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Helena Pedersen

The School and the Animal Other

An ethnography of human-animal relations in education



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The School and the Animal Other

An ethnography of human-animal relations in education

av

Helena Pedersen

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Abstract

Title: The School and the Animal Other. An ethnography of human-animal relations in education.

Language: English

Keywords: Human-animal relations, critical theory, gender theory, postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy, the "other", the discourse of species, boundary work, critical ethnography, socialization, meaning-making practices, social representations, the hidden curriculum, social and cultural reproduction.

ISBN: 978-91-7346-585-4

How human-animal relations are expressed and negotiated has significance for the situation of animals in society and offers insights that contribute to our understanding of how we organize relations between humans as well. This critical ethnographic investigation is positioned at the intersection of education research and the interdisciplinary area of human-animal studies. It uses participant observation, interviews with students and teachers and critical discourse analyses of texts and other artefacts used in the schools investigated to contribute cross-curricular perspectives on how human-animal relations are configured in the daily activities of both vocational (animal caretaker) and university preparatory programs.

Building on central ideas from the Frankfurt School, the study proposes a platform for a critical theory of human-animal relations in formal education that embraces species-inclusive versions of critical pedagogy as well as gender and postcolonial analyses. In this vein, the study explores how social processes and practices in and outside the classroom enable certain human as well as animal subject positions while disabling others. A primary question is how a species-discourse intersects with categories formed around conceptions of gender, race/ethnicity, and class. A variety of ascribed animal representations and positions embedded in these processes are identified.

The study argues that human-animal relations are characterized by indeterminacy and contradiction. While the school may educate to achieve improved conditions for animals in human society, it is at the same time involved in a process of social and cultural reproduction that normalizes the accessibility of animal bodies for human purposes. At the heart of this reproduction process lies boundary work around the animal as "other". Such conceptualizations at times conflict with the views of animals that students bring with them to school and they therefore receive guidance about the "appropriate" position of animals in society; guidance that at the same time allows students to keep intact a sense of self as caring and moral actors toward animals. The school has a repertoire of concrete strategies for achieving this, and the effects of these strategies are identified as key components in a hidden curriculum of human-animal relations. The analyses show that these effects constitute a shared frame of reference of commonsense knowledge about animals in which contradictions embedded in human-animal relations can be comfortably accommodated. In addition, analytical tools borrowed from postcolonial theory are proposed that contribute to understanding the operations of hegemonic discourses of human-animal relations in the classroom as well as the effects generated by resistance to these discourses.

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Keywords
Indexing
Classification

Abstract: This article discusses the role of the teacher in the classroom in the context of the new curriculum in Jordan. The author argues that the teacher's role is not only to deliver content but also to facilitate the learning process. The author discusses the importance of the teacher's role in the classroom and the importance of the teacher's role in the classroom. The author discusses the importance of the teacher's role in the classroom and the importance of the teacher's role in the classroom.

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Keywords: teacher, classroom, learning process, curriculum, Jordan

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March, 2007

Helena Pedersen

Part I

BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Chapter 1

Introduction: Exploring human-animal relations in the school context

This study highlights an area not often pursued in education research: Relations between humans and animals in formal education situations. This is an area that extends over a wide range of perspectives and issues of which I have been able to investigate only a few. My choice of research topic developed out of my MSc thesis (Pedersen, 2002), which dealt with animal experimentation as a teaching and learning method in life science education. The work on my thesis evoked a curiosity to know more about how relations toward animals are formed in the school context; not only as dissection “specimens” in biology classes but also in other courses and learning situations. The question was shaped by experiences I have gained from being involved in work related to animal ethics at NGOs in Sweden and in Japan. This background has inspired my choice of research area as well as my approaches to the subject, and without it, this dissertation would most likely never have been written. Another driving motivation behind my research was the insight that animal issues are largely absent from the Swedish National Curriculum, Lpf 94 (Utbildningsdepartementet, 1994), and the question emerged whether schools engage with these issues anyway – and *how* they do it, when formal guidelines are lacking.

This dissertation builds on field studies of primarily animal caretaker programs in Swedish upper secondary schools. For the students in these programs, relations to animals are often a central concern and a significant part of their daily life. But also in other schools without specific animal-related profiles, animals are used, consumed, displayed, studied and represented in a multitude of forms, just like in other parts of society. In this sense, relations to animals may permeate the school environment nearly as much as relations to humans do (although the former relations are not always explicitly articulated or discussed).

Why study human-animal relations?

Animals play a number of different roles in Western culture and society and we can hardly avoid interacting with them (as living beings, symbolic representations or dead bodies). Studying the ways in which we make sense of and use animals is a way towards understanding fundamental features of our society. Philo and Wilbert (2000) note that humans' lives are intertwined with relations to animals to such an extent that animals are even constitutive of human societies in multiple ways. From material as well as symbolical perspectives, animals are a central part of what humans are and what we do in the world and, at the same time, animals and their life conditions are dramatically affected by human actions. Although not all human-animal relations necessarily involve violence, the Animal Studies Group (2006) argues, for instance, that almost all areas of human life are at some point or other involved in the killing of animals. Not only much of our physical sustenance, but also our identity formation has been arranged around the use of animals. To borrow Emel and Wolch's (1998) formulations, in the drift between the frontiers of "culture" and "nature", animals flank the moving line, and it is upon animal bodies that the struggles for naming what is human is taking place. At a structural level, animals also enter literally into our politico-economic stories of progress and development (for instance, in the circulation of animal bodies and body parts in globalized commodity chains, or in the genetic transfiguration of animals in biotechnology), but in the process the animal itself is often rendered physically as well as morally invisible (Emel & Wolch, 1998). The study of human-animal relations involves reclaiming the visibility of animals by investigating all these areas from a diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Human-animal studies: Some theoretical and methodological concerns

Human-animal studies¹ is a cross-disciplinary area of research providing a platform for the development of knowledge about human-animal relations and interactions primarily from perspectives of the social sciences and the humanities. In the inaugural issue of the journal *Society & Animals*, Shapiro (1993) identifies a general human-animal research focus on how the diversity of animal presences in human society informs the social sciences. He also emphasizes a critical interpretive stance, entailing a non-instrumental study of

¹ The terms animal studies, anthrozoology and ethnozoology are also used.

animals that treats them as beings with experience and interests of their own, not solely as commodities or vehicles for human purposes. These approaches not only raise questions about the multiple layers of meanings that we ascribe to animals and how these meanings can be explicated and analyzed (Shapiro, 2002a), but also how animals themselves may enter and reconfigure our meaning-making practices (Philo & Wilbert, 2000).

In a more “instrumental” or human-centered approach to human-animal studies, studying the roles of animals in human society and our often taken-for-granted assumptions about them may not only illuminate new dimensions of how we organize our society, but also help us understand ourselves and our relations to other people. Over time, the human-nonhuman boundary has been rigorously policed, but also continuously destabilized and renegotiated. Its fluidity has been highlighted throughout the history of human society, for instance, in the numerous examples of how certain categories of humans have been pointed out as if being of less worth by viewing them and treating them “like animals” (Emel & Wolch, 1998), thereby facilitating oppressive practices toward both humans and animals alike.²

Burt (2005) has criticized the preoccupation with boundary issues in human-animal studies. He argues that in order for human-animal studies to move forward, “the animal” needs to be emancipated both theoretically and methodologically from the concept of the human and should be brought to center stage as a primary focus of study. Accordingly, “the animal” should be theorized out of the specifics of human-*animal* relations (rather than being absorbed in human-centered discourses). Human-animal relations may then be viewed as “a set of concrete practices and institutions that still need to be understood far better and made more visible” (Burt, 2005 p. 168). I agree with Burt’s critique but have still made human-centered discourses an important part of this study in order to investigate how human-animal relations figure in the school context, which, by definition, is a human-centered sphere. In this research process, “concrete practices” that Burt emphasizes are central units of analysis (in the form of ethnographic data) and are studied in relation to critical theoretical perspectives.

² Here, I will mention just a few examples of “dehumanizing” practices that presuppose abusive assumptions and treatment of animals: The methods of surveillance and physical restraint of slaves by slaveholders (Spiegel, 1996); the arguments used to justify American slavery (Plous, 1993); the historical “simianization” of Irish and Black people by the British (Emel & Wolch, 1998) and the Nazi treatment of Jewish and other people during WWII (Patterson, 2002).

Dissertation structure

This dissertation is structured in six parts. Part I, “Background and framework”, outlines the conceptual and theoretical foundations on which my investigation builds. Part II, “The research process”, addresses methodological issues related to my field study in four Swedish upper secondary schools. Parts III, IV and V present the findings of my field study and part VI, “Concluding discussion”, deals with conclusions and implications of the study.

After having introduced the field of human-animal studies and my motivations for a cross-fertilization between human-animal studies and education research (chapter 1), I give a brief account of previous studies related to my research focus (chapter 2). This account informs the formulations of my research objectives and scope (chapter 3). My theoretical framework is developed in chapter 4. It builds on the tradition of critical theory (in particular as formulated by the Frankfurt School) and its educational application, critical pedagogy. Under the heading “Intersectionality perspectives”, I outline two theoretical strands (gender and postcolonial theory) that function as guidelines, analytical tools and sources of inspiration in my work. This discussion results in an identification of the basic conceptual points of departure for the study, followed by definitions of some central key concepts the study builds on (chapter 5).

Part II, “The research process”, is introduced by an outline of a pilot study I carried out prior to embarking on the present project (chapter 6). Chapter 7 describes the ethnographic methodological framework developed and applied in the empirical part of my study. The findings of my field study are presented in chapters 9-21 (with a brief background in chapter 8). These chapters are arranged under three themes, concepts or “interfaces” by which human-animal relations in the school context may be interpreted and understood: “Identity” (part III) focuses on the complex identity work enacted in school in relation to the diverse roles of teachers, students and animals alike. “Gaze” (part IV) refers to the act of observing animals as a defining element in meaning-making processes, and “Body” (part V) denotes the variety of ways in which animals as embodied beings are put to use in these processes. There are several overlaps between these three themes. Questions related to identity, for instance, are discussed in all chapters.

Each theme includes 3-4 ethnographic chapters dealing with specific topics. The topics have been chosen partly on the basis of how my field schools

organized their educational activities,³ and partly on the basis of more conceptual or discursive areas that emerged from the work with my empirical material. (The identity production theme of part III is a result of the latter process.) Each theme is introduced by a brief theoretical overview and each ethnographic chapter includes a theoretical analysis related to the specific topic. This structure ensures that the theoretical discussion is continuously developed in relation to my empirical material and interwoven into all levels of the study. It also makes it possible to read each ethnographic chapter as an independent study on its own.

The study is concluded with a discussion of my findings and their implications (chapters 22-23).

Notes on language use

Language is an active component in the shaping of our view of others and I consider it important to be cautious of all forms of derogatory language use concerning humans as well as animals, but adopting a terminology that does not reinforce a dualistic or reductionist view of living beings is far from simple. For instance, one of the central concepts in this study, "animal", is problematic in terms of both implications and scope. For the sake of smooth reading, I have chosen to use the most familiar term, "animal", rather than "non-human animal" even though the word "animal" may give a false impression of an absolute human-animal divide. Birke, Bryld and Lykke (2004) argue that "the noun 'animal' is linked to a plethora of hegemonic discourses (philosophical, scientific, etc.), which rely on underlying assumptions about the essence or identity of 'animal' or 'human'" (p. 169), and that the effect of these essentializing discourses is to sustain the opposition between the human (subject) and the animal (object). It should be noted, however, that also the term "non-human animal" is problematic as it implies a dualistic position where animals are defined as a negation of the human (cf. Nibert, 2002; Shapiro, 1993).

Furthermore, the generic category "animal" lumps together an abundance of different species. Nevertheless, in everyday language we tend to use the word "animal" as a well-defined and absolute category. In this study, the "animal" is defined as any non-human animal species figuring in my empirical material, i.e.

³ Zoo management, wildlife management/hunting, animal agriculture and animal experimentation were included as separate courses or course modules in the animal caretaker programs, whereas wildlife watching and museum visits were organized as special activities or as integrated elements of some courses. Philosophy and social science classes could include a number of these topics in discussions on animal ethics. I have made an effort to include a variety of "animal issues" that occurred in my empirical material although not every topic has been given a chapter of its own.

during my field study in schools. The emphasis is on relations with vertebrate animals but not exclusively so.

Following the author style guide of the journal *Society & Animals*, I have in some cases used gender-based pronouns rather than referring to an animal as “it” (especially when a particular animal individual is referred to whose sex is known) and have, in line with Nibert (2002), also tried to refrain from (or to use quotation marks around) instrumental expressions such as “lab animal” or “livestock”. There are however cases when I have not been consistent on these points and have generally chosen to use terms that seemed most appropriate to the context. For instance, in all excerpts from field notes and interviews, my translations follow as closely as possible the formulations used by my informants.

Chapter 2

Human-animal studies and education research

The production of an overview of previous research related to human-animal relations in education raises delimitation problems. On the one hand, values education research offers empirical and theoretical studies on a range of issues but works on human-animal relations are difficult to find among them. On the other hand, there is a growing body of sociologically oriented research that deals with human-animal relations from multiple perspectives, but few of these studies deal with issues of formal education. I have chosen to focus this research overview on some works that may be located in the intersection between formal education and human-animal studies (which I refer to as research on human-animal education) and have categorized these works under four main headings: *Humane education*, *Education for sustainable development*, *Research on animal experimentation-based learning methods* and *Other research and documented experience*. It should be noted that this is a very rough categorization with several overlapping features.

Humane education

Humane education originated around 140 years ago as part of the organized animal protection movement (Unti & DeRosa, 2003). It is an attempt to teach care and compassion toward animals through formal and non-formal education, but also extends into (and ties together) other forms of values education such as human rights education, peace and development education, and environmental/sustainability education. According to Selby (1995), humane education is a process of learning that all life on earth is interconnected and interdependent, and this learning must take place in an atmosphere of democracy, participation and empowerment. Humane education implies an approach to values education that emphasizes compassion and a sense of justice that extends to all humankind, to individual animals, and to all species and ecosystems. General educational goals of sustainability and responsibility are part of the core ideas of humane education. A number of humane education studies are compiled on the website of the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (http://www.nahee.org/research_evaluation/).

A recent development in the humane education classroom is to provide students with opportunities to become involved in social action such as volunteer work and advocacy campaigns. Debates and challenges facing humane educators in contemporary multicultural societies include tensions between animal welfare and animal rights positions, the split between rural and urban communities concerning animal issues, and cultural and religious animal related practices (Selby, 2000). Selby argues for the need to make humane education part of the formal curriculum and for humane educators to establish partnerships and coalitions with other groups that work for a humane and sustainable society. Recent humane education oriented research places an even greater focus on intersectionality dimensions for the purpose of integrating humane education with other forms of social justice and environmental education (Andrzejewski, Pedersen & Wicklund, 2008, forthcoming).

Education for sustainable development

Recent research on education for sustainable development addresses human-animal relations from various theoretical and methodological perspectives (Öhman [Ed.], 2008, forthcoming). Kahn (2003), however, has raised general criticism against environmental and sustainability education in many of their present forms for being anthropocentric, technocratic, too tied to governmental and corporate agendas and not adequately addressing issues of social justice. He uses the notion of “ecopedagogy” (as articulated by the Freirean educator Moacir Gadotti) to develop an alternative approach. According to Kahn (2003), ecopedagogy involves remaining attentive to a manifold of different knowledge systems, acting in a non-anthropocentric fashion with a diversity of others, and holding a critical ethical stance toward the aim of sustaining the earth. I understand Kahn’s critical ecopedagogical position as embracing relations to animals not only as species representatives or as natural resources, but also as individual subjects with intrinsic value.⁴ In line with Selby (2000), Kahn (2003) argues for a transformation of educational curricula to involve confrontations with the realities of oppressed beings, and for the formation of alliances and shared strategies between the different agendas of the developing social movements.

⁴ Kappeler (1999) points out that the term “intrinsic value” is problematic since it implies a possibility of a lack of value as well as a (human) subject defining and recognizing that value, reinforcing the idea of a human agent ruling over an object world. I share Kappeler’s view and my way of using the term should not be seen as an absolute ontological position but as a way of illustrating a contrasting view of the notion of “instrumental value”.

Research on animal experimentation-based learning methods

Animal experimentation (dissection and vivisection exercises) as a teaching and learning method is a comparatively well-researched issue in human-animal education and here, I will mention just a few of those studies. Two empirical studies by Arluke and Hafferty (1996) and Solot and Arluke (1997), using interview and ethnographic data, respectively, focus on emotion management strategies employed in school and university laboratory settings during animal experimentation exercises. The studies highlight such exercises as elements of a phase for socializing students into natural science research and medical profession communities. Szybek (1999) adopts a phenomenological approach to the same issue and his study shows that the “stage” of science education in school leads to a specific way of constructing human responsibility toward other life forms: biology education makes certain relations (but not others) possible between humans and animals and entitles the human species to take almost unlimited advantage of the environment.

Psychological dimensions of dissection exercises have been explored by, for instance, Capaldo (2004). Major points deal with emotional distress in students who are made to inflict harm on animals against their own ethical convictions and the potential desensitizing effects these procedures may have, as well as the instrumental view of animals that may be imposed. Balcombe (2000) and Pedersen (2002) contribute with discussions of a range of other implications of dissection and vivisection exercises, including the situation of the animals used. Animal-free alternative learning methods are dealt with extensively in Jukes and Chiuiia (2003), and the issue of conscientious objection in Francione and Charlton (1992).

Other research and documented experience

The dissertation database of the Society & Animals Forum (<http://www.psyeta.org/dissertations/dissertations.html>) lists 60 doctoral dissertations related to human-animal studies in education science completed between 1973 and 2003. An overwhelming majority of these deal with perspectives on child-pet relations and interactions such as animal-assisted therapeutic methods although a few deal with attitudes toward animals more generally.

Examples of other relevant studies are Franck (2002) and Andrzejewski (2003), who offer experiences from and reflections around approaches to

teaching animal rights and other animal ethics issues at the secondary and tertiary level, respectively. Although both argue for a formal space for animal ethics/rights in the curriculum, they arrive at radically different conclusions regarding appropriate teaching approaches. Whereas Franck emphasizes the responsibility of the school to defend and apply the principle of a universal human value and argues that each case of animal abuse must be dealt with separately and be weighed against this value, Andrzejewski locates animal rights education in a general framework of social justice education where different forms of oppression are critically analyzed and viewed as interlinked.

In a study by Alger and Alger (2003b), presentations of the human-animal relationship in 30 introductory sociology textbooks published in the United States between 1998 and 2002 are analyzed. They found that most comparisons made between humans and animals in the books focused on concepts of culture, social learning and instinct. In paragraphs that concerned animals they often found incomplete research, inappropriate data and inconsistent information, sometimes without references. Alger and Alger conclude that the way materials on animals are included in these textbooks largely functions to reaffirm dichotomous differences between humans and animals.

Swensson (1999) presents a report from a survey conducted at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in which students were asked about their attitudes towards issues of animal ethics. The report reveals a strong interest in animal ethics issues among many of the student informants and a desire for such issues to be dealt with in secondary as well as tertiary education.

A variety of reports, guidelines and other documentation, particularly on the dissection/vivisection issue, have been produced by NGOs and other organizations. A few such organizations are the Humane Society of the United States, the International Institute for Humane Education, the Swedish Fund for Research Without Animal Experiments, the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods and the International Network for Humane Education. Many of these reports include student voices or have been written by students who themselves have experienced animal experimentation exercises during their education. In many cases, students have been the driving force behind school policy changes and dissection choice laws when they have confronted their institutions with their objections to dissection (Balcombe, 1997).

Chapter 3

Purpose, scope and delimitations

While most studies mentioned above focus on a single issue, course or component in the curriculum, and are mainly theoretically based or deal with curriculum development, the aim of this study is to investigate what is actually taking place in classroom settings whenever human-animal relations are brought into focus.⁵ The study, located at the intersection of human-animal studies and education research, attempts to capture and critically analyze a variety of practices through which human-animal relations are configured, mediated and negotiated within the school context, thereby contributing with *cross-curricular* perspectives on how animals are conceptualized in everyday activities of formal education. The primary purpose is to *explore how schools deal with animal-related issues by studying what messages and rationales about animals and human-animal relations are expressed (explicitly or implicitly) in the school environment*. The focus is on social processes involved in students' and teachers' meaning-making of animals as abstract categories or as embodied beings. The study also attempts to place these phenomena in a wider social context by exploring 1) how daily classroom activities and interactions may be understood within a larger human-animal related ideological framework; and 2) how human-animal relations may intersect discursively with relations toward *human* "others". By investigating these issues from cross-curricular perspectives and from a critical ethnographic approach, the study aims at making a contribution to the field of human-animal studies as well as to education research.

My field study comprises four Swedish schools at the upper secondary level (students 16-18 years old). Ideally, I would have wished to include also lower educational levels but I realized that it would have resulted in the amount of empirical (qualitative) data being too large to handle. One reason for focusing on the upper secondary level is that vocational animal caretaker programs are offered at this level. Another reason is that scheduled discussion seminars on animal ethics take place in some upper secondary courses such as philosophy, social science and animal protection.

⁵ I refer to these educational situations as *human-animal education*, although it should be noted that this term was not used in any of the schools where I carried out my field study.

The study adopts a critical approach towards human-animal relations at two levels: structural levels (ideology production), and levels of personal interaction. The latter involves primarily student-student and student-teacher interactions in and outside the classroom. I also had the opportunity to observe student-*animal* interactions since animals were physically present in two of my field schools, but this perspective is not systematically researched in this dissertation. Although previous sociological studies have applied ethnographic approaches based on, for instance, symbolic interactionism between humans and animals in a development of the ideas of George Herbert Mead (Alger & Alger 1997, 2003a; cf. Myers, 2003; Sanders & Arluke, 1993), my study is not a contribution to this particular area of research. One weakness of this delimitation is that it risks reproducing a perspective on “the animal” as *invisible* by overlooking issues of animal subjectivity and agency,⁶ and overlooking them as active participants in the creation of their own meaning (Birke, Bryld & Lykke, 2004). For instance, Bergman (2001) criticizes both humanist and natural sciences for their tendency to treat animals in research as if they had no lives of their own; either as abstract “texts” or representations, or as Cartesian instinct-driven, non-autonomous creatures. Although I feel that Bergman’s question “How can we begin to represent animals in ways that place them inside their own lives?” (Bergman, 2001 pp. B15-B16; cf. Malamud, 2003) is indeed important, I acknowledge that I have not incorporated this objective in my study, at least not in a direct manner. In a more indirect manner, I do, however, investigate in what ways school activities address (or do not address) animals as beings with “lives of their own”.

⁶ For discussions on animal subjectivity, see, for instance, Crist (2000); Regan (1999), and on animal agency, see Birke, Bryld & Lykke (2004); Philo & Wilbert (2000); Wilbert (2000).

Chapter 4

A framework of critical education theory

Critical theory and critical pedagogy

Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) have identified seven basic assumptions that guide critical social research: 1) All thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted; 2) Facts can never be isolated from the domain of values; 3) The relationship between concept and object is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; 4) Language is central to the formation of subjectivity; 5) Certain groups in society are privileged over others; 6) Focusing on only one form of oppression at the expense of others often elides the interconnections among them; and 7) Mainstream research practices are generally implicated in the reproduction of systems of oppression. Critical researchers are also guided by questions about whose interests are served by particular institutional arrangements and forms of knowledge production, and where our frames of references come from. There is often also an emancipatory intent (understood as emancipation from various forms of domination) (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998; Åsberg, 2001). By examining the interplay between structure and social practices, critical theory attempts to explain the ways in which dominant ideologies permeate everyday interpretative frameworks (Held, 1980). All these ideas have, to a greater or lesser extent, inspired the different phases of my research process.

It is primarily the thoughts generated by the early Frankfurt School theorists (Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse) that I rely on in the formulations of a critical theory useful for human-animal studies. It should be noted that there are significant differences between the Frankfurt School members and no coherent common basis of critical theory was advanced among them. In addition, critique has been raised against critical theory on a number of points (Held, 1980).⁷ The following sections should therefore not be

⁷ Some examples of critique are an exaggerated view in Frankfurt School theory of society as homogeneous and steered from above and an exaggerated notion of the cohesion of capitalism; an underestimated account of the importance of cultures for individual and social identity; and a lack of

read as an exhaustive account of critical theoretical thought, but as a very brief presentation of a few key ideas in critical theory that are of particular use to my investigation of human-animal relations in school. This presentation will be followed by an account of the human-animal link in critical theory.

Instrumental reason

Held's (1980) account of the Frankfurt School's works emphasizes that for Adorno and Horkheimer, developments in science, technology and production have increased the range of possibilities for human beings but have also brought about barbarism. Ideas of rationality and instrumental reason are fundamental in the apprehension and appropriation of social and natural worlds. Adorno and Horkheimer saw the interconnections between different forms of domination and oppression and stated that the meaning human beings ascribe to nature is purely instrumental: We want to learn how to *use* nature in order to fully dominate both nature as well as other people, both seen as potentially controllable and as objects of manipulation. In their view, capitalist expansion is seen as *one* specific form of domination. The development of the notion of mastery over nature precedes both capitalism and the Enlightenment but is made more acute under a capitalist order (Held, 1980).

Positivist knowledge regimes

Instrumental reason finds expression in a positivist understanding of science. Although the term "positivism" may be used to denote a range of philosophical positions, Held (1980) remarks that a central element in Horkheimer and Adorno's employment of the term is to construct an objective, empirical and systematic foundation for knowledge. In this interpretation, a positivist understanding of science implies that the world is composed of "facts" (as distinguished from values) and even the human subject is viewed as not much more than a set of physical events. Held (1980) writes that "[p]ositivistic consciousness objectifies the social as well as the natural world; that is, it conceptualizes the world as a field of objects open to manipulation." (p. 167) Within a positivist regime, science is identified with knowledge as such and there is no space for criticism of its structural forms or patterns. Moreover, science is also separated from the question of ends and ethics, and the complicated interactions of power, knowledge and values are overlooked (Giroux, 1997b).

historical detail in the Frankfurt School's works. Other unclear points are how to judge between competing views of an object as well as of the nature of equality and liberty (Held, 1980). Giroux (1997b) adds that the notion of resistance was underplayed by the Frankfurt School.

Critical theory seeks to expose positivist (and competing) accounts of “reality” to realms of ideology (Held, 1980).

Immanent criticism

Critical theory points to ways in which the above schema may be challenged. In Horkheimer’s view, one way is to assess the breach between ideas and reality by applying a method of immanent criticism (Held, 1980). Immanent criticism confronts existent orders with the claims of their own conceptual principles in order to criticize and transcend the relations between the two. This is a process of developing critique “from within” by re-examining the research object in the light of the implications of its own conceptual principles and standards. As a result, a new comprehension of contradictions and possibilities is generated and the object itself is brought partly into a state of flux. A critique of ideology based on these principles points to the limits of the existing order and opens it up to radical change. By means of critical reflection, we can develop an understanding of the present societal order as a social product rather than as something given and “natural”, reveal its inherent conflicts and contradictions and understand that it is open to transformation (Held, 1980).

In, for instance, chapter 20 I have attempted to apply the tool of immanent criticism to the claims made in a hunter education textbook. I point to the inconsistencies in a hunting discourse that initially criticizes the way “many city connected industrial people” (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 p. 16) have become distanced from nature, while the discourse itself expresses a distanced relation to nature by framing it in altogether economic terms. Hunttable animals are constructed as “game” whose value is calculated in percentages of “recreation value” and “meat value”; animals are seen as a renewable resource whose successful management generates “meat output” (p. 17). I have also highlighted how my informants have occasionally used a critical approach reminiscent of immanent criticism. In, for instance, chapter 18, the teacher Sofie encourages such an approach by analyzing the meat industry’s euphemistic strategies in class.

The human-animal link in the Frankfurt School’s works

In much research building on a critical theory or critical pedagogy tradition, animals as individual beings appear to be largely absent. The emancipatory intent is directed toward human beings with their capacity for reason, reflection and transformative action (e.g. Carr, 1995; Freire, 2001). Animals, usually defined in terms of their shortcomings as compared to humans, appear at best to be accommodated within the rather diffuse notion of “nature” and perceived as part of the ecological system solely as species representatives.

I would, however, argue that the situation of animals as *individuals* is made visible in the works of the Frankfurt School, particularly in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* where exploitation of animals is criticized in explicit terms:

Unreasoning creatures have encountered reason throughout the ages – in war and peace, in arena and slaughterhouse, from the lingering death-throes of the mammoth overpowered by a primitive tribe in the first planned assault down to the unrelenting exploitation of the animal kin[g]dom in our own days. This visible process conceals the invisible from the executioners – existence denied the light of reason, animal existence itself. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002 pp. 245-246)

The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* also points to the inconsistency inherent in the definition of animals in terms of their *lack of* human characteristics, while at the same time animal experimentation is performed on the basis of animals' presumed *similarities* with humans:

The idea of man in European history is expressed in the way in which he is distinguished from the animal. Animal irrationality is adduced as proof of human dignity. This contrast has been reiterated with such persistence and unanimity by all the predecessors of bourgeois thought – by the ancient Jews, Stoics, Fathers of the Church, and then throughout the Middle Ages down to modern times – that few ideas have taken such a hold on Western anthropology. The antithesis is still accepted today. The behaviorists only appear to have forgotten it. The fact that they apply to humans the same formulas and findings that, without restraint, they force from defenseless animals in their nauseating physiological laboratories stresses the contrast quite adroitly. The conclusion they draw from mutilated bodies applies not to animals in the free state but to man as he is today. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002 p. 245)

Practices of pet breeding and the keeping of animals in circuses are also exposed to critique:

Pekingese dogs whose distorted faces, today just as in the old paintings, remind one of those of the jesters who were overtaken by the march of progress. The tiny dog's features, like the hunchback's clownish leaps, still display the mutilated lineaments of nature. Mass industry and mass culture, on the other hand, have already learned how to apply scientific methods to manipulate bodies – both of pedigree animals and of humans. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002 p. 251)

Now and again, if we scan the trivial news-items on the second and third pages of a newspaper – the front page is crammed with men's frightful deeds of glory – we may come across a few lines about a circus fire or poisoned elephants. Animals are only remembered when the few remaining specimens, the counterparts of the medieval jester, perish in excruciating pain, as a capital loss for their owner who neglected to afford them adequate fire protection in an age of concrete and steel. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002 p. 251)

In *Eclipse of Reason*, Horkheimer (1947) sees our view of animals as a symptom of Western civilization, embracing both animals and nature under the principles of rationality and domination:

Modern insensitivity to nature is indeed only a variation of the pragmatic attitude that is typical of western civilization as a whole. The forms are different. The early trapper saw in the prairies and mountains only the prospects of good hunting; the modern businessman sees in the landscape an opportunity for the display of cigarette posters. The fate of animals in our world is symbolized by an item printed in newspapers of a few years ago. It reported that landings of planes in Africa were often hampered by herds of elephants and other beasts. Animals are here considered simply as obstructors of traffic. This mentality of man as the master can be traced back to the first chapters of Genesis. (Quoted in Clarke & Linzey [Eds.], 1990 p. 92)

Interconnections between subordination of human and animal “others” are recognized in Adorno’s *Minima Moralia. Reflections from damaged life* (1974):

Indignation over cruelty diminishes in proportion as the victims are less like normal readers, the more they are swarthy, ‘dirty’, dago-like. This throws as much light on the crimes as on the spectators. Perhaps the social schematization of perception in anti-Semites is such that they do not see Jews as human beings at all. The constantly encountered assertion that savages, blacks, Japanese are like animals, monkeys for example, is the key to the pogrom. The possibility of pogroms is decided in the moment when the gaze of a fatally-wounded animal falls on a human being. The defiance with which he repels this gaze – ‘after all, it’s only an animal’ – reappears irresistibly in cruelties done to human beings, the perpetrators having again and again to reassure themselves that it is ‘only an animal’, because they could never fully believe this even of animals. (Adorno, 1974 p. 105)

Minima Moralia also contains detailed criticism of zoos:

Zoological gardens stem from the same hope. They are laid out on the pattern of Noah’s Ark, for since their inception the bourgeois class has been waiting for the flood. The use of zoos for entertainment and instruction seems a thin pretext. They are allegories of the specimen or the pair who defy the disaster that befalls the species *qua* species. /.../ Nor can any good come of Hagenbeck’s layout, with trenches instead of cages, betraying the Ark by simulating the rescue that only Ararat can promise. They deny the animals’ freedom only the more completely by keeping the boundaries invisible, the sight of which would inflame the longing for open spaces. /.../ The more purely nature is preserved and transplanted by civilization, the more implacably it is dominated. /.../ The fact, however, that animals really suffer more in cages than in the open range, that Hagenbeck does in fact represent a step forward in humanity, reflects on the inescapability of imprisonment. It is a consequence of history. The zoological gardens in their authentic form are products of nineteenth-century colonial imperialism. (Adorno, 1974 pp. 115-116)

Referring to Arthur Schopenhauer, Adorno also speaks about exploitation of animals in *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, where he suggests that maltreatment of animals is the most obvious form of domination of nature:

In his day Schopenhauer held it to be the particular merit of his own moral philosophy that it also included a view of our treatment of animals, compassion for animals, and this has often been regarded as the cranky idea of a private individual of independent means. My own view is that a tremendous amount can be learnt from such crankiness. I believe that Schopenhauer probably suspected that the establishment of total rationality as the supreme objective principle of mankind might well spell the continuation of that blind domination of nature whose most obvious and tangible expression was to be found in the exploitation and maltreatment of animals. He thereby pointed to the weak point in the transition from subjective reason concerned with self-preservation to the supreme moral principle, which has no room for animals and our treatment of animals. If this is true, we can see Schopenhauer's eccentricity as the sign of great insight. (Adorno, 2000 p. 145)

Another Frankfurt School member, Herbert Marcuse, seems to share much of Horkheimer and Adorno's view of human-animal relations. In Held's (1980) account of Marcuse's thought, it is stated that "[h]umans are *objectifying* animals: objectification constitutes the unity of humanity and nature." (Held, 1980 p. 234, emphasis in original) Marcuse himself quotes Bertrand Russell when expressing his view:

Suffering, violence, and destruction are categories of the natural as well as human reality, of a helpless and heartless universe. The terrible notion that the sub-rational life of nature is destined to remain forever in such a universe, is neither a philosophic nor a scientific one; it was pronounced by a different authority:

"When the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asked the Pope for his support, he refused it, on the ground that human beings owe no duty to lower animals, and that ill-treating animals is not sinful. This is because animals have no souls." (Quoted in: Bertrand Russell, *Unpopular Essays* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950 p. 76])

Materialism, which is not tainted by such ideological abuse of the soul, has a more universal and realistic concept of salvation. It admits the reality of Hell only at one definite place, here on earth, and asserts that this Hell was created by Man (and by Nature). Part of this Hell is the ill-treatment of animals – the work of a human society whose rationality is still the irrational. (Marcuse, 1991 p. 237)

The above excerpts from several works by the Frankfurt School's members show their criticism of issues such as pet breeding, zoos, circuses, hunting and animal experimentation, as well as their insights into the intersectionalities of human and animal subordination and exploitation.

