid-nineteenth century the 'Victorian cult of pets was firmly established' (Ritvo 1987, 86)

During this time we see the rise of the breeding and showing of dogs as an occupation of the urban professional and business middle class. For Ritvo these occupations reflected the middle class's desire to categorize the social world, for in these shows to establish breeds was 'a vision of a stable, hierarchical society, where rank was secure and individual merit, rather than just inherited position, appreciated' (Ritvo 1987, 84). Whilst not denying the sentimental attachment of the middle-classes to their pets, Ritvo points out that the keeping of useless decorative animals was an attempt to emulate the upper class and a great deal of money was to be made in the creation of breeds, the production of food for these pets and grooming apparatus for them.

### **3.2.3 The Place of Legislation in Defining The Authentically Human**

As discussed previously, Lofgren points out that the new modern natural sciences which emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries must be viewed not only as an intellectual development, but part of a culture building process where a new ordering of the natural world was paralleled by a new order in the human social world. This had an impact on the distribution of knowledge, which was appropriated by the new middle class (Lofgren 1985, 193). The new science of zoology which had begun by examining exhibits in museums moved on to examining the interactions of the live animal, working with the rural peasant's folk knowledge and appropriating it and transforming this into 'science', eroding the belief in oral tradition and

replacing it with a written tradition accessible only to the middle class.

The new scientists, however, did not simply classify animals as animals, the classifications were "impregnated with bourgeois values and parameters" (Lofgren 1985, 196). Animals were anthropomorphized and hierarchically ordered reflecting the middle class desire to place order into the human social world. The middle class also had an agenda for the re-ordering of human society. In their cultural battle against the aristocracy and the lower classes, the new middle class modelled themselves in opposition to both these 'others'.

The intellectual middle class were 'rational' and 'moral', those engaging in cruelty to animals, revealed their own animal nature 'Only people belonging to the lower stages of cultural development could live like animals' (Lofgren 1985, 198). The aristocracy and its privileges and militaristic tendencies were regarded as the remnants of feudalism, and the many discourses which took place over the morality of hunting were aimed at curbing a dissipated aristocracy (Thomas 1983, 184). The lower classes who had brought rural sports such as bull-baiting with them into the urban landscape, were similarly viewed as undesirable. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the debates over kindness and cruelty to animals were inseparable from attempts to reform lower class habits into ones considered to be more suitable for industrial town workers;

Love for the brute creation was frequently combined with distaste for the habits of the lower orders; and middle-class opinion was as outraged by the disorder which the animal sports created as by the cruelty involved (Thomas 1983, 186).

In England this cultural battle propelled a discourse over bull-baiting, a rural pastime which had been brought into the town by the new industrial workers. Whilst rural life had been mythologised to represent a lost age of

innocence, the reality of the rural coming to town was frowned upon as a danger to the fabric of society. Political reformers, evangelical Christians and industrialists combined to rid England of this barbaric 'sport' (Turner 1980, 21). The science of natural history which emerged in the eighteenth century had demonstrated the connections of humanity with the natural world and this knowledge had permeated through the educated population. By the beginning of the nineteenth century: 'No tolerably well read Englishman ... could escape the insinuation that he was uncomfortably close kin to his horse' (Turner 1980, 23). This extension of kinship and ultimately compassion influenced attitudes towards cruelty and kindness to animals, together with an uncomfortable perception that the unruly workers who attended bull-bating were 'a dark primitive horde' liable to be as brutal to each other as they were to animals (Turner 1980, 23).

Even more influential than both these attitudes, was 'capital'. The new capitalists were eager to keep their costs down and their profits up. Blood sports such as bull baiting were not only undignified and cruel, but very lengthy affairs involving gambling and heavy drinking, threatened the industrial order and had to be curbed. Bills were brought to Parliament by Victorian worthies who shaped human destiny and involved themselves with the fate of animals as well. The first bill against bull baiting was moved by Sir William Wilberforce (1800), followed by an attempt by Baron Erskine (1809) and Richard Martin 'Humanity Dick' (1822). Wilberforce and Erskine failed, but Martin succeeded, with the backing of William Wilberforce and Thomas Fowell Buxton and resulted in the Acts to Prevent the Cruel Treatment of Cattle and the Cruelty to Animals Act which prohibited cruelty to domestic animals as the private property of their human owner. In 1822, Martin had learned the lesson that cruelty to animals was irrelevant to many MPs and in his speech to Parliament emphasized the unruliness of the urban workers who participated in such cruelty and the threat that this posed to human

society (Tester 1991, 108-109; Turner 1980, 39). The animals protected by this Act were mainly horses and cattle.

The success of Martin's bill was due to two themes, one that cruelty to animals displayed a disregard for private property and another that inhumanity to our animal brothers may lead to inhumanity towards other humans. Martin, together with figures such as Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury were instrumental in the formation of a body to enforce the legislation (Garner 1993, 41). The first animal protection agency came into being in 1824, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which became the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1840. This charity became a favourite of the upper classes, used as it mainly was for policing the working class and its ambivalent attitude to vivisection was favoured by the 'scientific' and necessarily middle class community (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 57). In 1835 a bill introduced by Joseph Pease extended the protection of Martin's bill to other animals and resulted in cock fighting and any animal baiting being declared illegal (Garner 1993, 75).

During the nineteenth century, although much debate continued over animal welfare, the last piece of legislation was the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876 for the regulation of vivisection laboratories. It was the question of vivisection which propelled a split in the RSPCA and a change in the Victorian heart and mind. Although the roots of the contemporary animal movement are frequently traced to philosophers and political activists, I feel that they lie in the Victorian mind, confused by a rapidly changing world, the loss of contact with nature and a bombardment of new knowledge. It is a hope frequently confounded that knowledge will promote kindness, but in the Victorian mind we can see its stirrings.

### 3.2.4 Compassion

It is fascinating to note on the point of *human authenticity* that as late as the nineteenth century, children, together with women and the Negro were still not included within its sphere, however changes were to come. As the middle class and urbanisation had grown hand in hand, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the idea of the family as a moral and nurturing unit separate from the flow of economic life and a place of privacy and intimacy also grew. The status of the child began to change, children had previously been used as workers or considered as property without status in the social world, very much like animals. This attitude began to change, to acknowledge that childhood was a morally and intellectually fragile stage of human life, with special needs for compassion and education (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 14-15). Legislation to protect animals was used to prosecute a child cruelty case in America through the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which led to the institution of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Garner 1993, 41). In this case the sensitivity which had expanded to include domestic animals similarly facilitated the inclusion of the child into the moral community.

James Turner hypothesises that the Victorian preoccupation with animals and their welfare to some extent arose from the increasing exploitation of human beings in the process of industrialisation and the proximity of their dehumanised working and living conditions. This he suggests disturbed a class of people who were their exploiters and a discourse over the discomfort of animals soothed troubled minds over the discomfort of human beings who were the source of their profits (Turner 1980, 36). Finsen & Finsen (1994) discuss Turner's hypothesis that sympathy for animals was a way of alleviating a concern for the poor which could not be expressed by the entrepreneurial classes, but conclude that

Turner overlooks the growth in the humanitarian movement at this time(Finsen & Finsen 1994, 25).

Turner also points out that a greater awareness of pain may have contributed to the growth of compassion and empathy. In his view, compassion involves a recognition and rejection of pain both for ourselves and others. New technologies and scientific discoveries appeared to be controlling Nature. Pain which in the past was an inevitable part of life, now appeared capable of control, at least for some. New technologies and greater education had also increased communication and knowledge of others which Turner contends contributed to the growth of empathy. This growth in empathy and revulsion from pain in Turner's view could not be allowed by the entrepreneurial class to extend to the working classes, and, therefore, coalesced in the concern for animals and in a rejection of vivisection (Turner 1980, 82-83).

This growing revulsion from pain precipitated the first of the schisms in the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) which although repelled by vivisection was perceived to be too cautious in its opposition. A breakaway group formed the antivivisection Victoria Street Society in 1875 which later became the National AntiVivisection Society (NAVS) under the leadership of Francis Power Cobbe. Cobbe later split away from NAVS and founded the British Union Against Vivisection (BUAV) devoted to the abolition of all vivisection. The question of vivisection is one that highlights attitudes which split the animal protection movement today, the questions of welfare and abolition.

The Victoria Street Society's ultimate aim was for the total abolition of vivisection, but it proceeded in 1875 to press for a bill to regulate its practices. This was met by opposition from the scientific community and the

Society was ultimately disappointed by the introduction of the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876 which merely demanded that practitioners be licensed, places of experimentation to be registered and experiments where animals regained consciousness to require a certificate. Frances Cobbe 's reaction to this was that it merely protected the vivisectors from prosecution under earlier legislation (Turner 1980, 92). Vivisection represented, and still does to many, the worst of human excesses, as it was not carried out by the ill educated, but those who operated in the name of Science. The practitioners of vivisection did not have access to anaesthesia until the 1840s but even after that some did not use it in their experiments upon animals, which provoked a great sense of horror both amongst those who loved animals and those who did not.

Martin Pernick (1985) discussing 'The Case of McGonigle's Foot' highlights the notion of a hierarchy of pain which presided in the mid-Victorian age in America which reflected the British attitude. Certain individuals were judged to suffer pain more acutely than others. Those within the truly human sphere who experienced pain and were perceived to require anaesthesia were the educated wealthy middle classes, those outside that sphere and therefore considered insensitive to pain were the poor and uneducated, the Irish and alcoholics who were classed with animals (Pernick 1985, 4, 148-167). In 1862 although anaesthesia was available and cheap, the unfortunate McGonigle fell outside the sphere of the *authentically human*, being a drunken Irish immigrant who had broken his ankle. Due to his social status he was considered insensitive to pain and had his foot amputated without anaesthesia, dying from shock two days later (Pernick 1985, 3-8). Animals together with their human counterparts, the lower social classes, were also considered to be immune to pain, but in Britain the anti-vivisection movement was pressing to change this. Already emerging was the sense that in their treatment of animals, human beings defined what they were and



could be (Turner 1980, 92).

... kindness to animals had become for many a sine qua non of civilization (Turner 1980, 78)

In the Victorian mind vivisection threatened the status of 'humanity'. Science which had originally discovered and disseminated a theory of kinship between animals and humanity as a 'scientific fact', had contributed to a growth in concern for animal welfare and yet now 'scientists' were perceived as betrayers of that kinship. This led to the 'parting of the ways' of the pro-animal lobby and Science (Turner 1980, 100).

Scientists were now perceived not only to have betrayed the animals, but in doing so had lost the respect of many Victorians who had looked to Science as a means to 'moral evolution'. Science had encouraged an empathy with animals due to discoveries of evolutionary kinship and animal ability and sensibility and then betrayed it, Science had attacked religious belief and now appeared to offer nothing to replace that hope for moral progress. Darwin, although appalled by vivisection and pain, rejected the God who created the cruel world of the survival of the fittest. Others rejected science which appeared to them to break God's laws (Turner 1980, 87). In an attempt to redeem the future status of humanity the Victorian animal lobby began to spread a 'religion of the heart' in which compassion and sentiment and taking action against suffering renewed that hope (Turner 1980, 102).

There is one further strand that contributed to the feeling of revulsion in Britain associated with vivisection, and that is its perceived 'un-Britishness'. Although vivisection had a long history, it was more frequently practised in Europe. In 1874 a French Physiologist, Magnon, demonstrated a vivisection experiment for the BMA, it was condemned by many doctors present as cruel, the meeting was disbanded and the Frenchman prosecuted, upon which he

fled from the country (Turner 1980, 89). This incident highlighted a fear of pollution by European ways that had began to grow in the eighteenth century.

### **3.2.5 Revolution and the Threat of Vegetables**

Reflecting on the cruelties of the working class towards animals, Mary Wollstonecraft commented that this was 'to revenge the insults that they are obliged to bear from their (\*human) superiors' (Wollstonecraft 1792 cited in Thomas 1983, 50). Amongst the urban intellectual and entrepreneurial middle class, who sought to mould humanity to their particular cultural pattern, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, was the abiding fear that the working populace's revenge may be turned towards them and the privileged orders of society. The French Revolution focussed the minds of many of the middle classes who feared that the conditions of the poor in Britain might lead to a revolution of our own.

Coupled with a growth in compassion, the fear of revolution may have contributed to many of the social movements and reforms of the period. The women's suffrage movement and the anti-slavery movement began in the early nineteenth century, new labour laws were introduced to protect children and women, increased public education and housing and hospitals for the poor, reforms in the treatment of the mentally ill and penal reform all illustrate an increase in compassion (Turner 1980, 34-35). It could also be considered that it reveals an unease about social conditions which if unaddressed could breed revolution.

One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words 'Socialism' and 'Communism' draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist, and feminist in England (Orwell 1937, 152)

The association between vegetarianism and social revolution is exemplified by the above quote and the association which began in the eighteenth century where prominent radicals espoused social change and vegetarianism continues on into our own time. In Britain the consumption of meat was historically and still is part of what Bourdieu (1977) would call our 'habitus', a taken for granted principle that is not questioned by the majority of people. Ethical vegetarianism rejects this taken for granted principle and reflects a world view which repudiates mass society's concept of the natural order of the world and therein lies a threat to commonly held beliefs about ourselves and the society in which we live.

The fear of a repetition of the events of the French Revolution in 1789 overshadowed many of the discourses which took place on the conditions and behaviour of the poor at that time. But the French Revolution had also inspired others. Political radicalism and vegetarianism were harnessed together as vehicles for many thinkers disenchanted with society. For most of what Adams calls the Romantic vegetarians, followers of Rousseau, the French Revolution was viewed as one stepping stone to the reformation of the world, whilst the abolition of the meat diet was another (Adams 1990, 112). Joseph Ritson's publisher Richard Phillips was a vegetarian and Republican, whilst Ritson himself in the 1770s took up the Jacobite cause and ended his life as a Jacobin (Turner 1980, 18). After the French Revolution he adopted the Republican calendar and insisted upon being called Citizen Ritson (Turner 1980, 18; Adams 1990, 112).

The Scot, John Oswald, published the first secular protest against the 'murder' of animals for food in 1791 (Turner 1980, 18). Oswald had been heavily influenced by Hinduism whilst serving as a soldier in India and believed in the transmigration of souls. On returning to England in the mid

1780s he began a career as a radical pamphleteer. Oswald greeted the revolution in France as a hope for the liberty of animals as well as people (Thomas 1983, 185). At the outbreak of the Revolution he travelled to France where he died fighting for the Revolution in 1793 at the battle of Pont-de Ce (Adams 1990, 112; Turner 1980, 18).

Ritson and Oswald were radical pamphleteers who brought the words of philosophy and revolution onto the streets. Adams points out that whilst the target of the middle class that wished to form humanity into a pattern defined by society, was the working class. The target of individuals such as Ritson, Oswald and Shelley was the upper class (Adams 1990, 112) these thinkers advocated a move away from the dominant cultural pattern.

Throughout this history I have discussed the anxiety expressed over the treatment of animals throughout certain periods of history, the pre-eminent philosophers and social reformers, but for most of these figures, vegetarianism was not an issue. Whilst preaching kindness, the killing of animals for food had not been considered as morally wrong by many who were active in promoting animal welfare.

This attitude is still one that is present in the wider animal protection movement, but the animal rights activist does not adhere to this view. Animal rights activists follow the tradition of Rousseau's 'Noble Savage' and the Victorian 'religion of the heart', notions of moral progress, social revolution and a brotherly love which encompass animals within the moral community.

The 'Noble Savage' according to Rousseau was biologically formed to be frugivorous and, therefore, taxonomically should be classified as such, and should eat food that was 'natural'. Meat is unnatural, it is a cultural product, part of a system that pollutes humanity and separates us from our true nature

(Tester 1991, 131). Rousseau's concept of the 'Noble Savage', as the *authentically human*, a state which has been corrupted by society, and his advocacy of the 'natural diet' (vegetarianism), was adopted eagerly by some English thinkers such as Joseph Ritson and the poet Shelley.

Joseph Ritson published 'An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food, as a Moral Duty' in 1802, and sought to prove humanity's similarity to animals and promote the need for human beings to take up the 'natural diet' for both their individual physical and moral well being and the benefit of society (Tester 1991, 133). Adams points out that Ritson endeavoured to negate the boundary between humans and animals, pointing to the similarities between human beings and vegetarian animals (Adams 1990, 102). Ritson also strove to emphasize the 'naturalness' of a vegetarian diet by using the evidence produced by explorers, of other human communities still living in a 'natural' state. In essence, Ritson contended that humans and animals are the same, but culture hides that similarity and draws human beings away from their natural state. Ritson in the opening statement of his essay, came close to what Darwin would eventually say, for different reasons, 'Man ... in a state of nature, was, if not the real orang-utan ... at the present day, at least an animal of the same family' (Ritson 1802, 14-14 cited in Tester 1991, 133).

For Ritson as well as Rousseau, human beings should be classified with the frugivores, and animals like humans, are sentient beings with interests in the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. Ritson was also concerned with the effects of meat eating upon human beings and feared that those who indulged in it may turn eventually to cannibalism (Adams 1990, 103). Unfortunately he also identified meat eating as the sole causative factor of lunacy, and promptly defeated his argument, though unwittingly, when he as a vegetarian, succumbed to mental illness (Turner 1980, 8).

Ritson, an atheist, dismissed any notions of humanity being in a state of nature before the biblical 'Fall' into corruption. Another atheist, the poet Shelley, however, wholeheartedly took up this notion, but rejected the biblical myth of Adam and Eve and located the 'Fall' within Greek mythology and the legend of Prometheus. Percy Bysshe Shelley and his wife Mary rejected meat eating and interpreted the actions of Prometheus as a revolt against autocracy, but also as the bringer of disease into the world, when the stolen fire was used to cook animal flesh.

Whilst Joseph Ritson rejected the eating of meat due to an empathy with animal suffering, Shelley appeared more concerned with human bodily purity and health (Turner 1980, 17). Both these attitudes are apparent in present day attitudes to meat eating and often converge within the contemporary animal rights community. The adoption of vegetarianism at this time represented a turning away from the 'unnatural' and 'society' as symbolised by meat and a return to a more 'natural' state. The ingestion of meat involves the taking in of death and decay, meat is a cultural product whilst vegetables are natural and 'signify a double life; the life they demonstrated as they grew ... and the life they give humans' (Tester 1991, 144).

Human beings do not generally eat raw animal flesh. Levi-Strauss noted that the very act of cooking is a singularly human occupation whose transformative nature through fire 'brings about the cultural transformation of the raw' (Levi-Strauss 1970, 142). Thus through cooking flesh it becomes transformed from a piece of a dead animal into meat, a cultural object. Levi-Strauss considers that the transformation of the raw to the cooked or from nature to culture is a universal practice by which human beings distinguish

themselves from other animals<sup>2</sup>.

Fiddes proposes that in eating flesh, human beings place themselves above other animals and by cooking it also place themselves above other carnivores reinforcing human dominance over the natural world. 'Raw meat, dripping blood, is what is eaten by wild, carnivorous animals, not by civilised humans' (Fiddes 1991, 89). If the status of being human is expressed through meat eating and meat symbolically expresses the 'core values of modern western society: of power, of superiority ... of civilisation' (Fiddes 1991, 93), then rejection of meat becomes a rejection of those core values. Whilst vegetables can be cooked, they are also eaten raw, animal flesh almost never is, meat is always a cultural product and as Fiddes suggests reflects cultural values.

When in 1894 Henry Salt took up the concepts expressed in the eighteenth century and from these constructed a new theory of animal rights (Maehle 1994, 100-101), vegetarianism became central to his theory. Salt rejected the superiority of human beings over animals and human domination of nature and the social inequalities which industrialisation and urbanisation had highlighted and naturally following from this comes a rejection of those cultural objects which support such a view.

Although vegetarianism had existed in the Middle Ages in Britain, in India and in Greece the modern version of ethical vegetarianism which embodies ideas of animal welfare, human health and morality began to appear towards the end of the eighteenth century. The growth in

<sup>2</sup>I note that the nature-culture polarity is not one accepted as a universal by all anthropologists. Strathern (1980) considers that it is a Western mode of thought. As I am considering Western modes of thought, however, I will continue to employ it.

humanitarianism throughout the eighteenth century had strengthened the stance of those in favour of a meat-free diet which was known as 'the natural diet' or 'Pythagorean diet'.

The term 'Vegetarianism' was coined in 1847 when the Vegetarian Society was formed in Manchester (Twigg 1983, 20). Why humanitarianism and vegetarianism became linked is perhaps reflected in patterns of meat eating which also reflect patterns of social inequality.

During the eighteenth century excessive meat consumption was noted amongst the English upper classes. The working class consumption of meat also increased due to agricultural advances, but the cost of meat in comparison to their wage meant they could buy very little. This continued on into the early nineteenth century whilst the affluent could indulge themselves in meat consumption, the industrial worker during the early nineteenth century very rarely could afford meat and what they could afford went to the worker, generally male, and their families were illnourished (Fiddes 1991, 24). This suggests that the working class was seeking to emulate the upper classes and trying to buy into the symbolic capital of the cultural product, that of power, superiority and civilisation.

Vegetarianism and radicalism were linked once more after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the Vegetarian Society in Britain supported the Mutiny (Spencer 1993, 268). Spencer contends that although at this time the Vegetarian movement was small, its existence was promoted by a change in people's perception of suffering, by the middle of the nineteenth century people did not want to be reminded that meat involved death and during this time slaughterhouses began to be moved from the centre of towns or disguised to save giving offence. Vegetarians in particular objected to their



presence in the cities as they were frequently sited opposite pubs for the working man and schools and the Victorian Vegetarian believed that the 'very sight and smell of them brutalised people' (Spencer 1993, 269). In his discussion of The Civilising Process, Norbert Elias (1978) associates the process of civilization with the repugnance felt by certain people concerning the association of death and meat. During the process of civilisation people begin to suppress their own animal characteristics and that of the food they eat. Elias argues that vegetarianism in the West is an extension of this attitude and one that is associated with affluence (Elias 1978, 120).

From the 1840s several middle class societies were formed such as the London Dietetic Reform Society, which was affiliated with the Manchester Vegetarian Society. The first Vegetarian restaurant founded by Vegetarian groups opened in London at 1 Farringdon Road on 22 May 1876 (Spencer 1993, 275)

During the 1880s interest arose in the vegetarian cause inspired by social changes which had begun in the mid eighteenth hundreds. Education was expanding, the lower-middle class was emerging and socialism was finding its voice. The Fabian movement, the idea of the simple life, the myth of the rural idyll and the support for vegetarianism by literary figures such as George Bernard Shaw and Tolstoy contributed to making the vegetarian way more acceptable, but mainly for those within the middle classes who also supported social change. (Spencer 1993, 275).

The most influential vegetarian of this time Mahatma Gandhi, (the great pacifist reformer) although coming from an Indian tradition of meat avoidance became involved with the Vegetarian Society following a conversion to ethical vegetarianism after reading Henry Salt's 'Plea for Vegetarianism' (1897). His previous adherence to a meat free diet had been

in respect to his mother's wishes, but he had secretly wished that he could indulge in a meat diet (Finsen & Finsen 1994, 25-26). When Gandhi arrived in England in 1888 he found the food unacceptable and fatefully came upon the restaurant in Farringdon Road where he read Shelley and Henry Salt's advocacy of a meat free diet which they linked with social reform for human beings. It was also here that he read the Bhagavadgita, in its English translation by Sir Edwin Arnold (Finsen & Finsen 1994, 291). Gandhi commented on his enthusiasm for Vegetarianism as that of a convert to a new religion and started his own Vegetarian Club in Bayswater with the editor of 'The Vegetarian' as its president, Sir Edwin Arnold was vice president and Gandhi the secretary. By 1889 Gandhi was a friend of Henry Salt and other vegetarian radicals and had become a member of the London Vegetarian Society (Finsen & Finsen 1994, 292)

It was during the 1870s that the Vegetarian Society became involved with animal welfare over the issue of vivisection. The original Vegetarian Society premised its views in opposition to medical practice. In line with Shelley, members felt that given the right food the body would remain healthy and would have no need for medicine. Following this train of thought vivisection is worthless and unnecessary (Spencer 1993, 285). In the Vegetarian Review, the journal of the Vegetarian Society, the plight of animals being transported in cattle ships was also raised (Spencer 1993, 286).

In 1891 Henry Salt founded the Humanitarian League. The aims of the league were to oppose inequality, cruelty and injustice on behalf of all living beings (Spencer 1993, 287). Its central tenets were vegetarianism as an expression of morality and goodness and a vision of the pre-capitalist world as of a higher moral order. The inception of the Humanitarian League is truly representative of the times. Industrial society had highlighted the

inequality of people and animals and the visibility of extensive cruelty to animals impelled society towards a view of a creeping contagion of cruelty which extended towards people.

Another split in the ranks of the RSPCA was also impelled by vegetarianism, Lewis Gompertz who had become secretary in 1828 felt that his vegetarianism and anti-vivisection views could not be reconciled with the RSPCA's lack of action on this front and left to form the Animals' Friend Society in 1832 (Garner 1993, 49).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Abbotsholme School and Bedales had both been founded advocating diet reform and pacifism and the abolition of corporal punishment in an effort to prevent domestic violence and future war, but war did come in 1914. Pacifism and vegetarianism were very closely entwined and the First World War became a moral crossroads where ideas had to become actions. Those vegetarians who chose to be conscientious objectors suffered a great deal during the war period being viewed as traitors and cowards (Spencer 1993, 309).

During the inter-war years the Depression blighted the life of the ordinary worker. During the General Strike the Vegetarian Society sent food parcels to distressed mining communities and through the 1930s supported the funding of food parcels to unemployed areas. The Society had now learned that food given without diatribes against meat consumption was far more helpful in spreading their message (Spencer 1993, 310-311).

After the Second World War many vegetarians felt that the shortage of meat had helped their cause, but when meat rationing was discontinued in the 1950s the symbolic capital of meat was once again elevated and its consumption increased (Spencer 316-317). However due to new research

into the connections between diet and health, nutritionists began to advocate increasing the proportion of vegetables and fruit in the diet. In 1928 a vegetarian and animal rights campaigner, Nina Hosali brought the ideas of the love of nature and the simple life together with health and opened the first Nature Cure Clinic. The clinic was also involved in anti-vivisection and animal causes (Spencer 1993, 311).

The Vegan Society was founded in 1944. One of the founders was Donald Watson a conscientious objector. Vegans refuse to consume or use anything from animal products including dairy products and eggs. Veganism is commonly recognised as the rational progression from vegetarianism. The Vegans broke away from the Vegetarian Society because the Society refused to publicise the views of Vegans. Veganism was regarded initially even by vegetarians as extremist, but now is acknowledged by many vegetarians as a state to aspire to (Spencer 1993, 317). For many within the Animal Rights movement veganism is 'spiritually ideal in that there is no exploitation of animals by humans' (Spencer 1993, 318).

During our own century another revolution has taken place, the Counter Culture Revolution of the 1960's when interest in alternative lifestyles and interest in philosophies from the East began to spread throughout the young adult population. Articles produced by vegetarians increasingly began to openly support the animal rights issue and together with other new social movements, the Animal Rights Movement began to grow with ethical vegetarianism at its core (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 148).

### **3.3 Conclusion**

Throughout this history I have tried to highlight the core concern of the debates, that of the search for the *authentically human* conducted through

a continuing discourse over the treatment of animals. Through the modern period of British history we see the transition of a rural based society to that of an urban based one. The cultural battle of a new class of people to establish their world view as the accepted one, their attempts to mould society and the individual into a model of that view and how 'using animals to think' they constructed a view of the *authentically human* in their own image. Highlighting the fact that the concerns of the protagonists in the discourses over animals were a search for the *authentically human*, the moral being, is their involvement with other moral crusades.

During both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries liberation movements on behalf of women and slaves emerged together with concerns over animals. Jeremy Bentham was an anti-slavery campaigner as was William Wilberforce and Fowell Buxton who were also two founders of the SPCA. Frances Power Cobbe in addition to fighting vivisection was a suffragist and philanthropist. Henry Salt was a pacifist and humanitarian. Later mobilizations on behalf of animals emerged during our century hand in hand with the Womens Movement, the Black Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Vietnam Movement. Animal Rights philosopher Tom Regan also espoused these movements.

If we look at these periods of time and step back from the animal view that I have used we see that during all these turbulent periods the search for the *authentically human* was prime. As I indicated in my introduction, this thesis concerns itself with the Animal Rightists' search for the *authentically human* employing Lionel Trilling's definition of authenticity as '... a polemical concept, fulfilling its nature by dealing aggressively with received and habitual opinion ...' (Trilling 1971, 94). To illustrate this process in what follows I will explore the themes hypothesised by Jasper and Nelkin in 1992, that involvement in the Animal Rights Movement reflects an

oppositional world view and notions of identity and community. As stated previously the concept of humanity is one that I take, following Geertz, to be a production of '... time, place, and circumstances, of studies and professions, transient fashions and temporary opinions' (Geertz 1973, 35). The concept of *the authentically human* is one which is constructed through a polemic directed at what the *authentically human* is conceived not to be. The historical background of the animal movement positively seethes with hopes for the moral progress of humanity. In the next chapter I will be concentrating on the value and use of history, the social conditions of the contemporary world as a background for the emergence of the contemporary movement and its implications for notions of community and human identity and on what the contemporary Animal Rights Movement conceives the *authentically human* to be.

## CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL BATTLES

### 4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6 I will be examining in depth the concept of identity and how it is narratively constructed. But at this point I would like to touch upon how an individual and community can locate their personal narratives within a larger one thereby giving a sense of authentication and tradition to a chosen identity and community. One way in which this can be achieved is through the use of history.

### 4.2 The Relevance of the Past to the Present

In the contemporary philosophical writings on Animal Rights and the Animal Rights Movement, the writers all invoke the past through reference to the historic philosophical debates. History as a validation for thought is clearly illustrated in the introduction to the second edition of Peter Singer and Tom Regan's book Animal Rights & Human Obligations (1989). The authors point out that trawling through historical writings had provided the writers with some intellectual authority for their philosophical viewpoints

The existence of this substantial historical body of thought was, from our point of view, double fortunate. First, it helped to establish the respectability of the issue as a subject of philosophical thought: the fact that the ethics of our treatment of animals had been discussed previously by key figures in the great tradition of Western philosophy made it much more difficult for one's conservative colleagues to object to it being taught in philosophy classes .. (Regan & Singer 1989, vi)

In doing this, several objectives are achieved. First there is a

validation of their own moral stance by locating it within a historical tradition. Their own writings thus become an opportunity for the dissemination of the tradition to their readership who can then use it in the construction of a community. In establishing a historic precedent, a foundation for the Movement is created which can be referred to for legitimacy and cohesion. A communal history is a useful 'social glue' which allows the differing strands of thought within the community to be expressed whilst remaining true to its historical roots. So whilst the differing factions within the contemporary Movement can sometimes appear to be in contestation with each other, welfarist versus abolitionist, vegetarian versus vegan, the fact that these areas of contestation have been part of their history, allows each faction to take what it requires from history for validation whilst recognizing that these debates are an integral part of the Movement.

The Animal Rights Movement which emerged in Britain in the 1970s has its roots in the eighteenth century and Keith Tester contends that it has evolved from its beginnings as an enquiry into the nature of humanity into an 'immutable natural truth' for its adherents (Tester 1991, 194).

It is accurate that the Animal Rights Movement considers that its belief that animals are due rights which involve being treated by human beings as beings of equal moral value is a truth that they have claimed, but the debate over the nature of humanity continues. They are involved in constructing their own model of what they consider to be the *authentically human* whilst engaging in a polemic against mass society's dominant model of humanity.

The lengthy historical debate over obligations to animals which was inextricably bound up with our obligations to each other, is very much removed from the contemporary Animal Rights morality, which is really located within the philosophy of its nineteenth century inventor Henry Salt.



Contemporary animal 'rightists' are not simply advocating kindness to animals, but seek an equalitarian status for animals as sentient beings and individuals of inherent value. The only equalitarian relationship that we can have with animals is that of leaving them alone.

Whilst the ancient philosophical debate cannot be dismissed, it has to be noted that the debate underwent a 'step change' in the nineteenth century, where it was transformed from a debate over cruelty and kindness to animals, to an assertion that animals were of equal value to human beings. Animal Rights in its original form, born out of utilitarianism and fostered by the spirit of the French revolution, had become inadequate by the end of the nineteenth century, 'natural science' had elevated animals and denigrated people (Turner 1980, 131-132). A greater knowledge of the lives of animals, through natural science and pet ownership and the disappearance of working animals, together with the greater visibility in the urbanised and industrialised world of the working classes (who in their poor conditions and perceived uncivilized behaviour may have taken the place of the working animals in the middle class mind); led to a theory which acknowledged differences in people as well as differences between animals and people;

If one could deny rights to a dog or an ape, one could also deny them to a child or an idiot ... defending animal rights meant standing up for human rights ... If inferiority deprived animals of rights, could the same not be said about the 'lower orders' of human beings ... the old, restricted utilitarian basis for animals' rights no longer sufficed (Turner 1980, 132).

Utilitarianism had to be adapted or re-invented to cope with the changing pattern of society, and thus the founder of the Humanitarian League, Henry Salt with the publication of "Animal Rights in relation to Social Progress" invented a theory of Animal Rights for urban, industrial society .

From this point of view, the 'ancient tradition' could be said to fall into Eric Hobsbawm's theory of 'invented tradition',

A set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm 1983, 1)

Hobsbawm asserts that there has been a 'clustering' of such inventions within the past 200 years as new social institutions were brought in to replace older ones 'for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes' (Hobsbawm 1983, 5). Whilst Henry Salt is the 'inventor' of contemporary animal rights, present day writers reach into the pre-history of the movement in an effort to establish its authenticity as a traditional concern of right-minded individuals.

In Hobsbawm's discussion of invented traditions, which have emerged since the industrial revolution, he notes three types. Of importance here is the type 'establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities' (Hobsbawm 1983, 9), which Hobsbawm calls 'communitarian' invented traditions' (Hobsbawm 1983, 10). A sharp difference is noted by Hobsbawm between old and invented traditions. He asserts that the old were 'specific and strongly binding social practices' whilst the invented are "unspecific and vague as to the nature of the values, rights and obligations of the group membership" (Hobsbawm 1983, 10). Within the animal protection movement, we see a complete inversion of this. Prior to Henry Salt, whilst some thinkers such as Rousseau, Ritson, and Shelley, advocated removal of human relationships with animals in every way, other thinkers preached kindness, but continued to keep pets and eat meat. Henry Salt's doctrine laid down the foundation of the present movement where it is

ideologically compulsory to abstain from meat eating or any use of animals including pet keeping. Salt set out the behaviours and values which are expected of group membership within the movement, which have been further embellished by writers and activists such as Singer , Regan and Linzey.

In a critique of Hobsbawm, Nicholas Thomas points out that there is a tendency in discussions of invented tradition, for writers to presume that because a tradition is invented, it is, therefore, inauthentic (Thomas 1992, 213). The actuality is that these creations are part of the dynamic process of cultural transmission during which culture is 'tailored and embellished in the process of transmission' (Linnekin 1990 cited in Thomas 1992, 213) and are no less 'real' or authentic for this. In his discussion of historical anthropology's analyses of colonial history, Thomas points out that 'reifications of tradition have frequently been seen as cultural phenomena that stand essentially on their own' (Thomas 1992, 213). But it is his contention that culture is essentially responsive, and caught up with the construction of identity in opposition to 'others' and that tradition, invented or otherwise is similarly constructed (Thomas 1992, 213).

Hence what is important is not so much the categorical fact that difference provides a foil for identity as the actual histories of accommodation or confrontation that shape particular understandings of others and thus determine what specific practices, manners, or local ethics are rendered explicit and made to carry the burden of local identity (Thomas 1992, 213).

Therefore, what any cultural group chooses to adhere to as a representation of themselves is a direct result of historical encounters with those whom they choose to disassociate themselves. The Animal Rights Movement can refer to a historical past populated by people such as themselves in contestation with 'others', which confers both identity upon

them and legitimises their moral stance.

#### **4.2.1 The Great and Little Tradition**

All invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion (Hobsbawm 1983, 12).

Precisely how this is done by groups who wish to highlight their difference from the culture of mass society as do participants in the Animal Rights Movement, is the question. Whilst Singer, Regan and Linzey invoke the past as a validation of the authenticity of their moral stance which is passed on through their writings to their readership, it has been my experience during my fieldwork that not everyone has read all of them or any of their predecessors. Yet all of my informants had a basic knowledge of the philosophical points made by them. None of my informants had even heard of such people as Humphrey Primatt, one had heard of Henry Salt and asked me if I had read him, as she had not, and she wondered what he had to say.

One might become interested in the ways in which the high tradition is communicated to the common people and how it becomes a part of the little tradition (Redfield 1956, 47)

If history is then to be used as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion, it would appear that it must not only be transmitted by intellectuals to their readership, but must be disseminated throughout the community by other means. Robert Redfield discusses a similar point in his discussion of the Great and Little Tradition (1956). Redfield asserts that; "The great tradition is cultivated in schools or temples; the little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of ... communities" (Redfield 1956, 42).

The tradition of the philosopher, theologian, and literary man is a tradition consciously cultivated and handed down; that of the little people is for the most part taken for granted and not submitted to much scrutiny or considered refinement and improvement (Redfield 1956, 42).

An important point here, however, is that philosophers, theologians and literary people are engaged in interpreting the world of the 'little people', thus Rousseau and Bentham were philosophising about how people should behave against a background of social upheaval and revolutionary thought that was being produced by the 'little people'. Their philosophising was a response to social conditions. Redfield points out that 'The two traditions are interdependent ... two currents of thought and action distinguishable, yet every flowing into and out of each other' (Redfield 1956, 42-43). Whilst Redfield is discussing peasant society and has been criticized over his assertion that peasant culture is a half culture (Obeyesekere, 152), his theory that these traditions are informed and moulded by each other is a useful one.

The existence of an embryonic animal rights movement in Britain, in the form of The Band of Mercy, prior to the publication of Peter Singer's work, Animal Liberation, would appear to be an instance of this. The publication of Singer's book and his notion of liberation was eagerly seized upon by members of the Band of Mercy, who adopted his terminology, but not his utilitarian stance, and transformed themselves into the Animal Liberation Front. Contemporary philosophers also give their readership access to historical moral debates which they would probably not access for themselves.

Within the grassroots of the movement, there is no one philosopher whose view is adhered to, but a conglomeration of their thoughts constructed into a working philosophy for those engaged in the fight for animal rights at

a local grassroots level. For those members of the movement with access to the Internet, Peter Singer and Tom Regan's thoughts are available in a more 'down to earth' language, for a wider readership, again with reference to the tradition of concern for animals (Issues of Animals Agenda on the Internet, Conversations with Peter Singer and Tom Regan). The thoughts of Jeremy Bentham are handed down in 'bite size' chunks inscribed on T shirts (BUAV Catalogue 1995-96, 2).

The question is not, can they reason? Nor Can they talk? But, can they suffer?

My conversation with the female informant about Henry Salt is another method by which the 'Great tradition' is disseminated throughout the community, by those who have read to those who have not. The end result of this combination of traditions, is that whilst the grassroots local level activist may be in possession of a hotchpotch philosophy made up of different strands, a 'little tradition', the Movement as a whole can call upon the 'Great tradition' of historical philosophical thought as a form of 'social glue', which holds together many and varied beliefs creating a form of 'communal thought' and as a validation of a moral principle, which legitimates the action taken by the community.

#### **4.3 THE CONTEMPORARY ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

##### **4.3.1 The Birth of a Movement**

The contemporary Animal Rights Movement in Britain came into being in the 1970s with the revival of a long standing debate over the status and rights of animals and has resulted in an ever expanding animal protection movement engaged in a battle for both improvements in the welfare of

animals and the winning of rights for them. Although Peter Singer is frequently given the credit for this, the publication of Animal Liberation in 1975 was preceded by a growing attention to the subject during the 1960s. A schism had again arisen within the RSPCA over the lack of action taken by the Society to oppose blood sports. The publication of Ruth Harrison's Animal Machines in 1964 (which exposed intensive farming practices and led to public revulsion) forced the then Labour Government to set up a committee led by Professor F W Brambell. The Brambell Report (1965) condemned the practices and called for a clearer definition of animal suffering which went beyond physical pain. Despite subsequent legislation and parliamentary rhetoric, the report was largely disregarded by Government (Garner 1993: 110).

The attention of academia was then drawn towards the subject. The publication of Animals, Men and Morals (1971) edited by Stanley and Rosalind Godlovitch and John Harris, with contributions from Brigid Brophy and Richard Ryder and the publication of Ryder's own book, Victims of Science in 1975, where the term 'speciesism' was first coined, were instrumental in the revival of the movement (Serpell 1992: 36). However, it was the publication of Peter Singer's Animal Liberation in 1975 which combined the welfarist concern for animals with the language of 'liberation' and moral certitude that provided the impetus for the birth of a community.

Peter Singer's ideological text emerged at a point in history when 'rights' and 'liberation' were high on the agenda in both the United States and Britain and were being expressed by the Women's Liberation movement and the Black Civil Rights movement. There is a direct parallel in this with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when concern for animals was linked with concerns for disadvantaged sectors of human society and when industrializing society was using 'animals to think'. Through the counter

culture of the 1960s and 1970s post-industrial society was again using 'animals to think' about being human. The anti-slavery movement, womens suffrage and animal protection flowered during the nineteenth century and at the latter end of the twentieth century, the terms 'racism' and 'sexism' were joined by 'speciesism'. Although this term was originally coined by Richard Ryder, Singer adopted it for his purposes in *Animal Liberation* and it is now an accepted term in the vocabulary of the Animal Rights Movement.

The movement seeks to redefine human relationships to animals, by expressing a kinship with animals based on animal sentience and similarity to human beings and rejecting the morality of mass society and replacing it with their own which rejects the use and oppression of animals for human gain. Singer issued a challenge to 'right-minded' people to change their attitudes towards non-human species, by rejecting what he and Richard Ryder before him, termed 'speciesism'. His challenge was answered by thousands of people across the Western world, as they entered the Movement. Jasper & Nelkin contend that this leads to the growth of an oppositional world view, involving concepts of identity and community.

Although the movement has grown tremendously in the West, the focus of this thesis is the Animal Rights Movement in Britain. The movement grew with an impetus which far exceeded many other social movements during the 1980s from very small beginnings at the opening of the decade, to become a major news item towards the end (Jasper and Nelkin 1992, 1). Singer was attempting to put animal liberation on the political agenda, but what he also did was to hand to a certain minority branch of the animal advocates a philosophy which appeared to them to legitimise the use of direct action in pursuit of the liberation of animals.

The League Against Cruel Sports, set up in 1924 had begun in the late



1950s to go some way towards direct action by laying false trails for fox hounds. The Hunt Saboteur's Association (HSA) formed in 1964 took up this action by physically disrupting the hunt. In 1972 Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman disaffected by the HSA's peaceful methods, had formed the precursor of the Animal Liberation Front, the Band of Mercy, which began to take violent action against property in the name of liberating animals. After serving a year's imprisonment for such action Lee formed the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) in 1976, adopting Singer's language (Henshaw 1989).

The Animal Liberation Front, are a part, but not the totality of the Animal Rights Movement. Keith Tester in particular concentrates too heavily on the ALF as being representative of the whole movement, using David Henshaw's book, which I have used myself, as a point of reference. Henshaw's book, whilst being the only book to be written on the ALF, is not academic in its nature, it resulted from a documentary television series, and is viewed by some as being flawed by inaccuracy and heavily prejudicial towards the whole movement, insinuating that all Animal Rights supporters are potential 'terrorists' (Garner 1993: 240n). The ALF have never caused serious harm to any individual, mainly confining their activities to action against property, yet Henshaw presented the activists as having 'murder in mind' in a book which capitalises on the sensationalist approach of the television documentary.

Many non-violent animal rightists empathise with the ALF. Several of my informants expressed feelings of understanding towards the ALF, as progression towards the acquisition for rights for animals, or even adequate welfare for them, seems to take so long to achieve. As one of my informants commented *'I can understand it, you know, you get so frustrated, I can't condemn the ALF'*. Another of my informants, in a written autobiography, told me that she contributed money to the ALF, but did not enter into any actions

other than peaceful protest. As the ALF is not 'joinable' through the payment of subscription fees, it is likely that she contributed money to the ALF Supporters Group which is concerned with the welfare of ALF members facing trial or jail sentences for actions and in fundraising. The ALF tends also to be used as the 'bogey man' who will come to get you if you don't take care.

The BBC 2 Public Eye documentary 'Animal Wars' showed footage, where a demonstrator was chanting, to the tune of the Red Flag: 'do beware, the ALF are everywhere'. The ALF are, however, only one part of a movement that comprises those who seek rights for animals and those who seek better welfare conditions for them. Many other members of the Animal Rights Movement, however, reject the violent methods of the ALF feeling that they are damaging and worthless

Organizations abound for those who wish to become involved with the wider animal protection movement, from those such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals (RSPCA) which has concentrated on many issues concerning the welfare of all types of animals to single issue organizations such as Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) which is solely concerned with agricultural animals, or the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV), the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) (Garner 1993: 39).

My own fieldwork suggests, that involvement in the Animal Rights community, means involvement with almost all of these organisations. All of my informants, whilst involved with protesting against the transportation of live animals, were members of all the above and even more organisations concerned with the animals' 'cause'. It is this multiple involvement that makes it difficult to come to concrete conclusions on the membership of the movement as a whole. Garner estimates that there are around 150 national organisations. Some may only have a few members, but thirty-one have a

large membership (Garner 1993: 42). Of these thirty-one, eight originated in the nineteenth century, another eight between 1902-44, but since the 1960s another fourteen have emerged (Garner 1993: 42). A similar pattern has emerged in the United States, with thirty-one organisations formed during the years 1950 to 1990, twenty-two of them emerging in the 1970s and 1980s (Garner 1993: 42).

In addition to thirty-one national organisations, there has been a growth in local groups. I believe that it is in the grass-roots local groups that the key to building and maintaining the movement and the community lies. Garner reports that in 1991 there were 300 local 'grass roots' groups (Garner 1993, 46). By April 1996 there were 360 (personal communication Animal Rights Coalition)

Jasper and Nelkin, in their discussion of the growth of the Animal Rights Movement, point to the disappearance of the animal from the everyday lives of modern urbanites apart from in the form of family pets as the growth of industry and urbanisation in America and Britain progressed, resulting in a romanticization of Nature and a growth in anthropomorphism associated with the retreat to the home from the vicissitudes of a market driven, impersonal society (Jasper & Nelkin 1992: 17). The emergence of these trends during the nineteenth century was discussed in my previous chapter. Jasper and Nelkin contend that recent research into the beneficial effects of pet keeping has bolstered anthropomorphic notions about animals, by giving scientific credibility to it.

Research into animal cognition, the representations of animals in storybooks and cartoons and the use of animals in television commercials, however, and the growing attention paid to the animal as a therapeutic aid, are considered by Jasper and Nelkin to have contributed to some extent to



the growth in the Animal Rights Movement, but are not sufficient to explain the explosion in interest which has taken place over the last twenty years (Jasper & Nelkin 1992: 20).

Garner also agrees that increased public knowledge about the capabilities of animals has contributed to the growth of the movement, but that it is a combination of our new awareness of animals' capabilities and the evidence of the harsh treatment of the very same beings under intensive farming procedures and the use of them in science that has combined powerfully to motivate individuals to join the movement (Garner 1993: 65).

It is here that Lowe & Goyder's notion of an 'attentive public' has been most powerful, that is 'those people who though they do not belong to any of the groups, share their values' (Lowe & Goyder 1983: 10). The publication of Ruth Harrison's expose of factory farming which resulted in public pressure to investigate the conditions of animals is such an instance. Many of these individuals will not join a group, but will lend their support, although this may be for a short time, whilst an issue is at the forefront of the national gaze. There has also been a great growth in pressure groups of all types since 1945 and exceptionally since the 1960s (Garner 1993: 39).

In the period following the Second World War, the middle class expanded and generations of children in the United States and Britain became the recipients of increased opportunities for higher education, economic security and the absence of military conflict within their own countries. In effect they were given the benefits of an education which allowed them to articulate their grievances about a materialistic society of which they were the beneficiaries. Economic stability allowed these generations to examine the values of society and as a result of this, they turned away from the ethos of material gain and towards the politics of values (Jasper & Nelkin 1992: 21).

Garner terms this a 'post-affluent political culture' and considers that it may well explain the growth in the Animal Rights Movement, relating this to the growth in concern for the welfare of animals during the affluent period of the nineteenth century and then the decline in the period between the two great wars at the beginning of this century (Garner 1993: 62). However, Garner does concede that the making of a living is still important for people in Britain, and like the nineteenth century reform movements, the present movement is still predominantly middle-class in its nature, peopled by those who are materially comfortable enough to have the 'privilege of concern' (Garner 1993: 62). Unlike Jasper and Nelkin, Garner provides empirical evidence to support this argument, using figures from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, where in 1979 41 per cent of its membership came from the technical and clerical category (C1) and only 20 per cent came from the skilled working class (Garner 1993: 62).