Marxism and animals

Critical theory is Marxist oriented but there are divergent interpretations of the status of animals in Marxist thought. Although central Marxist ideas have been understood as presupposing a fundamental human/animal dualism (Benton, 1993; Noske, 1997), this reading of Marx has been problematized. Benton (1993) points out that Marx's ideas rely on human/animal dualism but at the same time contradict his naturalistic view of human nature and prospects. Wilde (2000), on the other hand, argues that speciesist connotations in Marx's texts are commonly products of errors and misreadings on the part of the translators and are not found in the original German versions.

Whatever interpretation of Marxism's relation to animals is the "correct" one, human-animal studies scholars have broadened our understanding of human-animal relations by applying central Marxist ideas. Speaking about *human-animal relations of production*, Tapper (1988) extends the concept of social relations of production across the species barrier and argues that any set of ideas about the relation of humanity to animals is a function of fundamental economic imperatives (conditioned by the socio-political environment). The production systems Tapper analyzes are hunting and gathering, pastoralism, agriculture and urban-industrial production. Noske (1997) develops a detailed Marxist analysis around the latter form, building primarily on the concept of alienation (see chapter 18).

Perlo (2002) suggests that not only the concept of alienation, but the capacity for sympathy in Marxism as well as the theoretical ideas of surplus value and historical materialism are all applicable to human-animal relations. Similarly, Dickens (2003) discusses the importance of analyzing human-animal relations within a historical materialist framework:

Commodification, capitalism's restless search for value and the incorporation of nature of all kinds into capitalist labor-processes, is the heart of the capitalist enterprise. Animals as well as human beings seen from this perspective are not only, or simply, a "working class" on whose labor the whole of human society is predicated. Their biologically inherited powers of growth and reproduction are now increasingly subsumed within, and indeed modified by, capitalist social relations. They are being increasingly modified in capitalism's own image. /.../ Nonhuman animals, therefore, no longer are just slaves or beasts of burden, but they increasingly are being made central as means of production, ways in which surplus value is being realized by applying human labor (in, say, the laboratory) to the animals' powers of reproduction and development. /.../ These developments are just part of an attempt to make new labor-processes out of reproduction. They are no less than new ways of interacting with nature to generate surplus value, again using human

and non-human labor as a free input to realize value and profits. (Dickens, 2003 p.1)

I see the writings of the Frankfurt School's members together with Marxist perspectives in contemporary human-animal studies as providing an essential basis for a critical theory of human-animal relations. I will now extend this discussion into the area of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy: Applying critical thought in the education arena

Although there are many strands to critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1998), much like critical theory it sees society as fundamentally divided by unequal power relations (Burbules & Berk, 1999; Kanpol, 1999) and views schooling as a preparation and legitimization of particular forms of social life (Kanpol, 1999; McLaren, 1998). One aim of critical pedagogy is to challenge value structures that lead to oppressive, alienating and subordinative social practices, and raise questions about how these are reproduced in school (Kanpol, 1999). In Giroux's (1997a) words, this means to highlight how schools function in the shaping of particular identities, values and histories by producing and legitimating specific narratives. Development of a critical consciousness is thus central in critical pedagogy, but equally important is the creation of possibilities for transformative action.

Like critical theory, critical pedagogy has been subject to various forms of criticism, for instance, that its aims of emancipation and transformation actually may conceal a steering of students into "correct" views (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Questions have also been raised about limitations in the possibilities of education to bring about the massive changes in social arrangements that critical pedagogy strives for (Morrow & Torres, 1995).

My intention with this rudimentary outline is not to give an in-depth analysis of the debates within and about critical pedagogy, but rather to sketch a few ideas of a conceptual and practice-oriented framework with which to problematize issues in human-animal education. Although I argue that traditional versions of critical pedagogy represent a fundamentally anthropocentric enterprise, more recent social justice oriented educational approaches such as Andrzejewski (2003), Kahn (2003) and McLaren and Houston (2005), and humane education scholars such as Selby (1995), bring the key ideas of critical pedagogy into species-inclusive arenas. This background has inspired my research question of what pedagogical tools are used in human-animal education classrooms, and for what purposes.

Intersectionality perspectives

Two important influences that have inspired the present study are gender and postcolonial theory. I primarily use species-inclusive versions of these theories with a strong emphasis on intersectionality perspectives (i.e. how different power arrangements interact and discursively construct each other). Most of my empirical chapters are discussed in the light of both critical theoretical, gender and postcolonial approaches. The two sections that follow give a very brief outline of some human-animal perspectives in feminist and postcolonial thought.

Feminist and gender theory

Feminist researchers differ with regard to their willingness to include animals in their discourse. Noske (1997) and Smith-Harris (2003) report about their personal experiences of their involvement in human-animal studies as feminist scholars:

While researching this book [*Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals*] I was once asked at a party in Amsterdam what exactly I was doing. I mentioned my interest in the human-animal 'interface'. The reaction was one of sheer horror. Such research was bound to work against women! As it turned out the continuity question especially was a taboo subject among feminists. Behind my back doubts were expressed as to my political correctness... (Noske, 1997 p. 171)

When I first became interested in Human-Animal Studies (HAS) many feminist friends warned me not to get involved in research in this area. They discussed the political repercussions of being marginalized from the debates that "really mattered"- those addressing the oppressions connected to humans. (Smith-Harris, 2003 p. 85)

The agenda within feminism that shaped Noske's and Smith-Harris's experiences has been heavily criticized from within the field of feminist studies itself. For instance, Gruen (1993) argues that a failure to address oppressive practices toward animals is to contribute to a reproduction of exclusionary theorizing; a theorizing that seems to conflict with basic feminist ideas. Moreover, the categories "woman" and "animal" serve the same symbolic function as "other" in patriarchal society (Gruen, 1993; cf. Adams, 2002). These connections have been analyzed, for instance, within a gender perspective of meat production and consumption; within the context of domestic (and other) violence toward women and animals, and in ordinary language use in patriarchal society, which tends to produce and reinforce the subordinate status of women and animals (e.g. Adams, 2002; Dunayer, 1999).

Ecofeminist theory has developed these issues. Although there are divergent viewpoints, for instance, on the status of animals also within ecofeminism, ecofeminist theory builds on the idea that there are connections between the exploitation of animals/nature and other oppressive practices organized around categories such as gender, race, and class. According to Warren (2000), oppressive practices and structures rely on narratives that explain, sustain and legitimate relations of domination and subordination in society and include value hierarchical and value dualistic thinking (expressed in categories such as soul/body, reason/emotion, culture/nature, man/woman, human/animal). The links between anthropocentric and androcentric worldviews are thus made explicit in ecofeminist thought.

Intersections of feminist/queer theorizing and human-animal relationships have been further explored by Birke, Bryld and Lykke (2004) and McKay (2005) by building on Judith Butler's analyses. Birke, Bryld and Lykke (2004) use Butler's notion of *performativity*, seeing non-human otherness as a *doing* or *becoming* rather than as an essence, that is produced and reproduced by discursive practices and processes in specific contexts of human-animal interaction and consolidated by repeated action over time. Like gender performativity, species (my term) performativity *creates* a human/animal divide and reproduces relations of power through different inferiority-producing strategies. McKay (2005) applies another notion by Butler, "compulsory heterosexuality" and the constitutive nature of exclusion, to human-animal relations and the discourse of speciesism⁸. Just as binary gendering of the human being locates the gay or lesbian body as the constitutive outside of "compulsory heterosexuality", the animal body may, by means of analogous logics of heterosexism and speciesism, be viewed as the constitutive outside of what McKay terms "compulsory humanity": "It is compulsory that we 'become' human, and this very becoming is a function of our renunciation of the animal." (p. 218)

⁸ There are several definitions of the term speciesism. In McKay's (2005) interpretation, it can denote both an ideology and a discourse that polices the human-nonhuman boundary. The understanding of speciesism as an ideology is proposed by Nibert (2002). According to him, speciesism (like racism, sexism, and classism) is a set of widely held, socially shared beliefs that results from and supports oppressive social arrangements. Wolfe (2003c, 2003d), on the other hand, defines speciesism primarily as an institution; i.e. a network of specific modes and practices of materialization that reproduce the objectification of the other on the grounds of species affiliation. In Wolfe's (2003c) view, the discourse of species relies on and reproduces the institution of speciesism. My way of using the term speciesism in this study includes dimensions of both ideology and discourse as well as of social arrangements, institutions, practices and relations.

Postcolonial theory

Like feminist theorizing, postcolonial studies have been criticized for their lack of interest in the “animal connection”. One reason for the absence of this interest may be a concern about presumed dangers of destabilizing the human-animal divide and a concern that a focus on animals may trivialize the suffering of human beings under colonialism (Armstrong, 2002). Armstrong argues, however, that there are common grounds in postcolonial and human-animal studies. In his view, the idea of the human being’s absolute difference from, and superiority over, the animal is connected to colonial legacies. Furthermore, the definition of “the animal” is inextricably bound up with the formation of other notions that are fundamental to the colonialist project, such as “the human”, “the natural”, and “the cultural” (Armstrong, 2002). Also Tiffin (2001) argues that the animal question can be usefully retheorized in relation to postcolonial concerns such as otherness, racism, and voice.

Referring to Fiddes (1991), Armstrong (2002) gives the example that the “civilizing” mission of European colonialism involved a domination of both “savage” cultures and “savage” nature. In this manner, the “civilized” has been constructed in contrast with the savage and the animalistic in Western history. Speciesism is further used to underpin racism and slavery, for instance, when “the animal” is deployed as a derogatory term in genocidal and marginalizing discourses (Tiffin, 2001). In the empirical chapters of the present study, light will be shed on the appearance of animals in racialized discourse, and how the racialized human subject figures in the discourse of species in connection with human and animal identity production, zoos, museums, wildlife films, animal agribusiness, hunting, and animal experimentation. In many of these areas, it will be shown that the colonialist project’s striving to justify itself as *benign* and to mask its own oppressive character (Lundahl, 2005) is operative also in human-animal relations.

There are weak points in colonialist rationales. Postcolonial discourse in Homi Bhabha’s theorizing points to an uncertainty in the “master identity” of the colonizers, revealed in the way colonialism seeks to produce colonial subjects who are at once “the same” as their colonizers (amenable to cultural assimilation) and “different” from them (amenable to colonization). This implies that the stereotype of “the other” that colonialism relies on is, in fact, unstable and needs to be constantly reinforced in order to remain powerful (Macey, 2000). Oscillations between “similarity” and “difference” are also manifested in various configurations of human-animal relations (Bousé, 2000; Desmond, 1999), which could imply that also these relations are sensitive to destabilization.

By giving the example of the zoo, Anderson (1998) argues that the variety of ambiguous responses commonly evoked in zoo visitors upon encountering captive animals (including excitement, sadness, wonder, unease, guilt, nostalgia) reflects a fragility in human-animal power relations. Looking at these arguments in relation to Bhabha's discussion, it could be expected that also the narratives supporting human domination over animals are inherently unstable and need to be continuously repeated and recreated to maintain authority. If this analysis is reasonable (cf. Tiffin, 2001 on "hidden or repressed guilt" [p. 39] as a common feature of colonial and human-animal relations), it points at an additional possible link between postcolonial and human-animal discourse.⁹

Another perspective is provided by what Armstrong (2002) calls "colonialism's offspring", i.e. globalization, and, I would add, cultural, economic and technological imperialism. This form of reinvented colonialism has not, in Haraway's (2004c) view, appropriated and assimilated organisms as much as it has *remade* them in the image of commodity production.

Main theoretical points of departure

Arriving at some central points of departure for this study requires making a few choices regarding the theoretical perspectives presented above. I will deal with these choices in two main discussions. One discussion concerns precisely what is entailed in the concept of "critical" as applied to this study, and what functions and operations of the school this view relates to. Another discussion concerns the tensions between a "modern" versus a "postmodern" approach to my research focus, and what is at stake in this choice.

A "critical" dimension in human-animal education research

One element emerging from the critical theories outlined above is what has been called "standpoint theories" in feminist research. Standpoint theories, influenced by Marxist thought, claim to represent the world from a particular socially situated perspective and to represent the social world in relation to the interests of oppressed groups (Anderson, 2004). Drawing on feminist epistemology, the ecopedagogue Richard Kahn has argued for an "animal standpoint theory". The quotations that follow are my reconstruction of Kahn's elaboration of this notion as it emerged in an email-based discussion in 2004:

⁹ Wolfe (2003b) makes a reading of Bhabha (albeit from a different starting point) that does not exclude the possibility of, but remains uncertain about, the location of the animal question in his postcolonial theorizing.

Standpoint theory is a methodology that is designed to handle the issue of power and hegemony /.../ [It is] an attempt to articulate the standpoint of the oppressed and marginalized, the counter-hegemonic, hoping thereby to increase the objectivity of research discourse by bringing into the arena views that have been historically repressed. /.../ [V]ia an animal standpoint, one could enlarge the research domain by providing perspectives that transgress the dominant order, critique it and reconstruct it. /.../ Animal standpoints honor (my term) subjectivity of animals. This means that 1) they articulate that animals are sentient subjects of a life, 2) they do this because the dominant research and social paradigm denies and suppresses this, and so 3) articulating animal subjectivity is part of a political project that seeks to transform historical oppressions that cause animals to be treated/perceived as objects and not subjects. /.../ The point is (...) to articulate the question of oppressor/oppressed relations (and the researcher's involvement in them) as part of the research question/domain. (Kahn, 2004)

Standpoint theories in general have been criticized, for instance, for their tendency to universalize (Birke, 1994). Particularly an animal standpoint theory raises questions about the extent to which it is possible to imagine the experience of "the other", not least from my own position as a researcher belonging to a privileged species, race, and class. Nonetheless, I see Kahn's outline above as helpful for articulating a critical dimension in human-animal studies and these ideas have provided inspiration throughout my project.¹⁰

Thus, in line with Kahn's thought, my study seeks to challenge "conventional" wisdom about human-animal relations and the positions of animals in society, and provide perspectives that reach beyond established paradigms. These perspectives should be viewed in relation to an understanding of the school as not only an agent of socialization and social and cultural reproduction, but also as a site where conflicting political values and practices are enacted and contested (Giroux, 1997b).

My critical ambition is rooted in Marxist epistemology that focuses on the material and economic basis of different forms of subordination and exploitation in society (cf. Nibert, 2002), but also in Foucauldian ideas of how subject positions are constituted and negotiated in relation to normalization processes (cf. Carabine, 2001).¹¹ These points of departure relate to different conceptions of power that will be further discussed in chapter 5.

¹⁰ My understanding of Kahn's view is that recognition of animal subjectivity is a central position in animal standpoint theory, but I do not take this to imply that oppressive practices towards animals rely solely on a denial of their sentience.

¹¹ The link between Marxist and Foucauldian social theory lies, according to Olssen (2004), above all in a critical view of domination that takes social practices as transitory and intellectual formations as associated with power.

“Modern” versus “postmodern” approaches

In footnote 7, I mentioned a few critical points that have been raised against the Frankfurt School’s critical theory. I will now add to this critique, starting with the notion of “nature” as it appears in the Frankfurt School’s works.

Here, I find Haraway’s (2004c, 2004d) ideas useful as she takes us beyond the nature/culture dualism prevalent in much critical theoretical thought. She views nature not as a physical place, resource or essence, but rather as a “topic of public discourse”; a site on which to consider common themes. In this understanding, nature is a co-construction among human and non-human actors, and organisms themselves emerge from discursive processes in the intersection of, for instance, biological research, business practices and cultural productions of all kinds.

Haraway’s discussion leads to the debate between modern versus postmodern analytical approaches. The postmodern tendency to decenter the animal as embodied being and view her as a set of discursively produced narratives seems to be in conflict with the modernist oriented way of stressing the actual situation and lived experience of the animal as a member of an oppressed group. Addressing the tensions between critical theory and postmodernist research approaches at a general level, Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) argue for a synergism between the two perspectives that involves an interplay between the praxis of the critical and the radical uncertainty of the postmodern. Such a synergism, they believe, can contribute with new understandings of how power operates and a new politics of difference that refuses to exoticize “the other”.

Following Bruno Latour, Haraway (2004e) avoids the modern/postmodern distinction in favor of an *amodern* position, referring to a worldview without clear beginnings and endings but with more multi-patterned and fluid relationships (Haraway, 2004c). Accordingly, she also rejects the tendency of “speaking for” animals (or nature) that is common in critical modernist and activist discourse, since this strategy strips “the other” of agency: “The represented is reduced to the permanent status of the recipient of action, never to be a co-actor in an articulated practice among unlike, but joined, social partners.” (Haraway, 2004c p. 87) Haraway offers a reconceptualization of animals but also argues that we need new *practices* and forms of life, other “conversations” with animals, which can rejoin humans and non-humans (Haraway, 2004d).

My research project has developed by deriving insights from all the perspectives above, to varying extents in the different chapters, thereby aiming

to reach a more complex and multifaceted understanding of human-animal relations in the school context.

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Chapter 5

Key concepts

What follows is a selection of key concepts that have been instrumental in the development of my arguments throughout this study. They derive partly from the sensitizing concepts articulated prior to and throughout my field study (see chapter 7), and partly from the process of analysis that commenced during my time in the field. I focus primarily on these concepts' productive (action oriented) and relational ways of operating in my empirical material, rather than seeking to arrive at absolute and static definitions.

The hidden curriculum

Vallance (1973/74) defines the hidden curriculum as "those non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education" (p. 7), referring broadly to the social control function of schooling. Vallance suggests three dimensions of the hidden curriculum: the *contexts* of schooling, the *processes* operating in or through schools, and different *degrees of intentionality* and "hiddenness". She sees the hidden curriculum as a device for identifying systematic side effects of schooling that cannot be accounted for by reference to the explicit curriculum.

According to Seddon (1983), the hidden curriculum may refer to outcomes of learning and/or the processes leading to these outcomes that are not explicitly intended by educators. It involves the learning of attitudes, norms, beliefs, values and assumptions and concerns taken-for-granted commonsense knowledge that often remains unarticulated but can be seen as a basis of the socialization process. The implicit character and taken-for-granted nature of this learning deprives students of evaluation of and control over their learning situation. Possible effects of the hidden curriculum include keeping individual behavior in accordance with the effective functioning of society and maintaining the *status quo* of societal inequalities and injustices. Seddon notes that hidden curricula may be circumvented or resisted providing critical awareness is increased and educators adopt a policy of the active explication of curriculum assumptions and messages.

Martin (2001) defines a hidden curriculum as “those learning states of a setting which may be either intended or unintended but are not openly acknowledged to the learners in the setting unless the learners are aware of them” (p. 462). To her, the hidden curriculum is relative and contextual and may vary according to setting, time, and the individual learner. This means that if we are to analyze the hidden curriculum we must investigate what is actually *learned*.

Martin warns that what we find will be a function of what we look for and what we look at. We may, for instance, (unintentionally) overlook important parts of a hidden curriculum because they are not recognized as such; for instance, sexist practices in schooling in the 1960s or speciesist components today (Martin, 2001).

Martin suggests that in our analyses we must find out which elements or aspects of a given setting help bring out which components of that setting’s hidden curriculum, keeping in mind that some learning states are likely to be products of complex and interrelated practices and structures in and outside school. Like Vallance (1973/74), Martin suggests formal or informal consciousness raising as a way of counteracting undesired hidden curricula and transforming the learning states produced by them into objects of new and very different learning states. This method entails direct confrontation between the learner and the hidden curriculum, learning how to recognize hidden curricula and knowing how to avoid the learning outcomes one does not want to acquire (Martin, 2001).

Gordon (1982) is concerned with the validity of claims related to the hidden curriculum and suggests *pervasiveness* (i.e. phenomena showing a clearly discernible pattern) and *lack of sophistication* (i.e. ensuring that latent meanings are not simply read into the learning situation from the vantage point of the adult researcher) as two criteria for evaluating such research. In a later study, Gordon (1988) proposes another understanding of the hidden curriculum, as the reading of an educational text about society’s myths and “sacred” beliefs. Here, Gordon emphasizes the effect of the hidden curriculum on not only the students but on all members of society. He suggests that the hidden curriculum may be used in a productive way. Rather than trying to judge its messages, we can use it to help us understand the society in which we live. Lakomski (1988), however, criticizes Gordon and points to a number of fallacies in his theorizing, arguing that claims derived from the idea of the hidden curriculum cannot be justified in principle due to lack of empirical evidence.

The use of the notion of the hidden curriculum in the present study rests on several of the definitions above. I see the hidden curriculum not as an

absolute category, but as a “thinking device” or sensitizing concept that can alert me to certain dimensions in my empirical material that I might otherwise have overlooked. In this way, I also acknowledge the non-exhaustive, provisional and subjective character of my analyses of the hidden curricula of human-animal education practices.

I refer to the hidden curriculum as intended or unintended teaching or learning effects¹² of schooling that are not stated as aims in formal documents,¹³ but form parts of a socialization process into certain human-animal relations. In line with Martin’s (2001) suggestions, I have attempted to follow the operating processes of hidden curricula in different educational settings and acknowledge the interrelations of micro- and macro structures and practices in and outside the school environment in the formation of these processes. Like Seddon (1983), I argue that these processes may take place not only between teachers and students but between students (or teachers) themselves as well. Further, the validity of my analyses can be assessed on the basis of Gordon’s (1982) criteria of *pervasiveness* and *lack of sophistication*, and I develop the relations of my findings to the production of “commonsense knowledge” (as in Seddon, 1983) and “sacred” beliefs or myths in society (as in Gordon, 1988) in my concluding discussion (part VI).

The animal as “other”

The notion of the “other” is used in a variety of disciplines. It generally refers to “one pole of the relationship between a subject and a person or thing defined or constituted as a non-self that is different.” (Macey, 2000 p. 285) Macey distinguishes between phenomenological, psychoanalytical and postcolonial accounts of the other. Addressing human-animal relations, Philo and Wilbert (2000) make another distinction. They speak about *conceptual* and *geographical* forms of “othering”, where “conceptual othering” denotes setting animals apart from ourselves in terms of character traits, and “geographical othering” means the physical fixing of animals in places and spaces different from those occupied by humans. In human-animal studies, the animal is commonly analyzed as

¹² I do not, however, as Martin (2001) suggests, analyze the hidden curriculum exclusively in the light of what is actually learnt by students, since assessing learning needs to take long-term effects into consideration. Furthermore, I believe that both formal and hidden curricula may be problematic regardless of whether all their components are successfully mediated.

¹³ In cases where teachers verbally articulate certain values or assumptions related to learning outcomes, although explicitly stated in the classroom or other learning situations, I still regard these assumptions as in a sense “hidden” if they are not part of the formal curriculum documents normally open to public scrutiny.

“other” from any of these perspectives and especially figures in accounts of how dichotomies of humanity/animality are constructed in mutual interdependence. This understanding of the other surfaces in, for instance, analyses of how oppressive practices toward human and animal others may intersect and reinforce each other by reliance on similar logics. Wolfe (2003c) remarks that the discourse of speciesism can be used to mark *any* social other. In this context, animals may be viewed as *archetypical* others not only because of their perceived radical difference from ourselves, but also because certain arrangements of oppression toward animals have been used as a model and inspiration for the oppression of human beings (e.g. Patterson, 2002). Wolfe (2003c) argues that as the object of both discursive and institutional speciesist practices, the view of the animal as “other” has particular power and durability in relation to other discourses of otherness.

There are some general problems with the notion of the “other”. It may balance on the verge of essentialism, evoking an idea of a core of inherent, stable characteristics of individuals. Its frequent use also risks *consolidating* the binary oppositions of “self” and “other”, stigmatizing certain individuals or groups of individuals as stereotyped “others” rather than rendering such discursive markings problematic or dissolving them. Lynn (2005) suggests another understanding of animal otherness, or animal alterity. In his view, animals may provide insights into another kind of alterity, one that includes the simultaneous existence of differences and similarities in the constitution of individual and species identities.

Furthermore, there are divergent views on whether an animal may at all be ascribed the status of “other”. In the phenomenological philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas and the symbolic interactionist perspective of George Herbert Mead, an animal cannot be an “other” since animals are presumed to lack fundamental characteristics in their relations to humans. Levinas’s and Mead’s ideas have been revisited and challenged from aspects of human-animal interaction by contemporary philosophers and sociologists (Alger & Alger, 1997; Clark, 1997; Myers, 2003; Wolfe, 2003a), but the notion of animal otherness has also been questioned from less anthropocentric perspectives than Levinas’s and Mead’s. Steeves (1999) senses a shared physical existence between beings which leads him to negate space as an element separating individuals, thereby also negating otherness as such from a phenomenological perspective:

Space tricks us; false philosophy tricks us. My hand reaching for yours seems to move away from me, though it never does: it is me. Your hand, your paw, seems to be There and, hence, other. It is not: it, too, is me. We have met the animal’s body, and he is us. There are no animal Others. (Steeves, 1999 p. 8)

Within the critical theory framework applied in this study, however, animal and human otherness is viewed as a useful analytical concept for investigating identity production, normativity and power arrangements in society. My approach also follows feminist theory in the recognition that different animals may be *created* as others in different ways and contexts, and that these processes need to be more closely examined (Birke, 1995a; Birke, Bryld & Lykke, 2004; Birke & Parisi, 1999). This makes the issue of animal otherness not only a theoretical tool, but also part of the very objectives of the present investigation.

Social representations, constructions and positions

According to Chaib and Orfali (1995), social representations are collectively developed ideas and conceptions about various phenomena that surround us. They possess a long-term stability that distinguishes them from, for instance, attitudes. Social representations are historically and culturally contingent and derive from dimensions of contemporary society such as politics, science, and mass media, and their function is to produce “commonsensical” knowledge that guides collective forms of social behavior. Social representations may be seen as a “system of values” in the sense that they contribute to the establishment of a social order, and also facilitate communication by providing linguistic codes for describing and classifying social phenomena (Chaib & Orfali, 1995).

To take an example from human-animal studies, Shapiro (2002b) uses a social constructionist perspective, derived from Berger and Luckmann, when analyzing the conception of the “lab animal” in psychology research. According to this perspective, a social construction refers to the explicit or implicit consensus among a group of people regarding the meaning of an object or class of objects.¹⁴ This meaning is conferred by people and institutions playing an active role in the process, and the meaning derives from and is made intelligible by the social context of the actors and objects. Social *representations* and social *constructions* can be distinguished by defining representations as developing from the social constructions that society builds on (Chaib & Orfali, 1995), but in the present study I will use both terms as largely synonymous.

When applied to human-animal relations, our way of making meaning of animals is deeply contingent upon the symbolic roles or representations we ascribe to them. Despite their relative stability, social representations and

¹⁴ Many contemporary social practices in which animals figure actually construct them not only figuratively, but literally as well, by selective breeding, genetic engineering and other measures (cf. Shapiro, 2002b and the next section.)

constructions may shift over time and place and can be powerful in that they shape our commonsensical, taken-for-granted understandings of animals: In Arluke's and Sanders's (1996) words, "they do nothing less than shape our consciousness." (p. 16) Through these processes, representations of animals may shape and give meaning to our personal and collective lives and identities (Alger & Alger, 2003a; Emel, Wilbert & Wolch, 2002). The view of primates in the West, for instance, has shifted in the 20th century from being alien or strange creatures to almost humanlike with complex cognitive and social abilities (Arluke & Sanders, 1996). Another shift in social representations is exemplified by the rat, metaphorically transformed from being a disease-bearing, filthy animal of the sewers to a symbol of modern (Western) medical and scientific progress in the *conquest* of disease (Birke, 2003) (although both representations may exist simultaneously).

Animals as social constructions and representations can be analyzed on the species level as well as on the individual level. On the species level, Elstein's (2003) analysis of the species concept suggests that it has a subjective and contextual character. He argues that the category of species is not a static, "given" concept but is interest-relative, i.e. it has been constructed on the basis of its usefulness in certain contexts rather than on evidence that it possesses certain universal or essential "core" characteristics. According to Elstein, interpretations of species distinctions may actually differ between cultures as well as between scientific communities.

On the level of the individual animal, Marvin (2005) sees all viewing of animals as shaped by social and cultural factors, and argues that "[t]here is no asocial or acultural platform on which we can stand to see an animal as that animal really is" (p. 6). According to Marvin, an animal is represented the moment it is recognized as an animal and can never be simply a neutral presence. Similarly, Baker (2001) writes that there is no unmediated access to the "real" animal (which is not to be taken as a denial of the animal's experience or circumstances, but rather as emphasizing that animals can only be related to through our representations of them).

Shapiro (2002b) remarks that there is a debate between proponents and critics of postmodernist thought concerning whether a constructionist approach requires that any reality beyond the construction must be denied or not, and the extent to which this reality can be accessed. Falkengren (2005) argues that existential phenomenology may offer a way to approach "unmediated relations" between human and animal (which in her study denotes relations specifically between farmers and cattle), and Acampora (2001) points to the philosophical

ambiguities of constructionist perspectives. He argues that arguments for preservation of animals tend to rely on ideas of authenticity, and social constructionists who deny any inherent nature of animals simultaneously undermine the preservation argument (unless the confusion between ontological and epistemological claims about animals is solved). Furthermore, Bergman (2001) and Falkengren (2005) are concerned that a constructionist perspective risks downplaying animal subjectivity and agency.