The growth in the Animal Rights Movement, then, would appear to have several causes; anthropomorphic notions about animals, a greater knowledge of animals' capabilities, an expanded, educated middle class with the 'privilege of concern' and an ideology provided by academics which has given the notion of animal rights a credibility it may have lacked in the past.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have explored the ways in which history is used as a referent by groups to give a common ancestry and as a validation for present day philosophies. The individual and community can locate their personal narratives within a larger one thereby giving a sense of authentication and tradition to a chosen identity and community. We have also examined how the animal rights movement has grown and evolved

through its historical encounters with other whose thinking conflicts with their own. Historical encounters with other groups sees the emergence of cultural traits which are the result of interaction, they tell us what 'we don't want to be' and so we develop cultural traits that distinguish us as what 'we do want to be'.

In the ethnographic section of this thesis, Part II, commencing with Chapter 5 I will be exploring the notion of community and how the animal rights activists I studied construct, experience and express what they 'would like to be' and what they 'would not like to be' through the experience of community .

## **PART II**

### **THE ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

## **ANIMAL RIGHTS AS COMMUNITY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I look at the 'Animal Rights Movement' as a community and adopt an emic approach to this (Redfield 1956: 81). That is, I examine this community as it is perceived and experienced by its own members. Members of the Animal Rights Movement involve themselves in many aspects of animal protection and this part of the study concerns the experience of one campaign by the community as an expression of community and of a distinctive identity. I consider that this campaign represents the diverse views within the Animal Rights Movement which are held together by a symbolic notion of community. The experience of this campaign by the participants illustrates the ways in which the concept of community mobilises diverse individuals who each derive their own meaning from Animal Rights and yet create a community which is experienced as distinctive yet shared by them and perceived as such by the outside world.

In order to examine 'Animal Rights' as a form of community, it is first of all necessary to justify this position by establishing why I consider the movement to display characteristics of community. Whilst researching this subject a recurrent theme was a sense of dislocation after what I will call, following Giddens, a 'fateful moment'. This was followed by attempts to relocate themselves as individuals within a group of like minded individuals to support their new world view and support and guide their construction of a new identity.



### 5.1.2 Constructs of Community

The concept of community is a thorny one, in that it means many different things to many different people. Redfield in 1956 identified 'community' by its distinctiveness and seeming homogeneity and the problems of maintaining this distinctiveness through self-definition from 'others' either by distance or difference. Fredrik Barth (1969) built upon these ideas when he addressed the question of ethnic boundaries an area which had been given little examination by previous anthropologists who had addressed cultures in isolation. In doing so, Barth opened up a field of investigation of the processes involved in adopting and maintaining a group and individual identity, whilst interacting with 'others'. He proposed that ethnic groups were 'categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people' (Barth 1969 (a), 10).

This being so, it is not difficult to transfer Barth's logic to any set of social actors, who choose to ascribe to and identify with a particular social group and through this interact with individuals of like mind. Barth removed notions of geographical and social isolation as the prime factors involved in cultural difference and replaced it with a theory that people actively construct and maintain their own sense of difference at the boundaries which define them (Barth 1969(a)). This was the first step along the way to a notion of the construction of communities of meaning, which was taken up by A P Cohen, in Belonging and The Symbolic Construction of Community (Cohen 1982: 1985). The idea that a sense of community is largely one of thought rather than geographical location was also taken up by Benedict Anderson in 1983. In his discussion of nationalism, Anderson asserts that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their

falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (Anderson 1983, 6). The style which this imagining takes is that of a community of 'deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson 1983, 7). This way we come towards a definition of community that is constituted by a 'meeting of minds'.

In How Institutions Think (1987), Mary Douglas suggested that a theory of institutions was needed that addressed what she called the 'unsociological view of human cognition' (Douglas 1987, ix), which stresses the western view of cognition as an individual process rather than the way society informs and moulds the way that individuals think. Douglas applies the word institution to social groups proposing that an institution is a convention produced by a common interest in regulation to prevent deviation and encourage harmony. Thus by definition the institution or social group sets up rules to police itself (Douglas, 1987, 46). It becomes a legitimate social institution when it acquires a 'parallel cognitive convention to sustain it' (Douglas, 1987, 46) either personal in the case of a family, a father figure perhaps or 'by common assent on some general founding principal ... the way that plants or humans or animals naturally behave' (Douglas 1987, 46-47).

Approaching the notion of group solidarity and co-operation Douglas (1987) uses the theories of Emile Durkheim (1912: 1976) and Ludwik Fleck (1935) who both proposed that these ends are only achieved when a collection of individuals share the same categories of thought (Douglas 1987, 8). Using the combination model of Durkheim and Fleck's ideas Douglas produces the idea that a social group 'generates its own view of the world developing a thought style that sustains the pattern of interaction' (Douglas 1987, 32). In Thought Styles (1996) Douglas develops the notion of a 'thought style' as 'the communicative genre for a social unit speaking to itself about itself, and so constituting itself' (Douglas 1996, xii).

I will be adopting a model which combines ideas from Redfield (1956), Cohen (1985) and Douglas (1987: 1996). Both the concept of symbolically constructed communities (Cohen) and Redfield's contention that we must go beyond the intuitively perceived whole to the particular physical 'entities that compose it' (Redfield 1956: 19) share a concern to understand the interrelationships or systems which support and create the whole. Traditional anthropological analyses of community concentrated on small-scale societies which appeared to highlight that 'simpler' societies thought differently to those in industrial society. Douglas notes Levy-Bruhl's (1952) contention that what brought this about was not that people in small-scale societies were not capable of logic, but before logic is applied an 'affective bias' is present which precludes the application of logic with 'mystic participation' (Douglas 1996, xii).

Douglas contends that Bruhl is implying that industrial society has less affective bias, but what that leaves us with is the impossibility of understanding other modes of thought. She encourages us instead of looking to other parts of the world to examine different modes of thought, to look to those that occur in industrial society and their role in the construction of different communities.

This is such an examination. If we accept that community exists in meaning rather than locality we can move towards Douglas's idea of 'thought communities' and 'thought styles' which allows for several different 'thought communities' to co-exist in societies such as our own. This community is constructed by individuals who appear to display an 'affective bias' towards animals which produces what appears to those outside the community to be a 'mystic participation' in a cause and in behaviours which have little resonance in the cognitive worlds of those without this 'affective bias'.

All discussion of boundaries within this text will be directed at those boundaries that are social. These social boundaries do not isolate groups, there is rather an interaction, a flow of information across the boundaries and a flow of people. The whole purpose of the movement is to recruit and persuade; so by their nature, boundaries or points of interaction, are discursive negotiations both about the identity of the movement and the nature of mass society and views of an improved society and the model of the *authentically human*.

In his discussion of ethnicity Eriksen (1993) makes the cogent point that boundaries between social groups are social productions with an importance which is variable and changeable (Eriksen 1993, 38). The informants who helped me in this study were all engaged in employment or had been and were part of mass society in their everyday lives. Communal expressions of being discrete from mass society were what Eriksen calls 'situational' (Eriksen 1993, 31). In some situations a discrete identity is of no importance, in others such as active campaigns against perceived animal cruelty it is of prime importance. Campaigns are crucial foci for the negotiation of a particular identity which continually questions the model of human supremacy over nature. Nick Fiddes contends that 'Killing, cooking and eating other animals' flesh provides perhaps the ultimate authentication of human superiority over the rest of nature ... ' (Fiddes 1991, 65). For animal rights activists this model is redundant and their own model of the *authentically human* both subverts and inverts this model. Protest sites provide situations where activists can interact with each other as part of a community and with 'others' outside the community in negotiations of identity.

In his discussion of The Little Community Redfield (1956) gives us several criteria for establishing what is meant by community. His criteria are 1) the distinctive nature of the community as it is perceived from the outside

and experienced within; 2) either the community is in itself small enough to be the subject of personal examination or it is part of a whole community, which is considered to be homogeneous and can be examined as a representative of the whole; 3) that it is homogeneous and 4) that it is self-sufficient.

In what ways does 'Animal Rights' as a community fit this model? It is distinctive, for several reasons. It seeks to separate itself from mass society in several ways. It has a distinctive ideology which influences and defines its followers in their everyday lives. This is expressed in several ways, pollution avoidance strategies, social interaction as a member of the community with the community, a view of mass society as the 'Other' and a policy of action by the community against mass society's view of animals which involves interaction with mass society. In turn, mass society appears to perceive the Animal Rights community as distinctive in that it is frequently ridiculed by those not of their persuasion and the members of the community stereotyped as a 'terrorist in a stocking mask' or a 'little old lady in tennis shoes' (Shapiro 1994: 146). Mass society in its turn is perceived by members of the movement as less socially evolved than themselves and either apathetic to the cruelty inflicted upon animals or actively engaged as abusers of animals. As Eriksen points out stereotypes facilitate the ordering of the complex social world and are important in the definition of boundaries. The stereotype contains information about the goodness of one's group and the vileness of the 'other' and are important in validating one's own affiliations (Eriksen 1993, 22)

The Animal Rights Movement's appearance of homogeneity stems from mass society's common perception that its adherents are misguided extremists with more regard for animal life than for human life. Its self-sufficiency results from a belief system and the constant social interactions

and behaviours which reinforce its distinctiveness and affirm its members identities in opposition to 'Others'. This appearance of homogeneity is also used to present a face of solidarity to those outside the community.

Cohen contends that whilst all communities are in the mind the most important component of 'community' is its oppositional or relational nature. 'Community' ... expresses a relational idea: the opposition of one community to others ... the boundary marks the beginning and end of community ... the boundary encapsulates the identity of the community and like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction' (Cohen 1985: 12). As Cohen points out, however, a community does not simply become aware of its own culture and identity, it attributes value or otherwise to itself and to communities recognised as being different. 'We are not, therefore, merely aware of our distinctiveness, but we tend to value it as well' (Cohen 1982: 5). Clifford Geertz as we know, contends that 'We are ... incomplete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture - and not through culture in general but through highly particular forms of it:...' (Geertz 1973: 49). Geertz goes on to contend that cultural knowledge and belief are the referents used in establishing the truly human 'To be human ... is thus not to be Everyman; it is to be a particular kind of man, and of course men differ ...' (Geertz 1973: 53).

The Animal Rights Movement viewed as a community with a particular concept of what is *authentically human*, is an expression of such difference. It can be viewed as a moral community, it certainly views itself as such, its foundations rest upon an ideology which seeks to change the ways in which human beings treat other species and together with its practices indicate the construction of an alternative model for humanity. Douglas's notion of a 'thought style' as a communicative genre through which a social unit constructs itself is particularly apposite in relation to the Animal Rights

Community. Its attempts to construct itself and disassemble the world view of mass society by questioning received wisdom and its efforts to persuade others to its own view, flow continuously through its literature, its sites of protest and through the everyday practices of its members.

### 5.1.3 Defining The 'Other'

The Animal Rights Community in its pursuit of the rights of animals, seeks to distinguish itself from mass society and claims a kinship with animals in opposition to human 'others' in this pursuit. This oppositional practice operates as a definition of the Animal Rights community.

*A message to activists ... and radicals, idealists and other crazy dreamers ... For so long as you continue to be a good person in a bad society, you will be vilified. Keep at it. You will be slandered. Only during your lifetime. You will be called the worst person on Earth by people rather neatly fitting that description themselves. Take pride in having the right enemies. (Animal Rights Internet communication).*

Richard Tapper contends that in every society 'children have to learn how to distinguish Self from Other; and 'people not like me' (strangers, enemies and witches); 'not people' (usually animals)' (Tapper 1994: 49-50). The activist quoted above illustrates that in defining 'enemies', 'people not like me', comes self-definition. Enemies, 'people not like me', are not truly human. 'Not people' (usually animals) are recognized as kin and the Animal Rights community, recognizing human animality and identifying kinship with animals through this, adopts strategies to protect animal kin, their usage by enemies and prohibits the eating of animal flesh. Levi-Strauss in his work The Savage Mind (1966 (a)) notes that food prohibitions are often involved with close identification with an object 'Ingestion or contact are regarded as a sort of auto-cannibalism. The relation between the person and the object

is so close that the person possesses the characteristics of the object with which he is identified' (Levi-Strauss 1966 (a), 78). Thus vegetarianism or veganism is a *sine non qua* of the community.

Mary Douglas writes 'the contrast between man and not-man provides an analogy for the contrast between the member of the human community and the outsider' (Douglas cited in Tapper 1994: 50). For the Animal Rights community, the *authentically human* does not exploit animals, the *authentically human* recognises a kinship with animals and fights for this cause against human 'Others', who are outside the community. The Animal Rights community, is involved in two aspects of conflict with human 'Others'. It is engaged in a battle of persuasion and recruitment to its cause with mass society and a battle of opposition to active animal abusers. Mass society appears to be viewed, because of its appearance of indifference to the suffering of animal kin, as not quite properly human, but the active animal abusers, in this campaign, the farmers and farm workers appeared to be classified in a different way. Whilst members of mass society may not be quite 'properly human', the farm workers, appear to be classified as less evolved than other human beings. The farm workers, these particular 'Others' are the 'dragknuckles'. 'The dragknuckles were noticeably quieter, more polite and not half so punchy' (Animal Protesters Bulletin: No 30; 14 November 1995; p2). The idea of those who do not agree with the Animal Rights view of the world as being further down the evolutionary ladder, however, was as I found out not just reserved for active animal abusers, but illustrated an idea that they held about themselves. Several opinions expressed by the group I worked with depicted the Animal Rights self as one that was more evolved than others.



## 5.2 Expressing and Experiencing Community

Following Redfield I have concentrated on one part of a whole, a particular campaign against live-exports, using Cohen I use their protest site as a ritualistic occasion when they can publicly and communally express and experience their distinctiveness whilst entering into a discourse with mass society. Douglas's notion of the 'thought style' as a communicative genre which constitutes the social group is also highlighted.

Following Redfield I will look at those aspects of the community which he contends are useful to come to an understanding of any community. I will examine the social structure of the group, how they mobilise themselves to act as a community, and the expression of community through ritualistic protest.

What produces the cohesion of the Animal Rights community which enables us to consider it as a whole? Following Cohen I would propose that this apparent cohesion is created by using the notion of 'Animal Rights' as a symbol 'symbols permit interpretation and provide scope for interpretive manoeuvre by those who use them ... they 'express' other things in ways which allow their common form to be retained and shared among the members of a group, whilst not imposing upon these people the constraints of uniform meaning' (Cohen 1985, 18). For my purposes, then I can usefully use 'Animal Rights' as the symbol to which members of the community can attach themselves, perceive themselves and 'others' whilst each can make a separate meaning for themselves.

Symbols are effective because they are imprecise ... part of their meaning is 'subjective'. They are, therefore, ideal media through which people can speak a 'common' language, behave in apparently similar ways, participate in the 'same' rituals, ... and so forth, without subordinating themselves to a tyranny of orthodoxy. Individuality and commonality are thus reconcilable (Cohen 1985, 21)

Symbols are also effective recipes for action, which in this case allows the diverse individuals amongst the community to act together. Thus, within the community vegans and vegetarians, welfarists and abolitionists can work together towards what they perceive is a common aim. It is essential in the formation of any viable community that members and prospective members 'make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things ...' (Cohen 1985, 16). Members of the Animal Rights Movement, regardless of location, consider that together with other members of their movement they have made 'a similar sense of things'. The movement has evolved from its beginnings in the eighteenth century into a social institution legitimised by its history and constituting itself through what Douglas would call a 'thought style'. In what follows I hope to illuminate the theories which I have discussed by applying them to the analyses of the discourse and behaviours of a contemporary group of animal rights activists as they construct and experience community and a personal and shared identity which reflects their own world view which they perceive to be in contestation with that of the world view of mass society. When these two world views meet the scene is set for a discourse over the true nature of the *authentically human* feelings of community and negotiations for a personal and shared identity are experienced and strengthened.

### **5.3 Animal Rights Activists in 1995: Live Exports Opponents**

In the introduction to this thesis I briefly described the core group of activists I worked with. At this point I would like to reintroduce the reader to them. My core research group consisted of seven women and four men a

ratio which I indicated in the introduction mirrors the greater presence of women in the movement generally (Plous 1991; Jasper & Nelkin 1992, Jamison & Lunch 1992). From my observations at protest sites it is also obvious that many of the campaigners are middle-aged, middle-class women who quite possibly have more free time in which to engage in protest. More importantly I feel these women have had the time and life experience to reflect on the nature and actions of human beings.

The male contingent consisted of Alan and John both engineers, Tom a retired naturopath and Jack a scientist. The female members of the core group were Mary, Victoria, Priscilla and Anna all office workers, Kit a retired teacher and Sandy who originally trained as a nurse and who now runs her own business and Joan who was a teacher. As can be seen from Appendix 1 all were members of many different animal rights and animal welfare organisations and this multiple membership will be discussed in detail in this part of the thesis.

Below are 'thumbnail' sketches of the core group in which I highlight some of the themes which will be discussed in later chapters.

## **SANDY**

Sandy was my main informant who accompanied me to the protest site and took me on shopping expeditions in vegetarian/vegan style. At the time of the study Sandy was 39 and a single parent with one child trying to run her own business and living in 'Spatown'. Sandy grew up in the countryside and her father kept 500 hens as a sideline to his main job. In his youth he had worked on farms when they were still using horses to pull ploughs. Sandy ate a meat diet and never associated the hens outside with the chicken on the plate for Sunday lunch until she was 11 years old.

It was then that Sandy became vegetarian and was surprised and pleased that her mother supported her in this. Sandy's father was also tolerant of her views without sharing them. After the death of Sandy's father, her mother, too, became a vegetarian. During her childhood her mother kept 'open house' for discarded pets and the family itself had pets of their own. Sandy sees herself as in the past rather a champion of the 'underdog', but feels as she has got older less inclined that way when it comes to human beings. At school she refused to do dissections on frogs in Biology class and cook meat in Domestic Science class and instead of being set alternative work spent most of her time excluded from these lessons. Sandy's first animal rights action was to liberate a white rat from school which her mother then had to care for. She admits to feeling very isolated for some years.

*'Even all the way through my nurse training I never met a nurse or patient who was vegetarian, which another 15 years down the line is no longer the case.'*

After the completion of her training Sandy took up a full-time post in Edinburgh where she joined the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society (now called Advocates for Animals). It was at this time that Sandy became a vegan because of the perceived cruelty involved in dairy farming. On returning to England Sandy became involved in the running of the Testing Action Group and later in the protest at Heathcliff. Sandy retired from nursing when her child was born and after her divorce has set up a contract cleaning firm in which she only uses 'animal free' products. Whilst Sandy is a committed animal rightist and vegan, unlike my other informants she does have close friends who are meat eaters.

*'I love them to bits, but I have to say, that I do consider myself to be a couple of rungs up the evolutionary ladder from them.'*

## TOM

Tom was my one informant that I could describe as coming from an 'unconventional' background, his parents were both vegetarian (converted to vegetarianism by an Indian doctor). Tom was born in 1927. Tom's father was imprisoned for two and a half years during the 1914-18 war as a conscientious objector. He described his home background as one of 'peace and the love of all life'. The family had a pet cat while Tom was growing up and he felt that from an early age 'care and kindness to all animals was just a part of our life'. Tom attended a boarding school and whilst he was at school studying biology he felt that the subject brought a 'sense of wonder and increased a reverence for life'. Tom studied Naturopathy in Edinburgh where 'I became even more aware of the abuse of human privilege in the world of vivisection and medical trials, and the sheer mutilation of living organisms in the name of medical science'. Tom went on to practice as a Naturopath for forty years. He has had four children and now has ten grandchildren, all vegetarian. Tom 's children and grandchildren have had no vaccinations or medical treatments other than assistance in childbirth and he considers they enjoy good health from 'applying the creative principles of life'.

Tom has been a member of the Vegetarian Society for the greater part of his life.

*'Kindness, and positive consideration, to human beings and all other forms of life must be at the fore-front of the constructive principle of life. Love and kindness generates its kind, hate and aggressiveness leads to decline. Sadly, where money and the greed for money enters human life, standards are perpetually lowered, even dropped if it might make a penny more! We are in the midst of a moral decline'.*

## KIT

When Kit offered to complete her life-history for me, she did an interesting thing, she called it 'My Life - Part 2', which illustrates Kerby's point about narrative *'We notice change - that things and acquaintances are not as they once were'(Kerby 1991, 36)*

At the time of the study Kit was 65 years old. Her life as an animal activist had commenced at the age of 40 and was brought about she felt by her first experience of pet ownership, a small kitten. Kit's children had all grown up and left home and she felt that the kitten had initially reawakened her maternal instincts which had then appeared to translate themselves into a deep empathy with animals and a disillusionment with humanity. Shortly after acquiring her kitten Kit moved from an urban environment to a rural one which she felt 'brought home'

*'The cruelties of the countryside - the cows bellowing all night after their calves were removed, the adult pigs trying to protect their young, when the transporters came onto the farm, the rows of dead crows strung up to deter other birds - to mention just a few'*

## ANNA

At the time of this study Anna was 23 years old and had a rural upbringing. Her older brother had developed a great empathy with animals and had become a moral vegetarian when he was six years old a decision she was to make for herself when she was 16. She did not become involved with Animal Rights until she was around 18, but this was a false start

*'I didn't really feel I fitted in, straight away they were trying to get my friend and me running stalls and handing out leaflets, which we didn't feel quite ready for so we didn't go again'*

Anna, lives near the village of Heathcliff and her involvement with the group originated after she became a Vegan and a friend asked her to sign a petition to Ban Live Exports, she tried to get others to sign it, one of whom was a resident of Heathcliff. This person told Anna that she could hear the calves crying from where she lived, but that 'that was nature' and the protestors outside Victoria Farms every Monday were just a 'nuisance'. This person's attitude so incensed Anna that she felt moved to join the 'nuisances' outside the farm.

*'which I'm pleased I did because I like being amongst like-minded people'*

### **PRISCILLA**

Priscilla was 51 years old at the time of the study and had been an Animal Rights activist since the early 1970s. Of all the life histories examined, this one was the only one that gave no sense of any other life other than that of the activist. Priscilla mentioned no family, no friends, nothing except the struggle for animal rights. Priscilla described feelings of depression and frustration not only with those who abuse animals or who are simply disinterested, but also with other activists. Originally converted to the cause by a stall set up by NAVS (National Anti-Vivisection Society), Priscilla went on to join the League Against Cruel Sports and to campaign for them by going door to door and into pubs with petitions. She then joined the committee of her local NAVS group. She became a Vegan in 1974 after watching a television programme presented by the Vegan Society.

*'In 1974 veggies were considered rather weird, vegans were unheard of ... I joined the Vegan Society and found their help invaluable, but I have never felt so alone in my whole life as I did during the next 12-18 months'*

At this time Priscilla could not find suitable products for the vegan diet and then discovered the company Plamil who produced soya milk. She could only find one shop which stocked soya milk and a margarine produced for the Jewish community which was also suitable for vegans. (Priscilla even managed to do a little campaigning in her life-history by inserting a sticker advertising Plamil). At the time companies did not list the contents of their products, so she was never sure what was suitable.

*'Even now you're not sure what you're getting - for instance Safeway tomato sauce, looked to be Vegan, but when I got it home it said 'suitable for gluten free diets and cows milk free diets', no mention of vegetarians. My next job is to write and ask why it is not suitable for vegetarians, which it clearly isn't or they would have said'*

Priscilla appears to be a tireless campaigner and her multiple membership of animal organisations has pushed her financially and emotionally. She wrote at length of her feelings of disillusionment with human beings including other activists but also wrote that she was driven by her feelings for animals.

*'I get depressed when I do things which heighten my awareness of animal cruelty and guilty when I do nothing. Life was simpler, easier and less stressful when I knew nothing'*

## JOHN

At the time of the study John was 49 years old, married and an employed engineer living in 'Spatown'. He wrote that he considered that he had had a fairly conventional upbringing and conventional relationships with animals, both having pets and eating other animals. During his twenties he had lived on a kibbutz and although considering himself compassionate towards animals he still ate them and in fact helped unloading fishing boats and packed chickens into crates. It was whilst he was in Lebanon that he



experienced an event that began his conversion to animal rights activism. He shot a small bird for no reason at all and at the time of his writing he described the effect of this event on his life

*'This was the largest creature I have killed, before, or since that time. It now hangs round my neck like an albatross and I still don't know why I killed it'*

This event had not changed his dietary habits, but during the late 1980s because of the various food 'scares' which had gone on he began to cut down on meat consumption to the extent that he began to consider becoming a vegetarian and joined the Vegetarian Society in 1990. After this his attention began to turn to other reasons for becoming a vegetarian

*'Animal rights, the environment, 3rd world issues, economics, etc. I began to realise that good health was only one reason for going vegetarian and that in many ways the other reasons might be more important'*

As the years have gone on John has become increasingly involved in animal rights issues and as a result of his interest in animal rights his views on vegetarianism became more determined, but less health based.