In the present study, I follow Shapiro (2002b) in bracketing ontological and epistemological concerns and choose to focus on social processes that shape constructions and representations of animals. My intention is not to use social representations for making ontological truth claims about animals, but as critical analytic tools for interpreting the processes by which certain (animal and human) categories and individuals become “legitimately” subjected to abusive or oppressive practices. Here, I find Nibert’s (2003) notion of “social positions” particularly useful. In his analysis, ascribing social positions to others (humans or animals) may be seen as a way of collective and personal devaluation, which is one element in processes of exerting systematic oppression. Depending on the particular functions various animals fulfill in human society, they are ascribed different social positions in order to consolidate and reproduce these functions. In Nibert’s example from early agrarian society, common social positions were “slave” and “serf” for humans and “livestock” and “game” for animals. “Zoo animal” and “lab animal” are other examples of social positions ascribed to animals that are still widely accepted. In line with Noske’s (1997) Marxist analysis of animals in agribusiness (see chapter 18), Nibert’s (2003) account of social positions indicates how human society has subjected animals’ entire existence to the principles of utility and social division of labor. It is thus above all the morally charged and action oriented dimension of social representations that promotes and justifies certain treatment of animals (Arluke & Sanders, 1996). How these dimensions are articulated and processed in the school environment is of particular significance to the present study.

Human-animal power relations

The concept of “power” is multifaceted. Numerous definitions of power (most of which center around the human subject) are in circulation in contemporary social research, among which Foucauldian interpretations have probably been the most influential. My primary concern here is to discuss how animals figure in power structures and processes and what understandings of power are

implicated. I will focus in particular on how Foucauldian perspectives of power may illuminate our understandings of human-animal relations.

One dimension of power highlighted in critical theory is *domination*. To Horkheimer and Adorno, human beings have a fundamental intention to dominate and master nature that underlies the way both social and natural worlds are appropriated and apprehended (Held, 1980). Held remarks that Horkheimer and Adorno did not define the concept of domination but suggested a “minimal condition” for its application; i.e. “a situation in which the thoughts, wants and purposes of those affected by (domination) would have been radically different, if it had not been for the effects (it) created.” (Held, 1980 pp. 148-149)

While the concept of domination seems to extend to animals in critical theory, the notion of *hegemony* is different since it does not operate by force but rather through ideology and the “superficial” consent of the population (Femia, 1987). Stibbe (2001) notes, however, that hegemony affects animals in an indirect manner since “the coercive power used to oppress animals depends completely on a consenting majority of the human population who, every time it buys animal products, explicitly or implicitly agrees to the way animals are treated.” (p. 147)

Power may be viewed as stemming from different societal groups, such as one group having the ability to exert its will over another (cf. Nibert, 2002), or, in a more Foucauldian sense, as being entangled within social organization itself. The former view is embraced by ecofeminist thought, which conceptualizes power as patriarchally based “power over” human and non-human others. Birkeland (1993), for instance, argues that we must “move beyond” power and challenge the very idea of power structures as a necessary concomitant of human society.

From a Foucauldian perspective, however, the exercise of power is not simply a top-down relationship between individual or collective actors, and a society without power relations can only be an abstraction (Foucault, 1983). Power is, in this sense, deeply connected to the concept of discourse and may be formulated as “a network of boundaries that delimit, for all, the field of what is socially possible” (Hayward, 2000 p. 3). Power, however, is not only delimiting, it can also be productive. In this sense, power may be viewed as a process that infiltrates both the fine textures of social existence and self-identity (Olssen, 2004), also in our relations to animals. Although Foucault never directly addressed human-animal power relations (Palmer, 2001), there have been attempts to analyze certain situations of animals in human society and wildlife

management in terms of Foucauldian notions such as government (Patton, 2003), bio-power and discipline (Bergman, 2005; Novek, 2005). Palmer (2001) develops a more general framework for applying Foucauldian thought to human-animal relations:

A Foucauldian approach would accept that while there might be what we can think of as globalized human/animal oppressive structures, these have come about by the colonizing of existing heterogeneous discourses and micro-practices, and it is these discourses and practices on which we should focus. So we might approach such an analytic of power by considering the diverse nature of human/animal power relationships and how differently situated they can be /.../ Looked at from this perspective, there are a huge variety of power relationships between humans and animals, with their own instabilities and points of resistance. (Palmer, 2001 pp. 350-351)

Palmer distinguishes between *constitutive*, *internalized* and *external* practices of human power over animals. *Constitutive* practices such as domestication, selective breeding and biotechnology affect the biological constitution and form of animals, inscribing preferred physical and behavioral characteristics on the genetic make-up of the animal body. *Internalized* practices are human disciplinary practices that affect the subjectivity of animals, such as techniques of training and taming. *External* practices affect the external bodies and/or circumstances of animals. Some examples are confinement, castration, physical punishment, eviction from habitat and a wide variety of uses of space as a fundamental element in the exercise of power (Palmer, 2001; cf. Philo & Wilbert, 2000).

The effects of human-animal power relations are symbolic as well as material, and often contradictory. Taking the example of animal agriculture, Burt (2006) discusses the widespread distribution of modernist technologies that have not only been put to efficient use in the regulation, control and taking of animals' lives within regimes of food production, but also frequently mask these new forms of control as humane and progressive improvements (e.g. modern slaughter techniques). At the same time, responsibility within the food production system is diffused so that no single individual can be held wholly responsible for the harm caused to the animals (cf. Vialles, 1994). In this manner, notions of "humane" slaughter, clinical hygienic procedures, scientific efficiency, standardization and economic optimization come neatly together under a regime of control that makes entire systems of the mass killing of animals for human consumption possible (Burt, 2006).

Following Nibert (2002, 2003), the present investigation largely locates human-animal power relations within the dynamic of capital accumulation, or what Palmer (2001) refers to as "globalized human/animal oppressive structures", where animals as a group are systematically oppressed and exploited

for economic purposes. Under these conditions, animals are not only “incorporated into some form of normatively and pragmatically ordered social practice, including an asymmetrical relation of social power between human agents and the animals involved” (Benton, 1993 p. 152), but are also frequently “subjected to an intensified reification, a systematic exclusion from recognition as beings with a subjective life, or sentience, let alone interests or rights” (p. 72). Particularly in the micro-practices (in the present case, the micro-practices of the school) within which these structures are articulated, enacted, negotiated or contested (cf. Palmer, 2001), I am inspired by Foucauldian perspectives to understand how subject positions are produced to create both hegemonic consent to *and* resistance towards dominant discourses of animals in human society. Following Willis and Trondman (2000), the ethnographic chapters that follow attempt to address the notion of power as being lodged within taken-for-granted meanings and everyday practices as they are lived, experienced and handled by various actors in school.

Part II

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

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THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Chapter 6

The pilot study

Between January and March, 2003, I conducted a small-scale pilot study at a primary school just outside a Swedish urban area. The main purpose of the pilot study was to obtain feedback on how school staff may relate to issues of animal ethics and human-animal relations when discussed within a values education framework and to test my critical theoretical framework against a limited empirical material.

The pilot study comprised three parts: A critical analysis of some national and local policy documents, analysis of textbook materials, and two semi-structured interviews (one with the school principal, and one with a social science teacher). The school was selected as the result of a personal contact of mine who herself works as a teacher at this school. The interviews were structured around three main topics or themes: 1) How the school works with values related issues in general; 2) If, and how, the school deals with issues related to animal ethics; and 3) The school's cooperation with external actors such as sponsors. Each interview was tape-recorded and took about one hour.

One impression from the interviews was that the gap between the natural and social sciences is distinct when it comes to issues regarding animals. Animals are dealt with almost entirely within the natural science area and studied in terms of biological facts (and possibly in terms of their role in the ecosystem). Social science education, especially the EQ ['empathy quotient'] related sessions that had been introduced at this school as an approach to values education, is devoted to relations between humans.

When the human-animal relation is raised as an ethical issue it seems to occur primarily on the initiative of the pupils themselves. Such a discussion may be triggered by, for instance, media reports of cases of animal abuse, but issues of animal ethics may be raised in other situations as well. One of the interviewees recalled a discussion about animals in a kindergarten group, when a little boy in the group raises the issue of what animals are eaten and not eaten. A little girl in the group then reacts by putting her hands over her ears; repeating that she does not want to hear since she does not like the fact that animals are being killed. (How the school handles such feelings among children is not explained in the pilot study since I was not present at the time.)

Ethical discussions concerning humans and animals thus seem to be dealt with as separate discourses in this school and discussed in separate sessions or contexts. My pilot study experiences pointed to the importance of including student perspectives and student voices during the research process as well as to the importance of combining a diversity of research approaches in order to get an idea of how human-animal related values are mediated in school.

Chapter 7

Methodological considerations

My field study (starting with the pilot study in January, 2003) has been carried out in two main phases. The first phase, the interviews, took place between September and November, 2003 (with one follow-up telephone interview in March, 2004). The second phase, the ethnographic study (including participant observation studies, analyses of policy documents, learning materials and other artefacts in my field schools, and informal interviews and discussions with students and teachers), took place between March and December, 2004.

The research process has not followed a strict plan. The process has developed and changed over time and has been adjusted to new conditions arising in my encounters with "the field". The open, explorative character of my research objectives - i.e. investigating the social processes and meaning-making practices by which human-animal relations are constituted in school - has facilitated a flexible approach to my investigation. Working with qualitative data seemed appropriate to my study, since the use of surveys or other tools for producing quantitative data would not have allowed for the complex, critical interpretative approach necessary for investigating my research questions. A consequence of this methodological choice is that the generalizability of my findings is very limited. The results of my study cannot automatically be applied to schools or classrooms outside the immediate contexts I have researched.

The methodological choices I have arrived at are not the results of careful calculations of benefits and drawbacks of one method compared with another prior to beginning the field study. They should rather be seen as part of the flexible character of the research process as it has developed in continuous contact with the field. The ethnographic method, for instance, was not part of my initial research plan, but a choice that developed partly from the experiences gained from my pilot study (consisting of interviews only). Although it must be acknowledged that other methodological choices might have generated "findings" of a different character, neither the data nor the results of the investigation are dependent solely on the methods and theoretical framework applied. They are also dependent on the subject position and background of the researcher. All these aspects form an inevitable part of the research process.

Research design and data construction

Given my research objectives and methodological approaches, my project came to involve four schools and initially three key informants in each school (one student, one teacher, and one school leader with whom semi-structured interviews were carried out). Although I wished to include a larger number of schools at the compulsory as well as the upper secondary education levels, I decided to delimit my study to the upper secondary level for reasons of access (some compulsory schools I contacted were reluctant to participate in the study) and data management. The small number of schools opened up the possibility of an ethnographic approach.

The combined methods of individual, semi-structured interviews and ethnographic approaches have provided me with a very rich and varied empirical material that has helped me reach both a broad and deep understanding of the phenomena I have investigated. The interviews gave me new ideas about certain aspects to focus on in my ethnographic study and helped structure this part of the investigation. Access to participant observation opportunities became easier, as some of the persons I interviewed made a variety of school activities available to me and gave valuable advice about colleagues I could contact. In some cases, I felt that teachers became more willing to communicate with me after I had shown interest in their subject area by participating in their classes.

Apart from interview transcripts and participant observation documentation, my empirical material consists of notes from informal interviews and discussions with students and school staff, teaching and learning materials of various sorts that were used in the schools I visited, syllabi and policy documents at school level and at the national level, and a variety of other artefacts provided by the schools, such as student assignments and tests, school newsletters, and instructions for excursions and study visits. Constructing manageable data from such a diverse collection of material has been a challenge and I will return to this problem in the sections that follow.

Ethical considerations

Research ethics have been a central concern throughout the research process, not least since there are emotional and personal dimensions attached to values related issues. Prior to and during my field study, I took various measures in order to follow the research ethics principles in humanistic-social scientific research developed by The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR). All school names and personal names are fabricated and

I have not used any other forms of personal data. I started all interviews with an introduction of myself, my research project and my reasons for conducting the study. I also talked about the purpose of the interview and asked whether it was alright for me to tape record it. (All the informants agreed.) I informed them about their right to withdraw from the interview (nobody did), about issues of confidentiality, how the results would be used and when I expected to finish my project. I informed them about confidentiality aspects, particularly when interviewing students, to let them know that I would not speak with their teachers about viewpoints expressed during our interview. I also asked all interviewees whether they wished to receive a written summary of the interview when I had transcribed it, and I emailed a summary to those who so wished. Finally, I promised to give a copy of the completed dissertation to each school that participated in the study.

During my ethnographic studies, there was no opportunity to discuss with each individual student prior to entering the classrooms and the students could not withdraw from the situation without being absent from class. Usually, the teacher announced my presence before starting the lesson and let me introduce myself briefly and I tried to compensate for the lack of information by making myself available and open to questions. At one of the schools, I had an opportunity to publish brief information about myself and my project, together with my contact details, in the school's internal newsletter. In this manner I was able to introduce myself to all students and staff at this school (also to those whom I did not meet personally). Occasionally, both teachers and students showed an interest in my intensive note taking and I tried to be as honest as possible about my research work. I did this without speaking in detail about my theoretical framework, however, out of a concern for influencing my informants' behavior towards me and thereby affecting my findings. Another ethical dilemma arose when one of my key informants put subtle pressure on me to influence the way I would write about his school. This situation made me realize that I had not been sufficiently clear about my research aims. Thereafter, I tried to include more of my critical ambitions in the discussions with informants, but still without going into detail.

Maintaining a balance between transparency and integrity was often difficult and an issue of concern that followed me during my fieldwork, especially after some time in the field when I started to develop closer relations with some informants. I will return to the dilemmas connected to the different roles of a researcher in the end of this chapter.

Selection of field schools and informants

The process of selecting field schools has been a complex one. My starting point was an ambition to select schools where human-animal related “events” were likely to be particularly present. Such events could include special animal-related school profiles, projects or courses; the use of learning materials in animal ethics; or cooperation with sponsors or other external actors with an “animal connection”.¹⁵ I also looked for some diversity among my field schools with regard to the study programs they offered, and within the schools with regard to the subject areas represented. This was important since, in my cross-curricular approach, I wished to investigate human-animal relations not only in the natural sciences but in other courses as well.

The most important tool for finding and selecting schools has been the Internet, which I used to familiarize myself with potential field schools and learn from the ways they chose to present themselves to future students. Another tool became available via the Ministry of Agriculture. In February, 2003, the Ministry distributed learning material entitled *Djuretik* (“Animal Ethics”) (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003) to upper secondary schools all over Sweden. In May, 2003, the Ministry arranged a seminar to which it invited over 100 students from schools that had been working with the material with the purpose of debating issues it had raised. I was granted permission to attend parts of the seminar for research purposes. At my request, I also received a list of participants at the seminar, which I then used in my school selection process. The material, “Animal Ethics”, has been a key document in my research.

The selection process provided four upper secondary schools, which I have called Ormskolan, Falkskolan, Bokskolan and Teknikskolan. At Ormskolan and Falkskolan, I visited vocational programs in animal care (with approximately 200 students at each school with female students being in the majority), designed to prepare students for professions in areas such as zoos, pet shops, wildlife management, veterinary clinics and so on. Bokskolan and Teknikskolan (with approximately 1,000 students each), however, did not have this animal care specialization. These schools focused on university preparatory programs in the humanities/social sciences and the natural science/technical sphere, respectively. My contacts with all four schools started with a school leader representative,

¹⁵ External actors could include companies or organizations representing financial or other interests in the animal industry sector. I included some of these actors in my school selection process by asking them about their cooperation activities with schools. My critical framework, which included analyzing rationales of animal use and exploitation in different societal spheres and how these rationales are justified or criticized in school, thus also influenced to some extent my selection criteria.

usually the principal, whom I asked for an interview. Teacher interviewees were selected either on basis of principal's suggestions or based on information provided by the schools' websites, with regard to the teacher's interest and/or experience in teaching issues concerning human-animal relations.¹⁶

After having contacted teacher interviewees at each school, I asked them to pick out a student for an interview as well. This strategy risks teacher bias by allowing teachers to select students who can be expected to express the "right" viewpoints or be particularly "verbally talented". At Falkskolan and Ormskolan this might have been the case,¹⁷ but at Teknikskolan the teacher told me that she had arranged a lottery among those of her students who were willing to be interviewed (9 persons), and the "winner" was selected. At Bokskolan I specifically asked for a male student, since my three previous student interviewees had been female. This limited the number of potential informants since a large majority of the students were female at this school.

Interviews

I conducted three semi-structured interviews in total at each of my four field schools. Interviews were carried out with four school leaders (3 male, 1 female), four teachers (2 male, 2 female), and four students (1 male, 3 female). Interviews with school leaders were with one exception carried out in their private offices, whereas interviews with teachers and students took place in empty seminar rooms or equivalent spaces at the schools. Each interview lasted for around one hour and was tape-recorded and transcribed in its entirety. In one case, I conducted a follow-up telephone interview a few months later with a student in order to learn about her experiences of a short trainee period at an animal research laboratory.

I have primarily followed Lantz (1993) and Kvale (1996) in the planning and design of my interviews. The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that all interview questions were arranged under three main themes (similar to my pilot study): 1) Values issues in the school; 2) Humans beings' relationship with animals (as a values issue in the school); and 3) The school's cooperation

¹⁶ I made special efforts to find social science teachers with this interest, which was not easy. Many teachers in the social sciences and humanities whom I spoke to tended to see animal issues as lying outside their subject area. During my last semester in the field, I found one philosophy and one social science teacher who offered me invaluable participant observation opportunities in their animal ethics classes. I did not, however, carry out any formal interviews with these two informants.

¹⁷ On the other hand I had the opportunity to carry out informal interviews and conversations with many other students at these two schools later on since they were the primary sites of my ethnographic study.

with external partners. The questions formulated under each theme were roughly similar at all three schools but adjusted in relation to the particular school's character and activities and whether the interviewee was a student, teacher or school leader. I also maintained enough flexibility to allow for informants to elaborate on issues that concerned them in particular. The main purpose of the interviews was to get an idea of different activities related to human-animal relations that actually *take place* in school, as well as in what contexts and how these activities are organized.

Since the focus of the interviews was human-animal relations and animal ethics, a potentially contentious and controversial issue, I designed my interview plan so that the discussion would begin with a general talk about the school and the informant's reflections on the school's activities and character. Thereafter, the interviews proceeded to values education issues in general, prior to more focused discussions about human-animal relations.¹⁸ I was also careful with my choice of wordings during the interviews, avoiding, for instance, the notion of "animal rights", since it has sometimes been attributed controversial connotations in Swedish public discourse. Another term I avoided was "sponsor", which is also a potentially loaded concept in Swedish formal education. Both terms were, however, used occasionally by the interviewees themselves.

During the interviews, I showed my informants the learning material "Animal Ethics" (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003) and asked them whether and how it was used in their schools. At the end of each interview, I also presented a list of names of animal-related external actors (companies and organizations) that sponsor or have entered into other forms of cooperation activities with the school sector, and asked the interviewees to tick on the list those actors they had encountered in their own school. The purpose of this approach was to try to capture dimensions of a potential hidden curriculum of animal issues that informants may have been unaware of, and in this manner some information was elicited from informants that did not surface during the actual interviews.

Doing ethnography in human-animal studies

Arluke and Sanders (1996) regard ethnographic studies of human-animal relations and interactions as breaking new academic ground, much like the work

¹⁸ This strategy worked as expected during most of the interviews, but a few extraordinarily involved informants in the animal caretaker programs started talking about human-animal relations almost immediately, relating most other values issues to this one.

of the University of Chicago fieldworkers in the 1920s and 1930s who studied groups outside conventional middle-class society. Arluke and Sanders describe the “unfamiliar worlds” for human-animal studies ethnographers as follows:

For ethnographers of human-animal relationships, our exotic tribes are pet owners, veterinarians, animal trainers, slaughterhouse workers, mounted policemen, and any other group that works with or cares for animals, and our “bush” is the pet store, circus, riding stable, and countless other settings where animals play a part. (Arluke & Sanders, 1996 pp. 18-19)

Arluke and Sanders (1996) see the ethnographic research method as having an enormous potential for providing insight into human-animal relations, especially considering the often emotionally charged or sensitive aspects that frequently accompany these relations. However, they also stress the importance of the fieldworker acknowledging and analyzing their own emotional involvement with animals encountered in the fieldwork settings (if applicable). Such emotions, whether positive or negative, can provide an important source of understanding of the nature of social relationships between humans and animals. Arluke gives an example from his own ethnographic fieldwork at animal research laboratories where his immersion in the daily activities of the lab sometimes involved highly objectifying behavior toward the animals and finally escalated to performing invasive animal experiments by himself. Although my own field studies did not entail any similar experience, on some occasions I did find myself in close physical contact with animals. These situations helped a lot to increase my understanding of the emotional responses among my student informants towards animal caretaker duties, but also served as a reminder of the anthropocentric focus of my own research work.

The critical ethnographic method

My ethnographic fieldwork approach relies largely on Beach (1997), but a number of other methodological resources (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Davies, 1999; May, 1997; Patton, 1987; Willis & Trondman, 2000) have also provided guidelines and inspiration in different phases of the research process. My investigation has involved a total of 88 days in “the field” between March and December, 2004, although these days are distributed disproportionately among my four field schools. The time spent at Falkskolan and Ormskolan together amounted to 83 days (52 + 31), with only five days at Bokskolan. At Teknikskolan, I did not carry out any participant observation studies at all (only interviews). During my field studies I tried to focus on courses that seemed to be of interest to my research area, especially courses where human-animal relations

or issues of animal ethics were explicitly discussed, such as courses in animal protection,¹⁹ philosophy, and social science. However, I also spent many hours in natural science related courses where the primary purpose was to teach “facts” about animals and how to care for them properly, as well as in courses in practical animal caretaking skills taking place at the animal facilities at Falkskolan and Ormskolan.

My ethnographic studies were not limited to the classrooms. I had several opportunities to participate in activities outside the school such as study visits to zoos and museums and even in a three-day long school excursion, where I spent time with my informants in all situations from early morning to late at night as a member of the group. These occasions provided invaluable field experience that complemented the more formal educational practices in the daily routines of schoolwork. Despite this variation in fieldwork experience, I found it difficult to determine when the limit of “theoretical saturation” was reached in my empirical material since although some “patterns” in my data finally seemed to recur, they still generated new potential insights and ideas to be pursued by further observations. The time for the final endpoint of my field studies was therefore decided more for practical reasons than out of any conviction that my empirical data had reached “saturation” or completion.

Note taking during participant observations took place as often as possible during actual observations. In more informal situations, however, when I felt that note taking would have been too conspicuous or obtrusive, I refrained from taking notes and tried instead to reconstruct my field experience as soon as possible afterwards. My field notes were then typed out, usually at the end of each day. Apart from field notes, each day of participant observations, informal interviews and discussions and other forms of interactions with students and school staff was documented in the form of a field log, a field diary and a research journal; each form having a specific purpose in the planning, pursuing and analyzing of the empirical material produced in the field (cf. Beach, 1997).

I often found note taking difficult since the verbal (and non-verbal) interactions I attempted to capture were sometimes confusing. In classrooms as well as in other situations, phrases were frequently half-finished, spoken in low voices, or spoken simultaneously with something else happening in the room or while another person was speaking. Many utterances risked escaping my

¹⁹ The animal protection course was a local course, compulsory for all first-year students at Falkskolan. In the written course syllabus, animal protection legislative issues and “ethical norms and values in animal keeping” (my translation) were in focus. This is the course on which I spent most time during my field study.

attention or being misinterpreted. To facilitate my ability to focus I developed a small number of “sensitizing concepts” (cf. Willis & Trondman, 2000) derived from my theoretical framework; concepts that changed over time as new ideas and interpretations emerged from my observations. (Some of these developed into the *key concepts* in chapter 5.) However, I also tried to maintain some flexibility by writing down not only what I found “noteworthy”, but also as much as possible of what happened around me to avoid imposing too much of my theoretical preconceptions onto my empirical material and to make efforts to include a variety of voices. Nevertheless, what makes my ethnographic approach “critical” is that it is largely developed in a dialogue with my critical theory framework, in addition to which the empirical materials it has generated are analyzed within this framework. This aspect will be developed in the following section.

Critical discourse analysis and data interpretation

Interview transcripts were initially coded in a system that I soon had to discard. New ideas about how to categorize data emerged continuously as I worked with my material and thus rendered my previous structuring concepts largely useless. As for my ethnographic field notes, my starting point for analysis was my research journal that I had kept on a continuous basis throughout the field study process, but also this documentation seemed to include numerous fallacies when I looked back at them at the end of the process. By working my way through all my material over and over again, I ended up with a different kind of system for organizing my data, involving the creation of folders (both electronic and paper-based) where I gathered all data (interview transcripts, ethnographic field notes, learning materials and other artefacts) under different thematic headings, which also constituted tentative dissertation chapters. Categorization problems such as data that seemed to fit under more than one heading could usually be solved later on as the process developed. This system made my data analyses more manageable, allowed for related materials to be analyzed together and facilitated seeing “patterns” and tendencies in my material as well as contradictory elements. My ethnographic research journal was used as a tool for “doublechecking” my findings later on in the writing process when I compared my analyses in each finished dissertation chapter with the analyses I carried out at an earlier phase during my fieldwork. As the work on my data proceeded, I was also able to “crosscheck” analyses across the thematically organized folders and reflect on related phenomena as well as on discrepancies. As a final step in the analyzing process, I compared the folders with each empirical chapter to see

whether the main points of my conclusions in each chapter were still in accordance with my empirical data. As a result of these readings, further additions (such as alternative interpretations of my analyses), revisions or clarifications were made in each chapter.

The organization and interpretation of data has thus been anything but a straightforward process carried out in accordance with a predetermined plan, but has developed together with my increasing familiarization with my material and as I gradually found out what “worked” in my research process. Principles for the selection of data finally presented in the study include “typical” situations that recurred during observations as well as situations that did not necessarily recur but that I still considered significant for the purpose of the study. Such situations could, for instance, accommodate interaction that I regarded as deviating from the usual social interaction norms of a particular classroom or other setting; interaction or events evoking strong emotional expressions or responses among the persons present; interaction where acts of dominance or resistance were clearly played out, etc. A primary intention was to attempt to capture a variety of meaning-making processes in human-animal relations within the realm of the “ordinary” daily activities in the schools as well as in other situations.

A parallel process of data interpretation involved a critical discourse analysis approach. Most of my empirical material was analyzed not only as part of the context in which it appeared or was used, but also in relation both to my other empirical and theoretical material and to a wider discourse of human-animal relations in society. Critical discourse analysis was therefore a helpful tool in the process of relating these different levels of analysis to each other. I have not followed any rigid “model” or method of critical discourse analysis, but have been inspired and guided by issues raised by above all Zeeman *et al.* (2002) and Carabine (2001). These include questions of what system of meaning the discourse or “text” represents and what this system of meaning seeks to achieve (i.e. its effects); who or what benefits from the discourse (and who or what does not); what voices or information have been silenced or marginalized; how power relations are constituted or reinforced; identification of discursive strategies and techniques as well as of resistances and counter-discourses. Despite the analytical tools I applied when working on my material, I sometimes found my critical ambitions more or less blinded by conventional, seemingly “commonsensical” ideas of the nature of human-animal relations and had to work through my data systematically in order to try to identify and reach beyond my own preconceptions.

Validity issues

I have briefly discussed above some measures I have taken to reduce “interviewer effects” and “observer effects” during fieldwork, how I have worked with a diverse and varied empirical material and how I have performed my data analyses. I have also raised problems connected with the issue of generalizability. What I call “data” in this investigation is thus highly contingent on my own preconceptions, ideas and subjective perspectives and how they have shaped the research process. These “data” represent no more than my attempts to reconstruct and understand phenomena far away from the actual context in which they appeared and may be seen as an inevitable distortion of “reality” (or at least only a partial and subjective understanding of it).

Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) suggest that “trustworthiness” may be a more appropriate term than “validity” in contexts of critical research that avoid making truth claims. Two criteria they identify for “critical trustworthiness” are “the credibility of portrayals of constructed realities” and the researcher’s learning from “comparisons of different contexts” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998 p. 288). Another dimension they point to is Patti Lather’s notion of *catalytic validity*, which refers to a reality-altering impact of the research process (from emancipatory perspectives). I find all three notions problematic, not least from the point of view of measurability, and acknowledge that the present study may not live up to all these criteria. Employing transparency in my descriptions of the different research phases, including choices made and pitfalls encountered along the way, is my primary attempt to make validity (or “trustworthiness”) judgements about my research possible. (See also chapter 5 for a discussion on validity issues in relation to the idea of the hidden curriculum.)

Fieldwork experiences, roles and dilemmas

No ethnographer can make herself “invisible” in the field (this may not even be desirable) and it quickly became clear to me that my presence in classrooms and in other locations affected what was happening around me and that I was affected by my surroundings as well. As I always took a seat among the students in the classroom, usually at the back of the room, some students started treating me as a fellow student, asking me whether I had taken a note of something they had missed in class or even if we could work together on an assignment. Teachers tended to see me either as a researcher, a student or a colleague, and I kept alternating between these different roles. In one class, when the teacher was going through the homework assignment he asked me the same questions as he

asked the other students,²⁰ but in other situations I was able to assist teachers with supervising written tests or with other minor administrative tasks. Teachers sometimes made an effort to make sure that I actually would get something out of my visits in their classrooms. Some asked me for feedback during or after lessons on their planning, their pedagogical approaches or more fact-related issues, and on one occasion I was even asked to represent one of my animal-profiled schools by taking a group of visitors from a Norwegian partner school to a nearby zoo. The principal happily introduced me to the group by calling me “our tame researcher”. To sum up, I was *very* far from being a “modest witness” (Haraway, 2004a) during my fieldwork.

The influence the researcher exerts on her fieldwork environment and on her findings are important issues, but equally important (but perhaps less frequently discussed) is how the *researcher* is influenced by her research process. In her dissertation on the epistemology, ethics and politics of animal experimentation, Forsman (1992) says that her investigation had affected her and she was not the same person at the end of the study as she was at the beginning:

My methodological neutrality has to a great extent brought a neutrality also in values. I have become so good at “understanding” everything, that there is a risk that I am *too* good at understanding – everything. By habituation I have come to think that most things “are not so bad”, and my ability to empathize with the research objects (animals or people) has diminished. /.../ This is not an unimportant phenomena in the field of research ethics. It is rarely discussed how a researcher is affected by his/her research. Often a stability and unimpressionability is presupposed in the researcher, the unmovable mover. That picture might not be so realistic. (Forsman, 1992 p. 25, my translation)

Although I do not share the same research experience as Forsman, I have encountered related dilemmas during my fieldwork. For me, these dilemmas have centered around the difficulties in keeping an analytical and critical focus while at the same time developing personal relations with informants and taking part in their daily routines for a long period of time. These relations could occasionally include teachers trusting me with personal concerns, which on my part could give rise to dilemmas concerning loyalty. Another “objectivity” dilemma was when I encountered education activities that either strongly resonated or collided with my own personal values. Handling these dilemmas has been one of the most difficult experiences of my research process and has definitely changed me. It made me struggle with many doubts about my “rights”

²⁰ This happened during a hunting lesson and my inability to deliver correct answers to the homework questions probably did not do much to increase my competence in the eyes of the teacher and my “fellow students”.

as a researcher to enter, observe, interpret and authoritatively analyze daily activities and interactions of a community that I, after all, do not belong to.



Chapter 8

Organization of human-animal education in the schools

The Swedish National Curriculum, Lpf 94 (Utbildningsdepartementet, 1994) does not mention human-animal relations in its guidelines for fundamental values that are to be conveyed to students in upper secondary school. Despite this lack of formal guidance, human-animal relations were taught in a variety of forms and contexts in the schools I visited. In the vocational animal caretaker programs, these issues more or less permeated most natural science or animal-related courses, although the values dimension was not always made explicit but conveyed as “facts”, as science, or as commonsense knowledge. Two exceptions were the animal protection course at Falkskolan and a course in endangered species conservation at Ormskolan, where exercises and discussions of values in human-animal relations were carried out. At Ormskolan, such sessions were also organized in a social science course for the first time during my field study.

In the more theoretically oriented schools, human-animal education did not seem to be provided on a regular basis, although their natural science courses used animal dissection exercises as a teaching and learning method and optional courses at these schools included horseback riding and hunting/wildlife management. A philosophy course at Bokskolan did, however, devote a few lessons to animal ethics issues, primarily oriented around the utilitarian philosophy of Peter Singer. Staff at both Teknikskolan and Bokskolan also informed me about previous or planned “thematic days” where issues related to animal ethics were included. The set-up of such special events typically involved debates between invited experts or stakeholders representing different perspectives on some dimension of human-animal relations in society. In addition to these formally organized sessions, teachers and school leaders informed me in interviews that human-animal issues could be brought up in the classroom as topics of discussion initiated by students, often triggered by current incidents of animal abuse highlighted by the media (interview transcripts September 15 and November 25, 2003). Interviews with students at these schools, however, did not bring up these occasions and according to them, human-animal relations is a largely neglected subject in school (interview

transcripts September 15 and November 4, 2003). In the animal caretaker program at Falkskolan, on the other hand, media reports were frequently referred to in the classrooms of animal oriented courses (field notes May 12, 2004).

There were also differences between schools and courses with respect to the learning materials used. In some cases, the material consisted of copied articles or other texts compiled by the teacher. The philosophy textbook used at Bokskolan included a few pages dealing with utilitarian and deep ecological orientation towards animal ethics (Persson, 2003), and the hunting/wildlife management course at the same school used a textbook entitled *Jägarskolan* ("The Hunter School") (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999), produced by the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management (an NGO that organizes Swedish hunters and represents their interests).

One learning material deserves special attention. In February 2003, the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture distributed new material entitled *Djuretik* ("Animal Ethics") to upper secondary schools all over the country. Being probably the first learning material of its kind in Sweden and produced by a national authority specifically for school students, the material has symbolic significance. The purpose of the material is, according to the Ministry, to "give a foundation for and inspire discussions on animal ethics" (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003 p. 32, my translation) in primarily social science, religion, philosophy, and biology. The material is divided into two parts. The first part consists of journalist-style accounts from a veterinary clinic, an animal ethics review committee, and a pig farm. The second part deals with different theoretical perspectives on animal ethics, including a number of discussion topics and questions addressed to the readers (i.e. the students). The last page is a summary of Swedish animal protection legislation. The material lacks both references and bibliography. The preface, written by the Minister of Agriculture, says that "When you read the material you will encounter questions, but no ready answers", but on the back cover the material is described as based "on the view of animals that Swedish animal welfare legislation rests on." (My translations.) A few of the discussion topics in the material are formulated as follows:

- ★ Most of us think that all human beings are of equal value, regardless of intelligence, appearance, race, status, etc. But are human beings of more value than animals?
- ★ It is possible to discuss animals' and humans' value in relation to each other. What could the consequences be if humans' value is regarded as higher than the animals' value – or the other way around? How does such a society look like?

- ★ Do animals have intrinsic value? Do you think that the different animals that are spoken about in this material have been given intrinsic value? Do all living beings, even, for instance, a mosquito or a worm, have intrinsic value?
- ★ Discuss different consequences, for both humans and animals, if the human being did not exercise the right [to kill animals].
- ★ Is it possible to be an animal friend and think that animals' needs are important, at the same time as one accepts that animals are bred, slaughtered, and eaten?

(Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003 pp. 25 + 29, my translation)

These questions construct animals and humans as separate categories and are oriented toward certain ethical theories but not others. Alternative views of human-animal relations as formulated by, for instance, ecofeminist and postcolonial theories that would encourage answers to go beyond utilitarian and rights frameworks and consider intersections of human and animal subordinating practices, are not present in the text. The discussion topics in part two of the material ask the reader to reflect on animal ethics issues, while the articles in part one mediate the message that there really are no serious problems of animal abuse to discuss in the Swedish context. I argue that the material frames human-animal relations as an isolated issue and effectively delimits what can be said and thought about it.

The material "Animal Ethics" was used (to varying degrees) to structure teaching, in particular in the animal protection course at Falkskolan and in a social science session at Ormskolan. In the latter case, "Animal Ethics" was the only material used in the seminar, and the students were asked to read it, select 10 questions that were formulated in the material and answer them in the form of a written report. During the classroom seminar some of the questions would be discussed.²¹ When interviewing teachers about what they thought of the material, they had critical comments based on, for instance, its political correctness and its lack of certain perspectives (interview transcripts October 24 and November 4, 2003; field notes November 30, 2004) whereas students who had used it generally seemed positive (interview transcript October 24, 2003; field notes November 30 and December 1, 2004). In spite of the teachers' critical views, the discussion questions suggested by the material were largely followed in those classes in which the material was used.

This account has attempted to give a brief summary of how human-animal education was formally organized in my field schools. The field study that

²¹ This approach to a social science seminar on animal ethics may be contrasted to another values related assignment in the same course, where students were asked to critically explore stereotypical representations of different categories of humans (women, men, immigrants, etc.) in the mass media.

will be described and analyzed in the remaining part of this dissertation should be read with the above as a background.

Part III

IDENTITY

will be described and analyzed as part of the discussion of the
background and context of the study.

Part III IDENTITY

Chapter 9

Human-animal identity production: A theoretical overview

Bickford (1997) characterizes “identity” as a term thick with meanings that has multiple sources, plays different kinds of political roles, and is related to power in different ways. Identities are also considered fluid, shifting, and can be continuously reworked (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2006) so that personal and collective identity may be defined *relationally* rather than in terms of a set of inherent characteristics (Olssen, 2004). As an example from human-animal relations, Birke, Bryld and Lykke (2004) argue that animality, like gender, is complexly constructed and should be seen as a doing or becoming, not an essence.

The following three chapters discuss how animals play an important role in the formation of our individual and collective identities and how they are also ascribed different (and sometimes contradictory) identities by humans. Chapter 10 deals with conceptualizations of animals in school and the attribution of identity to them. This analysis partly overlaps the analysis of the discourses of the animal body in part V, since, as Desmond (1999) notes, “[a]nimals’ identities as authentic representatives of the natural are ultimately presumed to reside in their bodies, in their physical difference from humans.” (p. 149) Animals, according to Desmond, are thus seen as fundamentally more embodied than humans, with their identities virtually “inscribed” onto their bodies. This has consequences for what capabilities animals are attributed:

Animals, as part of nature, are metonymic of the wild; they may possess social organization but are not seen as producing social organizations, cultures, or cultural products. Nor are those organizations seen as subject to historical change and development. (Desmond, 1999 p. 147)

When animals are attributed subjectivity as individuals, for instance, through “anthropomorphic” emphasis of their intelligence or when framed in other “humanized” terms, dimensions of power and control inherent in human-animal relations may be masked, as is often seen in animal shows in zoos or animal theme parks (Desmond, 1999; see also chapter 14). Paradoxically, as chapter 10

will suggest, anthropomorphism also operates to further reinscribe animals' "animality", their fundamental difference from humans.

The preoccupation with difference in discourses of animal identity is reflected by the role that animals play in the construction of *human* identity. The essentializing concept of "animality", as referred to by Clark (1997) in his analysis of Levinas and Derrida, does not necessarily describe animals' nature, but configures and consolidates "the exemplarity of the human" (Clark, 1997 p. 182). In Balibar's (2002) words:

Man's animality, animality within and against man – hence the systematic 'bestialization' of individuals and racialized human groups – is thus the means specific to theoretical racism for conceptualizing human historicity. /.../ The 'secret', the discovery of which it endlessly rehearses, is that of a humanity eternally leaving animality behind and eternally threatened with falling into the grasp of animality. (Balibar, 2002 p. 57)

As an example of "bestialization" or dehumanization of an oppressed group of humans, Cohen (1999) mentions African Americans in the history of slavery: "Ideological practices of marginalization defined black Africans as inferior, less than human, and animal-like, arguing that such status was signalled by their black skin." (p. 56) The power of the devaluation strategies of this group of people is achieved by a projection of presumed animal characteristics onto them, but the strategies rely on an already commonly accepted devalued status of animals for their effects.

In Cohen's (1999) analysis of marginalized groups, a collectively assigned identity may be stigmatized by a process of social construction that defines certain physical characteristics or behaviors as deficient or of less worth. Often motivated by economic profit, social positioning or political power, dominant groups have used ideologies, institutions and social relationships to create and solidify the idea that certain distinguishing characteristics signal "inherent" or "natural" inferiority in marginal groups (as in Cohen's example of African Americans above). The justifications for subjugation of such groups are achieved at institutional and individual levels by cultural images, bureaucratic practices and economic arrangements.

As Cohen (1999) remarks, marginalization often occurs systematically and efficiently, without observed intent or malice, and as part of the everyday social interactions that structure society: "Marginal groups are thus distinguished by the pervasive way in which ideologies or myths that explain, justify, and recreate their secondary position become institutionalized throughout society." (p. 43) In human-animal studies, it is widely acknowledged that the often institutionalized mechanisms that Cohen refers to produce marginalization and exploitation of

certain groups of humans *and* animals alike. Elder, Wolch and Emel (1998) remark that “[a]nimals and their bodies appear to be one site of struggle over the protection of national identity and the production of cultural difference.” (p. 72) To this analysis I would add that identity struggles over animality intersect not only with conceptions of ethnicity and race, but (as chapters 9-10 will discuss) with gender and class relations as well, motivating the inclusion of human-animal relations in the larger field of identity politics (i.e. the social and cultural arena in which notions of identity become contested [Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2006]).

I would say that the discourse of animality is one of the multidimensional *effects* that, according to Bickford (1997), identity has in the world. The concept of identity implies “categorical sameness”, and thus “inevitably produces its Other as the difference that makes the category possible” (p. 119). That is, the definition of a certain group’s identity or commonality becomes meaningful primarily when positioned in contrast with some other group or collective. Bickford sees this logic of identity as one of the forces shaping contemporary social orders. A related example will be highlighted in chapter 11, where the professional role of the animal caretaker is discussed.

While I will return to the discourse of animality in relation to human identity in later parts of this study, the three subsequent chapters (10-12) also focus on other effects of identity production emerging from teacher and student interaction in the interface between conceptualizations of humans and animals. While chapter 10 focuses on animal identities, chapters 11 and 12 deal with ways that animals may figure in the identity production by students and teachers in their professional roles.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. The second part outlines the procedures for handling discrepancies and errors, including the steps to be taken when a mistake is identified. The third part provides a detailed breakdown of the financial data, including a summary of income and expenses. The final part concludes with a statement of the total balance and a recommendation for future actions.

Chapter 10

Conceptualizing animals

Introduction

A significant element in our sense making of animals is the ways in which we order and categorize them. Ordering can take conceptual as well as physical/spatial forms, and the interplay between these forms influences the very constitution of human-animal relations (Philo & Wilbert, 2000). This chapter focuses primarily on *conceptual* ways of ascribing categories, values and identities to animals in the school environment and how these attributes interact with the ways animals are represented and understood.

The taxonomical system as a symbol of learning

A primary way of scientifically categorizing animals is by using the taxonomical system, which was an element that appeared as basic knowledge in many animal-related courses in my field study. In classificatory schemes, each thing is separated, identified, delimited and positioned in its own “proper” conceptual place relative to all other things (Philo & Wilbert, 2000). When the objects of classification are animals, the effects of classification fix them “in a series of abstract spaces /.../, which are cleaved apart from the messy time-space contexts, or concrete places, in which these animals actually live out their lives as beings in the world.” (Philo & Wilbert, 2000 pp. 6-7) Ritvo (1995) describes the production of classification systems as a powerful intellectual act, carried out by an elite of scientists. Both Ritvo (1995) and Foucault (1994) question the presumed scientific objectivity of classification processes:

Most bodies of material neither define their own boundaries nor provide their own indices, although this taxonomic neutrality may not be obvious to those who use them. Different people identify and structure such bodies of material in different ways, reflecting their various interests, needs, social contexts, and historical experiences. (Ritvo, 1995 p. 419)

When we establish a considered classification, when we say that a cat and a dog resemble each other less than two greyhounds do, even if both are tame or embalmed, even if both are frenzied, even if both have just broken the water

pitcher, what is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification with complete certainty? (Foucault, 1994 p. xix)

Similarly, Kappeler (1999) describes classification as a political project:

Classification is neither neutral, being put to political use only “thereafter,” nor is it objective: it is itself an act of social and political discrimination and thus the expression of the subjectivity of power. What is said to be a quality of the object is in fact a difference construed in relation to an implicit norm constituted in the classifying subject. (Kappeler, 1999 p. 338)

At Ormskolan and Falkskolan, the centrality of taxonomy when learning about animals was frequently emphasized. The reasons for this, as explained by teachers, were pragmatic: taxonomy is conceived of as part of the “language of science” that the students must learn in order to find relevant information about animals in literature. Another reason mentioned was that knowledge of taxonomy helps us see how different animal species are related to each other, so that students will be able to conclude how to take care of a particular animal of an unfamiliar species on the basis of its physical resemblance to other animals. Taxonomy is, above all, a way to make clear “what animal we are speaking about” in the classroom. The scheme Kingdom (*Rike*) – Phylum (*Stam*) – Class (*Klass*) – Order (*Ordning*) – Family (*Familj*) – Genus (*Släkte*) – Species (*Art*), in which the Latin or Swedish terms corresponding to particular animal species were inserted, was thus routinely presented to students (either as a full scheme or with a focus on some of its terms) in handouts and on the whiteboard and was also frequently included in various study assignments and tests. Students were encouraged to begin thinking at the most general level and then continue further down the scheme to arrive at the correct classification of the animal (field notes May 10, 2004). However, students were also presented with classification schemes based on other physically derived principles in order to, according to a teacher at Ormskolan, learn “as many ways as possible of naming animals” (field notes October 4, 2004).

The scientific classificatory schemes worked with in the classroom not only function as devices of learning “facts” about animals. They also structure a specific way of thinking about them, of deducing knowledge about a certain individual animal from the characteristics of a generic animal of the same sort. Furthermore, the structures imposed by classificatory schemes are presented as rigid, leaving little room for negotiation or critical inquiry. When filling in the blanks, there seems to be only one correct answer.

The schemes also demarcate boundaries that are not to be transcended. In my research journal of May 3, 2004, I recall an earlier occasion when the teacher Rebecka at Falkskolan tells her colleagues about one of her students who, when

he was given the task of filling in the appropriate terms in the classificatory scheme, inserted information on his *own* kinship relations. When the teacher intervened and her instructions were clarified to him, he showed that he was able to insert the “correct” animal data there as well. The rest of this chapter will show that human-animal boundary work in school sometimes encourages continuities between humans and animals, and sometimes emphasizes discontinuities, and animal classificatory schemes may be seen as one element in such boundary work. Furthermore, the schemes not only present systems of meaning demarcating the starting point for where scientific learning about animals necessarily begins (cf. Ritvo, 1995), they also become symbols of what ways of *thinking* about animals are considered to be “scientific”, and hence, legitimate knowledge (cf. Philo & Wilbert, 2000). In this sense, the schemes may be seen as symbolic carriers of a collected body of scientific expert knowledge about animals.

Animals and values

The formal classificatory schemes were not the only approach to categorizing animals in school. Parallel with this conventional form of learning “facts”, other processes of conceptualizing animals operated in formal instruction and informal encounters in and outside the classroom. One such process focused on the *value* ascribed to different animals. This issue was discussed particularly during animal ethics seminars in social science classes at Ormskolan and in the preceding written student assignments on animal ethics (both based on the material “Animal Ethics” [Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003]). In one of these discussion seminars, the topic of animal intelligence was brought up in relation to value:

One student says that it is a matter of fact that humans value intelligence, but another student remarks that value can be different: A pig is smarter than a guinea pig but I feel more sorry for a sick guinea pig because it is a pet. I think it is strange if we are to create a value table, he adds. The teacher asks him if he considers personal relations more important than intelligence. “I don’t know how to [sort it out]”, he replies. The student is supported by a classmate who says that it sounds as if we are guided by intelligence [levels], but we are in fact guided by other factors: how common [the animals] are in society, personal value in animals [pets], etc. The next speaker comments that we don’t want to get involved with cows and pigs because we eat them. We want them to have lower value so that we don’t need to have a bad conscience when [people] eat hamburgers. Her classmates laugh. “I think that it is like that”, she emphasizes. Another student adds to the discussion by talking about a farm she knows

about where the animals seem to be valued differently: the dog has a higher value than the cows and the pigs, who are food [animals] to us. The next speaker remarks that it is O.K. to be an animal friend and to eat meat, it has always been this way, and the animals do it the same way. But the process must be decent (the animals shouldn't suffer). The teacher intervenes: Believing that animals have less value than humans is a precondition for eating meat. It seems as if most people think it's O.K. that the human being has a higher value, but there are those who think that animals should have the same value as a human being. How do you think that a person like that reasons? One student remarks that it is possible to like animals and think they have a value even if you eat meat. (Excerpt from field notes December 1, 2004)

To the students above, the character of the relationship between human and animal affects the value the animal is ascribed. Sharing the same *lifeworld* as an animal means increased possibilities for attachment and hence involvement of other values than otherwise might be the case. As Max, a student at Bokskolan, put it in an interview with me, animals like dogs and horses "with whom humans sort of can see themselves in the same shared existence" are easier to relate to and will therefore be more highly valued (interview transcript November 4, 2003). In the case of "food animals", some emotional distance or detachment must be *created* that allows us to value these animals differently from, for instance, pets, so that we are able to kill and consume them. The classroom discussion referred to above is largely in line with ethnographic research results on farmer-"livestock" relations indicating that certain forms of detachment or similar emotion management processes tend to take place especially when farmers send their animals to slaughter (Falkengren, 2005; Wilkie, 2005). However, the field notes above also suggest that it is important to students to maintain a view that caring about animals is not incompatible with meat consumption habits.

In relation to the "shared lifeworld" perspective, the animal's *physical appearance*²² and *accessibility for cuddling* as well as its "wildness" seemed to be highly valued by many students. Ideally, these characteristics would be combined in the same animal. During a zoo visit, a student at Ormskolan tells her classmate about a person who had taken care of a baby leopard, trying to teach it its natural behavior. The caretaker and the leopard had been out in the savannah together. The leopard had kept its "wildness" while at the same time letting its caretaker

²² "Cuteness" was attributed to animals frequently and generously by the students in the animal caretaker programs and applied not only to furry, "cuddly" animals but also to other species (for instance, reptiles).

interact with it. The voice of the student telling the story conveyed emotions of both longing and fascination (field notes August 19, 2004). Opportunities to establish physical contact and interaction with a “wild” animal (especially those species denoted by teachers as “charismatic megacarnivores”) were often alluded to in zoo advertisements, and in the introduction to her written report on dolphins, a student at Falkskolan explains her choice of animal species as follows:

I want to talk about a wonderful animal, the dolphin. I chose dolphins partly because I think they are so fascinating. I have always been interested in them, but when I was on Bali I had an opportunity to pat them in the wild and that was the most awesome [experience] that ever happened to me. It was as if something burst [inside me] and everything became clear! I love dolphins. As soon as I see them on TV or on film I feel ready to cry. They really are the most WONDERFUL animal[s] [in the world]. (Quoted from student report, my translation)

In the written student assignments on animal ethics in the social science course at Ormskolan, one student added a different perspective – democracy – to the values discussion:

If we regard ourselves as having more value than the animals, our society would no longer be democratic. Democracy is about allowing everybody to think what they want, say what they want and write what they want. Also, in a democracy everybody [*illegible*] valuable, which I think also includes the animals. /.../ I don't believe in a society that favors a certain “group” and regards them as more valuable. (Quoted from student assignment, my translation)

This student attempted to place animal ethics in a context of a democratic organization of society. However, the teacher's written comments in the margin of the student's outline did not focus on her thoughts about the connection between democracy and animal ethics, but rather on questions familiar from the classroom discussions and the “Animal Ethics” material: “Do a human being and a worm have the same value? Is it O.K. to eat meat? Why do we kill an animal that is suffering, but not a human being?”

Although teachers would occasionally join students in their meaning-making about animals, they would usually keep their focus on quite different value-related aspects. Biological diversity, whether a (wild) animal species is regarded as “endangered” or not, and whether it occupies a particularly important niche in the ecosystem, seemed to be central dimensions for teachers in the animal caretaker program. One teacher at Ormskolan expressed this value principle as non-negotiable:

If you can't see that you must euthanize rabbits so that the ravens can get food, or that you must kill rats in order for the snakes to survive, as the snakes have a tremendously important niche out in the tropical rainforest, then you are not suited to take this education program. Then you should take some more time to mature. (Excerpt from interview transcript September 24, 2003)

Mechanomorphism, zoomorphism, and anthropomorphism

The language used to describe animals can illuminate how animals are conceptualized. This section deals with uses of metaphors and analogies in the description of animals in different learning situations.

Using machine metaphors in relation to animals can be traced back to a Cartesian legacy. Crist (2000) uses the term *mechanomorphism* to describe the technical vocabulary commonly used in classical ethological science,²³ leading to the epistemological representation of animals as “natural objects” (p. 89).²⁴ Mechanomorphic representations of animals are expressed in ethological writing by both terminology and grammatical constructions. They have the effect of bypassing (or even eradicating) idiosyncrasies, subjectivity and agency in animals and situating them in a fixed behavioral pattern of innate responses to causal stimuli. Crist (2000) argues that mechanomorphic representations can be both totalizing and deterministic. During my fieldwork, I encountered mechanomorphic expressions in ethology-oriented as well as animal protection classes, school excursions and textbook materials. In photocopied material on ethology distributed to the students at Ormskolan, the mechanomorphic language of classical ethology was used, as in this excerpt on “key stimulus”:

Fixed patterns of movement and composite behaviors of which fixed movement patterns are part are in general triggered by very simple stimuli. The trigger mechanism is thereby programmed in such a way so that it reacts to some or a few typical characteristics of the object that triggers a behavior. Such simple stimuli are called key stimuli, since they are thought of as “unlocking and triggering” behaviors, where each key fits only its own specific lock. (*Etologi*, p. 3, my translation)

²³ Crist (2000) refers to Konrad Lorenz and Nikolaas Tinbergen as the founders of classical ethology. Classical ethology may be contrasted to new approaches in ethological science, such as “deep ethology” (Bekoff, 2002), emphasizing the importance of the scientist caring about the animal and understanding his/her lifeworld and subjective experiences rather than assuming the role of the “objective” observer.

²⁴ See also Haraway's (2004e) cyborg theory for an alternative analysis of animal-machine hybridity and borderland identities.

In the above passage, external and innate “mechanisms” are agents of action. The animal itself is constructed as an inert object upon or through which forces act (cf. Crist, 2000).

In Crist’s (2000) analysis, “[t]he stimulus-response connection forms a conceptual home where more explicitly mechanical notions can reside.” (p. 96) Classical ethology discourse can thus be thought of as a gateway for animal-machine conceptualizations. In the school contexts I visited, one of the most common mechanomorphic terms used when referring to certain instincts or innate behavior of animals was “programming”, but more explicit animal-machine analogies were also expressed. During a visit with Falkskolan to a nature reserve, our guide at the bird observatory gave us a detailed account of the research work there. In the excerpt below he explains how the birds are caught:

The birds should neither be shocked nor injured, our guide informs us, but adds that they *can't* get shocked and have no thoughts about the future. He exemplifies this by watching TV and other human activities that birds are not able to perform. The students laugh. “The crow, of course, has no thoughts at all”, the guide continues, and shows with the help of a toy bird how it flies into the net. /.../ Our guide informs us that the birds are fantastic individuals who can convert fat to energy, “quite simply a flying chemistry lab. They change from glutton to aircraft in two, three days /.../ everything is programmed.” (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

The expression “flying chemistry labs” to denote birds, as articulated by the guide above, was substituted by similar wordings for other animal species in natural science textbook materials: “medical factories” (i.e. genetically manipulated sheep) (Andersson, 2003 p. 74), “bioreactors” and “molecule factories” (i.e. genetically manipulated farm animals) (Ljunggren *et al.*, 2003 p. 51 + 57). These conceptualizations may be seen as elements of a discursive practice that consolidates the technical-objectifying representations of animals already present in classical ethological discourse.

Contrasting with mechanomorphic articulations in school were repeated conceptual locations of animals in relation to humans, including both *anthropomorphic* and *zoomorphic* ideas.²⁵ At both Ormskolan and Falkskolan, teaching strategies in ethology related subject areas seemed to include the human

²⁵ The term anthropomorphism is generally used in a derogatory sense to denote (illegitimate) ways of ascribing human characteristics to animals. Here, I use the terms anthropomorphism and zoomorphism without derogatory connotations to analyze how teaching and learning about animals may be assisted by analogies to human experiences.

species as a point of reference, and these strategies generally focused on zoomorphic aspects: i.e. an emphasis on the human being as one among other animal species. At Falkskolan, the common origin of humans and other primates was emphasized in a basic zoology course,²⁶ and as part of an ethology course the students in another class were given group work assignments in *human* behavior (field notes April 14, 2004). At Ormskolan, zoomorphic conceptualizations were explicitly stipulated in an introductory ethology class, not only as an approach to learning ethological “facts” but also as the “correct” *way of thinking*:

“You should write like this”, says the teacher Robert, writing on the whiteboard:

Never humanize animal behavior, but animalize your own!!

“That means, look at yourselves as the human animal”, Robert clarifies. (Excerpt from field notes November 16, 2004)

This zoomorphic statement was a key message in the animal caretaker program at Ormskolan and was expected to be embraced by students without further discussion. It was also reproduced as a matter of fact by students in written social science assignments on animal ethics (in one case, with direct reference to the teacher Robert) and in an interview I carried out with a third-year student at the school.

Whereas zoomorphic ideas were encouraged or even expected, anthropomorphic expressions were often downplayed, modified or reformulated in the mechanomorphic terms of classical ethology. While rejection of anthropomorphism may have a practical purpose of preventing incorrect treatment of animals, there are more dimensions to this phenomenon. In the following passage from a lesson in animal protection at Falkskolan, students had been asked to work in small groups on one of the discussion questions in the material “Animal Ethics”, focusing on differences and similarities between humans and animals:

The teacher tells her students about experiments aiming to find out whether animals can feel empathy. “Can they?”, she asks. “Yes”, is heard in unison from the class. One student gives the example of a mother dog who will go to pick up her puppy if it is lying on its own. The teacher starts speaking about *hormones causing mothering behavior*. (Excerpt from field notes December 3, 2004; my emphasis)

²⁶ In one written assignment in this class, students were also asked to describe a physical characteristic that *distinguishes* humans from other primates (field notes April 27, 2004).

In her analysis of ethological writing, Crist (2000) suggests that there is a tension between the language of ethological science and vernacular, ordinary vocabulary based on different preconceptions of the connection between animal behavior and mental life. Crist proposes that in ethological language, different means of *monitoring* mental notions, such as on-the-spot translation of “subjective” language into “objective” expressions, are used in order to confirm that technical language “reveals how things really are as opposed to how they only appear to be” (Crist, 2000 p. 119). The example above from a classroom discussion on dog behavior shows a similar tension between the anthropomorphic language used by the student (likely derived from her experiences of dogs in her everyday life) and the mechanomorphic, “professional” linguistic displacement carried out by the teacher.

There were endorsed anthropomorphic conceptualizations of animals in school that emphasized precisely the *humanizing* of animals that otherwise was implicitly or explicitly to be avoided. During practical training in how to guide visitors in the school’s animal facilities, students at Ormskolan were encouraged to anthropomorphize animals, although they were not encouraged to do so in other situations (field notes October 8, 2004). Furthermore, many animals kept at both Ormskolan and Falkskolan had been given individual – often humanized – names, and a few animals at Ormskolan had even been attributed individual biographies, or life histories, that were displayed in written form in appropriate places adjacent to the animal cages or enclosures. According to Phillips (1994), biographies are devices to ascribe unique characteristics to individuals and to situate them in specific historical settings. The biographic narrative also endows coherent meaning to their lives, as well as temporal continuity or cohesiveness. This contrasts sharply with the “scientific” ethological vocabulary that effectively rejects these dimensions (cf. Crist, 2000). One of the animal biographies at Ormskolan belonged to a cat (cats were the only animals allowed to walk around freely on the premises), and another belonged to the ravens.²⁷ The biographies were detailed, individual narratives about the background and life experiences of these particular animals, which complemented the normal information signs containing species-specific facts (field notes September 14, 2004).

At Falkskolan, anthropomorphic tendencies were also articulated, primarily in wildlife films (see also chapter 16). A few films even seemed to have

²⁷ The ravens seemed to occupy a prominent position at Ormskolan. According to the teacher Robert, they constituted an unusual and successful breeding project aiming at the subsequent release of their offspring in the wild (interview transcript September 24, 2003). The “story” of the ravens was reproduced in both oral and written narrative accounts during class instruction, in a local newspaper, in an interview and, as mentioned, on the sign next to the ravens’ cage.

as their overarching *purpose* to blur species boundaries and establish the “humanized” character of certain animals. One motive seemed to be to convey a message of the need for the protection of certain animal species, as made clear by a film on the “bush meat” issue shown in an animal protection class (field notes April 14, 2004), but there were also other dimensions of meaning embedded in anthropomorphic messages. The following passage is from an *Animal Planet* film with simians, shown to the students in a basic zoology class:

The voice-over speaks about mental capacities in simians and makes a comparison with the development of a human child. /.../ The film shows a young child and an elderly man playing chess. We are told that simians don’t play chess, but perhaps they too can imagine how others think. (Excerpt from field notes April 26, 2004)

After repeated messages about the similarities of simians to humans, the film ends with a recasting of the anthropomorphic theme and finds a “unique” characteristic (apart from playing chess) that positions the human subject as distinct from animals:

“The difference between us and our [simian] kin is very small”, says the voice-over, referring to our genetic set-up. A zoo representative is heard on screen and says that the difference is about “different levels in different capacities” rather than something more absolute. He says that we humans perhaps care more about the past and the future than the simians do. The voice-over concludes by saying that to learn about the simians is to learn about *our* past. (Excerpt from field notes April 26, 2004)

Species boundaries are thus temporarily blurred but at the same time the arguments presented in favor of human-animal continuities are undermined. Another film sequence shown during an ethology class at Falkskolan, entitled *The Humanimal Bond*, also portrayed animals as possessing human-like qualities – with some reservation: “When I meet the gaze of a dolphin, I see something that is *almost* human” (field notes May 26, 2004, my emphasis). The subject status of humans is thus ultimately constructed as “higher” than that of other species even though in the end also this film states that the differences are not a question of kind, but of degree, and suggests that we should accept animals on their own terms: “We need a new way of relating to animals” (field notes May 26, 2004). There is still, however, a paradox present as anthropomorphic messages seem to rely on an implicit *consolidation* rather than a destabilization of species boundaries (cf. Desmond, 1999). If there were no boundaries to transgress, anthropomorphism would lose its meaning.

Conclusions

According to Arluke and Sanders (1996), the classification of animals (or humans) on biological, moral or social grounds makes it seem “natural” that not everyone or everything is regarded equally. Moreover, classificatory orders are perpetuated by systems of social control (Arluke & Sanders, 1996) of which the school may be seen as a part. In the school environment, parallel processes of animal categorization and conceptualization seem to operate and some are explicitly endorsed by formal instruction whereas others are less so. The emphasis on classification schemes in the animal caretaker program may provide for socialization into certain “scientific” views of animals as well as more practical motives such as an understanding of animals’ basic needs. The processes of ascribing *value* to animals can either be scientifically framed and motivated, or be located within a social context or within a realm of personal emotions, relations, and morality. I argue that formal, “fact”-based categorizations of animals also are structured by values although these are not explicitly articulated. The following two chapters 11 and 12 will further explore what may happen when different ways of making sense of animals collide in school.