John is now a vegan and considers his main aim in life is to convert people to a vegan/cruelty free diet and feels that there is a difference between himself and people who are non-protesting and non-vegetarian.

*'When it comes to animal rights I believe that animals have a right to be as 'happy' and uninterfered with (ie unless interference is in their best interest) as possible. A basic human desire is to feel as little pain as possible and since animals strongly appear to have a capacity to feel pain, I, as a fellow creature of the universe would not want them to suffer.'*

## MARY

Mary was the least experienced of the activists, but no less committed and was 45 years old at the time of this study and first became an animal rights activist in 1994 after seeing news reports of demonstrations at English ports and programmes about the suffering of animals during transportation. Her first experience in activism was a protest at Hull Docks over the shipment of pigs where she met up with a local animal rights group who told her about the protest at Heathcliff.

Since her initial involvement Mary has increased her involvement and together with her grown up daughter and her husband spend most of their leisure time writing to MPs and others to pressurise the Ministry of Agriculture, Vets and the Government in the cause of animals. In addition to the protest at Heathcliff, they also travel to Dover to protest at the docks there and use their membership of Respect, Animal Aid and Compassion in World Farming to monitor the campaign at national level. She has increasingly felt her respect for the Government and the Police Force diminish due to her involvement in activism.

*'As soon as you join an Animal Rights group you become public enemy number one and are treated likewise'*

*'It has changed our lives because we are all vegetarian now, we know many people across the country who we are in touch with who are involved with the protests and have become our friends'*

In common with all of my other informants, Mary felt that it was her duty to speak for animals and express feelings of disillusionment with human beings generally and that animals should be left alone.

*'Do what you like with animals as long as you have their permission in writing to do it.'*

## JOAN

Joan was 24 years old at the time of this study and living in Spatown with her partner. As a child she was brought up in the countryside and her mother has told her that when she was young she had a deep affection for animals and that if she saw an animal get hurt on television she would cry, but if a person was injured *'she didn't bat an eyelid'*. As she did live in a rural community most of the children she went to school with came from farming families, but when she was 14 she came across some leaflets from the BUAV and being appalled at the treatment of research animals .

*'I remember being horrified they could do such things to rabbits (we had 3 pet rabbits at home).'*

At 15 she became a vegetarian. She cannot remember one particular thing persuading her to become a vegetarian, but remembers reading a lot of leaflets and the reality of actually eating animals becoming clear to her.

*'You know, the cute lambs you can see from your bedroom window, the cows you stroke over the wall on the way to school'*

At 18 she moved to 'Spatown' to go to college and joined her first local Animal Rights group and the Testing Action Group becoming involved in demonstrations, marches and street stalls. Street stalls she felt were of great importance because

*'educating the general public is the way forward, so many things are kept quiet, so many things are taboo'*

When she was 20 Joan became a school teacher and remembers

being in the staff room with her packed lunch and the rest of the staff asking her what she did eat because she did not eat meat. She felt that people seemed to forget there were many other types of food other than meat. She was still involved with the anti-vivisection group and felt that having friends within this group and other animal rights groups had the advantage sharing the same focus in life. Joan met her partner at this time not at any group meeting, but in a pub and he was by coincidence rather than design, a vegetarian, although she did express the view that she did not think the relationship would have lasted if he had not been vegetarian.

Around this time Joan heard of the export of animals from Humberside and joined the protest there and as the veal trade gained greater prominence in the public domain began to feel guilty about drinking milk and eating other dairy products and decided to become vegan. She also set up a society to rescue abandoned dogs in 'Spatown'. Her most recent involvement has been with the protest at 'Heathcliff', but admits that it has been a distressing experience. The proximity of the calves that she believes are in distress has had a depressing effect upon her.

Joan expressed an interest in the research that I had undertaken as she felt that animal rights activism had a very negative image with the general public and flatteringly felt that somehow I might portray them in a more accurate way (which I hope I will have done).

*'I think the general public think all Animal Rights campaigners wear balaclavas and bomb laboratories, but a lot of us are genuine'*

## **ALAN**

At the time of the study Alan was 36 years old, single and a resident of 'Spatown' where he worked as an engineer. Alan considered that he had

what he called a fairly typical upbringing and was raised on a *'typical meat with every meal type diet'*. His first introduction to what he called the cruelty of the meat diet/meat trade came about in 1978. On leaving school he had become an apprentice with the Local Authority and had to carry out work at the slaughter house where he saw that the animals were not always effectively stunned before being slaughtered. At first he claims he simply found this distasteful, but it did not raise any moral questions for him, but simply affected his appetite. His conversion to vegetarianism for health reasons came in 1986 although the fact that he mentioned his experience of the slaughterhouse may indicate that it had affected him on a deeper level than he recognized. His membership of the Vegetarian Society began what he called his education into the 'cruelty free' life style. In 1991 he gave up eggs due to the battery hen system and in 1993 became a vegan as he felt that being vegetarian was still indirectly supporting the meat industry.

His first animal rights activity was with the Testing Action Group and later he became one of the key organisers of the Live Exports Opponents. Alan involves himself with keeping other sites of protest up to date on what is happening at Heathcliff through the Animal Protesters Bulletin. Alan is opposed to all uses of animals including pet keeping and believes that animals are sentient beings who should have just as many rights as humans and believes that human beings only use animals for one thing.

*'Human gain - usually financial.'*

## **JACK**

Jack was 45 years old at the time of this study and was single and employed as a scientist in Local Government. He first became interested in the exploitation of animals in his last year at the University of Durham in 1975. What prompted him to look at the issue was the showing of an anti-

semitic film produced by Joseph Goebbels by the German Society at the University. His attention was drawn to animal cruelty (not anti-semitic feelings as he was aware of the propaganda aims of the film), although he did not become vegetarian at this time as he felt that he should not until the whole of society did. Jack then did some travelling in Spain during 1976 where he observed more cruelty towards animals which he continued to mull over.

In 1977 he joined the Hunt Saboteurs Association and became vegan at the same time. He wrote that the Animal Rights Movement was much smaller and more intimate at this time and concentrated on the saving of individual animals whilst he was more concerned with changing Society's attitude to animals as a whole. It was at this time that he became interested in the BUAV (British Union Against Vivisection), Animal Aid, Animal Activists and other Animal Rights organisations. He did not agree with or support what he called the anarchistic philosophy and methods of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) who he felt were in many cases involved in purely reactive campaigning with little structure or awareness of where they were heading and what limits they set on their style of campaigning ie. The extent of using illegal methods, destruction of property to achieve animal liberation. He did not feel that those running the ALF were giving a responsible lead to impressionable young people, who were not in any way prepared for stiff prison sentences and court appearances.

In 1980 Jack helped set up a new national organization the NALL (Northern Animal Liberation League) based in Manchester. The principles of this organisation were based on a whole variety of campaigning methods including non-violent direct action. The direct actions involved hundreds of campaigns not a handful of campaigns as he thought the ALF contributed to. These involved taking part in daylight roof top protests at factory farms and

laboratories for instance. He felt that their organisation had tried to be very democratic and open and had tried to cover all areas of animal abuse. In 1984 300 animal rights activists invaded ICI's main animal research laboratories in Cheshire and 20 campaigners were arrested, Jack being one of them. There followed an eight week trial and Jack was sent to prison for three months.

The trial and prison sentence had a traumatic effect upon Jack and his partner at that time and their families and on his release he decided to step back from his activities a little and subsequently NALL ceased to be. Jack felt that in many ways it had succeeded in what it had set out to do - put the issue on the political agenda without harming human or animal life in the process.

Jack felt that his involvement in the Animal Rights Movement had a major impact in his personal and social relationships . He found it difficult to get secure jobs and his involvement over 18 years had he felt necessitated sacrifice in terms of time given to friends, family and partners.

In 1987 Jack was appointed to an employed position in an anti-vivisection organisation as a fundraiser and undercover on research on behalf of the organisation. One of his projects was an undercover investigation into the primate trade in the Phillippines and Indonesia, the film of which was shown by World in Action which resulted in a German film company being contacted by the traders to let the researchers know that their lives were worth very little if they returned to Indonesia. Jack worked for this organisation for eight years, but changes in its structure brought about a change in its focus and grass roots campaigning was low on their priority list and he felt that they had begun to compromise the principles with which they had been established in 1898. Further changes were to come with a split in the Executive of the organisation resulting in the dismissal of many staff, Jack

being one of them. Jack felt that the organisation had been infiltrated by those in the employ of organisations using vivisection because they had been too successful in bringing the issue to the public's gaze.

After this Jack became involved in the anti-live exports campaign and initially took a key role at Heathcliff as a media spokesperson and liaising with the police. Jack holds a strong spiritual belief

*'All life is connected and to abuse animals for whatever purpose results in harm to ourselves as well'*

## **VICTORIA**

Victoria was 54 years old at the time of the study, married with two children. As a child Victoria refused to eat animals such as rabbit and pheasant because she reasoned that farm animals were meant to be eaten and these were not. She became interested in animal rights during the 1980s as a result of a cruelty free cosmetic campaign. She joined Animal Aid in early 1983 and became a vegetarian at the same time and joined the Vegetarian Society. After joining Animal Aid she read Peter Singer's book Animal Liberation which

*'made me 'know' that I had made the right choice'*

Where she lived there were no social groups interested in the same things as Victoria so she joined the London Vegetarians to meet new friends as she found it hard and still does to eat with non-vegetarians. When she moved to the US Victoria went to her first ever demonstration against the wearing of fur, but otherwise she did not socialise out of her work environment due to the fact that most people did not share her vegetarian outlook. Whilst in the US she received the Vegetarian Society magazine.



She found it useful in a society that she felt was obsessed with celebrity to point out to others the celebrities which the Vegetarian Society use in their publication to point to the popularity of the cause.

Victoria is also a member of the Born Free Foundation and is involved with the fund raising for the Dr Hadwen Trust (A medical trust which investigates alternatives to using animals for research).

In the summer of 1986 Victoria became vegan when inspired by a work colleague who was very athletic and also a vegan. Victoria had previously been doubtful about the health issues surrounding veganism, but this woman proved a role model for her. She found the transition to veganism a slower process than becoming vegetarian which had been a 'no more' decision, veganism is more complex. She also joined the Vegan Society and since then the Movement for Compassionate Living and the Ghandi Foundation which she says both continue the process towards a more thoughtful way of living.

Victoria has been involved in the protest at Heathcliff since the beginning and also does vegetarian cookery demonstrations, talks and supports stalls and distributes leaflets. Her aim in life:

*'To live causing as little harm to the planet, other people or animals while looking after myself and my happiness'*

These are the core members of the group and below on page 132 in Box 5.1 I show a diary of their year of protest against the export of live animals to the European continent which was conducted outside the gates of a farm in the North of England.

## **BOX 5.1**

### **\*DIARY OF THE COMMUNITY'S CAMPAIGN**

#### **1995**

- 16 January Having discovered that live animals are transported to Europe for the veal trade from Victoria Palace Farms at Heathcliff, hate mail is sent to the farm by certain members of the community.
- 22 January Animal Rights demonstrators begin protesting outside the home of Victoria Palace Farms' Managing Director.
- 4 February Letter bomb reported to have been sent to Victoria Palace Farms, Heathcliff, by the community.
- 20 February Members of the Animal Rights community calling themselves The North Against Live Exports commence protests outside Victoria Palace Farms.
- 21 February 16 members of the community arrested during a demonstration outside Victoria Palace Farms.
- 2 March The community decide to hold a weekly peaceful vigil outside Victoria Palace Farms.
- 27 March Victoria Palace Farm staff accuse the community of bullying tactics and endangering lives.
- 28 March Police accuse the community of inciting young people (children) to get involved in angry protest, the police, were in this instance, the community policeman. According to the activists the community policeman told the newspapers that the protesters were throwing their own children under the transporter lorries - the protesters consider the community policeman in the pocket of the farm owners.
- 5 April The local MP when requested to meet with the community refuses.
- 6 April The community requests round table talks, but Victoria Palace Farm refuses to negotiate with them on the basis that the farm is doing nothing wrong.
- 1 May 100 protesters take the campaign to the county town to recruit support.
- 25 May Agricultural Secretary William Waldegrave gives backing to continued veal exports from Victoria Palace Farms.
- 20 August 120 protesters join a mass rally at Heathcliff and lay wreaths for the exported calves.
- 6 November The community claim their actions have forced Victoria Palace Farms to stop transporting at night.

#### **1996**

- 23 January The community now calling themselves Live Exports Opponents say peaceful protests at the vigil will continue each Monday.
- 22 February The community organize a mass vigil to commemorate one year's protest. One arrest is made.

**\*Information extracted from the local newspaper (Yorkshire Evening Press) and the Animal Protesters Bulletin.**

In what follows I will be examining the Campaign as an Expression of Community, the Social Structure of the Group and the Vigil as an Expression of Community directed towards their own definition of an *authentically human* identity and community.

### **5.3.1 The Campaign As An Expression of Community**

What we are witnessing on the streets of Shoreham, Brightlingsea and Coventry is ... a clear expression of a belief in a different way of doing things, a different and better kind of world (Michael Mansfield QC: The Guardian 14 April 1995)

The campaign which my informants have been involved with has been one against the transportation of live animals to Europe. Whilst the community took to the streets, the docks and the airports in the South of England, a rural village in North Yorkshire where the trade was being supplied also became a target for the grassroots community. The issue of live transportation of animals has been one which has not only mobilised animal rights activists, but also what Lowe and Goyder refer to as an 'attentive public', 'those people who though they do not belong to any of the groups, share their values' (Lowe & Goyder 1983: 10). This campaign has been undertaken at a national level by Compassion in World Farming and at a local level by grassroots activists. The national campaign by Compassion in World Farming has been going on for the last thirty years, but it is only in the past couple of years that a huge amount of public interest had been aroused.

All of my core group informants are grassroots activists, who have been active in the Animal Rights Movement for several years. But in the course of my fieldwork, I have met several individuals who had been attracted

to the movement in the last two years, specifically by the live exports issue.

The form which the local campaign has taken has been that of a vigil outside the gates of a North Yorkshire farm where the animals are collected together to be transported for export.

At the beginning of the campaign in February 1995, around 100 protesters could be found outside the gates of the farm, but a year into the campaign, the 'attentive public' have drifted away and we are left with a core group which I consider are fairly representative of the general animal rights community, still there. They remain locked in a battle against the 'animal abusers' and an 'inattentive public' while expressing and deriving meaning from this.

Some of the core groups members have also been actively involved in a campaign in another Yorkshire town against a research laboratory which carries out commercial testing on live animals including primates. This campaign has been running since 1983, but due to lack of resources is not particularly active at this moment. However, it continues in the form of a Christmas Day Vigil outside the laboratories where members of the community gather and plant white crosses in memory of the animals that have died during the experiments. All of the core group of this campaign also attend this Christmas Day Vigil, whilst not all of them have been involved in the campaign in any other way.

### **5.3.2 Social Structure**

As previously discussed, the Animal Rights community is not geographically bounded its boundaries are produced through interaction with others. It is a community that is supported by an ideology or 'thought style'

and activated when it confronts or is confronted by others. Therefore it is not the archetypal 'little community' normally studied by anthropology, but more representative of interest groups in complex society. Both Animal Welfare and Animal Liberation groups operate within the 'thought style' of the Animal Rights community. There are great debates over strategies, smaller groups spring up and internal disputes result in their disintegration and usually their reappearance in another guise. But the human actors in these debates and argumentations continue to operate within the 'thought style' of the community.

In the public face, internal variety disappears or coalesces into a simple statement. In its private mode, differentiation, variety and complexity proliferate (Cohen 1985, 24)

Garner contends that in Britain today there are 150 identifiable national groups concerned with animal protection (Garner 1993, 42). Most national organisations, whilst having memberships gained through subscriptions, very rarely have local level branches (Garner 1993, 46). They may have a local representative as a contact. There is indeed a kind of suspicion expressed towards those larger organisations by the smaller voluntary grassroots activists. Certainly this is so among the people I have interviewed. Whilst the people I have talked to recognise the importance of Compassion in World Farming in gaining more welfare provisions for animals, they were suspicious of the organisation.

Sandy felt that Compassion in World Farming was full of careerists and sexists who had lost their idealism. One of the members of her small activist group had been nominated by the group to stand as a voluntary representative for CIWF, but this post had gone to Bill who had been in a rival grassroots group in the past. Sandy knows Bill and they have mutual

acquaintances who have belonged to both their groups, but their intense rivalry has led to both of them denying that they know each other. Sandy also felt that Compassion in World Farming, rather than starting the protest against live exports, had jumped on the bandwagon and taken the glory.;

*But it was really the small local groups that highlighted this, and it captured the public's imagination, then Compassion in World Farming stepped in and took all the credit.*

Alan felt that many people were suspicious of Compassion in World Farming because of its hierarchical nature and employment of well paid executives.

A rejection of hierarchical groups even when they are operating within the same 'thought style' is illustrated by the growth in the number of grass roots groups which Garner contends has been 'startling' (Garner 1993, 46). In 1993, Garner points to 300 grassroots groups in existence, by Spring of 1996, this number had grown to 360 (verbal communication from Animal Rights Coalition).

The relationship between national groups and local representatives is informal and without obligation other than when the national body may donate money to a local group to help on a particular local campaign which fits in with their particular agenda at that time (Garner 1993, 46).

Compassion in World Farming, which has been successful in lobbying both the British Parliament and European Parliament and gaining supporters there, does so by addressing the cruelties involved in factory farming and live animal exportation. Its ultimate goal lies in the abolition of the meat industry, but recognises that a mass campaign to convert the population to vegetarianism would be unsuccessful. It adopts a 'softly softly' approach. On

28 February 1995 Compassion in World Farming mobilised 3,000 supporters to a mass lobby of MPs (Agscene Spring 1995, 13). It manages the activation of its members through its quarterly magazine and newsletters issued to Compassion in World Farming Supporters.

How do local groups with no particular structure manage to mobilise supporters for various events? They normally rely on a system of personal contacts (Garner 1993, 46). Barnes refers to this as the social network 'a set of concrete interpersonal relationships linking individuals with other individuals' (Barnes 1968, 113).

The weekly vigil outside the farm contains a core of around 10-12 people who consistently attend. Some have attended for longer than others. Alan attends every week and contends that for this reason he will be endeavouring to arrange an anniversary vigil in mid-February to mark the anniversary of a year's protest, as he has been in constant attendance since the beginning.

*It tends to be the people who have been attending for the longest who are looked to, to organise things. There aren't any leaders*

Alan will discuss what to do and try to come to a consensus with the people at the protest. Then he and they will all contact people that they know who are involved in other animal-issue projects, who will then contact others, to mobilise support for the event. Once this procedure has begun, Alan contacts the Animal Protesters Bulletin office. The Animal Protesters Bulletin is distributed at each of the protest sites throughout the country each week and since the beginning of 1996 has also arrived on the Internet. This keeps all the protesters up to date with what is happening and any coming events. Alan's telephone number is printed in the bulletin so that people can contact

him. In addition to this, the event is published regularly in the ARC News (Animal Rights Coalition News), this publication is crucial to the grassroots movement as it publishes events going on all around the country, identifies new protests, the names of animal rights prisoners and the names of animal abusers. This publication is available to anyone who wishes to start up their own group or simply wishes to find out what is going on. It is sent out monthly.

All of the people I have interviewed are currently involved with the live animal transportation issue; many have also been involved with a local long running antivivisection protest run at different times by Sandy and Bill. Mike ran the original antivivisection protest with Bill, then Sandy started another one which ran alongside and there was some tension between them. Alan moved between the two, but was more involved with Mike and Bill. Now there is only one antivivisection campaign, run by Sandy. Over the years a friendship has grown between them, Sandy and Mike have supported Alan in the campaign against live exports and Sandy and Alan have supported Mike when his girlfriend left him and he made a suicide attempt. This is an example of interaction through network links. Bill is only really friendly with Mike now, as Bill has defected to Compassion in World Farming and left grassroots activism behind.

Through their co-involvement with animal rights issues over a period of around ten years, this collection of people have developed a mutual support system which has come from a common aim and infiltrates other areas of their lives. They not only use this system to gain support for their objectives in pursuit of animal rights and affirming their membership of the community, but also for emotional support and friendship.

The use of a social network in this case is a deliberate policy. A more



formal organisation is actively avoided because of the way that Parliament, through such legislation as the Criminal Justice Act, is at the moment taking steps to regulate public protest. Alan pointed out *'If there is no leader, then they can't be hassled by the police'*.

There is also a great deal of exchange of information at the weekly vigil. The vigil is attended by members of the animal rights community from all over Yorkshire, and on occasion beyond, information exchanged and then taken back to their local groups. The community also use a network for policing the activities of the lorry drivers who move the animals, in doing so they adopt the methods that the police have used on them. The protesters began to record the registration numbers of the lorries transporting the animals. Alan felt that this kept the lorry drivers from exceeding journey times and *'kept them on their toes'*. The collection of registration numbers and a passing on of information to other protester sites allows the protesters to monitor journey times and locate where the animals are being transported to and from, as well as affirm their membership of the community.

The use of a network, then becomes an effective method of organising a type of community which uses constant social interaction with fellow members in creating and maintaining their community.

### **5.3.3 The Vigil As A Ritualistic Expression of A Symbolically Bounded Community**

Boundaries are marked because communities interact in some way or other with entities from which they are, or wish to be distinguished ... The boundary may be perceived in rather different terms not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side (Cohen 1985, 75)

Anthony Cohen contends that 'ritual is an important means through

which people experience community' (Cohen 1985: 50), operating in a way that increases sensitivity and heightens awareness of the experience of community. 'It should not be surprising, therefore, to find ritual occupying a prominent place in the repertoire of symbolic devices through which community boundaries are affirmed and reinforced' (Cohen 1985: 50).

It is through ritual that action and thought commingle and present 'a veritable window on the most important processes of social life' (Bell 1992: 28). The enacting of a ritual not only highlights their own 'sense of difference' to the participants, but also signals it to 'others'. Whilst illuminating the central concerns of a community, it presents the participants with an opportunity to experience 'the world as it should be' transformed during ritual time to the 'world as it is'. 'In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world ...' (Geertz 1973: 113).

It is my concern here to discover what the central concerns of this community are - is it the winning of rights for animals which will elevate their position in the minds of human beings or is it more concerned with human identity? Are the animal rights community, seeking to project and experience an identity which confirms their superiority to human others, using the 'animal' as a metaphorical vehicle for this expression?

Animals are used by human beings in almost every part of our lives. They are not only used as a source of food and clothing, they live with us in our homes as part of our families, they are used in the testing of cosmetics, drugs and weapons, whilst being presented to our children in their nursery books as furry clad human beings with many morality tales to tell us. Given this situation, the animal rights movement are engaged on a utopian mission with relatively little possibility of success, other than increased standards of

welfare for the animals who will ultimately be slaughtered or experimented upon. Therefore, given the utopian nature of their quest and the unlikelihood of their success, whilst I would not deny that concern for animals is involved, I would consider that animal rights is not the only 'name of the game'. I believe that what we are seeing is a search for human perfectibility expressed through animal rights, that perfectibility being that of the *authentically human*.

In my description of the vigil I will discuss my reasons for contending this. But for the moment, I will go on to discuss the ritual process.

#### **5.3.4 The Ritual Process**

Edmund Leach (1961) contends that in the doing of ritual, special food, behaviours and dress are involved, as well as a changed status for the individuals involved. This involves a conception of time that is not continuous, but oppositional in its nature. 'With a pendulum view of time, the sequence of things is discontinuous; time is a succession of alternatives and full stops' (Leach 1961: 134). For Leach, the ritual process involves four stages, separation from the secular-profane world to the realm of the sacred, marginalisation where 'ordinary social time has stopped', desacrification or aggregation where the individual returns to the sacred-profane world, and a fourth phase where the 'normal' life is resumed, until the pendulum swings back to 'sacred' time (Leach 1961: 135).