There are contradictions and tensions surrounding different “morphisms”, or different ways of ascribing identity to animals with humans or machines as analogies, metaphors or reference points, and these issues were constantly negotiated in school during my field study. Anthropomorphism was probably the most contentious dimension. While anthropomorphism could be used as an argument for animal protection or for rethinking human-animal relations, it also seemed to do a paradoxical job of reasserting the human-animal boundary. Anthropomorphism attributes behaviors or characteristics to animals that are intrinsically coded as human, and Desmond (1999) sees this as a form of *mimicry* that reveals an unbridgeable gap between humans and animals rather than similarities between them. We can juxtapose Desmond’s analogy between anthropomorphism and racial assimilation with Bhabha’s (1994) analysis of (colonial) mimicry:²⁸

The magical fantasy of anthropomorphism is an extended instance of domination through incorporation /.../. Like the concept of racial assimilation, which is dependent on the idea of different social groupings

²⁸ The colonial analogy emerged metaphorically, but with different connotations, in the film *When Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry* shown in an ethology class at Falkskolan (see also chapter 16). The film ended with quoting the naturalist Henry Beston: “[The animals] are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other *nations*, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time /.../” (Beston, 1988 p. 25, my emphasis). (Field notes May 26, 2004)

called races, anthropomorphism makes the partial or temporary erasure of social difference its focus while retaining physical differences (between the category “animal” and the category “human”) as the ground of meaning. (Desmond, 1999 p. 210)

/.../ colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (Bhabha, 1994 p. 86, emphasis in original)

Despite their different contexts, anthropomorphic messages are, like Bhabha’s colonial mimicry, structured around indeterminacy and a “double articulation” (Bhabha, 1994 p. 86), producing (animal) subjects that are *almost human, but not quite*. Through their negotiation and renegotiation in school, they help keeping the species boundary intact. They are paradoxical (or *ironic*, to use Bhabha’s word) in that they ultimately reinscribe the same boundaries that they are challenging.

Chapter 11

Becoming a “professional” animal caretaker: Emotion management and other forms of socialization

Introduction

Socialization generally denotes the long process by which newborn individuals become adult members of their society, and formal education is seen as one agent of socialization (Shor, 1992). In line with Shor, I refer to socialization as an identity shaping process with the purpose of conforming the individual to the existing societal order, its culture and norm system. Shor also uses the term *desocialization* to refer to “questioning the social behaviors and experiences in school and daily life that make us into the people we are” (Shor, 1992 p. 114). By this he means “a critical rethinking of existing socialization” (p. 117) in the form of an educational counterculture. I want to add to Shor’s account that desocialization may be thought of as a form of *unlearning* previously received knowledge and can be put to use for more than counterhegemonic purposes. During my field study I found that the process of socialization into the animal caretaker profession that could be observed in school²⁹ frequently relied on *desocialization*, or *unlearning*, of students’ ways of making meaning of animals.

The practical training of handling animals, especially when the training periods were scheduled in the first or second year of study, offered specific insights into students’ meaning-making in their close encounters with animals *prior* to having fully adjusted to the expectations of their education. This chapter investigates how students’ conceptions of animals are expressed in and formed by direct encounters with them and how these expressions are handled by the school as part of the students’ socialization into the animal caretaker profession.

²⁹ Students’ professional identity as animal caretakers are formed over time during all phases of their vocational education and work experience, and the classroom observations presented in this study offer only a partial view of the socialization process.

The final section of the chapter also considers other elements in this socialization process.

Student-animal interaction

Practical training took place primarily in the schools' animal facilities and during periods of internship outside school (during which I was not present). The purpose of these exercises was to get hands-on experience of working with animals, but also to apply and deepen theoretical knowledge learned during classroom instruction. I followed primarily first-year students during their in-house exercises.

The most conspicuous feature of student-animal interaction was the emotive responses from students when handling animals. One of the most frequent expressions of affection was students' responsiveness toward bodily shapes and features of the animals, a phenomenon identified by Myers (1996) as one major parameter organizing child-animal interactions in his ethnographic study of preschoolers.³⁰ As in Myers's study, touching and petting animals was a much sought-after activity among the students at both Falkskolan and Ormskolan, also in situations which did not explicitly *require* physical handling of the animals (for tasks such as clipping claws).

At Falkskolan, the students were asked to cooperatively write a diary during their animal handling classes, specifying which animals they had been working with during the lesson. Diary entries did not only include statements about the animals' conditions, but here and there students had also added comments on whether they had cuddled the animals, and animals who would not let themselves be cuddled were described as "boring" (field notes May 25 and April 27, 2004). Touching and holding animals (including kissing, stroking, scratching, playing and talking "baby talk" to them) was commonplace and was also frequently accompanied by comments on the animal's physical appearance (its "cuteness") with a particular focus on details of the animal's body. The following observations were made during animal handling classes at Falkskolan and Ormskolan, respectively:

Today, several students picked up and carried animals around (guinea pigs, gerbils, rats) more or less continuously during the entire lesson. The students talk "baby talk" to them and call them "cute". Sometimes they focus on details of the animals' bodies: "Cute nostrils" (a budgerigar),

³⁰ Although my adolescent informants belonged to a different age group, Myers's (1996) analysis corresponds well with my findings on this point.

“cute belly” (a frog). A student who doesn’t manage to catch and pick up a gerbil says with disappointment, “No gerbils like me today”, and after a few moments, “No animals like me today”. A few of her classmates hold guinea pigs close to their bodies during almost the entire lesson. They comment on one of the guinea pigs: “She is more social [than the other]”, and “Then you feel more appreciated.” Another student exclaims that it is boring to be in the bird room. When I ask her why, she replies that you can’t cuddle birds; they are not social. (Excerpt from field notes April 27, 2004)

During break, two students stay for a while with the ferrets. One of the students picks up one of the ferrets, and then her classmate picks up the other. They hold the ferrets in their arms, caress them and repeat several times how cute they are. “Cute little legs”, says one of them and caresses the ferret’s legs. (Excerpt from field notes September 16, 2004)

Also nonverbal interaction could express affection, as when the first-year student Jens below is introduced to the animals kept at Ormskolan:

Jens picks up the birds’ feeding bowls and tries to make them eat from them. Then he opens the door to the cockatoo cage and touches one of the birds carefully with his finger. He touches the bird’s leg, beak, and wing. Then he moves on to the smaller parrots, trying to make one of them eat from his hand. Thereafter he goes back to the cockatoo and touches her again. He touches her beak and caresses her feet and claws. From a box full of feathers he picks up a long, red feather and touches it for a while, then returns to the cockatoo and scratches her head, with complete attention directed towards the bird. When she starts climbing on his body Jens gets a little bit scared, and the supervisor intervenes by letting the cockatoo climb over to his own body and then onto a thick rope in the bird’s cage. (Excerpt from field notes September 13, 2004)

Although affectionate responses could also include “playful” manipulation of the animal’s body or other slightly objectifying behavior, in most student-animal encounters, the animal “other” was related to as a subject with whom at least potential *relationships* could be formed. This is a far cry from the detached, mechanomorphic view of animals in classical ethology as described in chapter 10. With experience, however, students may undergo changes. Jeanette, who graduated from the animal caretaker program six years ago, describes emotional investments in animals as more or less futile:

You don’t get any response from animals, unless you bring them food, but that has nothing to do with emotional responses. To the animals it doesn’t matter who takes care of them, providing it is done correctly. It may be cozy having a guinea pig in your lap because it gives you a feeling

of warmth, but it could just as well be a warm cushion /.../ It is primarily the internship periods and the work experience that change one's view of animals. You don't project your own feelings onto animals to the same extent anymore. Probably it works in a similar manner for those who work with people. It turns more into technical issues. But some friends from the animal caretaker program have had problems getting over this. (Excerpt from field notes April 2, 2004)

Three years of vocational schooling and six years of work experience have resulted in a considerable difference between Jeanette and the new first-year students with regard to their view of animals and the possibilities of human-animal relationships.³¹ According to Jeanette's story, the process of becoming an animal caretaker includes transformations of not only cognitive, but also emotional dimensions. The following section will focus on what previous studies have labeled *emotion management strategies* (Smith & Kleinman, 1989; Solot & Arluke, 1997), which can be employed by the school as part of the socialization into the animal caretaker profession.

The analytic transformation of affection

Students encountered a variety of contradictory messages during their education concerning the level of "acceptability" of emotional bonding in their physical contact with the animals. Whereas schools themselves and/or zoos they worked with could appeal to affectionate dimensions in their public information material in order to attract students and/or visitors, the internal "professional" wisdom in the animal caretaker program accommodated slightly derogatory connotations to what was commonly referred to as "cuddling the animals". The following examples illustrate the contradictory messages of the "public" image, appealing to emotional aspects, and the backstage, "insider" view, focusing on scientific expertise with limited space for expressing emotions:

The [animal caretaker] education gives you a possibility to access professions where you can feel on a daily basis the happiness of the company of dogs. /.../ During your trainee weeks at a big zoo your close encounters with wild animals will give you knowledge and memories for life. /.../ [Falkskolan] makes it possible to realize your dreams of working with animals. (Quoted from information booklet from Falkskolan; my translation)

³¹ An animal caretaker who talked about her work during Falkskolan's study visit at a zoo, nevertheless emphasized the caretakers' close contact with the animals at her workplace as a highly valued aspect of her work (field notes June 1, 2004).

Many people think that all you do [here] is pet the animals, but the [study] pace here is tough. (Teacher at Falkskolan as quoted in a newspaper article about the school; my translation)

It is not only about caring for an animal, you must also be able to deal with what the animal needs /.../ and have knowledge about a lot of other things. All practical issues must work. It is not only about saying "Oh, how cute!" That is what you spend the least time doing. (Teacher at Ormskolan as quoted in a newspaper article about the school; my translation)

Caress a spider, pat a snake or tickle a ray. Mingle with the lemurs or stroll among all the animals of the rainforest. [Name of zoo] brings you into close contact with animals and nature. But no cuddling with crocodiles and cobras of course. (Quoted from zoo information leaflet; my translation)

At the "Farm" you get close to animals, [their] smell and sounds. /.../ You can also jump in the hay, crawl close to the pigs and pat rabbits. (Quoted from zoo information leaflet; my translation)

At the annual open house event at Ormskolan, students reproduced the "real" zoos' public invitation to make close physical contact with the animals in their information leaflets. However, the "internal" knowledge of proper relations between caretaker and animal was different and it was made clear to the students at this school that engaging in "cuddling" activities with the animals was professionally acceptable if justified by *practical* tasks. One such task was referred to by Robert, a teacher at Ormskolan, as "inspection". The message of "inspection" was often accompanied by an implicit or explicit expectation that students would *unlearn* a conception that physical contact with animals is engaged in for the pleasure of it:

We are watching a film from a zoo. The film shows a close-up of an animal caretaker with his face close to the face of a camel. It almost looks as if his own face is touching the camel's. Robert remarks that "to the uninitiated" it looks as if it is really cozy when the animal caretaker kisses the camel, but "to you as professionals it is inspection", not cozy. You are checking the animal's health. Robert writes on the whiteboard:

Inspection of the animals by close contact with them.

"It is *tremendously* important", he says /.../ The closer the contact the better it is, but the animals must also be allowed to live their wild life. (Excerpt from field notes October 18, 2004)

Robert turns the video on. The zoo film shows the caretakers' close interaction with dolphins. "The same inspection as we saw with the camels, we see here now", explains Robert. He continues by saying that patting and cuddling animals may appear to be very cozy to a viewer. Dealing with the animals should be a nice thing, but the purpose is to

check their health, such as the smell from their mouths. (Excerpt from field notes November 8, 2004)

Another zoo film shows the breeding of parrot babies. "Bart and his staff often play the role of a sensitive parent", says the voice-over. The film shows the caretaker with his face close to a macaw, saying "Oh, how beautiful you are!" The teacher Robert turns the video off and remarks with a firm voice: "Inspection." Then he alters his voice as if imitating somebody (a student?): "Oh, I want to be close to animals, live with animals, [and do] all this." He explains to his class that it is all about checking the animal's weight, whether it has reached sexual maturity and so on. /.../ You can have a cozy time with the animals for two seconds, Robert says, but the rest of the time it's about these other things. (Excerpt from field notes November 15, 2004)

In these examples, the teacher reconfigures the visions of human-animal intimacy that may have attracted many students to the animal caretaker program in the first place.³² This reconfiguration is achieved by transforming the interaction between caretaker and animal into an analytic event, described in the technical language of "inspection", whose primary purpose is rational rather than emotional. The strategy is underscored by the teacher's slightly derogatory imitation of the presumed affectionate behavior of a fictitious "non-professional" in the last example above. In line with Smith and Kleinman's (1989) study of emotion management strategies in medical school, the training of future animal caretakers may include norms of "affective neutrality" (p. 57), especially in relation to real or imagined physical contact with the animal body which often elicits particular emotional responses among students. Emotion management strategies may be explained by the intention to prevent incorrect treatment of animals; by the intention to prepare the students for a demanding working life where there is likely to be little time available for "cuddling" animals; or by a notion that emotional relations with animal individuals are not fully compatible with a scientific discourse that often values detached "objectivity".

During practical animal care training, emotion management strategies were applied to a lesser extent. Cuddling the animals appeared to be viewed as a more acceptable activity by the supervisors responsible for students' duties at the animal facilities (the supervisors themselves occasionally engaged in such activities), but also in these situations the practical reasons for close physical

³² One student at Ormskolan told me that many students in the program choose to become caretakers or assistants instead of veterinarians in order to have more contact with the animals (field notes August 19, 2004).

contact with the animals were often emphasized. Students at Ormskolan were encouraged to cuddle the animals for reasons such as stress reduction in animals prior to being handled, or just for the pleasure of it in the end of the day if they had completed their duties early. At Falkskolan, a teacher described her school's introductory animal handling course as a process of overcoming fear of certain animal species among some students (interview transcript October 24, 2003). Her description was supported by a second-year student who told me in an informal conversation that the practical experience of handling animals he had gained during his education had changed his view of both reptiles and rats (animal species that he had previously disliked but now wanted to keep as pets at home) (field notes June 3, 2004).

In theoretical classes, attempts at analytic transformation of students' affection were more obvious and ethology was used as a particularly effective tool for achieving this aim. By encouraging them to analyze their own behavior in ethological terms, students were led to control their own spontaneous feelings about animals. In this manner, ethological science itself was turned into an emotion management strategy (cf. Smith & Kleinman, 1989) and as a desocialization tool. The following observations were made at Ormskolan while watching a zoo film and during a lesson on animal instincts:

This film sequence is about artificial insemination of pandas. We are shown a successful example of a panda together with her baby. Delighted laughter is heard from the class. The teacher remarks that this is an "aw" animal, referring to the sound the students make when they see the pandas. He says that it is in the students' genes to not be able to resist the cuteness of animal or human babies with flat faces and domed foreheads. (Excerpt from field notes November 22, 2004)

"And also we humans are exposed to [key stimuli] all the time, but we don't realize it", says the teacher. /.../ We think that little Bambi is infinitely cuter with his flat face and domed forehead, he says, and continues that Disney uses diagrams to measure proportions that evoke feelings of cuteness. A student asks: "Why are we humans so obsessed with physical appearances /.../?" "It is a drive within us /.../" replies the teacher, and adds: "And now you are beginning to think the way that real animal caretakers and professionals should think." He turns on the video again. "Look at the upper parts of the nose and forehead", he says when the film shows an adult and a baby baboon. "And the laughter comes completely naturally", the teacher comments on the reactions of his students watching the baby baboon. I agree with you, he says. There is no doubt that we find one cuter than the other. (Excerpt from field notes November 23, 2004)

An ethology class at Falkskolan also encouraged students to think analytically about their own emotional responses to cuteness in animals:

“Why do we think that baby animals are cute?” asks the teacher. One student replies that there is a reason for it. We want to take care of every[one] who seems helpless. This also applies to humans in similar situations. /.../ The teacher says that she has thought about this [phenomenon]. No dog would approach a human baby, she says. Why do we humans become emotionally involved in species other than our own? /.../ What is the survival value to humans [that we find animals cute]? (Excerpt from field notes April 29, 2004)

Analytic transformation of affection into “scientific” ethological thinking was also applied in order to neutralize students’ tendencies to empathize with prey animals in predator-prey interrelations, as in these two observations during an ethology class at Ormskolan:

When we look at *one* animal, and its offspring, we think “I feel so sorry for it [when it is killed by another animal]”, says the teacher, imitating the sobbing voice and facial expression of a non-professional. He goes on: instead you should think that it’s good that some other animal gets food. (Excerpt from field notes November 30, 2004)

A film sequence shows a baby gazelle being chased by cheetahs. The students express empathy. The teacher comments on his students’ reactions: Yes, you start immediately [with your reactions]. It is remarkable. But you don’t feel at all sorry for the poor cheetah babies who will starve. /.../ “I am sorry, ladies and gentlemen, you are victims of ethology.” (Excerpt from field notes November 23, 2004)

Creation of social ties within the animal caretaker community

The transformation of affection into an analytic event is one form of socialization into the animal caretaker profession. Another form of socialization has to do with the significance and implications of becoming a “professional” and gaining access to a community of animal caretaker colleagues. At Ormskolan, it was made clear to the new first-year students from the first orientation day that being part of the program should be considered a privilege and that the mission of future animal caretakers is special, differing from and being more important than other professions:

The teacher Robert holds a brief introductory speech, emphasizing the students’ future responsibility for all living things on earth and the

transformation the students will go through from now on during their education. He makes an analogy with the fairytale about Cinderella, where people were transformed into pumpkins at midnight. He says that the school staff are proud. /.../ "You are the future elite in animal care in the world. Never forget that!" (Excerpt from field notes August 17, 2004)

In a basic zoo management class, the teacher dramatizes the same theme by depicting an apocalyptic future scenario:

Those people who have chosen to learn about cell phones, shipping and other things, will call from their cell phone to South America when the oxygen is disappearing from the air, asking if there is some [oxygen] left down there (there is not). In that situation they have no use for their knowledge, but the students from Ormskolan have. Robert says that they should feel that they are important and (jokingly) that they should demand respect from others around them. He also says that they must remember everything they learn. When Robert himself is not around anymore, they must remember everything he said, every word. (Excerpt from field notes September 27, 2004)

The excellence of the school and its students and their important task of "saving a threatened world" was continuously emphasized during classes at Ormskolan, instilling a sense of privilege and pride in students (cf. Smith & Kleinman, 1989), and also working as a social glue. Being part of a community of animal caretaker professionals means sharing certain views and experiences that set the animal caretaker profession apart from uninitiated "outsiders". This differentiation was expressed in various ways. One approach related closely to the strategy of analytic transformation of affection as described in the previous section. Here, the strategy is used to contrast the scientific skills the students will gain through their "inspection" of the animals with the ignorance of non-professionals:

You must know your animal so well that you can immediately see how it feels, by looking at only one detail in the animal's appearance or behavior, and other people will [be impressed and] wonder how you can see that. This is the way it will be, says Robert. (Excerpt from field notes November 15, 2004)

As a way of defining themselves as "professionals", students reproduced the messages that constructed their own learning context as "special" and their knowledge as "insider" knowledge in contrast to the general public. In a short information film on the animal caretaker program at Ormskolan, students in the program tell the viewer about their education and their personal interests:

The film shows a male student explaining that his interest in animals is not really about cuddling them. It is more of a scientific interest. /.../

Another student comments on the education program being hard work, saying that “it is not only about cuddling the animals, as some people may think”. (Excerpt from field notes November 22, 2004)

Students at both Ormskolan and Falkskolan explained in interviews and conversations with me how they perceived the views, knowledge and even lifestyles that they had gained during their animal caretaker education, contrasting this both with their previous life before entering the program as well as with their friends outside the program. Occasional clashes in understanding between the different “worlds” they and their friends represent were also mentioned. To these students, like the third-year student Carina below, the animal caretaker program has clearly engendered a sense of belonging to a privileged professional community that is inaccessible or even incomprehensible to others:

Helena: Do you think that the view you have of animals here [at Ormskolan] is sort of in accordance with [the view] you meet in the rest of society?

Carina: No. We learn so much more. /.../ Those [people] in society, [when] you hear other people speaking about [animals], /.../ they don't really know what it is they are talking *about*. We have gone in depth into everything. So we, we think a few steps further ahead. So it's not the same at all.

Helena: No. Do you often find yourself in discussions with people who don't really know what you are doing here?

Carina: Yes, usually, there are a lot of people who are interested in what we do when we work with animals here at the school and so on. And if somebody says something about some animal, and it sort of turns out completely wrong, because you yourself know more. Then you try to explain, and then it gets complicated because they don't understand, and then you try.../.../ Because there is such a big difference when you hear [something] from the outside. It is, yes, such screwy things can come, sort of, from the outside. What *they* think is very correct can be, well, really strange [*laughter*].

(Excerpt from interview transcript September 24, 2003)

A second way of affirming the social ties of the “in-group” was *joking* (cf. Smith & Kleinman, 1989). During my field study I found that certain forms of joking occurred both during formal instruction and in less formal situations involving teacher-student interaction such as during study visits. One approach to joking

was to accentuate the *hazards* that an animal caretaker may be exposed to as part of the profession. At Falkskolan, the story about a wolf named Kari who crushed the knee of a caretaker, who was trying to prevent the wolf from threatening visiting children at the zoo, was repeated at least twice by one of the teachers (field notes March 16 and June 1, 2004). His remark that the caretaker had almost been given a “punchcard” to the hospital because of her frequent visits to the hospital for her animal bites, gave the story a certain jargon.

Although teachers were often careful not to demonize animals potentially threatening to humans, or exaggerate the risks involved with encounters with such animals, telling adventurous stories was a way of emphasizing that the animal caretaker profession is not for everybody. The teacher John at Falkskolan devoted one lesson to telling his zoo management class about his experiences of shark research in the Bahamas; a story replete with dramatic episodes. He also showed the students pictures taken during his stay:

“I have another shark here that you must see. Here comes one of the most dangerous sharks in the world.” John explains how the shark is handled when marked with a data chip by one person holding the shark’s head and another holding its tail. John emphasizes again how careful you must be during the procedure and that only the most experienced [researchers] are allowed to hold the shark’s head, not just anybody. “So you have to do it quite quickly, because sharks get rather stressed”, John says. At the end of the lesson, students sitting beside me comment to each other that they also want to do this. (Excerpt from field notes May 27, 2004)

Guiding visitors at the animal facilities or the zoo was a typical situation where the animal caretaker could be exposed to unexpected hazards. During a guiding lesson at Ormskolan, the teacher describes in detail how once while guiding he was bitten by a large python, but tried to make a pedagogical point of the incident by letting the visitors look at the marks of the snake’s teeth on his hand (field notes October 1, 2004). One week later in the same class, the teacher encourages his students to joke about getting their bottoms bitten while standing with their backs against the animal cage during guiding (field notes October 8, 2004). In a similar vein, one of the supervisors made a joke during the introduction of new first-year students to the animal facilities: “It is no big deal if you get bitten, it is quite awesome being able to say later on that *I* have been bitten by a crocodile!” (field notes September 17, 2004). Clearly, a certain amount of exposure to animal attacks is a way of achieving social prestige in the animal caretaker group.

In an informal interview with Jeanette, a former student at Falkskolan, she reflected on the particular jargon developed among animal caretakers:

When you work as an animal caretaker you develop a certain humor that others may not be able to understand, and that may sound cruel and tough to outsiders. Probably all professions develop a certain jargon. I encountered it at all my trainee places. /.../ One example is the animal experimentation community, where there are mice called “popcorn”. You genetically modify mice by taking a gene away, and can then follow what happens to another gene. These mice tend more than other mice to be scared and jump when you try to pick them up. Another example is newborn mouse babies, dead or alive, which are used as food for other animals. These are called “bubblegum” (*bubbelgum*) or “pinkies” (*pinkisar*). (Excerpt from field notes April 2, 2004)

This jargon about mice was not restricted to the animal experimentation arena. It was repeated in the internal school newsletter at Falkskolan and also at Ormskolan, when a first-year student under staff supervision was assigned the task of giving a dead baby mouse to a bird spider. The supervisor explained that these mice are called “pinkies” (*pinkisar*) due to their pink color. When they start to develop fur they are called “fuzzies” (*fussisar*), and when they start to jump so that it gets difficult to catch them they are called “popcorn” (field notes September 16, 2004).

Joking (sometimes as part of potentially dangerous shared experiences), together with elevating the special knowledge and insights of the animal caretaker above other professions (and especially above the general public), are two elements in the formation of boundaries around the professional group identity in the animal caretaker program.

Conclusions

Patterns of spontaneous student-animal interaction in the early phases of animal caretaker training derive from experiences of and views of animals acquired by students as non-professionals, prior to their entering vocational school. Their ways of relating to animals at this time are still largely emotionally driven and may clash with expected “professional” behavior, which often relies on rationality and affective neutrality for its credibility.

The different dimensions of socialization described in this chapter – emotion management strategies and various ways of creating a feeling of “w-ness” by forming social ties within the group – work together to help students collectively define the value of shared experiences (real or imagined) within a

common frame of reference, and develop a sense of self as a professional animal caretaker from whom certain views and behaviors are expected, whereas others are considered less appropriate. In their study of medical school, Smith and Kleinman (1989) propose that the professional culture that informs teaching includes a hidden curriculum where not only skills and knowledge, but also emotive responses and ways of thinking become professionalized. The sense of privilege in becoming a "real" professional who knows how to take proper care of animals becomes a motivating force among students, but as animal caretaker novices, their immediate responses (often including affection, but in some cases also fear or repulsion) to the physical presence of animals may, at least at the beginning of their education, compete with the more rational approaches expected of them. Affectionate responses are not entirely discouraged by the school, but students are expected to learn how to control their own responses and this is part of a *desocialization* process that the socialization to the animal caretaker profession relies on (although the schools differed as to how much they focused on this aspect). This desocialization process may have pragmatic grounds such as allowing animals to keep their natural behavior and focusing attention on the animals' health condition rather than on their "cuteness", but it also produces ambiguities. The contrast between encouraging the general public to "cuddle" animals for the pleasure of it, compared to "backstage" messages of the primacy of scientific rationales, constitutes a double articulation of the legitimacy of such behavior and at the same time reinscribes the differences between the "professional" and the "uninitiated".

Chapter 12

Education for action and the teacher role

Introduction

How teachers view their assignments as educators of human-animal relations, and how they express these views in the classroom, were questions of particular interest to me during my field study. Chapters 10 and 11 outlined some general strategies for the “professionalization of emotions” in students (Smith & Kleinman, 1989) that largely work to consolidate and reproduce “rational”, detached and scientific human-animal relations conforming with a classical ethological view of animals. This chapter will focus on a radically different dimension of teaching human-animal relations: Teaching as a tool for *action* in order to challenge the status quo and change the position of animals in human society.

The concept of action has been identified as involving the two key components of intentionality and future realization of a goal (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2006). In the field of environmental education, Jensen and Schnack (1994) have interpreted action as activities addressing solutions to environmental problems that are being worked on in school, and decided on by those carrying out the action. Action *competence* may be defined as an ability to work for changes on the level of individual lifestyle, but also “to be able to collaborate with other people on changing collective conditions for everyday life” and to engage in “responsible actions and counter-actions for a more humane world” (Schnack, 1994 pp. 186 + 190). The idea of action competence is thus closely associated with student empowerment and involvement.

Linking critical pedagogy with environmental education, Fien (1994) emphasizes three key notions in what he terms “education *for* the environment”: critical thinking, values education (i.e. development of an environmental ethic), and political literacy (i.e. active participation in political systems of power and decision making). Instead of “political literacy”, Selby (1995) speaks in broader terms about “involvement literacy”, which he defines as follows:

[Involvement literacy] encompasses the exploration and evaluation of the range of avenues and strategies open to those who wish to effect change. It

calls for mature reflection upon the effectiveness, ethics, limitations, pitfalls and ramifications of different types of action and upon the rights and responsibilities of both the change agent and those who will be caught up in the change process. (Selby, 1995 p. 317)

To attempt to uncover some meanings that action competence in human-animal education may involve, I will begin by outlining teachers' own descriptions of their role as (critical) educators of animal-related issues and then review actual teaching approaches to action competence as observed in the classroom. Finally, I will include student voices to give their views as recipients of teaching for social change.

Teachers' views

The ideal of "neutrality"

My teacher informants differed significantly in the way they presented their approaches to their work, their subject areas, and their aims as educators. Whereas most teachers and school leaders introduced themselves to me by giving their educational background and professional experience, Gunilla, who teaches animal protection and animal health care related subjects at Falkskolan, also emphasized her animal activist background. However, she repeatedly expressed concern that her personal standpoints would influence her students and described the teaching strategies she has developed in order to avoid this:

You, you have such a huge responsibility, I thought so when I started working as a teacher, I felt that it was almost *frightening* how I, if I wanted to, could manipulate the students. As an adult role model but not mother or father, you have such an *enormous* influence. It was actually *frightening*, you become like an idol, whether you want to or not. And... from this I have learnt to be very careful about saying what I think. [*Inaudible*] waiting for them, in a way. Because, otherwise they will sort of think the way I do. And that is *especially* in the course Animal protection that I have, because it evokes *enormous* feelings. /.../ And then I have to be very neutral. Because I think what I think, I usually joke, not in front of them [the students], but had I been 18 years old today I would have been a real... animal rights activist. And having a background like that, I am a vegetarian and *all* these things, but if I were to say that in my first lesson, then everybody would be the same. So, it is such a big responsibility to be a teacher, so you understand, for every year that passes, you understand the breadth of it. Even if I *think* that one should be personal. One should dare to express one's view, but be *incredibly* careful to stress that "This is only *my* point of view, and this, this is what society says", and show them

different perspectives all the time. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Based on her teaching experience, Gunilla has found ways of balancing the conflict she feels between her personal standpoints, which (in her view) deviate from dominant human-animal discourses in society, and the requirement to maintain a “neutral” position in the classroom. One strategy is to show the students “different perspectives”:

Whatever issue we are discussing, if we are talking about hunting or we are talking about breeding cows in order to eat them, if I *am* a farmer living in the countryside or if I live in the city and never have been in the countryside, you twist and turn the issue *all* the time, in all subjects, and must see it from everybody’s perspective. And *that* is so good for them [the students], as they are so used to seeing black or white, black or white, at their age. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Gunilla encourages her students to valorize arguments and materials from different animal-related stakeholders in society in order to arrive at independent standpoints, but still feels concerned that her articulation of her own personal views on human-animal relations in the classroom poses a potential indoctrination problem in her role as a teacher. She has solved this dilemma by refraining from giving her own view until the end of the class:

They [the students] read like a *barometer* how I appear to have taken a stance for thinking in this way or that way. Then at some point, at last of course I tell them my point of view, but that must come at the *end*, *my* personal, because I don’t have to *hide* it. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Sofie, one of Gunilla’s colleagues, also expressed the importance of showing the students different perspectives, making them realize that people have different views and values, and letting them discuss and justify their arguments. When I asked Sofie what she sees as most difficult when teaching about animal protection issues, she replied that the most difficult thing is to be neutral. Prior to each lesson she really tries to prepare herself by studying “both sides” of the issue she will deal with in class. Like Gunilla, Sofie says that many students see things in “black and white”, especially when it comes to animal issues. (Field notes November 15, 2004)

Some teachers, on the other hand, did not stress neutrality but were very clear about the school having a responsibility to convey certain views of human-animal relations. A teacher at Ormskolan explained that “We *must* educate disciples who will go out in the world and preach” (interview transcript

September 24, 2003). A teacher at Falkskolan stated that the school should “convey the view [of animals] that we want to prevail in our society” (interview transcript October 24, 2003). At Teknikskolan, one teacher explained that the school’s role regarding animal ethics is to show respect toward animals while also clarifying that “there is a difference between human beings and animals, what the difference is, and that they [the students] can see this difference.” (Interview transcript September 15, 2003).

Teaching action competence

While “neutrality” was a concern for teachers with a critical view of human-animal relations, there was still space for discussing action-oriented activities in their classrooms. Gunilla at Falkskolan frames her approach as part of her ambition to teach animal protection issues in a coherent way:

I think that it is important that they [the students] *understand* this too, how things hang together and that you as an individual [can say that], sort of, “I think like this, I have an opinion, I, I *can* take part in *influencing* this”.
(Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Gunilla discusses with her students what ways to choose if you want to do something for the animals. Her main point in these discussions is that there are many things to do that fall between the long process of political work (which, Gunilla remarks, may seem insurmountable to a 17-year-old) and making attacks. Gunilla says that her discussions with her students will have a domino effect since the students will discuss with their families and friends, who, in turn, will discuss with others. When she disseminates knowledge to her students about things important to know in one’s daily life, they may spread this knowledge to others. One example is that they may start buying organically produced products. (Field notes May 3, 2004)

At Teknikskolan and Bokskolan, the social science teachers Inga and Eric both refer to the students’ desire to influence society as an inspiration for their teaching approaches when the situation of animals in society is brought up in the classroom:

The issues often come up when we talk about the EU and EU politics... animal transport and BSE and... then there are lively discussions. It’s the same when animals are used in experiments. It comes up as societal issues in social science classes. And... then there are lively discussions. How to act in order to influence ... minks held in captivity and if you can release minks, what the consequences are. So there are lively discussions. /.../ At times, they [the students] can be very *upset* about this, do we *have* to treat [the animals] during *cosmetics* testing, and what do they *do* to the animals

[in] animal experiments. *Those* initiatives have been brought up. They want to discuss this and want to influence. (Excerpt from interview transcript September 15, 2003)

I speak about the societal perspective in the sense that you should know who, so to say, has responsibility for the issues. And also how it works to change... this. In order to sort of get some understanding that issues can be complex and difficult you must be able to shed light [?] on a discussion. /.../ You should know who has the responsibility for different issues that relate to animal rights. I usually say to the students, you must be able to find the right tree to bark up. (Excerpt from interview transcript November 4, 2003)

Gunilla at Falkskolan, however, has done more than just help her students "find the right tree to bark up". She has encouraged activism among her students, and in one of her classes, activism became a big issue. Students started disseminating flyers and posting protest lists, but Gunilla found that students who did not want to get involved in that way risked getting singled out by their classmates. Consequently, she has changed her approach and will not give her students concrete tools for taking action anymore since she is afraid that they may get the idea that activism is part of the course grading system. Instead, she refers students, who want to take action, to the NGO Animal Rights Sweden. Gunilla says that she has probably recruited a significant number of students to this organization. (Field notes April 14, 2004)

Another activity that Gunilla has stopped doing with her classes is taking them on study visits to places such as slaughterhouses. She explains the reasons for this as follows:

There is no reason to take students there because they are already upset and on their way to becoming vegetarians anyhow, if I didn't *curb* them. And If I took them to a slaughterhouse, there is *nobody* who would eat meat after that, at least not for a month, then maybe they will have forgotten. /.../ I feel that, my students who are so sensitive, we watch films, quite a lot of films in the course and I warn and warn prior to [watching], and even then they just sit like this, crying and are unable to eat. So, I changed my approach a lot. There is no reason to *show* things that produce *such* terrible reactions. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Still, Gunilla supports her students' activist initiatives wholeheartedly. She mentions as an example when students, after an animal protection lesson that dealt with the production of dog and cat fur products, wanted to go out in senior compulsory school classrooms and talk about this particular issue. But while

encouraging activism, she also emphasizes the value of taking even small steps in a positive direction. Trying to counterbalance the tendency she sees among students to see things in “black and white”, she wants to make them feel proud if they manage to make just *one* small change in their daily life (such as persuading their families to buy organically instead of conventionally produced milk). (Interview transcript October 24, 2003)

When asking her if she has ever had comments from her students’ parents regarding her way of teaching to achieve social change, Gunilla says that this has never happened. Before the start of the animal protection course, she usually informs the parents of the first-year students about the course, saying that it will stir up a lot of emotions, and that the parents should be prepared to hear their children’s critical comments (for instance, against fur coats) at the kitchen table. She also tells the parents that she presents facts and perspectives that we would otherwise choose not to see. (Interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Action competence in the classroom: The fur issue

In the animal protection classroom at Falkskolan, one example that was dealt with in an explicitly critical manner was the fur issue. A lesson on mink fur production alternated between the teacher Gunilla’s outline of facts about the species and its living conditions in the wild as opposed to in the fur farm, and critical comments and discussions on mink farming. The following observation occurs toward the end of the lesson when Gunilla’s outline has reached the slaughter methods at mink farms:

Gunilla says that slaughtering the minks is done with carbon dioxide. She writes on the whiteboard:

CARBON DIOXIDE 30 SEC → UNCONSCIOUS

5 MIN → DEAD

SEVERAL ANIMALS IN THE SAME BOX

/.../ “What do you think about the method of euthanization?”, asks Gunilla. One student replies that she thinks it is better to beat them to death. Gunilla says that she has seen such horrible films from Russia. There they did like this [Gunilla shows with gestures how to break the back of a mink over one’s knee]. She adds that there is also a way of killing foxes with electrodes. Gunilla continues by talking about the flaying of the animals: They hang them and peel off their pelts. Not very nice, she remarks. (Excerpt from field notes March 29, 2004)

After this outline, Gunilla discusses the consequences of releasing minks from farm captivity:

Gunilla writes on the whiteboard:

DO RELEASED MINKS SURVIVE OUTSIDE?

She says to her class that now when you know about the conditions at the farm, maybe you feel really motivated to release them [the minks]. What do you think about their chances outside? One student replies that they will start fighting with each other. Gunilla explains that minks may keep many of their instincts and refers to studies of released minks, but she also refers to a picture, which showed that a lot of released minks were run over by cars. She then writes a list of "+" and "-" on the whiteboard, indicating the pros and cons (from her perspective on the mink's life) of releasing minks. Then Gunilla summarizes the list by remarking that it is possible to say that the minks will find ways in the end to survive [outside], but what would they do if they had a choice? Do you think they are happier out there, despite having problems hunting for food? A weak "Yes" is heard from the class. (Excerpt from field notes March 29, 2004)

Another fur lesson focused not on breeding, but on the trapping of wild minks:

Gunilla draws a simple sketch on the whiteboard illustrating how a trapper might move in the forest, to show how long time it can take before the traps are emptied. She says that the trapped animals often get completely desperate in the meantime. She refers to films available at Animal Rights Sweden, but says that these are so horrid that she has stopped watching them. Gunilla talks about the injuries the animals get from the traps and that they could be stuck in a trap for several days. She also talks about the different ways in which the animals die in the traps. "Did you read about this guy who sawed his own arm off with a nail file?", she asks her students. One student remarks that it was a pocket knife, and another student describes in detail what happened. Some exclamations of disgust are heard from the rest of the class. Somebody recalls a similar incident that she has heard about. Gunilla encourages her students to imagine what it would feel like. Then she reads aloud from a text that trappers often kick or beat the animals to death in order to avoid damaging the pelts. She talks about a special type of trap in which the animals get stuck with a broken back or internal injuries. She draws a simple sketch of such a trap on the whiteboard. (Excerpt from field notes March 24, 2004)

Gunilla's teaching strategy above is to appeal to her students' empathy with the trapped animals, and she asks them to imagine how they would feel if they were in the animal's situation. But Gunilla also links this approach to possible ways of

taking action for the animals. The following classroom observation was made immediately following the above:

Gunilla says that fur collars on jackets in Sweden can be coyote fur. She asks her students if those of them who have fur jackets have read on the labels where they originate from. One student replies that the label says "coyote". Gunilla tells about when she visited a fashion shop and asked the personnel where the leather comes from, and that she would decide whether or not she would buy the jacket depending on the answer. The shop staff couldn't answer. They started making phone calls and finally came up with an answer they thought that Gunilla would accept, namely, that it would be more expensive if it were real coyote [?]. Gunilla says to her students that a tiny fur detail would not make a big difference in the price. She also says that other customers in the shop started to pay attention to the discussion and she felt that the staff just wanted her to leave. Gunilla says that often it is not possible to see where the leather comes from. (Excerpt from field notes March 24, 2004)

In the above lesson, Gunilla takes herself as an example of a possible method of critical consumer activism and in this way she tries to raise awareness among her students. In the discussion that followed, the focus is shifted from the fur product retailers to the trappers:

Gunilla: "Now we will talk about something called *trash animals*". She explains that "trash animals" are "wrong" animals that end up in the traps and says that these animals are often just left behind with their injuries. This applies also to endangered species, which is one reason for banning traps. Another reason is that traps are cruel. She asks her students to underline in their handout that many endangered species get stuck in the traps. One student asks if one is allowed to save a [trapped] animal that one finds in the forest. Gunilla replies that it is a difficult question. The trapper would get very angry if he saw you. (Excerpt from field notes March 24, 2004)

Before moving on to the next issue, Gunilla concludes the trapping discussion by saying that Animal Rights Sweden has a lot of information on the fur issue on their website. A written test at the end of the semester included questions about how animals react when trapped, stereotypical behavior in caged fur animals, how fur animals suffer in cages considering their natural needs, and how minks are slaughtered. Further underscoring the criticism against fur was a piece of news about the majority opinion against fur farms from Animal Rights Sweden's website, copied into the internal newsletter at Falkskolan at the end of the year.

At the other schools I visited, none of the lessons I observed dealt with action-oriented education similar to the lessons described above. One exception

was a class on endangered species at Ormskolan, during which commercial fishing was discussed:

The teacher Sten mentions that he will order a brochure from the WWF that gives information about what sorts of fish to avoid buying if you want to be a conscious consumer. Sten tells his students how he has tried to influence the school canteen on this issue. But he says that he does not want to impose anything on anybody, it is up to each and everyone to decide. He says that he himself likes cod very much. (Excerpt from field notes November 25, 2004)

Like Gunilla, Sten gives himself as an example of the possibility to take action to achieve change, but his statement also reflects a concern about “neutrality” as a teacher and his action-oriented approach is softened accordingly.

Action-oriented approaches in learning materials were difficult to find but in the “Economy” chapter of a social science textbook used at Falkskolan, a section on consumer issues deals with consumer power:

/.../ Do we have a possibility to influence the supply [of products] in the shops? Yes, for instance, by refraining from buying products that do not satisfy the demands we make.

If you think that the animals are not treated in a good way, you can simply stop buying meat and leather. If you do not like child labor, you can make a choice by refraining from buying clothes produced by the hands of children. If you want to care about the environment, you can make sure that you buy products produced in an environmentally friendly way and do not generate a lot of unnecessary waste.

If there are many people who actively make a choice, it will force the companies to improve the way animals are handled, work against child labor and take the environment into consideration. As a consumer you can use your money to gain power. Other possibilities are trying to influence other people, protesting against a certain company that you think is doing wrong and helping form public opinion (influencing the view of the public). /.../ (Cronlund, 2003 p. 118, my translation)

Generally, however, I found that explicit encouragement of action was rare in both classrooms and in learning materials. The animal protection course was an exception. The following section highlights perspectives of students who have participated in that course.

Students' views

How does it feel to be a student in a critical educator's classroom? This section will focus on the viewpoints of two students at Falkskolan: the second-year student Lisa and the first-year student Sara.

In an interview with Lisa, she let me know that the animal caretaker program, and especially the animal protection course, had made a big impact on her. When asked whether she has changed her view on animals since she had begun the program, she replied “*Very* much”. Previously, she had not been aware of environmental problems and the way animals are treated in society, but now things are different:

I didn’t know what it looked like in the rest of the world... endangered species, didn’t know what animal transportation looked like, and things like that. And that has *really* opened my eyes [*laughter*]. “We must buy this, we can’t buy that. I will *not* go to McDonald’s. I will... skip that”, and “Hey, daddy, don’t buy that sausage”, and things like that. I really have... learnt. /.../ (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Lisa explains that her involvement comes from a sense of personal responsibility, evoked by her education, and describes the powerful emotional impact of the animal protection course:

In some way, I feel that sometimes I am ashamed of being a human. It is also the course of nature, I think, in some way, that things have turned out like this, but it is really we [humans] who destroy. We invent new things all the time that destroy the environment and nature and animals. ... Just take the rainforest. It’s devastated every day. And that is just because of rich people, and with money comes power. And... then we have these few [people] who might feel that we have to do something about this. I feel myself that it is partly my responsibility. Because I’m so involved in this and think it’s so interesting and I feel that, what are we actually doing to the world? So it feels like my responsibility, that I have to go out talk about what it looks like. The animals’ situation, and what is devastated, what sort of wood should we buy and not buy, when I go shopping with Mum I sort of, “Mum, buy this, don’t buy that, that brand is good”. And I also want to go out into the world and work abroad, with animal rescue or be a volunteer or something. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

/.../ and sometimes I even feel like I want to cry, because when one sees something with one’s own eyes, then one understands. And then, actually, I feel *bad* because then I can’t *walk around* in a shop and have the nerve to, [*Lisa quoting herself*] “Right, look at all the tasty meat”. Then there is a feeling of disgust. Automatically, one starts reflecting. /.../ (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Lisa places particular emphasis on her relations with her family in her process of changed awareness. She has not only influenced her parents’ and neighbors’ consumption patterns in a more environmentally and animal friendly direction,

but has also educated school children about animal issues with the help of her mother, a compulsory school teacher:

I have got a few people, a few neighbors, to buy from a “KRAV”³³ farm that we know. So now a bus comes occasionally and delivers [food] to the neighbors. /.../

We have made contact with that farm. What happened was this, [*Lisa quoting herself*] “I will only eat meat from that farm, when I am at home”. I didn’t want any other meat. Then my parents said, “Yes, that is really good”. And I also talked to Mum. She works ... at an independent school and they got materials from Animal Rights Sweden, and so on. And [she] said, “Can’t you come some time and show the animals?” [*laughter*]. So I can influence *there*, Mum listens [to me]. She is involved too, so that is good. Some environmental theme day or whatever it was. It is quite good fun. Because then they listen, and can take my, *my* information that I have got from school. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

During my interview with Lisa, I understood that she had some bad experiences from her own compulsory school education, including bullying and harassment. She describes the different climate of her present school as a positive contrast. Lisa mentions that now she can even imagine going back to her previous school to inform them about animal issues:

I and my friends brought it up, but then it flopped, but at that time we thought that we had sort of enough competence to be able to, it felt as if I would be able to go back to my old school maybe. Going around to those [pupils] above all of one’s own age and the age below, to begin with, and show a film and give information. Tell them what it looks like today. Because I think that there are so many people who don’t know about animal ethics. And then... regulations and such things and... now there are so many people walking around in Canada Goose jackets. With some arctic fox attached to the collar. And then you can show a film, they might take it as an accusation, but ...no, they will just have to take it. (Excerpt from interview transcript October 24, 2003)

Lisa sees the idea of going to schools (and other workplaces) to give information as a way of building up public opinion (or, in her own words, to “bring more people along”). She also feels that she and her classmates have enough support from their present school to be able to do this.

Lisa describes certain issues as easier to act against than others. She feels that selling trophy hunting travel packages at travel agencies would be difficult to stop, whereas animal transport and the fur industry are problems that feel

³³ A Swedish label for organically produced food.

“closer” to her and thus possible to act against by convincing people around her to change their consumption patterns. Lisa describes her involvement as a way of achieving step-by-step improvements for animals in society rather than as an expression of far-reaching animal rights ideas, and is not in principle against the continued use of animals in areas such as hunting, meat production, and animal experimentation (interview transcript October 24, 2003).

Whereas Lisa attributes her involvement entirely to her education and especially the animal protection course, this is not the case with Sara. Sara is a first-year student at Lisa’s school and a vegan; and in contrast to Lisa, she has previous experiences from hanging around with radical, left wing activists when she began upper secondary school. With her friends, she has been sitting in animal rights cafés (according to Sara, places that do “ordinary” café business but have animal rights activities behind the scene) and Sara has learnt about animal issues from them. Her present classmates are not part of this context. Sara describes in detail her activist past involving taking part in masked demonstrations (the mask, she explained, would protect her from being identified by Nazis), but a personal conflict made her lose interest in these activities and she is not politically active anymore. (Field notes November 29, 2004)

Although Sara attributes everything she learned about animal issues to her friends outside school, she also thinks that the animal protection course has contributed by giving her an insight into what is behind the issues. She comments on the course as follows:

It feels good that the teacher dares to show the truth. She [the teacher] brings up very important issues. She is not entirely unbiased, but can bring up arguments from both sides. The teacher can “discuss with herself”. There is a free flow of thoughts. (Excerpt from field notes November 29, 2004)

Sara thinks that it is good when teachers do not take up a position. They should be unbiased and be able to “talk with themselves”. Sara hates it when people try to convert her. She feels that many teachers try to do that, try to brainwash her, saying that her viewpoint is wrong. Sara says that a few other students have similar experiences. She believes that the teachers feel that they are being accused and that their behavior is a way of protecting themselves.

In my informal interview with Sara, I asked her how she would organize a course in animal protection/animal ethics/animal rights if she were a teacher teaching a group of students of her own age. I expected her reply to somehow

reflect her activist past, but instead she stayed close to the ideals she had just described about the “unbiased” educator:

I would get information from the slaughter industry and from animal rights organizations and make students compare their materials and look at what is good and what is bad. They would make written reports on some animal, how it is treated in different situations such as at the slaughterhouse. Would the animal make it without the human being, and does it benefit society if we preserve them/eat them/don't eat them? I would also give the class a test by dividing it into two groups, with one group acting as if they were militant animal rights activists, and the other group arguing in favor of killing animals in, for instance, research. They would look for pros and cons on both sides, and have a discussion without trying to convert each other. I would also arrange study visits to slaughterhouses and animal experiment institutions, bring an animal rights organization to these places and start a discussion. The students should be allowed to think freely, *entirely* by themselves, in order to get them thinking about these things. The course should be a basis for the students arriving at whatever viewpoint they want. It shouldn't be a long course, perhaps some thematic arrangement for a month or so. If it is too long, it will get off track and the students will start thinking like their classmates. The entire thing should be like an exercise. After a while you become influenced, even if it [the course] is unbiased. (Excerpt from field notes November 29, 2004)

With this description of her ideal animal ethics course, Sara largely mirrors the teaching strategies outlined by her teacher Gunilla, seeking to show her students “different perspectives”, and, above all, to be unbiased and “neutral”. Although activism has apparently played a significant role in the development of Sara's knowledge about animal issues, she appears to draw a clear line between life in and outside school, which she sees as two different contexts.

The animal caretaker program may to some extent seek to foster action competence in students, but these ambitions risk being neutralized not only within the school, but above all afterwards when students enter their professions. Jeanette, who graduated from Lisa's and Sara's school six years ago, said in an interview that experiences from her trainee periods and working life have changed her view of animals. Just after graduation, she wanted to *act* on behalf of the animals and “rescue” them. These ideas in part disappeared during her trainee periods but above all as she gained work experience, and she no longer believes that animals are always better off in nature than in captivity (field notes April 2, 2004).

Conclusions and discussion

To the extent that it is possible to talk about action competence in human-animal education, action competence seems to be a complex discourse of teaching that is not free of tensions. Despite these tensions, the empirical materials presented in this chapter suggest that there is space for critical action-oriented education in some classrooms. This could include activities addressing changes on the level of individual lifestyle or on the level of societal/political structure as seen, for instance, in the teaching about fur production and consumption issues at Falkskolan. One aim seems to be to create synergy effects that will ultimately lead to positive changes in the lives of animals.

One source of concern in the critical human-animal education classroom is the ideal of "neutrality". Why is there such a focus on neutrality among teachers and students whose personal views on human-animal relations seem anything but neutral? In Sara's case, she has negative experiences of teachers trying to "convert" her to a way of thinking considered more acceptable in mainstream society, which may explain why she now appreciates what she calls "unbiased" teaching. Similarly, her teacher Gunilla has realized how easily students adopt their teacher's point of view and is thus careful about how she expresses her personal values in class. Fien (1994) discusses the ideological ends served by values pluralism and claims of neutrality and suggests that these ideals originate from a liberal orientation to education. The liberal position holds that students should be taught about the range of values and how to clarify their own position in relation to them, but fails to acknowledge that school curricula and practices reproduce dominant patterns of power and control in society. This position overlooks the hidden curriculum of the values that underlie the case for neutrality. I would like to add that it is primarily underrepresented discourses that risk being conceived of as "biased". While critical educators more or less seem to feel that they are expected not to favor any particular perspective, teachers representing more dominant discourses seem more likely to take the legitimacy of these discourses for granted, as well as the need to mediate them in the classroom. I also argue that the overarching norm of "neutrality" in human-animal education may possibly appropriate or absorb potentially counterhegemonic voices in school. It could be speculated that this may be another factor influencing Sara's "impartiality turn" in her view of animal protection education.

Fien (1994) argues that the study of controversial issues in environmental education is a political exercise and should be openly acknowledged as such, with teachers' and students' commitments being shared and critical thinking and

acting skills encouraged, but Shor (1992) points to a necessary delimitation: "Students cannot be commanded to take action and cannot be graded on their consciousness. They can only be presented with critical problems and invited to think and act on them." (p. 197) To this I would add the importance of situating the problems in a social and historical context since, without a critical analysis of the vested interests and forces behind the situation of animals in society, students are withheld central explanatory dimensions.

As for the fur issue that was critically explored at Falkskolan, the story of fur includes more than the suffering of the trapped or farmed animals. In Emberley's (1996, 1997) analysis, the story of fur also includes its production of symbolic, exchange and material value. Fur may be seen as a sexual and commodity fetish closely associated with a history of class, imperialist, and patriarchal oppression, and has been used as a visual representation of social difference and thereby the social production of identity. For instance, in medieval England prostitutes were forbidden by law to wear fur in order to differentiate them from "respectable women"; the pelts of finer, rare and smaller animals were reserved for the aristocracy. Further, Emberley argues that the use value of fur clothing works to situate the "primitive" as a stable, fixed and traditional condition of indigenous peoples and masks the transglobal circulation of capital in fur production.

With only parts of the fur story told, Selby's (1995) "involvement literacy" may not be fully developed in the classroom. The remaining chapters will address other stories of human-animal relations, as they are told in school, in a similar manner by expanding their scope and discussing their intersections with other social justice issues.

Conclusions and discussion (C9)

There are a number of reasons why the study of controversial issues in environmental education is a political process and should be openly acknowledged as such, with teachers' and students' consciousness being shaped and critical thinking and

action being encouraged. The study of controversial issues in environmental education is a political process and should be openly acknowledged as such, with teachers' and students' consciousness being shaped and critical thinking and action being encouraged.

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Part IV

GAZE

Part IV

GAYE

Chapter 13

Observing animals: A theoretical overview

Marvin (2005) argues that if we are to fully understand the complexities of human-animal relations, it is vital to carry out case studies on the highly differentiated ways in which people *look* at animals, since different ways of looking both imply and generate different relationships that are socially and culturally mediated in various ways. This introduction will outline some theoretical perspectives on looking at animals as a background and conceptual framework for the following chapters that attempt to provide three “case studies” as asked for by Marvin (2005). They deal with the “educational” visual encounters of animals at zoos, museums, on film, and in nature.

The act of viewing animals may seem to be an unproblematic and “natural” activity, especially in education situations, which often presuppose and emphasize visual perception. To take the case of the museum as an example, one rationale behind museum pedagogy in the 19th century was an idea that learning through visual impressions is more effective than learning by verbal means (especially for those without many years of schooling) (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001). Observing animals would, according to this logic, be a significant part of the process of learning about them,

There are, however, reasons for questioning the idea of observing animals as an “innocent” act. Visualizing practices may require arrangements involving direct coercion, harm or abuse of animals but may also include more subtle forms of violence. In either case, the act of viewing may assign and reinforce certain social positions to animals and contribute to legitimate their status as objects. For instance, reliance on sophisticated visualizing technologies and arrangements in areas such as zoo displays and wildlife filmmaking produces increasingly intimate exposures of animals’ daily lives and even their bodily interior (Chris, 2006; Willis, 1999), and in animal research laboratories, instruments of visualization that enhance and extend the limits of observation are used (Shapiro, 2002b). The varied “apparatuses of visual production” (Haraway, 1991 p. 195) not only structure relations between the observer and the observed; they can even blur the boundary between the instrument and the observed object (for instance, when a “lab animal” is chronically implanted with

an electrode connected to a machine that records and displays responses) (Shapiro, 2002b).

In an outline of visual culture, Hooper-Greenhill (2001) describes vision as a social practice raising questions such as what is made visible, who sees what, and how seeing is interrelated with knowing and power. The relationship between vision, knowledge and power has also been analyzed by Berger (1980), who notes that animals are always the observed and the objects of our knowledge, and that the knowledge we gain when observing animals becomes an index of our power over them, further separating us from them. The one who is observing is thus not part of the observed spectacle himself; he is the privileged eye, the bearer of reason, the author, the knower (Anderson, 1998). Desmond (1999) has framed this structure of power hierarchies implicit in viewing as a “politics of vision” (p. 155) that makes it possible to commodify, elaborate and sell public displays of how animal (and some categories of human) bodies look, what they do, and where they do it. These arrangements form the economical basis of animal tourism industries, but their negotiation, meaning, and particularities of enactment are also subject to contestation and change.

There are several parameters that structure our viewing of animals and one parameter concerns the situations or venues in which viewing takes place (Desmond, 1999). Desmond develops a framework of geographical categories, *in situ*, *in-fake-situ* and *out-of-situ*, as a tool for analyzing implications of what different settings imply about the corporeality of displayed animals.³⁴ These concepts (although not mutually exclusive or rigid) constitute three different nodes on a continuum of viewing experiences, from “real/natural” to “fake/artificial”, which each encode “specific notions of bodily authenticity,³⁵ display, and human/animal interaction within an elastic discourse of the natural.” (Desmond, 1999 p. 152) The concepts are thus based on varying degrees of human intervention in the exhibited behavior of the animals as well as on varying degrees of realism.

Although Desmond’s (1999) analyses of viewing processes primarily concern the animal tourism industries, I have found them to be also applicable to the educational context. If applying Desmond’s framework to the empirical material presented in this study, school excursions to wildlife observation sites (where animals are presumably “being themselves” and the spectators enter into

³⁴ I interpret this framework as a recasting of the terms *in situ* (in the animals’ natural biotopes) and *ex situ* (outside their natural biotopes).

³⁵ As markers of the “authentic” in this context, Desmond (1999) mentions notions of “noncommodifiability”, the physical presence of *certain* bodies but not others, and the impression of the unmediated encounter (pp. xix-xx).

the actual habitat of the animals) could be said to represent the *in situ* experience (i.e. the maximum end of this realism continuum). Visits to animal shows at zoos would represent the *out-of-situ* experience, where animals can be seen exhibiting behaviors that they (presumably) would not exhibit in the wild and where the performance and viewing spaces are clearly separated. The *in-fake-situ* category denotes a constructed setting where animals are exhibiting a *selection* of behaviors they (presumably) *do* exhibit in the wild, but not the full range of behaviors, and where spectators experience themselves “as if” they were part of the animals’ environment. An example of this setting is the animal theme park where entire animal habitats are reconstructed. Although I did not participate in any such visit during my field study, this category was continuously present, especially at Ormskolan, where this kind of park (such as Disney’s *Animal Kingdom*) was frequently referred to (in teacher instruction as well as in student assignments) as an ideal version of a zoo.³⁶

The production, crossing and maintenance of borders between the physical *spaces* assigned to humans and animals is thus a central element of analysis in Desmond’s (1999) continuum of viewing, but this border project also operates at the level of *identity*. According to Desmond, the animal’s bodily difference is the foundation from which our viewing of them gains meaning, and the simultaneous confusion and reinscription of species boundaries is central to this meaning-making process. Our visual “consumption of radical bodily difference” (Desmond, 1999 p. 144) can be anthropomorphically framed and recoded into similarities with human physical and behavioral traits, but this recoding ultimately functions to reassert the human-animal species boundary. As Desmond notes, anything the animal does eventually reaffirms our concept of it *as* an animal “other”, and the same logic may be applied when the objects of viewing are *human* “others” in, for instance, “exotic” tourist venues.

The crossing of barriers between “us” and “them” is a theme that recurs in Franklin’s (1999) analysis. He uses the term *the zoological gaze* to describe the act of viewing animals as a social, cultural, and historically specific process that has been organized and reorganized over time through changing institutions and social practices: from anthropocentric visual consumption of animals as vehicles for recreation and entertainment in the early 20th century to a more zoocentric or ecologicistic form of zoological gaze concerned with species and habitat preservation from the late 1960s. According to Franklin, we are now

³⁶ One site that seems to fall outside Desmond’s categories is the museum, where representations and reconstructions of animals are the objects of viewing; not animals as living beings. Watching wildlife films is another activity that is difficult to locate within Desmond’s continuum.

experiencing a postmodern zoological gaze by which the human-animal species barrier is repeatedly breached and confused by inviting feelings of intense involvement with the animals' world. During my own field studies, I could trace elements of all three forms of a zoological gaze as identified by Franklin, although not as representations of clearly demarcated historical periods but as simultaneously co-occurring and intertwined dimensions.

The zoological gaze not only shapes, frames and "fixes" animals in the act of viewing, but also expresses their more general objectification under the logic of dominant societal and cultural regimes. In these processes of "fixing" animals into given conceptions, Baker (2001) writes that human culture may render even animals, which are fully exposed to our view, effectively *invisible* – i.e. either seen as mere vehicles for the transmission of a symbolic meaning, or drained of any significance whatsoever (cf. Berger, 1980). The following chapters will explore these processes, as well as processes by which the visibility of animals is *reclaimed* in learning situations.

Viewing is not, however, always a static one-dimensional process and the ways we structure our viewing of animals do not necessarily imply that, as Berger (1980) argues, "[t]he fact that they can observe us has lost all significance." (p. 14) Nor do I fully agree with Haraway's (2004a) claim that to be the object of vision is to be evacuated of agency. Rather, I would suggest that the desire for interaction, to get a *response* from the animal observed, was a driving force in many students' visual involvement with animals during my field study. But, again referring to Desmond (1999), this desire for interspecies interaction may include an idea of both the crossing of a barrier and its simultaneous reassertion in order for the imagined intimacy to be meaningful.

Chapter 14

The fantastic world of the Lion King. Struggles for legitimacy in the school – zoo encounter

Introduction

The zoo has been described as a place where animals are gathered, confined and (re-) presented to the public. They are not there as individual, subjective beings but as signifiers of their species, and are assumed to display species-typical behavior (Anderson, 1998). They are also categorized and displayed in specific ways so as to produce certain pedagogical and entertainment-related outcomes (Willis, 1999). Many analyses of zoos from educational perspectives focus on what is perceived to be their educational benefits, assuming that they replicate a “true” representation of “nature”. The animals confined there are reduced to being educational instruments presenting themselves to the learner. As Milson (1990) has expressed it, zoos, aquariums, and museums can be “a living laboratory” for school children, and he describes the zoo as a place where children can observe “the physical characteristics, behavior, adaptations, habitats, diets, and locomotion methods of animals” (pp. 523-524):

Museums, zoos, and aquariums have always held great potential for teaching and learning. They are the perfect “tool” for supplementing classwork with artifacts, works of art, fossils, historic relics and collections of almost every kind. They show the “real thing,” instead of the written description that children receive in a textbook. (Milson, 1990 p. 521)

This view fails to take into consideration the multiple meanings performed by the zoo. The present chapter attempts to explore some of these meanings and problematize them as they emerge in school – zoo encounters.

Critical conceptualizations of the zoo

The zoo as a site of visual power arrangements

Anderson (1998) provides a perspective on the zoo that differs from Milson's (1990) above. According to Anderson (1998), zoos in the West historically evolved out of a desire to classify and control the non-human world. In her analysis, she relates the human-nature relations mirrored by the zoo to feminist and postcolonial critiques of Western science and philosophy. She does this by discussing the notion of a normative human identity constructed out of a rational (male) subject's perspective that sets itself up as "neutral", "objective" and "all-knowing", and an ultimately universal "human gaze" around which everything else revolves. Acampora (2005) even speaks about zoos as pornographic in their way of overexposing their subjects.³⁷ In the process of marketing and consumption of the animals' visibility, they are degraded or marginalized.