Victor Turner (1969), following Van Gennep's earlier work in 1909, and Leach (1961) also contends that ritual involves the removal of the individual from ordinary life and space and its accompanying codes of conduct and rules. Turner's definition of ritual involves three stages, separation from ordinary life; a state of liminality or anti-structure where, like Leach, he considers that the normative order of things has been removed and a

reversal of 'norms' becomes the 'norm'. For Leach the wearing of 'funny hats' and 'false noses' becomes de rigeur (Leach 1961: 132-134). During this liminality stage Turner contends that an intense feeling of 'communitas' is achieved among the participants, a profound feeling of affiliation between the participants. This is followed by a reintegration phase when the individuals return to ordinary life. The vigil, as it is referred to by the members of the community, from my observation is all of this, and is also considered as such by other outside observers 'Residents of ..... a normally quiet village, had to accept the weekly ritual of protest ...' (Yorkshire Evening Press 19 February 1996: 5). Having argued that the vigil is a ritualistic happening, I shall now go on to discuss Turner's concept of 'communitas' in relation to this particular ritual.

### **5.3.5 Communitas**

In his discussion of the ritual process, Turner argues that in complex industrial societies the search for communitas is not a search for the type of easy comradeship which arises through friendship or that experienced by co-workers, but a search for a 'transformative experience', existential in its nature, and experienced communally (Turner 1969: 138). In search of communitas, the animal rights community experience what Turner calls 'ideological communitas', an experience where their view of how 'men may best live together in comradesly harmony' in this case with the animal world, is felt by the participants. The 'world as it should be' becomes the 'world as it is', and the underlying ethos of the community is expressed.

Communitas is achieved when participants leave the life of 'structure' where obligations have to be fulfilled, obstacles overcome, decisions made and personal inclinations subsumed to that of the greater community, and become at one with the other participants in the ritual. A sense of power is

created through this feeling of *communitas*, but this must be transformed into practical application. 'It is no substitute for lucid thought and sustained will. On the other hand, structural action becomes arid and mechanical if those involved in it are not periodically immersed in the regenerative abyss of *communitas*' (Turner 1969: 139).

This type of analysis gives us an insight into why the vigil takes place. The larger organisations concerned with animal protection, such as Compassion in World Farming, involve themselves in the lobbying of parliament in an attempt to have legislation on animal welfare improved, but the members of the community need face to face interaction and experience of *communitas* to refresh themselves, empower themselves and express their identity. The vigil also becomes a space for negotiation and discourse over what constitutes the *authentically human*.

The animal rights community, could be classified as a peripheral community, but in the process of ritual, they become central and mass society operates on their periphery, and within that centrality they come to express feelings of power and *communitas*. I will now go on to describe what I have observed, and how I interpret the 'happenings' whilst hopefully conveying how the participants themselves feel.

### 5.3.6 The Vigil as Ritual

A social unit speaking to itself about itself, and so constituting itself (Douglas 1996, xii)

The vigil takes place each Monday and begins at midday, when members of the community begin to gather outside the gates of the farm. In the doing of this ritual, two purposes are served. Representatives of the

animal rights community are gathered together to affirm their identity, their sense of belonging and their oppositional stance to 'others' by giving a physical expression of 'difference' to an ideological 'difference', whilst at the same time inviting 'others' to ascribe to their 'thought style'. At ritualistic protest sites such as these the identity of the community is reinforced and affirmed and negotiated within the boundary activated by their interaction with those who they feel represent 'others' who are in direct conflict with them. At the same time as the very nature of the word 'vigil' implies, they are 'keeping a watch' both over the behaviour of human 'others' and the treatment of their animal 'kin'.

I have witnessed three types of vigil, which have differed in size and 'success'. The campaign has now been going on for over a year and the numbers attending have dropped from around 120 at one point, to a regular attendance of around 20.

I shall begin with a description of the nature of the vigil at the beginning of the campaign. In February 1995, the community decided to maintain a vigil outside the farm gates, a vigil which contained the ritualistic properties discussed above. The ritual of the vigil was enacted within a 'sacred' space demarcated by the participants. The arriving participants marked out the space by decorating the physical boundaries of the farm with the purple ribbons which are worn to indicate that an individual is a part of the community involved in the campaign against the transportation of live animals. Placards and posters were positioned around the gates of the farm, where the police occupied a space between the community and the community of 'animal abusers'. It is within this 'sacred' space that the ritual takes place. At this moment the participants are removed from ordinary life and space and its accompanying codes of conduct and rules and the donning of the 'funny hats' and 'false noses' can begin. To illustrate this, what better

than a song composed by a member of the community, originally to be used at Coventry, but now distributed by the community all over the country.

*On the first day of protest to \*\*\*\*\* we did give, ...  
A hedge full of purple ribbons. 2. banging drums.  
3. Loud hailer calls. 4. Whistle blasts. 5. Out, out,  
outs! 6. Police cars wailing. 7. Cameras filming.  
8. Placards waving. 9. Torches shining. 10.  
Banners flying. 11. Songs a singing. 12. Cars a  
hooting... and a hedge full of purple ribbons.  
(Tune - The Twelve Days of Christmas)*

The participants involve themselves in meeting each other again, from my observations, affectionate embraces and 'kidding' begins amongst the participants and many discussions of how life is faring for them, not ordinary social life, but how battle for animal rights in their location. Amongst the participants are those closely involved with running animal sanctuaries, as well as those who have little direct contact with the welfarist part of the Animal Rights Movements and are solely concerned with the advancement of rights. Some participants, in fact, show very little liking for animals. On one occasion, I witnessed an encounter between one female participant and another's dog, the woman recoiled and later told me that she could

*'see no difficulty with not being particularly keen on animals and being part of the Animal Rights Movement, I don't see the problem, I usually say I can't touch them because of my eczema, liking them and not wanting to see them abused are two different things'.*

As Cohen comments 'people can participate within the 'same' ritual yet find quite different meanings for it' (Cohen 1985: 54). 'The boundary represents the mask presented by the community to the outside world; it is the community's public face' (Cohen 1985: 74).

It is difficult to reconcile an attitude of revulsion towards animals which is displayed by participants such as the woman above and the dedication of a life to the pursuit of their rights. For some of the participants in this ritual, the meaning would seem more to do with their own identity rather than empathy with the plight of animals, whilst for others who are actively engaged in the 'hands on' welfare of animals, meaning is derived from both, so that claiming an identity as part of the community and empathy with animals conjoin. Like Cohen, Turner contends that during the liminal phase distinctions between participants tend to dissipate and the group appears homogenized. (Turner 1969: 95). In reality amongst the activists at the protest site, in addition to the woman who appeared not to like animals particularly, yet was a vegan and an animal rights activist, there are others who may like the woman I mentioned in Chapter 1 continue to eat animals, but campaign for better treatment of them. These individuals are not animal rights activists, but may appear so to the outside eye simply because they are supporting the activists. These individuals will stand together with strict animal rights activists who follow the vegan or vegetarian paths in protest and yet will have very different motivations for participation.

In addition to a prohibition on the discussion of 'normal' life, the participants behave in ways in which 'normal' life is inverted. In the 'normal' course of every day 'structured' life, there are severe prohibitions on the way that we interact with 'others'. The liminal phase in which the participants caught up, allows those prohibitions to be dropped, hence the participants are allowed to give vent to their feelings of outrage against 'animal abusers', by verbal insults, spitting and swearing at them. The rules of personal safety are also dropped, and behaviours such as lying down in front of transporter lorries are indulged in. The intrusion of 'others' who are not of the community, into the 'sacred' space results in action by the community. The transporters coming through are met with cries of '*shame on you*', angry gestures and attempts to



remove them from the space the community occupies. All of these actions embody those feelings of power which Turner argues emerges through *communitas*.

It is during these events, that the participants appear to feel an empowerment that is absent in 'structured' normal life, where they are considered by many to be eccentric and are given little credence and little voice. Another way in which 'normal' 'structured' life is inverted, is the way in which the community uses the tactics used on them by the police, back to the police. The police would video the participants as they arrived and as the vigil went on, the participants then began to bring their own camcorders and as the police videoed them, they would be videoing the police. This also seemed to give them a certain amount feeling of power. As one participant laughingly observed of the police

*'They don't know what's happening'.*

As the vigil continues, food sharing amongst the participants is indulged in. It is, however, a particular food sharing, which affirms identity and allows the participants to act in a transformed world. The 'world as it should be', during this time becomes the 'world as it is'. The participants no longer have to eat in the presence of those who indulge in the eating of the flesh of animals. During ritual time human beings are no longer carnivorous, all traces of animal are removed from food. This may in fact be even more symbolic, since some would contend that the Animal Rights Movement seek to remove animals from all parts of human life. This was voiced to me by Anna

*'Sometimes I wonder what the world would be like without animals, at least they wouldn't be mistreated, abused and killed'.*

As pointed out earlier Levi-Strauss (1966(b)) notes that food prohibitions are often involved with close identification with an object 'Ingestion or contact are regarded as a sort of auto-cannibalism. The relation between the person and the object is so close that the person possesses the characteristics of the object with which he is identified' ( Levi-Strauss 1966(b): 78). Central to the ideology of the Animal Rights community is an identification with 'animals', a recognition of animals as sentient beings and that the animal rights model for *authentic humanness* is a superior model for humanity. It comes as no surprise then that food sharing of a very distinctive kind is used in this ritual. This echoes the point made by Bell with regard to ritual providing an opportunity to see in microcosm the most important tenets of a particular social life (Bell 1992: 28).

The most important tenet of this particular community's life is vegetarianism or veganism as an expression of the animal free or cruelty free life. The food shared is generally vegan as veganism appears to be the highest state of authenticity at the moment. Lengthy debates take place over the ingredients of food stuffs to ensure that they are truly vegan or vegetarian. One lady had brought some home made cakes and offered them round. Questions were thrown in the air

*'Have they got eggs in them, because I can't eat them if they have, I'm a vegan'.*

*'If they've got eggs in them, are you sure they are free range? Where did you get them?'*

If someone brings along some new food there is great interest over it, where it came from and how to get it and what is involved in the production. These discussions and deliberations over the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of food are also examples of negotiations of identity.

As night falls, the participants demarcate their sacred space with candles, and I observed many discussions over the difficulty of obtaining vegan candles, how does one know they are vegan, is there a regular supplier of these? As the vigil winds towards its end, usually around midnight, the conversation begins to change and the participants prepare to return to normal 'structured' life, but in a regenerated state. The talk centres around what to do next to advance the campaign, when they will next meet. I have witnessed the singing of the old song 'We'll meet again', which was used during the Second World War to create a feeling of *communitas* in Britain in the face of the enemy. It evokes the view of a community at war with others, but also regenerated and transformed into taking positive action in structured life after their experience of *communitas* and what Turner refers to as 'anti-structure' (Turner 1969).

The return to 'structured' life is marked both by the community removing their placards and candles, and also the police who whilst the participants are 'packing up', tear down the purple ribbons, symbolically removing the community and as the last participants drift away, the farm workers emerge from the farm into the space the community have occupied and join in the removal of the traces of the community.

In line with Turner's contention that ritual and the resulting feeling of *communitas* may result in a feeling of regeneration, Moore suggests that at the least it produces is an 'attentive state of mind' (Moore & Myerhoff 1977: 7-8). This implies that there are 'more successful' and 'less successful' rituals. The ritual described above would be considered to be 'successful'. There were a large number of participants and as a result of this, there were large numbers of mass society there, represented by the police, spectators and farm workers, to witness this expression of identity and opposition. The presence of the representatives of mass society facilitates a greater expression of power during the liminal state and a greater feeling of *communitas* is achieved through this

expression.

As the campaign has worn on, however, I have witnessed 'less successful' rituals. The numbers of the community have depleted, due I would think, to the 'attentive public' becoming less attentive, leaving only the core members of the community. As a result, whilst the community has had the opportunity of affirming itself, but it has had less opportunity of experiencing empowerment, as the opposition has depleted.

Therefore, whilst an 'attentive state of mind' has been achieved, the feeling of empowerment has lessened and the community has had to take steps to increase the feeling of *communitas*, by appealing to other members of the community from farther afield to join them at intervals. When this has happened, instead of a small crowd of slightly dejected and cold looking people outside the farm gates, they have been transformed. On one occasion, protesters from Brightlingsea attended. They had arrived on a coach, dressed outrageously in bright colours and full of tales of disrupting a hunt and annoying the local vicar by appearing in the church to pray for the animals. The vigil on this occasion took on a celebratory tone amongst the participants and the verbal abuse of the police increased, particularly by the Brightlingsea protestors. At the end of this particular vigil, there was a great deal of singing and laughing, hooting of horns and the participants agreed that *'it was really fantastic!'*

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have examined the construct of community, the social structure of this group and their protest as an expression and experience of community. The vigil has been analysed as its ritualistic expression where it enters into a discourse with its own members and 'others' in the negotiation of a discrete identity. We have determined that a sense of community for the

animal rights movement is constructed through a perceived faculty of 'making the same sense of things'. In order to do this they ascertain that 'others' do not and use protest as a method of persuasion and condemnation and their 'rightness' to distinguish themselves from the 'wrongness' of the 'other'. In their ritualistic behaviours they negotiate and maintain their distinctiveness.

Following on from this examination of the concept of community and how the animal rights community finds public expression and meaning through social interaction with others at the boundary of their community, in my next chapter I intend to narrow my focus to that of the individual. Individual life-histories of activists have been examined to analyse the process of individual recruitment to the movement and the processes involved with the discarding elements of a particular personal and social identity.

## The Project of The Self Becoming An Animal Rights Activist - New Beginnings & Discard in The Construction of Identity

### 6.1 Introduction

I wish now to turn to how individuals enter the community and the processes which are involved in producing an animal rights identity, based on their own model for the *authentically human*. Personal identity appears to have assumed a greater importance under what some authors call postmodern conditions and others modernity or late modernity. Whilst discussing these authors' viewpoints, I will retain their terms, but prefer to place myself in no particular point of history other than the post-industrial phase of the late twentieth century.

It has been contended that members of the contemporary animal rights movement have a strong awareness of 'self' which is linked to the European Romantic tradition and that in this they follow in the footsteps of their historical antecedents, such as Rousseau and Shelley (Tester 1991, 146). Although I would contend that they have a strong **desire** for a sense of self rather than an awareness of self and a desire for structure. In order to explore this, it would appear necessary to understand what this notion of 'self' is.

In 1938 Marcel Mauss proposed that the European notion of the 'self' is both a recent phenomenon and the result of a historical social process which began with the social role player (the personage) (Mauss 1990). The 'personage' was a product of 'traditional' small scale society, created and bound by social duties and kinship ties alone with no assumption of an inner life. Under Roman influence the 'personage' gave way in European history, to the 'persona', the site of legal obligations and citizenship and later with the

influence of the Stoics to the development of the "personne" or 'person'. The meaning of the 'personne' was now not only the individual with legal obligations and rights to citizenship, but also a moral agent. Through the development of Christianity the 'person' was imbued with not only legal and civic obligations, but an inner spiritual life and conscience, or soul, considered unique to them 'persona - substantia rationalis individua ... The person is a rational substance, indivisible and unique' (Cassiodorus, Psalmum VII cited in Mauss 1990, 20) .

At the commencement of his essay Mauss sets aside any consideration of the essential inner or psychological self which he refers to as the '*moi*' and contends that what he is concerned with is the development of legalistic and moralistic notions of individuality and how this has contributed to Western understandings of the 'self'. Through ethnographic examples he compares this with other societies' understanding of 'self', to illustrate that notions of the 'self' are constituted by a particular set of social and cultural relationships which we refer to as 'Society'. Having at the commencement of the essay eschewed investigating the psychological essence of 'self', Mauss reintroduces the concept when he discusses the growth in sectarianism during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a point in history when the 'personne' began to be equated with 'the category of 'self' (*moi*), the site of thought and action, a process which was completed during the nineteenth century 'From that time onwards the revolution in mentalities was accomplished. Each of us has our 'self' (*moi*), an echo of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, ...' (Mauss 1990, 22).

In a response to Mauss, Carrithers (1985) takes up the notion of the inner self and following Mauss uses the term the *moi*. He, however, contends that whilst Mauss's analysis of history is interesting, he has reduced a complex plot to a single narrative of the 'self' or the '*moi*' which is inherently flawed.

Carrithers points to a narrative with perhaps many strands, but picks up two of them, the notions of the 'person' and the 'self'. For purposes of clarity he employs "two terms of art", that of 'personne' and the 'moi'. The 'personne' he defines as a notion of the individual as a member of a recognised social group with legal and social obligations and rights. The 'personne' carries with it a social and legal history because these are necessary elements of its construction. The '*moi*' he defines as;

(1) the physical and mental individuality of human beings within (2) a natural or spiritual cosmos, and (3) interacting with each other as moral agents (Carrithers 1985, 236).

Carrithers points to the essential distinction between these two concepts. The 'personne' may as a member of any collectivity have certain rights due from and be aware of duties towards that group but these may conflict directly with the 'moi' and their own view of how human beings should behave. Carrithers traces another historical narrative unfolding, a narrative not just of the person as a legally defined individual which restricts persons to merely being automatons, but a separate narrative that recognizes that human beings are psychosocial beings. We think about our being and our social relationships. In his discussion of the 'moi', Carrithers points to systems of thought which result in action which are not merely 'Society' driven, but based on individual deliberation and choice.

Parallel to the narrative of the society-guided legal definition of the person, is the narrative of moral systems based on the individual. Carrithers uses the examples of Stoicism, Christianity and Buddhism. These are predicated not on the individual as a product of Society, but;



they expressly set out some reflective and argued view of human mental and physical individuality, of how the individual should act, these systems cannot be considered apart from that individuality ... (Carrithers 1985, 248)

From this point of view, we cannot then dismiss the notion of an intrinsic and essential self, merely as a product of European recent history, a legalistic tool which resulted in the birth of a never-before encountered phenomenon, the human self. Even Mauss did not dismiss the existence of an essential self, unique to the individual;

there has never existed a human being who has not been aware, not only of his body, but also at the same time of his individuality (Mauss 1990, 3).

I believe that what Mauss is arguing is that the notion of the 'self' is constructed at different times and by different societies in different ways and for different purposes. For some societies the dominant notion of the self will be that of the 'personnage', the role player dependent on existence on interwoven social relationships. The 'personne' may dominate in societies where individual legal and moral responsibilities are of importance, societies where property and money are dominant economic spheres. In societies such as our own, I believe Mauss is saying that this legalistic model has become conflated with the inner self as the source of action and belief and that this 'self' is 'Society' driven. Following Carrithers I consider that in societies such as our own, both notions of the 'personne' and the 'moi' coexist;

These sorts of complex society make available such rich and disparate experiences to their members that both moi and personne theories can flourish in them (Carrithers 1985, 255).

In Steven Lukes discussion of Western individualism he points to three aspects of the concept, the inherent worth of the individual, that the individual is socially autonomous and measures social requirements and responds in a reflective manner and that the individual is essentially a private entity.

This concept is rooted both in Modern and Romantic notions of the self. The Modernist as exemplified by philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham stressed the rationality of human beings as individual moral agents but who were moulded by the demands of 'Society'. The Romantics stressed the perfectibility of human beings through self development which was predicated on the notion of the individual human being set apart from 'Society' which was fundamentally flawed and living their lives according to their own moral code.

This combination of understandings of the notion of the 'Self', of the public and the private is, I believe, the basis of a common notion that is shared by most people in British society at least. As Carrithers has pointed out, however, there may be some considerable dissonance between the 'personne' and the 'moi', the public and the private. Some things which are legally and morally acceptable in 'Society's' view are unacceptable privately.

This is a central problem for the animal rightist, who in order to reconcile this dissonance must engage in strategies to negotiate a viable social identity, which authenticates the inner self. Herzog (1993) in a study of the psychology of American animal rights activists commented that within the movement there were inconsistencies between public beliefs and private behaviour, but certain committed individuals did try to reconcile these differences. He together with Plous (1991) based this observation on people who attended public demonstrations. The problem with this observation is that individuals who attend marches against the use of animals are not always animal rights activists; many will be welfarists, people who are anxious to promote better conditions for

animals or merely the 'attentive public' who are part of the larger animal protection movement. However, Herzog goes on to describe more committed individuals as undergoing a transformative process after committing themselves to animal rights (Herzog 1993, 110). It is this transformative process which is of interest.

There is a notion that in Western society, the inner 'self' or 'moi' has secured primacy over the social 'self', but in the construction of personal identity that personal identity must be recognized as socially viable, or it will fall within a continuum that flows from eccentricity to pathology. In essence, the notion of identity must be a shared one, which in no way detracts from the individual, but substantiates the individual by validation.

Writers such as Gergen (1991) suggest that in what he calls 'the postmodern world' the bombarding of the self with increased knowledge of the world and the opening out of the social world through technology, results in a 'socially saturated' self with no vocabulary for its discussion. Gergen paints a world where both Romantic notions of the self which stressed individual depth, passion and morality and the Modernist notion which stressed the capacity for reason and continuity are fast disappearing. Under the conditions of postmodernism or social saturation, a continuous knowable, or authentic self disappears, and is replaced by the 'multiphrenic' self, the self which is more and more populated by the images and opportunities for 'being', through the increasing social relationships brought about by technologies. The postmodern multiphrenic self, is populated with many selves which may be called upon in response to differing situations and relationships.

These relationships pull us in myriad directions, inviting us to play such variety of roles that the very concept of an 'authentic self' with knowable characteristics recedes from view. The fully saturated self becomes no self at all (Gergen 1991, 7)

Gergen contends that within this postmodern consciousness we see the loss of deeply held beliefs about the nature of the self. Truth, authenticity and continuity are replaced by a 'chameleon' self. This picture of post-traditional life is a picture first painted by Durkheim (1952) in his study of Suicide, and can appear bleak and empty. If individuals are perceived to be ever changing, then mistrust develops and a sense of meaninglessness can overwhelm. This sense of meaninglessness, which Durkheim termed 'anomie' and attributed to the loss of traditional norms and values, however, is something that can be combatted, precisely by the conditions which have produced it. The conditions of contemporary Western society create opportunities to construct an identity which do not preclude incorporating a search for authenticity and meaning into that identity, in response to the conditions of perceived meaninglessness.

Anthony Giddens in his discussion of this particular historical point refers to the present period as "high' or 'late' modernity" (Giddens 1991, 2) terms originally coined by Tonnies in 1887 (Tonnies 1963). Whilst his picture of post-traditional life coincides with that of Gergen, Giddens points not to a resulting 'multiphrenic' self, but an increasing desire for an authentic and knowable self in response to these conditions. Where the conditions of pre-modern societies may have presented individuals with a 'fixed' identity, self identity in post-traditional societies becomes 'a reflexive project' (Giddens 1991, 32). The reflexive project of self-identity, Giddens proposes, stems from a need for 'Ontological Security: a sense of continuity and order in events ...' (Giddens 1991, 243). In terms of self-identity, this continuity is not simply based upon 'sameness' over time or a 'given' self, but upon the individual constantly creating and sustaining a self-identity which is 'reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography (Giddens 1991, 53). To contend, however that this type of relational self is unique to post-traditional societies, may be mistaken. Fred Myers in a study of Pintupi speaking Aboriginals notes that

personal identity is negotiated through social relationships which involves autonomy and shared identities. The individual consents to engage in relationships which confirm a particular identity, whilst rejecting others (Myers 1988, 55 ).

Ontological security also involves possessing answers to basic existential questions, and in the course of day to day life enacting these answers on a behavioural level, although self-identity is not simply behaviour, it is behaviour located within a particular narrative 'the ongoing 'story' about the self' (Giddens 1991, 54).

A person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people (Giddens 1991, 54)

In his discussion of individualism, Lukes points out that central to the Romantic's view of the self was the idea of self-development (Lukes 1973, 67), Griswold suggests that for the postmodernist this idea is absent and contends that postmodern life has seen the 'decline of the metanarrative' which has been replaced by 'a growing cynicism based on the sense that life is meaningless and culture only a play of images without reference to some underlying reality' (Griswold 1994, 110).

I would suggest that the emergence of the animal rights community and the animal rights self is a reaction against such a world. The animal rights activist seeks structure and incorporates both Romantic and Modernist notions of the self using the conditions of post-industrial life in the construction of an identity where the narrative project of the self is of great importance.

It is my intention to illustrate how the animal rights activist engages with

the opportunities presented by contemporary post-industrial society in the construction of an identity, which is predicated upon the notion of 'authenticity'. This 'authenticity' is made up of two strands. One strand is the search for the 'authenticity' of a self which is knowable and constant based on moral values and self-development and is narratively coherent. The second type of authenticity they seek is that of *authentic humanness*, not based on the existentialist notion of criterion-less choices of the individual, but based on a moral code and practices which define the *authentic human* from the lesser socially evolved human being; who is perceived to be cruel and blood thirsty and not in control of these aspects of their nature. This second strand is also part of the narrative of the social history of the animal protection movement. This narrative reached a hiatus during the period after the last World War and was taken up again in the 1960s.

In pursuit of this authenticity, animal rights activists must engage in practices which confirm personal identity and set up social relations with others of similar mind. This they do through bodily practices involved with notions of pollution and through ritual activity and the use of material culture to set up social relationships with others which confirm a shared and personal identity.

Central to the construction of the animal rightist's identity is a point of reformation, the beginning of a particular narrative. Jasper & Poulsen (1992) refer to the recruitment of animal rights activists as being through a 'moral shock'. Giddens would term these 'fateful moments', moments which require the individual to confront existential questions (Giddens 1991, 203). After experiencing a 'moral shock', the individual is confronted with the questions 'How shall I live my life?', 'Should I change how I live my life?' For Turner (1974) this would be a liminoid experience, the opportunity to step outside the norms of everyday life and question. If the answer to those questions is the abandonment of one lifestyle and the taking up of another, it is also part of the

ongoing narrative of the self.

Carrithers (1992) points to narrative thought as the means of interpreting and predicting the intentions of others, the present conditions of social life within a landscape of the past and a predicted future and mediating our actions and responses to situations. These responses will be culturally and historically specific and supply us with an orientation within which we can act in a way which makes sense in our particular life 'story'.

For Douglas (1987), this involves cognitive choices and thought styles which, when conjoined with the similar thought styles of others, form thought worlds or communities. This involves Carrither's notion of the ability of human beings to mind read the thoughts of others and the stories of others in a logical way. The human ability to mind read is one that was investigated originally by Schutz who termed it a 'scheme of interpretation' (Schutz 1972, 86). This 'mind reading' is illustrated by Cohen's theory that community exists in the minds of its members who 'make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things' (Cohen 1985, 16). At the point of reformation, the animal rights activist engages with others whose thinking they believe is similar to their own, in the construction of both a personal and shared social identity.

In so far as it is dominated by the core perspectives of modernity, the project of the self remains one of control, guided only by a morality of 'authenticity' (Giddens 1991, 225)

Social life in Britain and elsewhere in the Western World since the Second World War, presents individuals' with multiple choices of how to live their lives. Some people are content to answer the existential questions thrown up by contemporary conditions by the superficial multiple self. Others have a desire for the constant, essential and knowable. As Giddens points out:

Some individuals find it psychologically difficult or impossible to accept the existence of diverse, mutually conflicting authorities. They find that the freedom to choose is a burden and they seek solace in more overarching systems of authority ... an authority whose rules and provisions cover most aspects of his life (Giddens 1991, 196).

It is at this point that 'authenticity' becomes central. Members of the animal rights community are not part of a geographically located community, but a relational community of meaning. In order to protect the integrity of the community, traditional face-to-face communities engage in the mutual monitoring of individual behaviour. Within relational communities, the maintenance of an *authentic* self is the preeminent medium for monitoring behaviour to protect the integrity of the individual and the community. Whilst in relational communities the opportunities for face-to-face mutual monitoring of behaviour can only be engaged in under the circumstances of ritual activity, the self, in order to maintain its own integrity and authenticity, must continually engage in a process of eliminating any dissonance between itself and the community.

In order to examine these processes I would firstly like to turn to how the individual enters the community.

## **6.2 Entering the Community**

Pre-existing social networks for the recruitment of new members to social movements have, in recent years, been regarded as a prime factor for recruitment. James Jasper suggests, however, that unlike other contemporary social movements, the Animal Rights community relies heavily upon the recruitment of 'strangers' and that in recent surveys it was shown that only one third of animal activists were recruited through a personal network (Jasper



1992). McAdam, McCarthy and Zald's (1988) theory that those who belong to several protest movements will be more liable to join another was only upheld by three of my core group of activists. Previous involvement in non-animal rights issues, however, was not a question which I addressed to them, but information which they volunteered and this would be an interesting topic to pursue, because the Animal Rights Movement has a its history of concern for humanity as well as animals. This dual concern, however, is one that is taken up by grassroots groups rather than the larger national organisations. The slogan used in many major demonstrations illustrates this dual concern *'Human Freedom, Animal Rights, One Struggle, One Fight'*.

Jasper and Poulsen assert that there has been an over-concentration on the recruitment of individuals to protest movements through previous and existing social networks and an under-concentration on the role of cultural meanings which pervade wider society (Jasper & Poulsen 1995, 493). In a survey of animal rights and anti-nuclear protestors, Jasper and Poulsen distinguished two discrete patterns of recruitment, one appeals to 'strangers' whilst the other to 'friends' or pre-existing social networks . 'Strangers can be recruited because of the beliefs and feelings they already have' (Jasper & Poulsen 1995, 494). If these beliefs and feelings are already in place without being mobilised, what is it which triggers that mobilisation? During my fieldwork, I was interested in what led people to subscribe to this community. What leads the members of the animal rights community to reject the morality and ideology of mass society and to take up a new identity or re-birth into a new community?.

Jasper & Nelkin (1992) contend that the animal rights community recruits new members through the use of 'moral shocks', the use of appalling images such as vivisection upon familiar domestic animals such as cats and dogs and animals which are closely related to humans, such as primates. They contend that these images 'appeal to anthropomorphic sympathies' (Jasper & Nelkin

1992: 44). They also go on to contend that, in the animal rights literature, these morally repugnant images are frequently contrasted with happy contented, 'uninterfered' with animals. This is certainly well demonstrated in the literature provided by Compassion in World Farming, for instance whose glossy brochures usually have a front cover with a beautiful picture of contented animals (the world as it should be ) and whose back cover reveals the world as it is. See for example Agscene No 117, with a cover picture of a beautiful Guernsey cow and her little calf, cosily lying together in clean straw, the mother's eyes looking out at the reader - 'The bond we break for veal ...', contrasted with the back cover where the awful truth is revealed and the world as it is confronts us with the solitary calf in a veal crate.

Compassion in World Farming, however, uses very restrained images as part of its 'softly, softly' approach, combined with the fact that it is preaching to the converted through this literature. To receive the literature one must be a member of Compassion in World Farming. In contrast to this a leaflet distributed by the Veggies Catering Campaign, a workers co-operative, wishing us a Happy Christmas carries a cover with the 'Grim Reaper' holding a dead turkey on a plate, complete with blood dripping from its throat 'How would you like your Christmas turkey - strangled? Knifed? Brutally slaughtered?'. This much more forceful tactic, is one which is used far more by the grassroots, egalitarian groups and are most frequently used when recruiting for the community from the outside when stalls are set up in town centres for the distribution of information and leaflets.

From those informants who completed autobiographies, all except one had been recruited through some sort of 'moral shock'. This evidence was backed up by others I interviewed during the course of my fieldwork at the protest site. Most of my informants, had a tale to tell of their birth into the community through such an event.

*At 14, whilst doing an English assignment I came across some leaflets about vivisection, (a draize test on a rabbit). I can remember it vividly. I think it was from the BUAV. I remember being horrified they could do such things to rabbits... I remember reading a lot of leaflets and being horrified at realizing you are eating animals ...*

*I was out shopping when I suddenly came across a promotion on behalf of NAVS. There was a large poster of a monkey in a ZEIGLER chain. A metal chain to which the monkey is clamped with metal hand and leg cuffs, belt and head clamp to monitor the brain. I was horrified and went away with leaflets and application form, I was now a member of NAVS. It was 1972 and I was 27 years old.*

Not everyone is recruited through the community. Sometimes the attitudes of mass society provide a moral shock which promote an individuals entrance into the community or a direct life experience, becoming a vegetarian can also propel someone into the community through the Vegetarian Society's magazine. For one of my informants, Alan it was a direct life experience.

*Around 1978-79 the local authority with whom I was serving my time, owned a local slaughter house and I had occasion to carry out installation and maintenance there. One frequent job was the repair of the electric stunning tongs. These failed frequently, so in retrospect, I believe many animals probably were not properly stunned. I was able to watch the whole process from the animals in pens to ending up as 'sides' on the hook'*

It was this experience which appeared to plant a seed of doubt in the Alan's mind about the 'rightness' of mass society's attitude towards animals. Alan, became a vegetarian some time after this and through reading vegetarian magazines and discovering more about what he perceives as the cruel practices carried out in the farming industry and vivisection propelled him into becoming an activist. Alan has also told me that after his conversion to the animal rights cause and vegetarianism, the other 'lads' he worked with used to

delight in sending him out to the slaughterhouses, which merely confirmed his moral stance and his disapproval of mass society's practices.

*I didn't mind, it just gave me more ammunition, more proof  
that this was all wrong and evidence to show other people  
what goes on*

Moral shocks are not only administered through visual images, but through the rhetoric which flows through the protest literature and the verbal rhetoric used at protest sites.

As opposed to former theories that protest arises from a common grievance shared by an existing network of people, moral shocks "serve as the functional equivalent of social networks, drawing people into activism by building on their existing beliefs" (Jasper & Poulsen 1995, 498). It is here that I would disagree with Jasper and Poulsen who appear to be saying that activists were already concerned with the fate of animals. I have not found this to be so clear cut and prefer to think that recruits have perhaps a previously unrecognized 'affective bias' towards animals that makes them susceptible to these tactics.

Moral shocks are 'condensing symbols ... that neatly capture - both cognitively and emotionally - a range of meanings and convey a frame, master frame or theme' (Jasper & Poulsen 1995, 498) which facilitate the recruitment of strangers. Jasper and Poulsen make an important point that 'Although some symbols are more powerful than others, they still do not resonate to the same extent or with the same meanings for everyone' (Jasper & Poulsen 1995, 498). This perhaps highlights the notion that some individuals have an 'affective bias' towards animals whilst others do not.

Most of my informants had been pet keepers either in childhood or prior to their recruitment to the movement and so many had had the experience of

relationships with animals which may have facilitated their reaction to a moral shock. However, in the course of my fieldwork I had the opportunity to talk to people who were residents of the village where the protests were taking place and the symbols and rhetoric had no meaning for them whatsoever, their 'affective bias' lay elsewhere.

### **6.3 Seeking Belongingness in Practices of Immersion and Discard**

Bodily discipline is intrinsic to the competent social agent; it is transcultural rather than specifically connected with modernity; and it is a continuous feature of the flow of conduct in the *duree* of daily life. Most importantly, routine control of the body is integral to the very nature both of agency and of being accepted (trusted) by others as competent (Giddens 1991, 57)

The most essential element of community, is the fact that people consider themselves to be part of a community. How is this sense of belonging achieved, Giddens points to the key. A sense of belonging to a distinct community has been evidenced in my fieldwork, by the people themselves. Many people felt that they no longer wanted to associate with individuals who were not part of the community, if they did not have to and many expressed the opinion that they felt more comfortable with the Animal Rights community than any other. This is also reflected in some of the literature. John Callaghan in the *Vegan* magazine offering advice to new vegans points out that 'Veganism may have changed your life to the extent that you can be friends only with people who don't sanction animal exploitation ...' (Callaghan 1995, 12).

Several of my informants expressed the same view. John, who has been involved with the movement since the early 'eighties said *'I now feel more at ease when in the company of animal rights protestors, especially when they are vegan'*. A couple of the younger women informants were also worried about the lack of marriageable young men there were for them as they felt they could not

tolerate marriage with someone who did not feel the same way as them. They appreciated the difficult position this put them in

*'Since becoming a vegan I thought that obviously my relationships just weren't getting anywhere and the best thing would be a vegan boyfriend ... it does slightly limit your options!'*

The sense of belonging, of what it means to belong is constantly evoked by whatever means come to hand; the use of language, the shared knowledge of genealogy or ecology, joking, the solidarity of sect, the aesthetics of subsistence skills (Cohen 1982: 6)

From my observation and analysis of the autobiographies of my informants a sense of belonging appears to be achieved through three strands, immersion through multiple membership, pollution avoidance and the use of material culture all directed towards the building of cultural 'competence'. The first strand opens the way for the second and the third strand follows after a sense of loss has to be overcome. In what follows it is my intention to examine the first two strands, multiple membership and pollution avoidance strategies. The use of material culture in the building of cultural competence will be examined in detail in Chapter 7.

After initial recruitment to the movement it became obvious through both autobiographical notes and their conversation that a pattern of multiple membership of different animal interest agencies takes place. As can be seen in Appendix 1 all of my informants were involved with several agencies.

The effect of multiple membership is fourfold. (1) All the agencies have their own literature which reinforce the awareness of animal cruelty and the ways in which mass society is culpable in this. (2) Membership of the Vegetarian Society and the Vegan Society provides access to literature which

gives guidance on the avoidance of products which are tainted by cruelty or 'inauthenticity'. (3) Multiple membership also increases interaction between activists reinforcing their belief in the 'rightness' of their affiliation. (4) Most importantly multiple membership reinforces the need for the individual to take steps to make their personal identity reflect their social identity, to engage in processes to eliminate cruelty from their lives in a process of evolution towards the state of *authentic humanness*.

### 6.3.1 Who Moi?

The reality of community in people's experience thus inheres in their attachment or commitment to a common body of symbols. Much of the boundary-maintaining process ... is concerned with maintaining and further developing this commonality of symbol (Cohen 1985, 16)

As we can see from the above, boundary maintaining processes translate themselves into processes of further immersion in the movement. It also involves processes of removing any dissonance between the individual and the community. This involves the building of a personal identity. We have already examined the way in which ritual serves as a public expression of the experience of a symbolic community. This boundary came into being when the community interacted with others. In this section I wish to examine how the commitment of individuals to the community is created through boundary maintaining processes on an individual level which increase a feeling of belonging and a sense of identity. These manifest themselves initially in processes of discarding a set of conceptual tools which have previously supported a world view of the human dominance and exploitation of other species as 'taken for granted'.

Just as nonhuman animal suffering pervades society, so every aspect of activists' lives - diet, dress, diversions - is designed to expunge the taint of animals exploited for

human ends. They embrace caring for animals by bearing witness at every mundane turn to the possibility of living their caring within a mutually supportive community (Shapiro 1994, 162).

Pierre Bourdieu's work on how societies reproduce and maintain themselves as groups in relations of power with other groups introduces us to the notion of the 'habitus'

A system of lasting, transposable dispositions, which integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transformations of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems (Bourdieu 1977, 83)

The habitus is shaped by socialization within the family and through education during childhood and the internalization of the material world. The habitus involves notions of competence and knowledge, but it is also embodied. According to Bourdieu the habitus is imprinted on the body of the individual, ways of walking, sitting, gestures, facial expression, ways of eating, drinking, body size, shape, posture amongst many other things are representations of the individual's habitus. For Bourdieu, the habitus operates within a coherent logic which he calls the 'logic of practice' and is organized by a system of classification. What happens when that system of classification changes?

After recruitment to the community of animal rights activists, new recruits turn to the community for guidance on the personal behaviours which will reinforce a sense of identity and community. The recent history of the movement has produced a convention to regulate the behaviour of its members and protect the integrity of the community. It has acquired a 'parallel cognitive convention to sustain it' (Douglas 1987, 46). This is based on the Romantic notion that humans have been corrupted by society, that left in their natural



state human beings would live in peace with other species. This is twinned with a belief in self development towards a goal of perfectibility expressed through living a cruelty free life which stresses the Modernist notion of the individual as a free moral agent. Thus to become *authentically human* is to make a moral choice to live an animal free life in which all traces of the products of oppression or cruelty to animals or of slaughtered animals are removed from one's life. It is at this point that an alternative set of practices is brought into action, practices which are the processes of disassembling certain aspects of a previous self and its social relationships.

Attendance at protest sites introduces them to the discursive nature of the community and to its practices and allows them to interact with others who share their newly acquired views. Literature produced by animal interest agencies educates and informs the individual both about animal interest causes and the personal practices which are required from the activist to invoke personal boundaries of negotiation or marks of identity. The personal boundary of negotiation, is that which is in force all the time, through practice, although it is not always apparent. It is most visible when engaged in social interaction. Whilst the public boundary is raised at sites of protest as a ritualistic expression of group identity and community in contestation with mass society it is essentially a permeable boundary of negotiation which allows 'others' outside the community to join with them. Thus, while protesting against specific animal abusers, against whom the boundary is raised, they distribute leaflets and engage in persuasion tactics to recruit for the community from the general public whilst negotiating their own identity as a community. The personal boundary of negotiation is enacted upon and through the body using the body as a personal metaphor for the community and individual practices as the logical application of a new world view.

The Animal Rights Community is faced with a problem common to many

ethnic minorities and minority interest groups in urban industrialised society, that of maintaining separateness and difference, whilst in everyday contact with the mass society. In Judith Okley's ethnographic study The Traveller Gypsies (1983), Okley points out that;

One way of remaining different is by invoking pollution beliefs which both express and reinforce ... boundary (Okley 1983, 77)

In her discussion of symbolic boundaries, Okley points out that pollution beliefs 'cannot be seen independently of those of larger society, mainly because they create and express symbolic boundaries between the minority and the majority' (Okley 1983, 78). If we consider that members of the Animal Rights Community are engaged in actively constituting a particular and separate cultural identity whilst engaging with mass society's culture, the question of how they construct a boundary of negotiation is central. There is a certain similarity between the case of the Gypsy and the case of the Animal rightist. Each group can be considered as peripheral and in both cases, the body is used as an effective negotiating boundary. Each of these cultural groups transforms the everyday practices of living into a constituent of that boundary. I concede that the Gypsy may not be consciously aware of constructing this boundary, having been ascribed a Gypsy identity at birth and subsequently been socialized into it. The Gypsy can perhaps be considered as part of an ethnic group ascribed by birth, whilst the Animal rightist may fall into the classification of an adherent to a particular 'thought style'. The use of the body as a site for negotiating identity is common to both.

## 6.4 The Body as a Boundary of Negotiation

Regularised control of the body is a fundamental means whereby a biography of self-identity is maintained; yet at the same time the self is also more or less constantly 'on display' to others in terms of its embodiment (Giddens 1991, 57-58).

Ethical vegetarianism is a theory people enact with their bodies (Adams 1990, 147)

Analyses of the social meanings of the physical body have in the main followed a Durkheimian model, that of Society written upon the individual (Polhemus 1975, 26). Marcell Mauss (1935) stressed that bodily practices are cultural and social products of social learning processes based on shared social thought. Levi-Strauss coined the phrase 'socio-logic' to explain this shared cognitive concordance (Levi-Strauss 1968, 76). In his essay 'The Techniques of the Body' Mauss concludes that 'In every society ... everyone ... has to know and learn what ... to do in all conditions' (Mauss 1935 (trans 1973), 85). As we have already examined, Bourdieu translates this into a system he calls the habitus which is embodied.

Mary Douglas developed the notion of the body as a metaphor for society through which the body social and the body physical experience and exchange meanings which are driven towards the removal of any dissonance between the two in order to reinforce each other (Douglas 1970, 65).

Following Douglas's reasoning then, an examination of attitudes towards the body physical and its use in boundary definition should result in a greater understanding of the body social. Polhemus regards the body 'as a tool - a native-made model or image of society - which the social scientist cannot afford to ignore' (Polhemus 1975, 28-29). Polhemus also points out, following

Durkheim that societies exist through the individual exertions of people in creating, changing and maintaining them and that continuity can only be achieved through individuals learning what their society is (Polhemus 1975, 31).

Polhemus discussing why the modern age seems to be living with a 'Cult of the Body' suggests that anthropologists and sociologists have tended to compare 'The organic wholeness and formfulness of the primitive world with the anomic disintegration of form in the West ... two factors would seem to contribute to this disintegration of form and the subsequent disintegration of the consonance of physical and social levels of experience ... We are faced with social change so rapid that the physical body cannot catch up ... There is a multiplicity of social systems which our bodies are called on to reflect' (Polhemus 1975, 31-33).

If animal rights activists are reacting against such a world, as I have suggested previously, then it is of no surprise that the bodily practices of the activist become so meaningful.

At this point I should like to return to Mary Douglas as I wish to discuss the notion of pollution avoidance in the life of the activist. Mary Douglas contends that 'The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious' (Douglas 1969, 138). The body symbolizes society and 'the powers and dangers credited to social structure' are 'reproduced in small on the human body' (Douglas 1969, 138).

### 6.4.1 Pollution Avoidance

Pollution ideas work in the life of society at two levels, one largely instrumental, one expressive (Douglas 1969, 13)

The social structure and the boundaries of negotiation of the animal rights community are predicated on distancing themselves from cruelty to animals in every way and highlighting their difference from human 'others'. The ingestion of animal flesh or the use of any materials derived from or tested on animals are a pollution of the identity of the animal rightist and through this a danger to the community's integrity. Mary Douglas points out that 'We would expect to find that the pollution beliefs of a culture are related to its moral values' (Douglas 1975, 54). The vegetarian or vegan body is a vehicle for the moral ideology of the movement and pollution avoidance is an expression and reinforcement of the boundary of negotiation of the animal rightist body and thus the community. As I have already pointed out some members of the community become animal rights activists after joining the Vegetarian or Vegan Societies for others it is through some sort of 'moral shock'. For those who join after undergoing a 'moral shock' there follows a period of removing from their lives the products of animal cruelty specifically meat and its by-products. As Sandy pointed out to me:

*It would be pointless to be any sort of 'campaigner' if you couldn't see that breeding, rearing and killing living creatures just to satisfy your taste buds is about the worst abuse'*

During one of our conversations which had veered off onto other subjects, as conversations do, we were discussing the obsession of contemporary Western society with achieving a slim body, Sandy pointed out one of what she considered the aesthetic gains of her way of life:

*You should become a vegan, you'll never see a fat vegan'*

Tester contends that the Animal Rights community is one of the 'slim and moral watching over the flabby and violent' (Tester 1991, 178). There is certainly an expectation that the vegetarian or vegan body will be slim and healthy as a result of leading a moral life. There is also a suggestion that the diet affects morality and that the rewards of this are manifested physically.

The decomposition of animal proteins in the unsuitably long gut of our species creates poisons that affect both mind and body ... vegetarians are second to no meat-eater in strength, stamina, good health and longevity (Wynne-Tyson 1988,71).

In the course of my fieldwork, a rather overweight lady and her equally overweight daughter attended the vigil. After they had left, there was quite a lot of sniggering about the size of these two ladies and one young woman commented *'Well, I've never seen a fat vegetarian before'*. These two unfortunate women had transgressed the boundary of expected vegetarian embodiment.

#### **6.4.2 Inner Body Pollution Avoidances**

The central tenet of the animal rightist, is that cruelty to animals must be eliminated from human life. This finds expression in many pollution avoidances. Central to this is the avoidance of ingesting animal flesh. The animal rights community is engaged in claiming a kinship with animals based on animal sentience and similarity to humans and efforts to widen the human moral community to include animals, thus producing a new model for *human authenticity* predicated on their notions of the morally and physically pure. It is, therefore, not unexpected that avoidance of moral and physical pollution is essential and enacted through and by the body.

Meat eating ... is indefensible ... it is not now necessary to feast on the bodies of dead animals in order to be healthy (Linzey 1987, 72).

In fact for the animal rightist, it is not only physically unhealthy to eat dead flesh, but physically and morally polluting. However, vegetarianism is not the only signifier of the animal rightist body. Many people in the Western World are renouncing the meat diet, not on the basis of ethical vegetarianism, but simply for their physical health and will certainly share cultural traits with the animal rights activist, but these vegetarians are not of interest for my purpose. It is not important that animal rightists share cultural traits with 'others', it is only important for my purposes and their own purposes that they consider themselves to be culturally distinct.

Many activists in order to emphasize their cultural identity become vegan in their efforts. There is an element of implied hierarchy within the community, that vegetarianism is the first step on the ladder to purity, but veganism is a higher stage. This is often denied in print, 'I don't believe that vegans are infinitely superior to vegetarians - nor do I believe that vegetarianism is only a stepping stone on the road to the ultimate goal of veganism' (Callaghan 1995, 12), but in the process of carrying out fieldwork, I found that not being a vegan appeared to need justification and veganism appeared to be the 'ideal'. This was illustrated to me by Alan particularly clearly.

*I'm vegan and now the girl that works for me has become vegan too. She used to be vegetarian, but I think I might have influenced her, I used to call her 'dirty' because she wasn't vegan*

Sandy considered that a 'real' vegetarian is a vegan:

*When I gave up dairy products and became properly vegetarian (vegan) I rediscovered my sense of well being and that feeling is worth a dozen banquets'*

In addition, the ethical vegetarian or vegan who takes up the identity of animal rightist goes far further than simply avoiding easily identifiable products of the animal, such as the flesh. They seek out the presence of animal products in foods that many of us are 'blissfully' unaware of, such as the presence of animal products in breakfast cereals, bread, confectionery, vitamin capsules, cosmetics. As an illustration of how insidious the presence of animal products is both in food sources and other products and how hard it is to avoid animal products in our day-to-day lives, I reproduce in Appendix 3, a table compiled by The Times newspaper and modified by myself, listing the uses of beef by-products only.