As suggested in the conceptual framework preceding this chapter, the act of viewing is not innocent, especially when institutionalized. Foucault (1995) compares Bentham's *Panopticon* – an architectural blueprint for the prison, providing an environment for ultimate surveillance – with the menagerie, a private collection of caged animals that formed the early version of the zoo:

At the center was an octagonal pavilion which, on the first floor, consisted of only a single room, the king's *salon*; on every side large windows looked out onto seven cages (the eighth side was reserved for the entrance), containing different species of animals. By Bentham's time, this menagerie had disappeared. But one finds in the programme of the Panopticon a similar concern with individualizing observation, with characterization and classification, with the analytical arrangement of space. The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power. (Foucault, 1995 p. 203)

The incorporating of power relations is, however, not limited to old-fashioned zoo architecture. Adorno (1974) claims that the replacement of bars by more invisible barriers such as water in zoo enclosures further emphasizes the denial of the liberation of the captives. Willis (1999) suggests that varied, innovative and naturalized contemporary zoo designs (which have been described by Mullan and Marvin [1999] as the "architecture of guilt") may *increase* the visual domination of the animal. Different vantage points at different levels around the

³⁷ I do not take Acampora's analogy to assume that there is a similarity between the subjective experiences of the objects of the zoo and the pornography industry.

enclosure enhance the possibility of viewing animals from multiple angles. Willis parallels this form of the zoological gaze with vivisection; an absolute objectification of the animal, further emphasized by the plate-glass viewing wall commonly used at the zoo to exhibit aquatic animals. The glass slices the animal's aquatic world and makes it seem as if it has been bisected:

An animal in the wild is integral with its surroundings, which it continuously engages through senses, instincts, and corporeal functions. To slice into an animal's environment, making its world a window for our gaze, enacts the surgery of invasion and domination. (Willis, 1999 p. 681)

The purpose, as Willis sees it, is to create new forms of illusionary human-animal intimacy, having the contradictory effect of emphasizing our absolute separation from the animals. This separation makes the *responses* we get from the animals important to our zoo visit experience, i.e. whether we can attract their attention and see them look back at us. However, our desire for the animal to return our look at the zoo often leads to disappointment since the animal is likely to ignore us (Rothfels, 2002b).

In Berger's (1980) analysis, an animal's disinterest in the human spectator is because we "*are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal*" (p. 22, emphasis in original). According to Berger, the marginalization of animals is a consequence of them having been made completely dependent on their keepers, the artificiality of the spaces they inhabit in the zoo, and their isolation. Our ritual of looking at animals in a zoo is important for our sense of self, but when we are denied acknowledgement by the animals, we may instead find *ourselves* isolated. The zoo then becomes a place of isolation for animals *as well as* for humans, quite contrary to its presumed function of acting as a site of encounter between the species. According to Rothfels (2002b), it is exactly the moment when the animal at the zoo actually *does* look back at us that has a destabilizing effect on the foundations of the zoo's existence as it forces us to reflect on the subjective experience of the animal.

The zoo as a colonial enterprise

Power relations enacted by the zoo extend beyond zookeepers' and zoo visitors' relations with the captive animals. Like other institutions, zoos may differ depending on the social and cultural context in which they are located, but Western zoos share a common legacy in the form of the old menageries. Hanson (2002) notes that wealth-accumulating civilizations have long been interested in collecting exotic animals, and the animal trade that zoos (as well as circuses, the pet trade, and laboratories) have relied on was a form of colonial commerce dependent on the structures set up by European powers in Africa and Asia. The

collection of animals displayed at zoos in the late 19th century was thus shaped less by their representativity across the taxonomic order, but by what was available for sale on the market (Hanson, 2002).

The capturing of animals also functioned as a *symbolic* representation of the conquest of distant, exotic lands, and the zoos were thus an endorsement of colonial power through a visual display of imperial reach (Berger, 1980; Davies, 2000). Rothfels's (2002b) historical investigation into Hagenbeck's Animal Park in Germany describes a business not only in international hunting, trade and exhibits of exotic species, but also in exhibits of indigenous people from all over the world, beginning in 1875 with "a family of Laplanders" (complete with a herd of reindeer and household belongings) brought to the park to complement the usual animal exhibits. This initiative was followed by exhibits of "Nubian", "Eskimo" and "Ceylonese" people.³⁸ The rationale for the people displays seems to have been similar to that for the display of exotic animals: to stimulate curiosity and fascination by means of a constructed encounter with "the other". Many of the menageries also exhibited humans with various sorts of deformations considered to deviate from the normative human appearance (Mullan & Marvin, 1999).

The zoo as a class marker

Hanson's (2002) account of the development of zoos in the United States points to another aspect of the zoo as not only a colonial marker of the intersection of species and ethnicity, but as a class marker as well. Zoos (and other parks) were previously intended to serve as a means to bring civilization to the working class and immigrant population and to educate them to middle-class standards of behavior, thereby counteracting the threats to moral and social order that followed urbanization. By taking the physical layout of suburbs and university campuses as a model for zoos in the 19th century United States, zoos were spatially, visually and socially set apart from popular entertainment and made into socializing arenas for bourgeois culture. Furthermore, the "natural settings" of zoos were less connected to the animals' natural habitats than to interpretations of the natural world in accordance with visual and literary conventions familiar to middle-class viewers. Zoos liked to enhance their status by comparing their animal collections with scientific and cultural institutions

³⁸ "People shows" still occur in zoos. In June, 2005, an entire African village with people, animals and handicrafts was exhibited at a zoo in Germany, and similar events took place in zoos in London, Bedfordshire and Detroit (Raji, 2005). In 2006, a debate arose about a Masai show in a Swedish zoo. According to the zoo, the Masai performers were hired to market safari trips to Kenya. (*Svenska Dagbladet* August 3, 2006)

such as museums³⁹ and distinguish themselves from circuses, although Hanson (2002) notes that there were in fact several overlaps between zoos and circuses since they often exchanged both animals and personnel and relied on the same animal dealers.

The commodified Ark

Contemporary zoos have made efforts to shake off their controversial legacy and create a new basis of justification for their existence. For this purpose, a Noah's Ark metaphor of biodiversity conservation is useful since it evokes an image of a sanctuary where different animal species live peacefully side by side, protected from the brutal realities they face in nature (Rothfels, 2002a). The Noah's Ark metaphor has also suited the vision of the zoo planners, since a breeding pair of every species would spare the zoo the future expense of buying animals (Hanson, 2002). The Ark metaphor in itself, however, is a too superficial way of understanding the contemporary zoo. In Anderson's (1998) analysis, zoos can be seen as a form of "hybrid spaces", located at the culture-nature interface – an arena in which humans have defined and struggled with their complex relationship to animals and nature. It is a place for the discursive construction of animal otherness and human identity, as well as for the situated material production of human-animal relations. Malamud (1998) offers a Marxist analysis of the latter:

The representations of animals in zoos and zoo stories are indebted to the machinations of capitalism and the agenda of capitalist hegemony. The energy – physical, financial, cultural – that goes into the acquisition of captive animals and the proliferation of zoos as institutions reflects the 'magnitude' that Greenblatt (following Marx) sees as an essential constituent, or force, of modern capitalist culture. (Malamud, 1998 p. 11)

Malamud sees zoos as embodying an accumulation of "capital" in the local culture, which is illustrated, for example, when a local zoo is described as an investment in the region where it is located. Contrary to the story of the zoo as a raiser of awareness of endangered species, the demands that the zoo be profitable contradict its self-declared aims: The animals are resituated "in a place that could hardly be further from nature – surrounded by parking lots, gift

³⁹ Hanson (2002) points to several similarities between zoos and museums. Museum-trained taxidermists influenced the early visual representation of natural settings in U.S. zoo displays; like museum specimens, zoo animals were intended to evoke an aesthetic appreciation of wildlife; and zoo animals used in art as models for painters should, like those in museum displays, be "ideal" specimens (i.e. healthy males; cf. Haraway, 2004b). Hanson also mentions that the public may apply their own interpretations and categories to zoo displays that may differ from the educational aims intended by zoo planners, which accords with Hooper-Greenhill's (2001) analysis of the museum (see chapter 15).

shops, and hot-dog stands.” (Malamud, 2003 p. B9) Despite this, zoos sell the idea of a vanishing “wilderness” as one of the last bastions of idealized authenticity - regardless of whether the animals exhibited have ever seen wilderness or not (Desmond, 1995).

School – zoo interfaces

McDonaldization and Disneyization

Ritzer (1998) describes the accelerating rationalization process, which society is undergoing, marked by efficiency, predictability, calculability and control, as the “McDonaldization process”. In order to understand specifically how Western zoos are affected by these changes, Beardsworth and Bryman (2001) use the term *Disneyization*.⁴⁰ In their definition, Disneyization is a parallel concept to McDonaldization in that the processes that are constitutive of both terms frequently co-occur in relation to particular institutional spheres. While McDonaldization denotes the spread of principles of the fast food restaurant to other sectors of society (Bryman, 1999), the term Disneyization is used to describe the impact of Disney theme park principles on sites such as the modern zoo. One characteristic of the Disneyization of a zoo is theming, and another is expanding commercialization, not only in terms of an increased range of merchandise for sale in the zoo, but also in terms of blurred boundaries between different spheres of consumption (as in the case of extensive shopping, dining and other entertainment facilities coexisting in a park). If Disneyization and McDonaldization are parallel, congruent, frequently co-occurring concepts, we could expect to find principles of both notions at work in zoos. As we shall see, many of the students I followed were exposed not only to this phenomenon of co-occurring *principles* of Disneyization and McDonaldization in their zoo management education, but also to the co-occurrence of the physical and/or symbolic presence of the actual *corporations* of Disney and McDonald’s.

Ormskolan and Falkskolan kept animals on the school premises for educational purposes. At Ormskolan, the animal facilities were designed with inspiration from a number of famous zoos worldwide to present an experience closely reminiscent of that of a “real” zoo.⁴¹ From an interview with one of the teachers, I understood that the Disney theme park Animal Kingdom in Florida

⁴⁰ Not to be confused with the term *Disneyfication*, pejoratively denoting the impact of a Disney approach (i.e. infantilization and vulgarization) to cultural products (Beardsworth & Bryman, 2001).

⁴¹ Adjacent to their animal building, Ormskolan had also built up an ecologically based environmental recycling system based on an “energy platform” which was a source of great pride at the school.

had been an important source of influence for the school (interview transcript September 24, 2003). Staff members had made study visits to the park, and one of them had even been employed there, and Animal Kingdom was sometimes referred to during lessons as a good example of various practical arrangements at a zoo. Also, when students were trained to guide visitors around, “infotainment” was a regularly occurring keyword, defined by the teacher as “knowledge and show business together” (field notes October 1, 2004).

In zoo management classes at Ormskolan, the importance of commercial thinking was frequently pointed out to the students. Commodification of the exhibited animals’ symbolic value by selling “zouvenirs” (field notes November 22, 2004) and arranging special events, performances, adventures and working with sponsors and the entertainment industry, were promoted as necessary ways of raising funds to run the zoo, consequently saving more animal species (one zoo information brochure, however, asserted that “no one should make money from conservation efforts”). But these arguments were frequently presented to the students in an ambivalent manner:

The teacher Karin says [to her class] that some people think it is terrible with lotteries and merry-go-rounds, that they don’t belong with animals. She says that it is a bit ambiguous, but that zoos have to attract people, and that a result may be that those who then go there [to the zoo] learn something they never could have imagined prior to [their visit]. (Excerpt from field notes October 1, 2004)

During my fieldwork at Ormskolan, the first-year students were assigned to develop their visions of an entire animal park structure as a school project. Many of the students’ fictitious zoos, as described in their written reports, reproduced a commercialized, capitalist logic, more or less commodifying the animals involved and the promise of intimate encounters with them.⁴² Hotels, conference sites, amusement parks, playgrounds, elephant rides, dolphin and seal shows, “zoovenir” shops, and various other activities designed to maximize the entertainment and economic exchange value of the animals were frequent elements. One report was given a title inspired by the Disney movie *The Lion King*, with characters from the movie re-created in various forms throughout the park. The animal species were selected to fit in with the Disney theme, and some individuals were named after the movie characters. Thus, the animals are not only exposed as being representative of their species, but are also reconstructed

⁴² I read seven student reports. In some of these I also found perspectives that challenged commodification, such as the fictitious zoo being primarily for the animals’ sake (not for humans), and being operated without any profit-making interest.

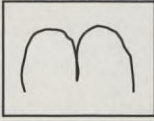
as movie stars and incorporated in the brand of a multinational corporation. The front page of the report showed a picture from the movie, together with the following text:

Welcome to the fantastic world of the Lion King, where you can see, among other things, lions, baboons, warthogs, slender-tailed meerkats, elephants and many other animals from the famous movie "The Lion King"! (Quoted from student report, my translation)

The schools I visited also went on study visits to various zoos as part of the regular curriculum. The students were given assignments to solve in the parks, such as classifying the animal species in the zoo, studying how the park is designed and managed, looking for stereotypical behaviors in the animals, and finding out how many conservation projects the park is participating in. At Ormskolan (whose zoo visit was one in a series of three; called "the golden zoo triangle" by one of the teachers), the students were informed that the zoo they were going to visit is an extremely good example of a zoo, whereas at Falkskolan, the students were not given any prior information regarding the quality of the zoos. At all three zoos we visited, the presence of commercial interests made itself felt before any animals were encountered. At two of the zoos, the logotypes of sponsoring companies, such as GB Glace (an ice cream producer) and McDonald's confronted the visitor inside the zoo entrance. The sponsors were also allocated space on the information signs next to the animal enclosures and/or in the free information leaflets available in the parks. At the third zoo, a gigantic, artificial clown figure was sitting on top of the entrance building with a Mickey Mouse statue in one hand, and an elephant statue in the other. On the lawn outside the entrance, there was a big Santa Claus statue. The three zoos were also equipped with conference centers, swimming pools, performance stages, amusement parks and/or playing areas with designs inspired by well-known cartoon figures and names such as "Phantom Land" (*Fantomenland*).

After one zoo visit, the students at Ormskolan were instructed how to design information signs at a zoo. As a good example, the teacher Robert mentions a Disney theme park where the signs have been decorated with Disney characters together with children's nursery rhymes. Robert stresses that this approach is very stimulating, and that information must be adjusted to the different age levels of the visitors. Furthermore the zoo's sponsors must be visible on the signs:

But it must not look like this, he says [Robert draws a big sign on the whiteboard entirely covered by McDonald's logotype]:



The name or logotype of the sponsor must not be too dominating. The purpose is not to have the visitors suddenly leave the park when they want to go and have a hamburger. A better way to do it is to write a line at the bottom of the sign, for instance, "Thank you, McDonald's, for your kindness /.../ You have been able to save this animal species". The way to do it is to incorporate the sponsor's name in a sentence. Robert writes on the whiteboard: "Sponsor's name included, please!!" He gives an example of a park that has all the sponsor names gathered together on a sign at the zoo entrance, but says that this doesn't work: people are not interested in stopping and reading it. /.../ (Excerpt from field notes October 11, 2004)

According to Beardsworth and Bryman (2001), the simultaneous presence of Disney and McDonald's in a zoo context is not a coincidence. One of the sponsors of the Disney theme park Animal Kingdom is McDonald's. Disney's and McDonald's joint rationale for doing business is thus projected onto the zoo concept. A paradoxical effect is that the zoo, claiming to save and preserve animals, closely cooperates with an enterprise (McDonald's) whose business idea rests on the mass exploitation of them (although the species concerned are different).

Boundary work in the contemporary zoo (1): The "exotic" and the "cartoonish"

The previous history of the zoo was not discussed in any class I visited during my study. Although some of the learning materials used acknowledged the history of the menageries as ethically problematic, and that the animals kept there were often in miserable condition, the "people shows" such as those described by Rothfels (2002b) were not mentioned. The intertwining of human and animal otherness in the zoo was, however, referred to by Jeanette, a former student at Falkskolan, during an informal interview:

If all zoos disappeared, there is a risk that we would go back to looking at deformed people in tents. Sometimes we need to see things that we can't understand, but that are not threatening. Maybe we need fair amounts of this [experience]. Zoos fulfill the function of letting us see something that is different. (Excerpt from field notes April 2, 2004)

While the zoo has to a large extent re-invented itself and washed away its controversial legacy, one of the zoos visited in this study displayed an exoticizing logic in its zoogeographic organization by grouping its animals in the park according to their continent of origin (Asia, Africa and South America), which was also marked by artefacts assumed to be significant for each continent and restaurants with exotically sounding names like “Bali”, “Jambo”, and “Pampas”. The Asian area, for instance, had a Buddha statue and an entrance in the shape of a pagoda. Next to the entrance to the African area, a sign greeted us with the message “Welcome to Africa”. Straw roofed huts accompanied the animal displays, ensuring that the geographical theme message did not go unnoticed. (Field notes August 19, 2004) According to Mullan and Marvin (1999), this classical way of displaying animals not only attempts to convey a sense of the “exotic” by stressing the curiosity value, but also carries colonial connotations. Human and animal otherness is thus blended in the physical design of the park. Their description of Buenos Aires Zoo analyzes these features:

/.../ animals on display were strange creatures from distant lands and that quality was emphasized by relating them to a series of images of the strange human societies which inhabited the same far-off places. Elements of human cultural styles became indicators of distance and difference and are used therefore as markers for the animals. (Mullan & Marvin, 1999 p. 50)

Another approach is to give the interior of the animal enclosure an anthropomorphic and presumed humorous design. Mullan and Marvin (1999) show such an example at a Danish mini-zoo, where rabbits are housed in a “toy” village. One of the zoos visited in this study had a similar display in their guinea pig enclosure. The guinea pig house was designed as a miniature replica of houses used for human activities. Such an exhibit not only anthropomorphizes the animals, it also trivializes and juvenilizes them; indeed, it makes them seem as cartoon-like as the Mickey Mouse decorating the entrance to the park. As Berger (1980) notes, zoo decors often resemble theatre props, making the animals appear like actors on a stage.

The zoological gaze is productive in the construction of the animals’ otherness at the zoo. Although some of the student projects at Ormskolan emphasized the importance of providing sheltered areas for the animals where they can withdraw from the public, there were also detailed ideas about how to provide unobstructed views of the animals from as many angles as possible, such as underwater tunnels to observe aquatic animals from below, cafes and conference rooms located with views of animals from above, staircases, and binoculars. Some ideas reminded one of the *Panopticon* structure, where the observed object cannot herself observe (Foucault, 1995):

If a female [feline] animal is going to have babies, we take her into a special enclosure within the large inner enclosure, where she can be on her own with the babies. The size of that area is 40x40 meters and it has plants and a little lake, which is not filled with water when the babies are there due to the drowning risk. The enclosure is equipped with hidden video cameras so that both the staff and the visitors, on a TV at the info center, can see what is happening with the mother and the babies. (Quoted from student report, my translation)

Boundary work in the contemporary zoo (2): The dolphin performance

Another dimension of animal otherness was embodied by the dolphin performance, compulsory in Falkskolan's zoo visit schedule and occupying a special place and status. In the show, the dolphins are personalized and given names and drawn into a sphere of intimacy and familiarity that conceptually distinguishes them from most other animals at the zoo:

First, we are shown a promotion film about the sponsors of the zoo (among others, Coca Cola and GB Glace) on a screen above the dolphin pool. The film goes on for quite a while. Thereafter a picture is projected onto the same screen showing free dolphins in the sea. Bengt, the teacher sitting next to me, turns to me and remarks that somehow they are not really the same *animals*, when you have seen them like that (in their natural habitat). I ask him what he thinks the difference is. He replies that it has to do with a feeling of freedom.

Then the dolphin trainers enter and introduce the dolphins by their personal names. The trainers describe them as social and intelligent animals, each of them having their own unique personality.

During the show, the dolphins are made to perform different tasks while background music is playing. "Dolphins are cuddly animals and it is important for them, just as it is for us, with closeness and tenderness. So the best moments we have are down in the water", explains one trainer. She "dances" with the dolphins, kisses them and rides across the pool standing upright on a dolphin's back. We are told that the basic premises for good cooperation between human and animal is respect, trust, and having fun together. After the show, some of the students approach their teacher John and ask him to help them so that they can pat the dolphins, or get a job in the show. (Excerpt from field notes June 1, 2004)

To many of the students, the dolphin show's promise of human-animal symbiosis seems to appear irresistible. A student I spoke to after the zoo visit viewed her chances of getting a job at the zoo – particularly the dolphin show – as an unachievable dream. The opportunity for close encounters with normally

“wild” animals (such as dolphins) appears to resonate deeply with the wishes and aspirations of the students. The emotive responses elicited by the performance build on an idea of shared sensory experiences and needs between humans and dolphins, manifested in the various acts during the show in an atmosphere of harmony and happiness.

The dolphin show experience can also be viewed in the light of Desmond’s (1995) observation of the orca whale performance at San Diego’s Sea World. She notes that the hierarchy remains clear during the show, although somewhat hidden by rhetorical assertions of mutuality and equality. The show is controlled and choreographed by humans, and the animals are disciplined to deliver a rigorously planned performance through cues almost invisible to the spectator’s eye. The story told by this performance is one with a veneer of interspecies intimacy and understanding, behind which the necessary relation of domination lies carefully concealed:

The whales are literally imported into our world, placed in a huge (beautiful) container, completely out-of-situ. The conditions of possibility for the show are that wild whales are captured, transported thousands of miles, confined, trained, and forced to work for a living. They make money /.../. To mask this reality, they are presented as willing partners, as part of our family, as equals from whom we have so much to learn, and their display is coded as art, as education, and as conservation. (Desmond, 1995 p. 230)

Although these two zoo contexts certainly are different in terms of scale, investment, and structure, their animal shows seem to exhibit similarities in meaning. The dolphin and whale performances both attempt to overcome animal otherness, but at the same time their existence paradoxically rests on the acknowledgment of this same otherness. As with the other animals at the zoo, the performing dolphins/whales are supposed to represent *all* animals of their species, but during the study visit with Falkskolan, the show fails to fully achieve this. The teacher Bengt sees them as representing only their captive counterparts, whereas free dolphins are viewed as almost qualitatively different animal beings. The physical constraint of confinement is forced not only onto the animals themselves, but also onto how they are perceived. For many of the students, however, the coercive relations in the dolphin performance are glossed over by its emotional impact.

Controlling life

After World War II, zoos could no longer rely on the wild animal trade as suppliers of their collections and turned to captive breeding. Breeding ensures continuous availability of animals to display as well as public sympathy when

zoos can show that they are part of the effort to save species rather than contributing to their extinction. In addition, zoo births are taken as evidence that the zoo gives the animals good care, and also draw crowds to the zoo (Hanson, 2002).⁴³ Therefore, at a zoo, not only animal behavior, but also their births and deaths, are processes under strict human control. This message was conveyed to the students in a number of ways. At Ormskolan, during the showing of a zoo film from the United States, the reproduction problems of giant pandas were in focus.⁴⁴ The artificial insemination of these animals was explained with reference to the same procedure cows are exposed to in the agriculture industry and celebrated as an indication of progress in zoological research:

The film shows the artificial insemination of a panda, and the teacher explains the process to the class. He parallels the process with artificial insemination of cows, remarking that it is very common. The voice-over then says that “the artificial insemination of wild animals is an exciting breakthrough” in zoological research. /.../ The film further explains that the goal is to return pandas to protected sites. “A triumph for zoology”, states the voice-over. The teacher turns off the video. (Excerpt from field notes November 22, 2004)

The rationale behind the modern version of the Ark is not, however, simply to accommodate “two of every kind being ushered safely into a better future world” (Rothfels, 2002a p. 217). Animal reproduction is also a planned procedure calculated to fit into the zoo’s marketing strategies:

The teacher goes on to speak about the time of the year when the zoo opens its gates to the public – which corresponds to the school’s open house event the students arrange in their third year. “It is important to see to it that you have [animal] babies when the zoo opens”, he remarks, and says that there is nothing [else] that attracts so much. The timing is important: “When should I put the animals together *in order* for their babies to be born *by* April 1?” (Excerpt from field notes November 8, 2004)

⁴³ In Desmond’s (1995, 1999) analysis, zoo animal babies also provide the “evidence” of captive animal happiness within a naturalized heterosexual family discourse whose celebration serves conservative political interests.

⁴⁴ In her analysis of the giant panda in zoos and in wildlife films, Chris (2006) attributes this animal “symbolic overdetermination” (p. 169) since it has been ascribed exceptional inaccessibility, rarity, popular appeal, and economic and political currency. Coupled with its delicate biological reproduction pattern, the species’ survival has been positioned as in need of interventions by Western scientists and their superior technology in a manner that Chris parallels with a form of reinterpreted Orientalism (Chris, 2006).

Another dimension of adjusting the number of animal individuals in the zoo is the killing⁴⁵ of “surplus” animals. After a class of detailed guiding instruction at Ormskolan, during which the teacher had emphasized that the students must make every effort to avoid speaking about animal deaths and euthanization when they guide visitors, it was time for practice at the school’s animal facilities. Next to the bird enclosure, the teacher repeated one of the important points:

“We will kill some of them [a fowl species]. They will be used as food for the ravens, you understand”, the teacher says, and continues: “But we will not mention that [during guiding]!” Laughter is heard from one of the students. About the geese the teacher says, “We will slaughter some here as well”. (Excerpt from field notes October 8, 2004)

To the outsider, the animal facilities should be presented as an idyllic scene where no human-inflicted (or other) animal deaths occur so the visitors have a positive experience of the site – even if this means disguising the truth of what actually happens to the animals kept there. The “real” zoo logic was to be silenced, remaining as internally shared knowledge between the students and staff. An informal interview with Jeanette, a former student of Falkskolan, further underscored the killing of “surplus” animals in zoos as a routine, but carefully concealed, aspect of the zoo reality:

The fact that the baby animals born at the zoo that can’t be taken care of are slaughtered, is not made known to the public. Jeanette refers to a joke that they [the baby animals] are consumed at the zoo employees’ parties. (Excerpt from field notes April 2, 2004)

This killing practice carries several layers of meaning. On the one hand, it may turn animal deaths into “just one more pedestrian detail, unchallenged and rendered unremarkable” (Malamud, 2003 p. B9).⁴⁶ On the other hand, the practice also seems to develop certain coping mechanisms among the animal caretakers who transform and incorporate it into an internal jargon, a signifier of “inside” expertise, defining a borderline between the professional in-group and an uninitiated general public. In the process, animals are reduced to entities that can be deemed too many, too few, or adjusted to an appropriate number, but their births and deaths are dealt with differently. Births are exploited in order to

⁴⁵ The appropriate, professional term would be “culling”; a euphemism implying that the killing of animals considered dispensable is a practice morally equivalent to the destruction of plants (Bostock, 1993).

⁴⁶ The killing practices were, however, challenged by a student at Ormskolan who raised a critical question of how the killing of animals can be allowed to happen at a zoo. The explanation she was given underscored the necessity of killing under certain circumstances (field notes November 25, 2004).

enhance the zoo's market value, and deaths are kept behind the scenes, away from the eye of the visitor whose illusion of the zoo as an idyllic Ark must at all times be kept intact.

Legitimation strategies and moments of resistance

A threefold basis of justification for keeping animals in captivity could be traced in the zoo rhetoric, and was also reproduced by the schools: species preservation (the Ark metaphor), research and education, and recreation. According to Hanson (2002), a rationale behind these goals is to imply that zoos have something to offer for everyone, which helps account for their lasting popularity. At Ormskolan, this narrative of preservation, research, education and recreation was conveyed to all new students from their first introduction day as *the* ethical rationale for keeping animals in captivity, in the school and at the zoo. The rationale was presented as self-evident and non-negotiable. The learning material used enforced the message, such as the following example from Falkskolan:

The animals keep their fingers crossed. Who will help the animals when things start to go bad? Yes, the zoos of the world! Endangered animals worth protecting have real friends in the zoos of today. Some of the animals would not exist on the earth at all if zoos had not existed. (*Bevare oss väl!*, p. 172, my translation)

Also zoos themselves emphasized their active involvement in species preservation projects. My interviews with students, however, did reveal some ethical concerns. Carina, a student in her third year at Ormskolan, expressed the following view:

Sure, I think it is *terrible* to keep animals in captivity. It is, it is not fun at all, I think. But for the purposes of research, being able to care for the animals outside and preserve them, it is important to learn about the animals and be able to, well, be able to teach as well. In that case it is good to have animals as we have them here at the school as well. So, I really don't think that it is *right* to have animals like that. But for educational purposes and research and to be able to care for the animals in nature, it is important, I think. (Excerpt from interview transcript September 24, 2003)

Carina's ambivalence toward keeping animals in captivity seems to emanate from an ethical conflict of interest between the captive individuals and the animals "in nature", who in the end are those who presumably will benefit. In a social science class on animal ethics with a group of second-year students from Carina's school, the teacher Anna raised the same issue:

Now, Anna wants to bring up a new question for discussion: Do they [the students] think that it is O.K. to keep reptiles and other such animals in a cage, whose natural environment is never possible to fully reconstruct, like they have at Ormskolan? One student replies with a defense of her school: We have them [the animals] for a purpose, she says, just as the zoos do. Our purpose is education. Anna: You will educate yourselves in order to make things better for other animals, therefore it is O.K. that they [the animals kept at school] suffer for a while? Anna gets the reply that they [the animals] are bred in a terrarium, and that they wouldn't survive outside. /.../ The next comment from the student group is: We would never keep animals ourselves as many other people do, because we learn how those animals ought to be kept. (Excerpt from field notes November 30, 2004)

When encouraged to reflect on an ethically problematic practice, the students defend not only their own roles, but their school's role as well, seeing both parties as a medium through which to achieve a better life for animals in their natural habitat. The fact that most of the captive animal individuals fulfill a solely instrumental role in this process and are denied a life in freedom gives rise to ethical concerns. These concerns are alleviated by the argument that the means justifies the end and in this sense the critical thinking taking place in the classroom was typically accommodated within the existing zoo paradigm. During a lesson at Falkskolan, however, the teacher Bengt brings a fundamental argument for the zoo enterprise into question:

"We use these lifetime prisoners [the animals at zoos] for research, when we have captured them", says Bengt, and asks his students: "Is it right, do you think, to capture (and do research on) wild animals? How many baby dolphins have died in the pools of [name of zoo]? /.../ How many monkeys have died during transportation?" Bengt says that sometimes the idea of conservation threatens wild species. His invitation to his students to critically reflect on the zoo paradigm did not, however, give rise to any classroom discussion, and the focus shifted quickly to another issue. (Excerpt from field notes March 9, 2004)

The visits to zoos gave rise to varied reactions among the students. Their joy at seeing the animals was mixed with feelings of pity for at least some of them, such as the polar bear and the gorilla. When I asked the first-year student Johanna what she thought about one of the zoos visited, she described her experience as follows:

It was boring; the animals "just stand there". The enclosures were boring. The animals had nowhere to hide. (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

Johanna's disappointment about the animals' lethargy resonates well with Berger's (1980) analysis, summarized in the question "Why are these animals less than I believed?" (p. 21). One of the zoos triggered particularly strong reactions among the students. When strolling through the park, I heard numerous critical remarks and nauseated exclamations concerning the poor conditions for the animals there. In the reptile house, I meet Marianne, a student in her first year. She is very upset, trying to find out whether it is possible for anybody to actually open one of the glass cages, and after a little while she manages to do it. When John, her teacher, shows up, she explodes in an angry monologue about how easy it would be to take animals out of the zoo. John tries to calm her down, saying that there is a purpose with the visit. (The purpose, as it was explained to me, was to expose the students to a "bad" zoo to enhance their critical thinking.) I walk with Marianne back to our bus. She is still very upset and says to me that she hates this park:

Would they put their children in that chimpanzee cage, she asks angrily. I reply that they would probably not. But they put chimpanzees there, "our closest relative!!", she exclaims. Marianne tells me that many of her classmates had chosen to go to the amusement park instead (an integrated part of this zoo), as they couldn't stand seeing the conditions in which the animals were kept. (Excerpt from field notes June 3, 2004)

Conclusions

Beyond the rhetoric of biodiversity and conservation (the Ark metaphor), the zoo produces plenty of contradictory meanings. In the school-zoo encounter, these meanings form a hidden curriculum, implicitly promoting certain assumptions of the human-animal relation while disguising others. I have argued that the very rationale of the zoo phenomenon in general builds on operations of domination and objectification that appear to contradict the zoo's modern Ark aspirations. This is further underscored by a capitalist logic underlying the contemporary zoos in this study; a logic generating otherness and separation under the guise of harmonious interspecies co-existence. Viewed from this perspective, the zoo's promise of human-animal intimacy is turned into just another form of merchandise for consumption. In Desmond's (1999) words, the images of mutual interspecies harmony may be seen as "utopian moments" that will never be satisfactorily fulfilled but must be consumed over and over again, in line with the commodity capitalism logic.