This is a simple illustration of how complex pollution avoidances become for the animal rightist. Many of my informants recounted to me that their weekly shopping time became greatly extended as they had to carefully scrutinize the ingredients lists on packets as they became more aware of the 'scientific' names of animal ingredients in food. Many had given up supermarket shopping in favour of using health food shops. In one instance, the contents of a shopping basket had been identified by Sandy and had led to the recruitment of the shopper into a local Animal Rights group;

*I said to him, that's a good vegan shopping basket you've got there, and he said, Oh are you the woman who runs the local Animal Rights group, I've been trying to contact you. That's how I met Alan .*

But this is the beginning of another aspect of achieving a competent identity and the core of belonging to which I will return in the next chapter. To



return to the subject of pollution avoidance, Mary Douglas asserts that in Western culture, pollution is more regularly defined as dirt, which was illustrated quite neatly by Alan and the pressures he brought to bear on the employee to become a vegan. 'Dirt avoidance is a process of tidying up, ensuring that the order in external physical events conforms to the structure of ideas' (Douglas 1975, 53). Whilst mass society does not define animal flesh as 'dirt' or polluting to the human body, the thought style of the Animal rightist defines it in this way in order that the structure of ideas of classification which operate within the thought style of the community remain unambiguous.

### 6.4.3 Outer Body Pollution Avoidance

Together with avoiding potentially polluting animal products in food, the animal rightist actively avoids using any substance which has been part of an animal or which has been tested on animals being used on the surface of the body. The most obvious of these avoidances is that of the wearing of leather, in the form of coats, trousers or footwear. Another problem is that even when footwear is not leather, the solutions for keeping the footwear together may have animal products in them. Also avoided are lotions and potions for application to the skin which may contain products from an animal or which have been tested on animals. The use of detergents for washing clothes or washing cooking utensils which contain animal products or have been tested on animals is also potentially polluting and is avoided.

*Now when I go out shopping I refuse to buy any products containing gelatine, animal oil/fat, I do not eat eggs, cheese (unless vegetarian) and I will not buy anything that does not state it has not been tested on animals, or is completely 'animal ingredient free'*

#### 6.4.4 Pollution of the Immediate Environment

Pet-keeping is supposedly ideologically unsound within the community, but many individuals who are animal rightists do keep pets or 'companion animals'. Many of these 'companion animals' have been rescued from unsuitable environments and as such become ideologically acceptable as they have been 'saved'. But pet keeping is an issue within the animal rights community which highlights an issue that anthropologists often observe - that what people say they do and what they actually do is different.

Keith Tester insists quite wrongly, in my view, that animal rights is not about animals at all and that animal rights activists do not keep animals because they do not like animals. As Steve Baker points out Tester's analysis of pollution avoidance strategies by animal rights activists interprets them as avoidance of animals themselves, rather than give credence to the theory that these avoidance strategies are actually a refusal to join with mass society's behaviour towards animals which they consider to be cruel (Baker 1993, 212-213) Tester contends that animal rights activists are trying to remove animals from the human sphere because their presence threatens human identity, however, I would contend that the view of the animal rights activist is that it is the presence of cruelty to animals that threatens the *authentically human*. Animal rights activists in the main do keep animals and do like animals, they do have a slight problem with this though.

The problem of carnivorous 'companions' is one that needs to be tackled. Depending on how strong one's ideological stance is, one either allows one's companion to follow their 'natural inclinations to eat meat which involves the presence of a potentially polluting substance in the home, or one tries to convert them to vegetarianism. This enterprise can be quite successful with dogs, but carnivorous cats are more difficult to convert. Although some will try. The

Vegan Society import the only animal-free cat food into the United Kingdom and ask its readers 'Is feeding your cat your last link with the SLAUGHTERHOUSE? This preparation provides complete meals for vegan cats (Vegan 1995, 29)

Whilst ideologically unsound to live with carnivores in their personal environment, opinions do vary amongst the activists. Sandy felt that some activists went too far when trying to modify the 'natural behaviour' of their animal companions and recounted an incident when she who is a committed vegan and animal rights activist was told off by another. A fellow activist (a vegetarian) offered her some chocolate, which she refused as she is vegan, but she thought she would give the chocolate to another activist's dog at which point;

*'He said 'Don't give that to my dog, he's a vegan!' Have you ever heard anything so ridiculous, does the dog know he is a vegan'*

Horse riding was another issue where Sandy departed from some of the activists. Ideologically it is unsound to use horses for riding and all the activists were diametrically opposed to horse racing, but Sandy could see no reason why she should not allow her daughter to learn to ride.

*'There's a huge difference between forcing a horse to run to the point of exhaustion for entertainment and a little girl pootling around on a pony'*

## **6.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have examined how the individual enters the community very often through a 'moral shock' that profoundly disturbs the individual and leads to an alteration in that individuals way of seeing the world. That which was once familiar becomes disconcerting and unwanted. The individual then enters into practices which involve a deeper immersion into an animal rights identity through multiple membership of animal focussed

organisations which increases their contact with like minded others and reinforces their sense of identity, belonging and 'rightness'.

From this multiple membership and membership of the Vegetarian and Vegan Societies they gain information on what practices are required from them to begin the construction of a new identity. Their first steps along that road involve the disassembling of certain aspects of a previous identity and habitus. These manifested themselves as processes of discard. The material props such as meat and animal-cruelty related products which supported their previous world view were rejected. These steps were analysed as pollution avoidance strategies on an individual basis which created the boundary of negotiation for a personal identity and the first steps towards competence.

In my next chapter I wish to turn to what I consider to be the very core of building a successful personal and shared identity for the animal rights community, a further process of negotiation which involves acquiring a new habitus and becoming competent in its use. This is the third strand of the construction of identity and belonging, increased competence and how it is gained through the use of material culture.

## **Consumption, Construction & Competence ( It's Getting to Be A Habit)**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In what ways is a sense of belonging evoked for this community? In Chapter 6 I discussed the process of immersion and the process of discard expressed through pollution avoidance, which were entered into after recruitment. Pollution avoidance continues on as part of the construction of identity, but is joined by another aspect of identity construction and a strategy for belonging.

In this chapter I wish to concentrate on the practice of a new system of classification which informs the new animal rights activist in the building of an 'habitus' and how this leads to a competency which allows them to express themselves confidently as individuals both within the community and in interaction with those outside the community in their negotiations of identity.

Marilyn Strathern (1981) in her analysis of 'belonging' in Elmdon pointed to the sense of 'real' or authentic Elmdonness being found in patterns of kinship, Clement Harris in his analysis of the village of Hennage found that 'real' Hennage people were those who achieved a level of competence in cultural life. 'To be 'competent' in the village context carries a host of implications and is a portmanteau word covering a whole ideal of life' (Harris 1974, 19). For the animal rights community 'competency' is also at the core of belonging.

## 7.2 Consuming Culture

To continue to think rationally, the individual needs an intelligible universe, and that intelligibility will need to have some visible markings ... goods in their assemblage present a set of meanings ... They are read by those who know the code and scan them for information (Douglas & Isherwood 1979, 5)

The concept of what Giddens terms a "fateful moment" was discussed in the previous chapter. In the life of the animal rightist, this moment, as we have seen, has generally been provoked through a 'moral shock' which resulted, for them, in a refiguring of the conceptual world. For the animal rights activists with whom I worked, the force of the 'moral shock' which they had experienced prompted a fundamental change in their conceptualisation of the world and a process of reformation was set in train.

This led to a rejection of the world view that the exploitation of other animals for human benefit is a 'natural' and proper ordering of the world. This world view had been replaced by one that highlighted the similarities between human beings and other animals and implied an equality between the species, which rendered the treatment meted out to other species by fellow members of our own society anathematic. The material commodities which symbolised and supported that previously lived in world, were now seen as cruel and exploitative and were discarded. Those tools of meat, leather, animal derived products and products which involved cruelty to other species no longer symbolised a right and proper ordering of their newly acquired conceptual view.

But, as has been pointed out by Douglas and Isherwood, the conceptual world requires material expression. In the course of analysing the autobiographies of the group which I had worked with, a pattern of discard of the products of cruelty was clearly laid out. What I had not concentrated on was

a pattern of appropriation. But it was a chance telephone conversation with Sandy which widened my field of attention beyond the processes of discard, to include the processes of appropriation and to explore the meanings involved with both. Sandy recounted the story of how she met Alan, a fellow activist.

*I was in the supermarket, at the checkout and there was a guy in front of me. I noticed his shopping and said 'That's a good vegan shopping basket you've got there' and he said to me 'Oh, are you the woman that runs the local animal rights group. I've been trying to contact you'. That's how I met Alan*

The tale of Sandy and Alan, two of the activists I worked with, demonstrates that the conceptual world of the animal rightist is not merely constructed through practices of immersion, discard and avoidance, but involves expression through material means. The material contents within a supermarket shopping basket had signalled a possible identity that had been scanned and decoded and through this, contact made with an individual who shared a similar social identity, which highlights the point made by Douglas and Isherwood that in applying analysis to the objects purchased by individuals it is useful to;

Forget that commodities are good for eating, clothing, and shelter; forget their usefulness and try instead the idea that commodities are good for thinking treat them as a nonverbal medium for the human creative faculty (Douglas & Isherwood 1979, 62)

Throughout this thesis, Levi-Strauss's suggestion in his discussion of totemism, that animals are 'good to think', has been explored in the context of a group of 'modern' people. Levi-Strauss highlighted totemism as a mode of conceptualising 'self' and 'other' between human groups and human and animal, using a process of conformity and opposition. This process he suggested was

a universal process, but one more obviously displayed in the world of the 'primitive', or non-technological societies. In this chapter I wish to explore the ways that material objects are used 'to think' in much the same way in Western society. Marshall Sahlins suggests, that the "totemic operator" articulating differences in the cultural series to differences in the natural series, is no longer a main architecture of the cultural system (Sahlins 1976, 176). But he further argues that 'capitalist production stands as an exponential expansion of the same kind of thought, with exchange and consumption as means of its communication' (Sahlins 1976, 176). Following Baudrillard (1972) he asserts that 'consumption itself is an exchange (of meanings), a discourse - to which practical virtues, 'utilities' are attached only post facto' (Sahlins 1976, 177).

In this chapter I follow Douglas & Isherwood (1979) in treating food and clothing as conceptual tools and consumption as both a medium for the affirmation and construction of personal identity and a means of engaging in a discourse over a shared identity. In doing so, I do not deny their practical utility and necessity, but in many cultures across the world we can see evidence that utility values and cultural values are mutually reflective (see for example Bourdieu's analysis of the Kabyle house (1973)). I do not deny, also, that utility values become paramount in situations of social chaos or deprivation where the imperative to survive overwhelms.

I will explore the ways in which material objects are used as a vehicle both in a discourse over the nature of civilized humanity or *authentic humanness* as conceptualized by animal rights activists and the way in which objects are used in the construction of personal and shared identity thus building a material world to support a conceptual world for animal rights activists to operate within.



### 7.3 Becoming Authentically Human

In the construction of their new identities, the animal rightists I worked with all evidenced practical efforts to 'knit together' the three elements of the social, personal and corporeal in the transformative process of achieving an authentic identity and in the process of becoming *authentically human*.

In a psychological investigation of animal rights activists in America, Herzog (1993) noted that all of his respondents had to reconcile 'their ideals and their actions' (Herzog 1993, 103). As Herzog notes, 'the animal rights movement was not simply an isolated set of ideas or philosophical beliefs; it entailed a transformation of their daily lives' (Herzog 1993, 110). The central point of that transformation was diet. Transformation of the diet has implications for all aspects of identity, in particular through the concept of 'control' both of the private self through individual bodily control, the social self through public enactment and as a tool for the building of a conceptual world. Elsewhere I have discussed the process through which the meat diet is discarded. Here I wish to explore the appropriation of material culture as a discursive medium through which personal identity is negotiated and new meaningful social relationships set up which affirm both self and social identity between those who share the same conceptual world in opposition to 'others' who do not.

We have already noted that the notion of the reflexive project of building a personal identity according to Giddens, stems from a need for 'Ontological Security: a sense of continuity and order in events ...' (Giddens 1991, 243). In terms of self-identity, this continuity is not simply based upon 'sameness' over time or a 'given' self, but upon the individual constantly creating and sustaining a self-identity which is 'reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography' (Giddens 1991, 53).

A person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people (Giddens 1991, 54)

We have seen that animal rightists communicate their sense of identity to each other and 'others' in a variety of ways, through protest, individual bodily pollution avoidances through processes of discard. Our attention now focuses on the use of material culture. As noted before, Fred Myers in a study of Pintupi speaking Aboriginals observed that within their culture personal identity was negotiated through social relationships. The individual consents to engage in relationships which confirm a particular identity, whilst rejecting others (Myers 1988, 55 ). According to Myers this was done through material culture. Similarly we see these processes at work within the culture of the animal rightist. Following a moral shock comes a point of reformation, the animal rights activist answers the question of 'How should I live my life?' in a particular way and, in order to maintain a biographical continuity, has to follow this decision through. This they do by rejecting certain social relationships and engaging in others. In the building of a reflexive self-identity as an animal rightist they must transform themselves, and to confirm this identity, engage with others whose thinking they believe is similar to their own.

This does not prevent the animal rightist from engaging with others who do not share that identity. All of the people I worked with were engaged in employment and led a life which at times had nothing to do with their animal rights activities (although several expressed the opinion that in the best of all possible worlds they would rather be engaged in animal rights activities all the time). They still, however, managed to negotiate and maintain their own self-identity through the control of their diet and bodily practices and affirmed their social identity through this and by engaging in ritual and as we shall see in particular consumer relationships whilst rejecting others.

In a culture whose worldview holds that animals are subservient to humans and are there to be used for human benefit, one of the most powerful conceptual tools to be used is that of the animal as an appropriate food for human beings in the form of meat. Such is the dominant world view in the Western world. Meat is a powerful symbol within British culture, we have the 'Roast Beef of Olde England', and if the French to the English are 'frogs' then to the French we are the 'rosboeufs', but to many animal rightists all meat eaters are classified as 'cannibals' or as we know 'dragknuckles'.

The term 'dragknuckles' represents many of the attitudes displayed by the animal rightists I worked with, that a culture that depends on death and cruelty for sustenance and profit was one that was less socially evolved. Both Sandy and Alan expressed this openly. Sandy whilst having friends who were meat eaters pointed out;

*I love them to bits, but I have to say, that I do consider myself to be a couple of rungs up the evolutionary ladder from them*

Alan expressed the view:

*I believe that human beings evolve at different rates and that people who support animal rights and protest have evolved further and more quickly than other people*

This point is underlined by John Callaghan in an article in the Vegan magazine where he points out that in contemporary Western society 'you don't have to exploit and commit murder' in order to survive 'This concept isn't weird just civilized' (Callaghan 1995, 13). What marks out the animal rightist from the cruel and exploitative human being then, is control, the civilized human being controls those aspects of human life which involved cruelty to and exploitation of animals.

It is interesting to note that even the concept of civilization is one that is inverted amongst those who advocate animal rights. In Nick Fiddes' recent examination of 'meat' as a natural symbol, he suggests that within the Western worldview, dominated by Christianity and science, meat-eating is legitimated by the concept of civilization, which is represented as the ability to control and dominate nature and animals. Given then that the dominant Western worldview is that of 'civilized humans, ... as predators and conquerors' (Fiddes 1991, 63), the animal rightist's view of human beings and animals being part of a continuum rather than oppositional poles represents a complete inversion of this worldview, where even the concept of 'civilisation' is inverted. In the view of the animal rightist, to be truly civilised or *authentically human* it is necessary to invert the practices and products of mass society.

In this chapter I illustrate the ways in which animal rightists negotiate their personal and social identities through consumption of material objects which symbolise this inversion and how material objects provide a discursive medium for the construction of personal and shared identity. Marshall Sahlins suggests that human beings 'reciprocally define objects in terms of themselves and themselves in terms of objects' (Sahlins 1976, 169). If animals are objects in the world view of a meat eating culture, in the worldview of the animal rightist, there is a complete inversion. Animals become subjects and the natural world is not there for human exploitation. Most people in Britain today buy their food from supermarkets. Meat in supermarkets is packaged in such a way that any connection to a live animal is disguised and sanitised and many people do not relate a steak to a cow or a pork chop to a pig.

After undergoing a moral shock, people who become 'converted' to animal rights activism increasingly make these connections and other wider connections to what they regard as the cruelty involved in intensive farming, the effects upon the ecology of the planet and other peoples' lives due to the

expansion of Western capitalism. These connections are facilitated through a process of education through the different organisations that are joined and through contact with other animal rightists. Meat, in a meat eating culture symbolises life and strength, within the culture of the animal rightist, meat symbolizes cruelty, death, poison and greed.

Vegetarianism and veganism are the vehicles of expression for the animal rightists. The material objects manufactured for their consumption also become vehicles by which meanings are exchanged and identity affirmed. The animal rights worldview renders what is considered edible in the meat eating culture, inedible. It dismantles the props of the meat eating culture, replacing them with their own. Most of the animal rightists that I worked with were vegans, although some were vegetarians. Although vegans reject all animal products and by-products, vegetarians can consume dairy products. But among the group I studied, even the vegetarians had rejected cows milk, as a result of their involvement with the live export protests which had highlighted for them the cruelty inherent in milk production. It is at this point that we must turn our attention to the material props which support the abstract conceptualisation of the animal rightist's world.

In an autobiography completed by one member of the core group, a sticker advertising a product had been inserted. The sticker has a representation of a cow and its calf looking at a bill board advertising Plamil, soya milk. The cow is saying to her calf, 'No dear, that's for humans'. Here we see a complete inversion of the meat eating culture, where cow's milk is considered to be a valuable dietary component for human beings, in particular children. TVP (textured vegetable protein), the soya bean and other pulses, tofu, vegetables, grains and milk substitutes become the material products which support the conceptual world of the animal rightists as foods fit for human consumption.

These foods become cultural objects which are surrounded by clusters of social relations which promote and affirm both personal and shared identity and we begin to see Levi-Strauss's theory of the oppositions of self and other conducted through objects 'with exchange and consumption as means of its communication' (Sahlins 1976, 177). By this I mean that those products which we buy and use very often symbolise what we think about ourselves and others and signal this to others. By buying and consuming meat, we engage in social relations with the meat eating culture, if we refuse to do so, we have broken those social relationships and must set about establishing new social relationships. If our new social relationships involve a rejection of the meat eating culture, then the objects which we use to communicate our identity within these relationships must be identifiable and oppositional to the meat eating culture in order to have any power of expression. As Nick Fiddes points out;

The foods we select reflect our thought, including our conception of our actual or desired way of life and our perceptions of the food choices of people with whom we wish to identify (Fiddes 1991, 33)

In the world of the animal rightist for every animal-based food product there is a cruelty-free product to replace it. For the novice this is not always apparent. Many of my informants reported a sense of loss as to how to proceed after deciding to adopt the animal rights lifestyle, simply cutting out meat from the diet did not fulfil their need for a particular sense of self;

*I started cooking meals for the family and I would just not have the meat. They would be having meat and potatoes and vegetables and I would just eat the potatoes and vegetables, because I didn't know what to eat. It felt really odd, there didn't seem to be a central bit of a meal. I didn't feel I was eating meals, just snacking all the time and I didn't feel I was part of it really, you know somehow excluded*

*Not being part of it*, points to the centrality of meat in the Western diet and also points to the phase following a 'moral shock' and the discard of certain materials - that of not being one thing or another, neither 'fish nor fowl' a severe sense of dislocation. Pierre Bourdieu posits;

the objects of knowledge are constructed , not passively recorded, ... the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the habitus, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions (Bourdieu 1984, 52)

Bourdieu conceives of the 'habitus' as a collectively shared set of classificatory structures which is absorbed by the individual, enabling that individual to transfer and apply these structures to every avenue of life. Daniel Miller's interpretation of the 'habitus' leads him to describe it as 'learnt through interactive practices, as the acts of living within a world which is composed of this same order are continually reinforced in different domains. In fact, this is a process of familiarity rather than learning.' (Miller 1987, 104). Following Bourdieu, Miller also links shared classificatory structures to shared identity

These closely woven principles are specific to certain groups ... and lead also to a sense of identity between those who share habitus (Miller 1987, 104).

The habitus is our ability to function confidently in all situations, knowing what is right, wrong, how to move, think, feel and speak, and what to eat, what not to eat, what to wear, what not to wear, in our own particular culture. It is second nature to us. However, at the point of reformation, the animal rightist discards the familiar habitus and undergoes a process of acquiring another. I feel that without further prevarication then we should proceed to examine one of the processes of increasing familiarity which the animal rightist must experience to construct an habitus which is competent enough to operate within the shared habitus of the group. The process to be examined is that of

becoming familiar with cultural objects.

It was at the point after discard that most of my informants decided to join either the Vegetarian Society, or the Vegan Society. Joining these societies performs several functions. Alternatives to the meat diet are introduced, which results in the setting up of new consumer relationships. An awareness of new risks is introduced through education into the pervasive presence of animal by-products in consumer goods. This education endows them with a degree of competence in discourse when amongst other animal rightists and with the meat eating culture.

Many of my informants spoke of a learning process involved with becoming an animal rights activist. One described her discomfiture upon finding out the *truth* about the pervasiveness of animal products in food and clothing as - *Ignorance was bliss*. Shopping became *like a maze , full of risks*. Another referred to vegetarianism and veganism as *a continuing learning process*. These comments underline the process of continual construction and the theme of competence involved in the construction of personal and shared identity which is discursively achieved and represented through the medium of material objects.

Daniel Miller points out that 'objects may not merely be used to refer to a given social group, but may themselves be constitutive of a certain social relation' and 'may also themselves be manufactured as objectification of the relationship between different societies (Miller 1987, 122-123)

In what follows we can see clearly, through the actions of animal rightists, the constitution of particular social relations and the creation of cultural objects which reflect the particular culture of the animal rightist. In rejecting first of all the meat diet, animal rightists reject a method of production and through



this reject the social relationships involved with the consumption of these products. They then seek to set up new social relationships which conform to their newly acquired conceptual worldview. It is principally through this that they begin to become competent in their new identity and begin to invert the world of the meat eating culture. Through joining the Vegetarian Society or Vegan Society a process of induction into a new world where the animal rightist can control those substances which support the physical body, the social body and the body of the community is facilitated, through the acquisition of knowledge. One of my informants, Jack, also pointed out another way in which novices are guided toward competence. Often after deciding to join the animal rights movement, an individual will attend a protest or meeting, and;

*experienced vegetarians and vegans will try to help new people out by recommending books, or if its at a protest site and we have all brought food, then we can tell them if their food is OK and if its not then we'll tell them about an alternative*

Jack, who is an animal rightist and vegan of some twenty years standing, also told me about yet another form of education, ridicule. This can be directed at anyone, whether they are a novice or an 'old hand'. It is administered by what he referred to as the Vegan Police.

*They don't wear a uniform, and you can't see them coming, but before you know it, they've got you by the ears. They sneak up on you. You could just be standing there eating some kind of snack and they'll say 'Don't say you're a vegan when you're putting that stuff in your mouth'. Then they'll proceed to tell you about what's in it at great length and at great volume. They are the ayatollahs of the vegan movement and make sure you stick to its principles*

Jack liked the idea of competence, when I put it to him, he felt it expressed very well the processes that went on. He also felt that the 'Vegan Police' represented many vegans who were constantly;

*afraid of slipping back. You know if you let one thing slide, before you know it you've lost the faith completely*

This fear of *slipping back* is well represented by the great stress there is upon learning. This learning is constitutive of the habitus and 'constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions' (Bourdieu 1980, 52).

I am not, therefore, referring to the learning involved should an individual decide to 'bone up' on the philosophical roots of the movement, but one which facilitates the practical nature of gaining a competent habitus. Vital to this learning is the reading of literature which points the way. The Animal Free Shopper, published by the Vegan Society, is an encyclopaedic source of what is available to the ethical vegetarian and vegan consumer. This shopper's guide lists products which are both free from animal ingredients and are not tested on animals. Knowledge of the mysterious E numbers in food and cosmetics is also essential to building up a competence.

*You have to learn your E numbers*, one of my informants told me. It is a legal requirement for the manufacturers of food to indicate on labelling the additives present in any food. These additives can either be listed using the full name or due to the length of names use a number. Numbers listed with a capital 'E' in front are additives that have passed the legal requirements for use in food within the European Union. The 'E' number does not indicate that an additive is 'artificial', many are natural substances which are of vegetable or animal derivation (Connor, GoodFood Vegetarian, 19). The decoding of E numbers is essential in the search for cruelty free products which may have no other marking on them. This is particularly important for vegans. Much food retailed in supermarkets may be marked as suitable for vegetarians, but little attention is paid to vegans as yet. Gaining a competence in recognizing the E numbers or their chemical names is a time consuming business. This was highlighted in autobiographies where informants stressed the amount of time

that shopping took after they had become part of the movement.

*Where I used to spend an hour maybe shopping, I was spending two or more, wandering round studying all the packets and bottles*

This is unsurprising, when one realises, that for example of the permitted 46 food colours alone, there are 21 which are 'natural' and are derived from animal or vegetable sources. However, when competence is gained; *You become very quick at scanning ingredients* and shopping becomes far less time consuming, the habitus becomes strengthened enabling the individual to engage more with other animal rightists when attending protest sites or meetings, where food is often consumed and discussed and sharing in the social relationships created through material culture. Given the religious themes introduced by Jack when he talked of the *ayatollahs of the vegan movement* and keeping *the faith*, I asked him if it would be acceptable to talk of some goods being 'kosher' and others not. When I mentioned this, Jack laughed and explained;

*Years ago when I first became involved with animal rights and became a vegan, the only margarine around that was suitable for us was one called, Tomor, I think. This was a Jewish kosher margarine and in those days, I'm talking twenty years ago or so, vegans used to talk about things being 'kosher'. Nowadays, though, it would not be an acceptable term because of the association of cruel practices and kosher meat*

The introduction of the 'V' Approved by the Vegetarian Society' symbol has actually simplified life a little for those seeking to avoid animal products in food. The actual form of the 'V' sign, is a form of symbolic inversion. It appears like a 'tick' mark that a teacher would make when a pupil's answer is correct, yet it is a reflected or inverted image. The long stroke of the tick mark is on the left, whereas it is normally on the right and the short stroke is on the right rather than the left. This stresses both the practices of inversion and the learning

process. In picking out the product which bears this sign, the searcher had made the correct choice, by recognising and acting upon the inverted symbol. Most of my informants made reference to this sign when searching out appropriate foods.

The sign is withheld from some products which may appear to the uninitiated as ethically correct. In order to be allowed to package products with the 'V' Approved by the Vegetarian Society' mark, companies must submit a product specification, listing details of all their ingredients. The product must meet with the Society's criteria, which involve both that the products must be free of products resulting from the death of an animal, or if products contain such substances as eggs, they must fit the ethical criteria of coming from a source which is not cruel. For example, battery eggs are unacceptable although they fit vegetarian dietary principles, they fail on the ethical front. If products pass these criteria, the manufacturers are allowed to display the mark, which is a trade mark, and companies must pay for the privilege of using it.

The 'V' sign is also significant in approving products which may appear anomalous. The most problematical area being that of margarine. E471 (mono- and di-glycerides of Fatty Acids) is present in many margarines, the problem is that it can come from either a vegetable or animal source (Connor, GoodFood Vegetarian, 19). The 'V' sign indicates to the consumer that if it is present, it is of vegetable origin. There are 44 accepted additives in food which are of this anomalous condition, where manufacturers anxious to reassure consumers may apply to the Vegetarian Society for approval. Having discussed some of the ways that an individual can gain competence by seeking out and becoming familiar with the hidden dangers involved with food substances. I should now like to turn to the more obvious ways in which the meat eating culture is inverted through the consumption of certain products.

Certainly we can see an inversion of the meat eating culture when we look at the plant-based products which replace meat. Fiddes suggests that the increased availability of meat substitutes points to the importance of the 'concept of meat' within our own culture (Fiddes 1991, 16), whilst acknowledging that across the world within different times, cultures and contexts 'meat is supreme' (Fiddes 1991, 13). Having said this, although many vegetarians and vegans do buy these products, some of my informants did not, because of the 'realistic' taste. I, myself, was surprised that anyone who had given up meat would want to use a product that emulated its taste and appearance. When I asked Sandy about this she told me;

*Well, its not really surprising. I mean I gave up meat from an ethical point of view. I think people eat them (meat substitutes), simply because people like savoury tastes. I don't eat them, but my mother who is also a vegan does. I find them too much like meat and that makes me feel nauseous, it reminds me of when I used to eat meat. But many people like them and find them an easy replacement for familiar things*

Meat can be replaced by TVP (Textured Vegetable Protein) which is made from soya flour, air and water. VegeMince and VegeSteak (based on wheat gluten and produced by Realeat) reproduce the flavour and of meat without the use of animal products. The name 'Realeat' also implies that this soya based food is *real* food for properly civilized human beings as opposed to the products based on a 'blood diet'. The terms VegeMince and VegeSteak can be perceived to have a duality of meaning. To the passing consumer, it can be an invitation to indulge in a taste for meat without the risk (particularly in the light of both the BSE and E-coli crises of recent years), or to animal rightists, vegetarians and vegans it represents an inversion of the meat-eating culture by being Mince and Steak produced for 'Veggies'. The 'reality' of this food adheres in its 'authenticity' in relation to the principles of the animal rightist. Its 'authenticity' is also stressed by the mark of approval of the Vegetarian Society

, the 'V' sign.

An example of these principles which emphasizes that these products are not merely an alternative to meat from the health angle are the different treatment of the Realeat products and Quorn. Realeat's Vegemince and Vegesteak acquire a 'tick' mark whereas the product 'Quorn' another replacement for meat, does not. Quorn, originates from a fermented mushroom-like fungus and whilst it does not violate the vegetarian's principles of not eating meat, it contains the whites of eggs which are not from free range hens, so it still has an association with cruelty. The consumer is told by the absence of the 'tick', that this choice would be incorrect from an ethical point of view. Realeat's products, however, contain egg whites from free range eggs and so are deserving of a 'tick' mark. Realeat, however, is unsuitable for vegans due to the use of eggs, as vegans eat no dairy or egg products.

'Seitan', based on wheat gluten, is also a replacement for meat in the diet and is used sliced up in sandwiches in much the same way that cold meats are used.

All these products after manipulation, closely resemble meat's texture and appearance, so whilst inverting and contradicting the meat eating culture's notions of what is appropriate sustenance for the human body, they emulate the products of the meat eating culture whilst doing so. The 'Goodlife' range of bean based burgers and soya based sausages also invert and emulate, and reflect their ideological stand through their name, like the 'Realeat' company. However they do not reproduce the taste of meat

Nick Fiddes (1991) points out that globally, meat is surrounded by different taboos and avoidances and following Twigg (1983) uses the device of the loathsome witches' brew from Macbeth as containing predominantly animals

and animal parts which produce a feeling of disgust in our own culture, to illustrate (Fiddes 1991, 18-19). Forbidden foods are the substance of the brew within the cauldron. The significance of mass society's suspicion of animal rightists and those of vegetarian tendencies and the oppositional nature of a culture that dissents from meat eating has not been lost on the manufacturer's of 'Cauldron Foods'. The use of the marketing device of a cauldron implies that these too are forbidden foods for the uninitiated, a 'witches brew' only for members of the 'coven'. Cauldron Foods also emulate and reproduce foods consumed by the meat-eating culture, but are based on a 'witches brew' of tofu, soya bean curd, nuts and herbs. Cauldron Foods products also have the approval of the Vegetarian society 'V' sign or tick.

Replacements for the Sunday 'roast' are available from Granose Foods Limited in the form of Lentil Roast Mix and Nut Roast Mix and approved by the Vegetarian Society. Gelatine is replaced by Gelazone an approved vegetable gelling powder. Kallo Foods produce vegetarian gravy powder and stock cubes to replace the animal based products and are approved by the Vegetarian Society.

Certain products which are of obvious non-animal origin are very often not approved by the Vegetarian Society, simply because there is no need for such approval, for example Soya Milk. On the other hand, certain supermarkets retailing salad leaves have seen the arrival of packets of vegetable leaves with the 'V' sign. The Vegetarian Society will approve these products whilst recognizing that there is no need for it, the producers simply want it as a marketing device.

The concerns of the manufacturer regarding the type of consumer they are trying to attract are very often revealed in their source of approval. 'Whole Earth', who manufacture wholefoods, predominant concerns are ecology and

human health, whilst producing such substances as Organic Tomato Ketchup which appears to be vegetarian, seek approval from the Soil Association and not the Vegetarian Society.

In his discussion of industrial manufacture Daniel Miller uses William Morris's nineteenth century arts and crafts movement as an illustration of how products are meaningful through opposition and proposes that;

when manufacture as the signified of the object, becomes reified as having a separate and particular connotation it is not the actual process of manufacture which is of importance, but the ability of the object to stand for a particular form of production and its attendant social relations (Miller 1987, 115).

The consumer behaviour of animal rightists, however, stresses the importance of manufacture in conjunction with the symbolic nature of products and their uses in social relations. From this point of view, manufacturers who are engaged in the production of meat products who introduce vegetarian ranges may capture consumers who may be anxious to replace certain elements of the meat diet, in particular for their children in the light of the many of the recent food scares surrounding animal based foods. They are, however, unlikely to capture ethical vegetarians and vegans who are involved in promoting the rights of animals. For the committed animal rightist, there is not only the problem that in buying products from these ranges one is still supporting the meat industry, albeit indirectly, there is also the real problem of pollution of food, as processing and packaging of vegetarian ranges may be done in the same premises.

An illustration of these concerns are the steps taken by the Linda McCartney range (following a scandal when it was alleged that meat had been found in the range). Whilst the Linda McCartney range is a very personalised



product, it bears the name and photograph of the late Mrs McCartney on the packaging, the manufacturers are in fact (at the time of writing) MacVities Prepared Foods and part of the United Biscuits Company which manufactures products with animal derivatives.

The unique way in which this was tackled was the opening of a vegetarian factory in Fakenham, Norfolk in 1995 where only Linda McCartney foods are produced (Personal communication Linda McCartney Foods Careline, 4 March 1997) The Linda McCartney range of vegetarian foods illustrate the process of inversion and emulation, and is suitable for those with a busy lifestyle who are too short of time to use raw products. The range emulates and inverts many of the ready made meals which are sold through supermarkets. Linda McCartney sausages, kiev, country pies, lasagne, cannelloni are all inversions and emulations of the meat eating culture's diet. An important point to be made here, is that whilst many manufacturers of meat based products are producing 'vegetarian' ranges, for example the manufacturer's 'Birds Eye', these are not cultural objects in the world of the animal rightist because they are made by manufacturers who are associated with the meat trade. To the animal rightists these are merely products produced to try to capture a niche in the market and not indicative of social relations which accepted cultural symbols are.

The fact that Linda McCartney was a known vegetarian and advocate of animal rights, plus the fact that the above steps have been taken to protect the products from possible pollution by animal substances would appear to point to the fact that these products are authentically vegetarian. However, there is no 'V' sign on these products, only the in-house assurance on the product that the products are suitable for vegetarians. Curious to understand how it is that these products which are *prima facie* vegetarian, do not have a 'V' mark and yet have the backing of a known vegetarian and animal rights advocate, I contacted the company to discover why this would be. A spokesperson for the

company informed me that it was precisely because Linda McCartney's views were so well known, that it was felt unnecessary to apply for the 'V' mark together with the fact that they did not want to pass on the extra cost of this to the consumer. However, during discussion with the Vegetarian Society, it was alleged that the Linda McCartney range of foods does not carry the 'V' mark because some of the range contains eggs from battery hens (Personal communication The Vegetarian Society, 4 March 1997). It is interesting to note that both Linda and Paul McCartney are sponsors of The Vegetarian Society, which is opposed to the keeping of hens in batteries, and this brings into question the reality of the Linda McCartney range and their authenticity as cultural objects within the culture of animal rights activists.

In fact, most of my informants did not refer to the McCartney range in any way other than as suitable food for children. The only product from this range, I found that was frequently used by them was the Linda McCartney vegetarian sausages, which those who had children, fed to them. Childhood is frequently perceived as a time spent in gaining 'competence', it may be that the McCartney range is viewed as a range for those who have yet to gain a competent habitus as an animal rightist, or for those merely 'flirting' with vegetarianism. It is certainly true that the range plays upon a perceived 'naivety' of the consumer, suggesting that these are personal family recipes devised and supervised by Ms McCartney, when it is actually produced by McVities Prepared Foods. It is interesting that Birds Eye's vegetarian range, is in the main very child-oriented too, 'Vegetable Fingers' and 'Vegetable Quarterpounders' are produced as replacements for 'fishfingers' and 'burgers'.

Realeat have no connection with the meat industry, other than to oppose it, and actively promote vegetarianism from an ethical and health point of view, Goodlife products also are involved in promoting alternative lifestyles based on plant products. It is the goods produced by these and similar manufacturers

that constitute a world of material objects within which social relationships are entered into by animal rightists with both the manufacturers and each other.

The meat eating culture's dependence upon cow's milk for sustenance is another instance which to the strict animal rightist is an illustration of a lack of civilized behaviour and to some, evidence of infantile characteristics. Jack commented;

*the inability of some people to wean themselves off the breast*

The soya milk range of products, produced by the Plamil manufacturing company are another range of products used as cultural objects within the world of the animal rightist. Plamil introduced their soya milk replacement for cow's milk into the market in 1965. Whilst other companies do produce soya milk, Plamil advertises its authenticity by informing the consumer that 'Plamil is the Only Soya Milk Made by A Vegan Company' (Plamil advertisement in the Vegan Magazine). By informing the consumer of this, the consumer is assured that the product is manufactured using no animal produce or derivatives and is cruelty-free and that the manufacturers are engaged with the consumer in the promotion of a cruelty free diet. Plamil also stress their authenticity by only selling their products through health and wholefood shops. The Plamil range offers alternatives to a diet which depends on the dairy industry, inverting and emulating the common products which the meat eating culture consume. Apart from the cow's milk substitute of soya milk, the range offers chocolate bars which are derived from soya, egg-free mayonnaise, veeze an alternative to cheese spread, carob bars and spreads made from soya. Here again we see that the animal based products have all been replaced by plant products.

## 7.4 Conclusion

The use of material culture in the construction of a personal and shared identity is central to the animal rights community in their efforts to become *authentically human*. Through this analysis of the relationship between the conceptual and material world of the activists we see that becoming and belonging within this community are simultaneous and mediated through a gaining of competence in the knowledge and use of material objects. I have concentrated on the replacement of one cultural object that of meat. In this analysis I could have gone much further to illustrate the ways in which most of the material world is manipulated, cosmetics, clothing, toiletries, alcoholic beverages, one can go on vegan holidays and feed companion animals with specially prepared plant derived food, but rejection and replacement of meat is central to this all. The processes involved with seeking replacements for this one commodity build up a body of knowledge about the presence of its byproducts in many other commodities.

This knowledge translated into the application of practical skills contributes to the gaining of competence through the building of a new habitus which can competently transfer these skills to all areas of life.

## CONCLUSION

**The conflict between animal advocates and animal users is far more than a matter of contrasting tastes or interests. Opposing world views, concepts of identity, ideas of community, are all at stake (Jasper & Nelkin 1992, 7).**

This study began from a decision to explore the above hypothesis and was conducted through an examination of the activities and narratives of a group of British animal rights activists. There is a paucity of social scientific data on animal rights activists in Britain, in fact I could find very little British anthropological work addressing the subject. This was mirrored in the United States until the late 1980s and mid 1990s when social scientists turned their attention towards the subject, although these were mainly sociologists and psychologists. As a result of this, the studies which were available for examination as background for this research were those based on contemporary social scientific data on American animal rights activists. My own data paralleled those from the American studies.

There is strong evidence to suggest that animal rights activism expresses more than feelings about animals. The activists in this study did display strong attachments to animals many being motivated to join the movement through an experience of what Jasper and Nelkin (1992) termed a 'moral shock' which involved a revulsion from cruelty towards animals. Animal rights then became a consolidating symbol for other thoughts about the nature of humanity. From analysis of the data I conclude, along with Jamison and Lunch (1992), that compassion and concern for animals does not fully explain activists' enduring constancy to the movement. Work by Thomas (1983) illuminates the symbolic

role of animals for human beings in times of social and technological change. This is clearly illustrated in the historical background of how human beings have thought about animals and debated the true nature of humanity through a continuing discourse from the beginnings of the huge social and technological changes brought about through industrialisation and urbanisation in Britain.

Anthony Giddens refers to the present post industrial era as 'high' or 'late' modernity' which through the increasing opening out of the social world has created a social landscape of shifting and changing social relationships which facilitates conditions that are considered to increase opportunities for experimenting with and expressing different identities which are both relational and situational. The animal rightists search for an authentic identity is in essence a response to these conditions using the very conditions of post-industrial society in its creation. They take the opportunity of using a relational and situational identity in their own efforts to create, construct and express their personal identity and morality publicly whilst using their lifestyles to authenticate their public relational and situational identity. Therefore, to say that identity for animal rights activists is only meaningful or successful in interaction or in public performance would be to minimise its importance to them. They create situations for themselves for the public display of a discrete identity as part of their polemic against mass society where they can hold up for view a different model for the *authentically human*, and express a desire for the constant and knowable or authentic, in its lived-inness.

Giddens (1991) points to the conditions of 'late' or 'high' modernity as a creator of opportunities for a relational identity, but allows room for those who wish to construct a relational identity which can also be directed towards authenticity, in effect, a knowable and consistent identity achieved through the construction of a narratively coherent and reflexive biography using the conditions of contemporary society in its construction.

Giddens characterizes contemporary society as a risk society. 'The notion of risk becomes central in a society which is taking leave of the past, of the traditional ways of doing things, and which is opening itself up to a problematic future' (Giddens 1991, 1110). Trust and rejection are fundamental features of every society. The opening out of the social world confronts the individual with a changing landscape of conflicting information and multiple opportunities of experience. This highlights the notion of risk and promotes a yearning for structure.

Who and what do we trust? Who and what do we reject? Who do I want to be? Who do I not want to be? The 'fateful moments' produced by 'moral shocks' are moments when these questions are asked. Initially the activists answered the question *'What do I reject?'*, by choosing to reject those aspects of a world and a human identity which are apathetic to or condone animal oppression or cruelty. The question of *'Who do I not want to be?'* is answered by this rejection. The notion of animal rights becomes a consolidating symbol for all the wrongs of human beings.

The question of *'Who do I want to be?'* appears to be *'I want to be better, better than those 'others' who feel animal exploitation for the benefit of human beings is a natural and acceptable behaviour'.* *'Who do I trust?'* Is answered by *'I trust myself and others who feel the same way as me'.* *'What do I do now?'* The answer to this question becomes another step in constructing a narratively coherent identity. The polemical nature of the search for authenticity is illustrated by the questions that the activist asks in an inner discourse and in the discourse they conduct with mass society.

Their initial steps following practices of rejection became deeper immersion into the movement through multiple membership of animal interest agencies and the Vegetarian and Vegan Societies. Their beliefs translate

themselves into practices structured by the existing animal rights community, and the individual practice of animal rights becomes a structuring practice in the construction of a personal and shared identity predicated on *authentic humanness*; which in turn constitutes the community through practice. These practices are facilitated by the opportunities created by contemporary social life.

Material culture has been used to express social affiliations and create social bonds in many traditional societies. In post-industrial society the choice of affiliations is greater and the manipulation of the material world through consumer choice enables those affiliations and bonds to be made with unseen others of a like mind. This places the stress of construction and maintenance of identity on the individual who has to reconcile individual practices with what the community of unseen others expects. Thus can personal identity be reconciled with the expectations of the community in a shared identity and be competent enough for that identity to be scrutinised when in shared ritual activity.

All aspects of a previous identity cannot be rejected. We cannot reject the biological facts of family or the existence of a previous life, but when processes of rejection and construction are contextualised within the biography of a person then the life narrative remains coherent and provides individuals with security. I believe that the animal rights activists in this study reflect a desire for a sense of structure and security in an ever changing world but combine this with a desire for change, to create a better world and a better human being, the *authentic human being* and choose to do this by thinking with animals.



## **Appendix 1**

### **PROFILE OF CORE GROUP (All names pseudonyms)**

#### **Illustrating multiple membership of animal protection and rights groups and dietary ideology**

**ALAN:** (36) Heavily involved in organising the vigil and recruiting support from other sites through the Animal Protestors Bulletin. Member of Animal Protestors, Vegan Society, Vegetarian Society, League Against Cruel Sports, RESPECT, British Union Against vivisection. Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Live Exports Opponents. Former member of Testing Action Group and still supports the Christmas vigil outside the Laboratories. VEGAN No Pets

**ANNA:** (23) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors Vegetarian Society, Live Exports Opponents and other protests against Live Exports. Helped publicise the Jill Phipps Memorial Fayre in Coventry. VEGAN

**MARY:** (45) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, Live Exports Opponents, RESPECT, ANIMAL AID, Compassion in World Farming. VEGETARIAN

**JOHN:** (49) Attends the farm vigil every week and sometimes keeps a lone vigil on other evenings. Member of Animal Protestors, Live Exports Opponents, Secretary of a local Vegetarian and Vegan Society, member of the League Against Cruel Sports and The Protestors. VEGAN

**PRISCILLA:** (51) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, Live Exports Opponents, National Antivivisection Society, League Against Cruel Sports, Vegan Society, Compassion in World Farming, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Vegetarian Society. Attends the Christmas vigil outside the laboratories. VEGAN

**KIT:** (65) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, National Antivivisection Society, Compassion in World Farming, the League Against Cruel Sports, Animal Vigilantes, The Catholic Society Against Animal Cruelty, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, HAPPC, SPANA, Human Research Society, Live Exports Opponents. VEGAN

**JOAN:** (24) Attends the farm vigil every week, also rescues dogs. Member of Animal Protestors, British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, Compassion in World Farming, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Testing Action Group and Live Exports Opponents. <sup>211</sup>Attends the Christmas vigil outside the laboratories. VEGAN

**TOM** : (69) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, Vegetarian Society, Soil Association and Live Exports Opponents. Attends the Christmas vigil outside the Laboratories. **VEGETARIAN**

**VICTORIA** (54) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, League Against Cruel Sports, Beauty Without Cruelty, Canine Defence League, National Antivivisection Society, Animal Aid and Live Exports Opponents. Attends the Christmas vigil outside the laboratories. **VEGAN**

**SANDY** (38): Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, British Union Against Vivisection, Testing Action Group, Vegan Society, Animal Aid, League Against Cruel Sports, Live Exports Opponents. **VEGAN**

**JACK** (45) Attends the farm vigil every week. Member of Animal Protestors, British Union against Vivisection, Testing Action Group, Vegan Society, Animal Aid, League Against Cruel Sports. **VEGAN**.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Guidelines Issued With Autobiography Note Books**

Thank you so much for agreeing to write an autobiographical account of your life and experience with the animal movement. I wonder if when you are doing this, you could keep in mind certain things -

When did you first become interested in the cause - your age?

What prompted your interest?

Prior to your involvement with the animal movement, were you active with any non-animal issue pressure groups?

What has membership of the movement meant to you - that is - how and if your life has changed as a result - in what way? What do you now do or not do as a result? Have your social relationships changed for instance?

What practical steps have you taken to further the cause in your own eyes and for you what are your aims?

What groups have you belonged to?

I wonder if at the end of your autobiography, you could make a statement about whether or not you feel animals should have 'rights'. What those 'rights' should be and what those 'rights' should be based on eg. sentience?

**PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT THIS IS COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL  
AND YOU MAY USE A PSEUDONYM IF YOU WISH - ALL I REALLY  
NEED TO KNOW IS YOUR GENDER AND AGE.**

### Appendix 3

<b>BY-PRODUCTS OF A COW*</b>
<b>Skin, tendons and ligaments:</b> boiled to make gelatin, used in jellies, biscuits, pies, ready meals and sausage skins. Also in capsules, glue, match heads and photographic processes.
<b>Hide:</b> leather, vellum
<b>Vertebrae:</b> can be used in gelatin and suet.
<b>Bones:</b> China
<b>Tallow(beef fat):</b> soaps
<b>Elastin(a protein uniting muscle fibres in meat):</b> Moisturisers
<b>Glycerol:</b> cleansers
<b>Keratin(Protein in hair, horns and hooves):</b> used in shampoos, conditioners and fertilisers.
<b>Lactose (the sugar derived from milk):</b> tablet fillers, sweeteners and carrier for flavouring agents in crisps.
<b>Oleic oil (liquid from pressed tallow):</b> margarine
<b>Oleostearin (solid from pressed tallow):</b> soaps and candle making
<b>Rennet (extract of calf stomach):</b> Used in cheese making
<b>Stearic acid:</b> Organic acid used to soften skin in lipstick, moisturiser, eye shadow
<b>Stearate: Salt of stearic acid,</b> used in body building supplements and mint sweets

\* Reproduced from The Times Newspaper, Thursday, 21 March 1996  
(with modifications)

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