Both students and teachers actively legitimate and reproduce this zoo discourse and its contradictions. As in Hanson's (2002) analysis, zoos seek to

educate about authentic animal behavior but may at the same time adopt anthropomorphic, manipulative or other strategies towards the public if they are considered beneficial for the financial imperatives of the zoo. Most criticism encouraged toward zoos by the schools in this study is of a character that can be accommodated within the existing paradigm, thus providing a stabilizing function rather than a fundamental challenge to the zoo's rationales. If moments of resistance with a more transformative potential are manifested, they are rarely given enough weight to be developed into discussion or action, and an opportunity to reconsider the zoo is lost.

Chapter 15

Human-animal relations in museum experiences

Introduction

From an educational perspective, zoos and museums have been analyzed as similar institutional arrangements that both work primarily through visual modes of representation. Milson (1990) describes museums, zoos and aquariums as “tools” for education that show the “real thing”. For instance, in museum exhibits, “[s]tudents can learn so much more from watching a native American making an arrowhead, than from just reading about the process” (p. 522).

The perceived “realism” of these institutions, claiming that objects and contexts are and can be displayed as “authentic” entities and represented through “typical” specimens, is, however, problematic, and so too is the tendency toward appropriation and authority that both zoos and museums achieve through the classification and ordering of their displayed objects. Milson (1990) is not alone in making the analogy between zoos and museums. Montgomery (1995) has done likewise, albeit in a more critical vein. In his analysis, museums, like zoos, create order on the basis of collection before a collective and collecting eye (“the Public”). In both cases, the purpose is visual consumption in the form of entertainment, education and conservation.

Much like zoos, museums in the 17th to 19th centuries primarily addressed visitors from the privileged bourgeois class before becoming more of a contributor to the public education system (Beckman, 1999). Hooper-Greenhill (2001) has described the educational approach of traditional “modernist” museums that evolved during the last part of the 19th century as a “transmission approach” based on an idea that placing objects on view was sufficient to ensure learning. Museum displays were used to authoritatively transmit the universal laws of object-based disciplines, among which natural history was the paradigm:

Objects were seen as sources of knowledge, as parts of the real world that had fixed and finite meanings that could be both discovered, once and for all, and then taught by being put on show. /.../ Making this knowledge visible and available through public museums was in itself a pedagogic act; a walk through

the museum galleries would result in learning. It was thought that large numbers of people could be taught in this way at the same time, and thus a huge social gain would occur. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001 pp. 5-6)

According to Hooper-Greenhill (2001), objects are arranged in museums to make visual statements and combined to produce visual narratives. The narratives constructed by museum displays and the methods used to communicate them, i.e. the content and style of the displays, together form a hidden curriculum that communicates ideas about expected responses. The effects of this hidden curriculum, however, depend largely on the interpretive framework within which the objects are seen. A display may therefore be invested with multiple meanings from the position of the observer who will construct her or his own coherence, which may or may not be in compliance with the educational intent of the museum (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001).

Building on previous criticism of museums as manifestations of power, this chapter will integrate representations of animals in the analysis of museum displays and explore their intersection with other dimensions of museum narratives. I also investigate students' encounters with two particular museum exhibitions (the Swedish Museum of Natural History and a special exhibition, "We love them... and eat them" [*Älskas... ätas*], located on the premises of a zoo) and consider in particular the human-animal relations negotiated within these encounters.

Museums' colonial legacy

Museums have been described as sites of power that form links in the chain of cultural reproduction together with, for instance, schools and media (Nederveen Pieterse, 1997). Critical examinations of museums as authoritative repositories of "truth" focus on the museum as producing narratives about margin and center, identities, and meanings, including "otherness" and subordination based on, for instance, ethnicity. In her critical analysis of the "modernist" museum, Hooper-Greenhill (2001) remarks that museums "construct relationships, propose hierarchies, define territories, and present a view" (p. 18).

The order created by museums thus presumes and reproduces certain worldviews. Nederveen Pieterse (1997) argues that the museum is an outcome of the Enlightenment and has been a site for producing national and imperial identities informed by race, class and gender. The dominant discourse permeating above all ethnographic museums has been colonialism in the exhibition of trophies of imperial endeavors, but also in postcolonial times, museums have a preoccupation with narratives about the "other". These

representations of “others” can be exoticizing (emphasizing difference) or assimilating (emphasizing similarity), but either way, both are defined from the point of view of the center (i.e. “us” as privileged observers) and such power arrangements tend to remain unexplored (Nederveen Pieterse, 1997). Bal (1992) has noted that the manner in which a museum physically and conceptually organizes its displays and the relations between them may in effect make the visitor identify with the Western white hegemonic culture that produced the museum in the first place. When animals are put on display, often in the form of taxidermy, certain dimensions are added that may contribute to the meanings of museum narratives in various ways.

Taxidermy

Taxidermy – a process of replication involving the stuffing and mounting of a dead animal – is a technique embodying the rationales of “realism” as well as of human appropriation and control over animals (Desmond, 2002). Haraway (2004b) has called taxidermy “the production of permanence” (p. 152). In order to create a taxidermic “fiction of liveness” (Desmond, 2002 p. 159), ironically the animal must not only be killed (and all marks of killing erased), but its body must also be dismembered and reassembled. In exhibits, the manipulated animal body is also frequently situated in “typical” posture in a reconstructed piece of habitat, implying a “suspended narrative” of a moment of a life frozen in time (pp. 172-173). Taxidermic displays not only articulate a vision of a natural world and a vision of science, but also allow for unusual intimacy between human and animal bodies (Desmond, 2002). This intimacy, enabling the museum visitor to examine the animal closely for as long as she/he wishes, gains its attraction from the impossibility of such a situation in the wild.

Bryant and Shoemaker (1988) have noted that there is a considerable diversity in the various forms and social functions of taxidermy. In museum exhibits, the purpose of taxidermy is primarily to educate and to evoke interest in or attention to zoology, but also to conserve wildlife that is considered to be part of a cultural inheritance (Simpson, 1999). I would like to add that taxidermic displays in museums can also function as “markers” of a historical period or a social or cultural context or as markers of wildness and exoticism (cf. Nederveen Pieterse, 1997). As a more implicit purpose, Ryan (2000) emphasizes taxidermy as a desire to possess and control nature. It is within these dimensions that narratives about animals merge with narratives about human “others”. In some natural history museums (as in some zoos), this merging becomes explicit when displays of native peoples and their cultures have been placed in juxtaposition to

exhibits of animal models, whereas Western, “white” culture has been displayed in art and history museums (Bal, 1992; Nederveen Pieterse, 1997).

The museum visits

During my field study, I joined Falkskolan in a visit to the Swedish Museum of Natural History, and Ormskolan in a visit to an exhibition entitled “We love them... and eat them” (*Älskas... ätas*). The latter exhibition, which focused on human-animal relations, was arranged in cooperation between a zoo and a museum. The two exhibition settings were very different in terms of size, location, content and style of displays.

Although the museum visits were arranged as part of the formal curriculum, the visits were carried out in a leisurely atmosphere and no formal assignments were given to the students to work on in the museums.⁴⁷ This facilitated more spontaneous interaction between students and displays as well as between students and their peers.

In the following sections, I will describe encounters between students and displayed animal representations during the visits to the Museum of Natural History and the exhibition “We love them... and eat them”. I have chosen these settings as two remarkably different examples of museum concepts and of the gazes they invite. The contexts of these two particular visits also allowed me to carefully observe student responses to displays without too much intrusion. At the Museum of Natural History, the visit was formally organized as a guided walk through several spaces of the premises, and in the case of the exhibition “We love them... and eat them”, the small exhibition area (accommodated in a single room) and the large number of students facilitated very close observations.

Zoological gazes: The Swedish Museum of Natural History

In the Museum of Natural History, huge quantities of animal bodies are collected although not all of them are on public display. The museum’s website explains that

The Swedish Museum of Natural History houses collections of millions of specimens that in size and quality belong to the finest in the world. The collections form a basis for the research conducted at the different research departments and they are continuously used by researchers and institutions from all over the world in the form loans and visits from guest researchers.

⁴⁷ During one museum visit, one group of students was, however, encouraged by their teacher to take the opportunity to gather ideas about texts and displays for their own upcoming open house event at their school.

One of the most important tasks of the museum is to take care of the collections so that they are preserved for posterity and kept accessible for international research. /.../ (Quoted from the website of the Swedish Museum of Natural History, 2006, my translation)

Public exhibits are thus not the only task of the museum. Research is another important area, and the student group I joined was received by the museum staff as future natural science researchers rather than as representatives of the general public. After dividing the class into two groups, we were given a guided tour “behind the scenes” of the museum through spaces not normally open to the public. During the tour, the museum guide, assuming the role of an educator, asked the students questions such as the species of the animal skeletons we were shown, how much the animal weighs, and the animal’s name in Latin. When a student gave the right answer, she was praised by both the guide and her teacher (field notes March 5, 2004).

The dimension of most of the museum’s physical environment is huge: high ceilings, tall cupboards, large skeleton parts. Research objects surround us everywhere, sometimes locked inside cupboards, sometimes displayed behind glass or standing freely in the different rooms in the museum. My group started the guided walk in the taxidermist laboratory:

We are informed that this is the place where “newly killed” animals end up. The taxidermist tells us that environmental toxins can be traced through the animals, that animals can be sold and stuffed, and that uncommon species are stuffed whereas usually only the skeleton of more ordinary species is preserved. On the wall hangs a poster with pictures of various wild domestic animal species. It is entitled “State property”. This means that if you find a dead animal of one of those species, you are obliged to take it to the police. The taxidermist remarks that “many rarities coming from the East are not State property”, that is, there is no obligation to take them to the police. On a table lies a big bird with one wing cut off. We are informed that cutting off one wing is done on a routine basis. The reason is that visiting researchers who, for instance, are writing a book about birds usually tear off the wings when they handle the dead birds. To prevent this from happening, the museum staff themselves cut off one wing for the researcher to look at. Next, the taxidermist shows us a little bird and says, “Here we have a real rarity...”.

When we look into a small wardrobe-like space belonging to the laboratory and see the dead animal bodies collected there, the teacher Bengt comments, “A lot of corpses”. One student replies, “I feel really repulsed”. Meanwhile, our guide speaks about the length and weight of a dead eagle. He also comments on the problems with illegal shooting: “A

poor eagle that was found had been shot twice.” (Excerpt from field notes March 5, 2004)

We proceeded with our tour to another space in the museum where we encountered a diversity of “exotic” and other stuffed animals (or, as the museum staff called them, “mounted” animals):

Here are whole or parts of bodies, including the heads of both giraffe and moose. One display shows a monkey head mounted on a stand with the description “Head of mandrill”. Other monkey species, both adults and babies, are displayed surrounded by branches as if to give associations to their natural habitat. When we walk into the next room, the first thing we see is a stuffed dog lying on top of a cupboard. Our guide remarks that “sometimes people leave their pets here [for stuffing]”. Many students seem to react particularly to the stuffed dog and one student says, “Pets, give me a break, that’s repulsive!”. We are informed that the dog has been brought to the museum by an employee. (Excerpt from field notes March 5, 2004)

On our way back from the museum visit, the stuffed dog was brought up again as a topic of discussion among the students and some of them identified themselves with the dead animal’s caretaker. One student said, “Imagine if it was your dog” and “Imagine if it was your rabbit”. Another student reflected over what it would feel like to have had the company of your dog when it was still alive, and then come to the museum and see it stuffed. Desmond (2002) refers to pets as a special case in taxidermy. Pets have a special position in human society since they are often regarded as “family members” and therefore the pet’s body, to a larger extent than most other animals used in taxidermy, represents the pet’s *being*. Bryant and Shoemaker (1988) refer to pet taxidermy as a form of “nostalgia taxidermy” that for some may be a way of dealing with emotional loss, whereas others may view it as a morbid practice.

While our guide shifted between information talk addressed to the group and discussions with the teacher Bengt about the knowledge to be gained from the animals, student attention was directed more towards the visual sensation of the animal bodies surrounding us. One student noticed a collection of bats put on display behind glass with their wings spread out: “Oh, how cool [they are]!” One of the boys turned to a female classmate and asked, “Mia, did you see the snake skins in there?” Another student named Julia, imagining herself to be in the situation of the stuffed animals and referring to her own name in plural form as if to illustrate her imagined shift of identity, remarked to her classmate, “Imagine if we were lying in there, ‘here we have Julias’”.

When asking a few students what they think about the displays, one girl said "I think it's grotesque having stuffed animals, repulsive". When asked for his opinion, another student replied "Exciting, awesome". Yet another girl said, "Stuffed animals are unpleasant". When asking her why, she replied, "They have been alive". (Field notes March 5, 2004)

The next space we entered was full of whole animal hides:

The hides are preserved with faces and paws intact. They are hanging in dense rows with strings running through their eye sockets. We are informed that here are "felines from all over the world", but also other fur-bearing animals. One student comments, "There's an entire wardrobe hanging here". "Repulsive", remarks another. Another student dialogue goes, "Imagine if we hang like this some day." "I'm sure we will." "I don't think they want us." The guide mentions the cost of one hide and remarks, "Of course it is more fun when they are mounted". One cupboard carries the sign "Second-rate collection. Hides for lending and teaching". (Excerpt from field notes March 5, 2004)

According to Hooper-Greenhill (2001), a major function of museums during the modernist period was the mapping of the world through the collection of artefacts brought back by explorers, traders, missionaries and others who voyaged across the world, and the establishments of such collections can be viewed as a form of symbolic conquest. In the above example, the very *quantity* of animal bodies collected signals the power to objectify. In students' responses, such associations became located and expressed within personal frameworks of interpretation that centered primarily around their own subject positions.

We then reached another room, containing several rows of locked wooden cupboards:

The room's interior seems to make the students associate to horror movies. Our guide has no key to the cupboards but informs us that they contain birds. The teacher Bengt opens a box full of bird carcasses. "Here they lie piled up", he remarks. Turning to me and some students standing beside him, he asks jokingly: "Have you seen "Six feet under?" (Excerpt from field notes March 5, 2004)

We proceeded to a room filled with animal skeletons. A monkey skeleton, hanging with one arm from a tree branch, was displayed behind glass. This room housed long rows of cupboards. Each cupboard carried a sign showing the classification of animal body parts and a photograph showing the animal in the wild. One girl asked her classmates, "Can you think about some really awesome animal that you would like to see?" Our guide informed us that the museum possesses 13,800 fox skulls, "and then we have 10,000 jaws in the attic that

nobody bothers about really”. On our way out, I asked a girl if she would like to work at the museum after graduation. “A bit scary. I think I’d rather work with living animals”, she said. When asking the same question to the boy who earlier had found the stuffed animals “exciting” and “awesome”, he too replied “No, repulsive to work with stuffing animals.” (Field notes March 5, 2004)

Our last stop on the guided tour at the Museum of Natural History was a separate building with several rooms. In the first room a collection of reindeer skulls was arranged with horns intact. The next room contained whale skeleton parts:

Our guide speaks about how the skeleton is constituted in whales. He shows one part and mentions a famous expedition in the 19th century. “This is the mother whale and this is the baby whale”, he says and points at a skeleton. Standing among the remains of dead whales and speaking about living animals, he asks one student about how long a distance the whales can communicate with each other. Another girl remarks, as if to herself, “Keiko, he is dead”. I ask a few students if they would like to work here. One student replies, “I want to be a vet, so my task is to *save* animals, before they end up here.”

Now our guide shows us the largest skeleton parts. He holds up one part in each hand so that everybody can see them. “This is the inner ear of a whale”, he explains. The teacher Bengt asks if they correspond to the human [ear], but the guide replies apologetically, “I only know about whales”. Bengt then starts discussing with some of his students that the school should perhaps go on a whale safari field trip to Norway. (Excerpt from field notes March 5, 2004)

After leaving the museum premises, students discussed their impressions from the visit. When asked if they could imagine working at the museum, most students seemed to prefer working with living animals, although one student I talked to was open to the possibility of research or museum work, since “you never know”. Some students found the museum experience “repulsive, but interesting at the same time”. On our way back home, one girl commented on the museum visit with the brief remark, “How boring to be dead! You don’t experience anything then.” (Field notes March 5, 2004)

Beyond exoticism: “We love them... and eat them”

The exhibition entitled “We love them... and eat them” (*Älskas... ätas*), located on the premises of a zoo, deviated remarkably from the Museum of Natural History. It explored the ethics of human-animal relations and was described in the zoo information brochure as follows:

How have we treated, used and exploited animals? And how have we created the animals we need? What are our views on animals in captivity and in the wild? Who is dependent on whom, and who holds the power of life and death? /.../ The basic theme involves ethical issues relating to how we treat our animals, animal rights, and human obligations, or perhaps the opposite. Where do we draw the line – the hamburger, the handbag, or the transplanted kidney? (*The Animals at Parken Zoo*, 2004 p. 34)

The exhibition was housed in the entrance building of the zoo, separate from the animal enclosures. The destination for this school excursion was primarily the zoo itself, which functioned as an introduction to further project work on zoo management during the school year. Although the exhibition was not mentioned in the written assignments handed out to students prior to the zoo visit, during lunch at the zoo, when all students were gathered, one of the teachers encouraged everybody to go there. The small exhibition area was crowded from floor to ceiling with a diversity of messages in texts, quotations, models, artefacts, pictures and photos that represented different voices contributing with various perspectives to the overall theme of the exhibition. One of the issues most spectacularly represented was the animal agriculture industry. Especially the slaughter process was depicted in great visual detail:

Among the first displays encountered when entering the exhibition area is a small space with a chopping-block and an axe with painted bloodstains. On the floor lie a number of fluffy toy chickens. From the ceiling hangs a long row of broiler models upside down, decapitated and with bloodstained bodies. One wall in the exhibition area displays a long photo sequence describing the slaughter process of pigs, step by step. Following the photo sequence is an information text with the title "Slaughter". It reads, "Very very few domestic animals die a natural death. Most of them are slaughtered at an abattoir to become food for us humans. It would be wrong to deny that many animals experience stress and agony, but with correct handling the slaughter can be made humane to the extent that the animals feel secure until the end. This is also an advantage for us since the meat is of better quality." But there is also a counterhegemonic voice represented, a quotation from "Anna, vegan, 1998": "I am a living, feeling individual, just like all those non-human animals who today are utilized and murdered for the benefit of the animal species called the human being. I would no more exploit a cow than I would a human being." Another information sign focuses on breeding: "/.../ Technology substituted natural fertilization and the human being had taken another step toward control of the animals' reproduction and sexuality." A quotation from the pig industry recommends insemination rather than natural fertilization, "/.../ Breeding work is directed toward profitability with a focus on maternal characteristics and meat quality." Another sign,

located by a huge cage in which a model of a human-pig hybrid is placed, reads: “When the human being plays God. From breeding to genetic engineering. /.../ What responsibility does the human being have, as a species, as a fellow being, as society and as individual?” (Excerpt from field notes August 19, 2004. All quotes are my translations)

Fur production was also briefly dealt with at the exhibition with a few color photographs and a fur coat hanging on the wall. Beneath the fur coat was a quote from a zoologist: “The human being is the only species who adorns herself with body parts from other species.” Animals in circuses were problematized by a small model of a circus performance in which a pig, placed in the center of the ring, was taming humans, instead of the other way around. Here, the sign read, “When the human being controls movement and place: Why does the human being enjoy training her fellow beings? Or is it about interplay, about playing together? How far should the human being’s power extend over where animals should be and how they should move? When does power turn into abuse?” (Field notes August 19, 2004. Quotes are my translations)

According to Nederveen Pieterse (1997), power is more often fetishized in exhibitions than interrogated by them, but the exhibition “We love them... and eat them” seems to fall outside the exoticism – assimilation paradigm. A more critical agenda seems to be at work here. In Nederveen Pieterse’s (1997) words, the exhibition represents “a shift from discourse about others to discourse about *othering*” (p. 141, emphasis in original), even though closer observation revealed that the exhibition was still to some extent guided by the power arrangements that it intended to explore. For instance, instrumental social positions such as “battery hens” and “breeding animals” were used by the exhibition without critical analysis, and animal experimentation and its institutional arrangements were only superficially referred to:

A model of a laboratory rat cage was on display together with a few color photographs (which did not depict any invasive animal experiments). An information sign said that the animal ethics review committees “with the Animal Welfare Act as a point of reference weigh the benefits of the experiments against the animals’ suffering”. The question was posed: “Where the limit is drawn can be discussed. Can the suffering of hundreds of mice be legitimated by the possibilities for curing human beings?” The sign also mentioned that there are researchers who are beginning to question the effectiveness and applicability of the experiments. (Excerpt from field notes August 19, 2004. Quotes are my translations)

The hunting issue was also somewhat underthemed at the exhibition as, although it occupied an entire wall in the room, the only information provided was some

uncommented statistics from the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management on the number of animals shot in Sweden in one year, together with two small black and white photos of shot animals. Moreover, although the exhibition was hosted by a zoo, I could see no displays that referred to zoos at all.

“We love them... and eat them”: Student responses

When the whole student group entered the exhibition room they almost filled it up entirely. I stayed for a while beside the slaughter photo sequence:

Many students pass by slowly. They look at the photos and read the texts carefully. I hear reactions of discomfort and dismay, although one student remarks that she doesn't think the animals feel so much since they are anesthetized. One student looks at a photo showing pigs' bodies hanging upside down and remarks that the pigs are given more space as dead bodies than as living beings. Another student says when she sees one of the slaughter pictures (a pig hanging in front of a blood-stained wall) that it really looks like murder. Yet another student sees a photo of a pig hanging upside down and remarks sadly that its tail is completely slack. She lets her finger slowly and gently trace the shape of the tail on the photo. A fourth student says to her classmate, “I know that I should become a vegetarian, but...”. Her classmate replies that she herself is, turns toward a large plastic model of a cow standing beside them, caresses it and says reassuringly, “I won't eat you”. As if suddenly realizing the absurdity of caressing a plastic cow, the two girls start laughing. (Excerpt from field notes August 19, 2004)

When passing by the animal experimentation display, one student pointed at the laboratory mouse cage and commented briefly, “That's fair play”. At the companion animal displays one student stopped in front of an authentic-looking, furry cat model, and scratched its back.

When I asked some students afterwards what they thought of the exhibition, I got comments such as “scary but interesting” and “grotesque”. Others found it confusing and strange but still providing food for thought. One student said that the exhibition was good and gave rise to discussions on veganism and vegetarianism and whether free-range hens really are better off. Some felt positive about the exhibition showing “reality”, especially for young children. When I asked another student if he was familiar with these issues prior to the museum visit, he replied that he had had some knowledge of them before, but not about everything in the exhibition. A third student complained about the lack of wild animals in the exhibition, saying that horses and pigs are not as interesting.

Processes of meaning-making in the exhibitions

According to Hooper-Greenhill (2001), museum visitors deploy their own interpretive strategies and repertoires and may invest displayed objects with emotional significance that may deviate from the pedagogical intent of the museum. During the visit to the Museum of Natural History, I could discern at least two parallel processes of meaning-making. While our museum guide informed us about the zoological “facts” of the animal species displayed (represented by remains of dead “specimens”), student attention seemed more focused on the questions of life and death evoked by the displays (but not explicitly referred to by them).

The students’ preoccupation with life and death in the museum environment also became interwoven with images of “self” and “other”. Hooper-Greenhill (2001) states that assemblages of words and artefacts in a museum act to produce identity and self-image in the sense that the imagining of possibilities for the self is materialized and made tangible through objects. At the Museum of Natural History, encounters with dead animals gave in a similar manner rise to reflections around self-identification, either with the animals themselves or (in the case of the stuffed dog) the animal’s caretaker. The teacher, on the other hand, seemed to assume a mediating role. As a member of the group being guided and, at the same time, sharing a common professional identity with the guide, he contributed to shaping both meaning-making processes by shifting between them.

Nederveen Pieterse (1997) argues that exoticizing (or assimilating) discourses about the “other” tend to leave other possibilities ignored “such as recognizing difference without exoticism, others as counterparts in dialogue, or oneself as an other” (p. 125). The natural history museum displays seemed to a large extent to adhere to the conventional exoticism discourse in order to generate an appropriate zoological gaze, subtly normalizing human-animal power relations.⁴⁸ In the school newsletter at Falkskolan two weeks later, one staff member reported on the museum visit. Her account conformed well with the gaze of exoticism invited by the museum:

/.../ [The museum visit] was very interesting and fun since we had an opportunity to visit departments that are normally not open to the public.
/.../ We could walk around different rooms/departments. One room was filled from floor to ceiling with animal skeletons such as elephants, giraffes, birds. It is fantastic, there are skeletons, hides, mounted animals, for instance,

⁴⁸ On one occasion during our walk around the museum premises, however, our guide acknowledged that museums were previously guilty of exploitation during their expeditions abroad (field notes March 5, 2004).

from expeditions carried out more than 150 years ago. Also Linnaeus's materials are preserved but regrettably we could not see this. /.../ (Quoted from school newsletter, March 16, 2004, my translation)

Student responses to the experience, however, resemble more Nederveen Pieterse's (1997) "other possibilities". Although students are not immune to the exoticism imbued in the museum exhibits (which implies a conception of distance between self and other), their own interpretive framework largely appeared to operate in the opposite direction as the stuffed and dismembered animals seemed to invoke associations with mortality that facilitated self-identification with them.

If issues of life and death, self and other arise as "side effects" of the displays at the Museum of Natural History, the exhibition "We love them... and eat them" explicitly used these conceptions as tools with which to problematize human-animal power relations in a visually dramatic manner. At the exhibition "We love them... and eat them" students related to animal representations perhaps not fully as "counterparts in dialogue" (Nederveen Pieterse, 1997 p. 125), but almost as if they were physically present as "real" embodied beings in the room.

Concluding remarks

From a critical perspective, museums may be seen as sites of cultural hegemony where narratives about "others" (humans or animals) and our relations with them are manufactured, reproduced, and presented as education, entertainment and/or conservation. On the other hand, as Hooper-Greenhill (2001) suggests, museums can also be potential sites for social and cultural change if their development is driven by questions of meaning and if the cultural politics in which museums are engaged are acknowledged. Although the two museums explored in this study clearly had different agendas and arrangements, in both cases oscillations between conceptions of life and death took place in the museum settings, and it is in this process that relations building on the demarcations between "self" and "other" become most visible.

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Chapter 16

“The Winner Takes It All?” Lessons from watching wildlife on film and in nature

Introduction

This chapter analyzes two different modes of observing animals in their natural habitat: wildlife films, and observing birds and seals during excursions. While the former mode is mediated via filmmakers and takes place in the classroom, the latter occurs in real time at a site where animals are present. Both activities are ways of seeing with a common denominator: The idea that we are entering into the animals' *own* world (cf. Desmond, 1999). Watching wildlife – whatever the medium – is therefore an activity that can be expected to differ from a zoo or museum visit experience. Acampora (2005) has emphasized these contrasts by pointing out that observation *in situ* allows the animals to choose whether to engage in or break off any encounter with human visitors. This animal agency offers a perceived authenticity that also carries a connotation of “appropriateness”: A possibility to catch a glimpse of animals “as they should be seen” – i.e. undisturbed by human society (cf. Baker, 2001).

My field study offered plenty of opportunities to observe learning situations centered around activities involving watching wildlife in nature and on film, since the animal caretaker programs to a large extent lack adequate textbooks that relate to their subject areas such as zoo management and ethology. This situation imposes extra responsibility on the teachers to produce their own collection of materials such as readers, field study assignments and also films. One teacher showed me a media archive register he had created, comprising over 200 pages of recorded wildlife films and press clippings stored over a period of 6-7 years. The reason for creating such a register, he told me, was that there are no textbooks on zoos (field notes May 14, 2004).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate human-animal relations constituted by different forms of activities involving watching wildlife as educational experiences at Falkskolan and Ormskolan. I will begin by investigating how students' approaches to watching animals were structured by

the formal or informal arrangements of the learning situations. This is followed by a discussion of how implicit messages about both animal and human society are mediated as a 'side-effect' of wildlife films.

Codes and norms of watching wildlife

The students received guidance in various ways regarding what to pay attention to in situations involving watching wildlife. When watching wildlife films, typically, the voice-over was the primary guide, complemented by the teacher who could interrupt the film narrative by turning the video off for a few moments to add comments or write key words on the whiteboard. On excursions, the voice-over was replaced by comments by school staff, or by written materials. In either case, students were asked to focus on roughly three different dimensions of the animals: Their *physical bodies* and *behaviors*, the *number* of species and individuals, and *aesthetic* or "spiritual" qualities of the wildlife encounter.

Animal behavior

One set of characteristics that students were expected to focus on included the *physical appearance*, *behavior* and *adaptability* in animals. In the example that follows, a group of first-year students at Ormskolan are watching a film entitled *Jungle*:

After the break, the students sit down in small groups. They have been told to work on different biotopes and draw lots for which group will work on which biotope. The teacher Robert asks the students to reflect on the differences between the biotopes when they watch the film. He goes through the instructions for the group work. "Simply by having seen all these films you will have your entire species list completed", he says and then turns the film on. One scenario shows bats and what they eat. Robert interrupts the film to give more information on eating habits among bats and their function to spread seeds through their droppings. After a while, when the film has been running, he interrupts again and talks about the special form of smell adaptability in bats. /.../ The film shows a squirrel glider flying between trees. "Here we have a splendid example of adaptability, when the pelt has turned into a glider", Robert says. Both the teacher and the voice-over describe the movements of the squirrel glider as "elegant". (Excerpt from field notes September 6, 2004)

The next sequence comes from a film on hippopotamuses, which was shown to a group of first-year students at Falkskolan as part of a zoo management class:

The film begins by describing the hippopotamus as dangerous and unreliable – even the alligator is careful when encountering a

hippopotamus. The hippo is well adapted to a life in water, but at the same time it leads a “double life”, since it spends its days in the water but leaves the water to graze in the evenings. The voice-over talks about how much the hippo eats and how much it weighs, and that it saves energy by being in the water. /.../ (Excerpt from field notes May 14, 2004)

Feeding behavior, in particular predator-prey interactions, are frequently focused on in many wildlife films and, according to Bousé (2000), probably disproportionately in relation to the real daily routines of many predator and prey animals. Bousé attributes this tendency to the demands on wildlife films for drama and climax:

We may be told on the voice track that of a certain predator’s attempts to catch prey only one in ten ends in a kill, but we certainly do not see nine failures for every one success. (Bousé, 2000 p. 182)

For Burt (2001), animal deaths on film are a particularly charged form of animal representation that reflects not only a “voyeuristic” streak but also a tension between the humane and the cruel, between education and entertainment. This tension was explicitly expressed in a film entitled *When Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry*, brought to an ethology class by a second-year student at Falkskolan:

The film displays the headline “Mother and child”. “The most characteristic quality of the mammals is to give care”, says the voice-over as the film shows sea lion babies. When a sea lion baby is eaten by a killer whale, the voice-over expresses compassion. He says that he does not want to see this happening, even if it is a fantastic display of predator behavior. We are shown the reactions of the sea lion mother as she realizes that her baby is gone. “Heartbreaking”, comments the voice-over. (Excerpt from field notes April 29, 2004)

The focus on how bodies look, what they do, and where they do it (Desmond, 1999) as a guideline for watching wildlife can also be understood as observing *the right animal in the right place*. During a birdwatching excursion with Falkskolan we passed by a cow enclosure. A few students stopped by the enclosure (instead of gazing out over the sea to observe the birds on the other side):

A few students notice the flies gathering on the back on one of the cows and express feelings of pity. The teacher John passes by and comments on the fact that his students are watching cows instead of birds. Jokingly, he asks one of the girls, who is holding a bird guidebook in her hands, if she can find any cows in the book. Some students continue their walk, but a few stay by the cows for a while and observe them. They remark silently that one cow has an infection in her eye. (Excerpt from field notes June 3, 2004)

A parallel to this observation may be drawn with ecotourism when it codes certain animal species as proper gazing targets and others as not (even though both may exist in the same habitat). As Desmond (1999) notes, the point of these activities is to access uniqueness, to come close to animals that are not normally visible in our daily lives: "Watching cockroaches in the kitchen or rabbits in the backyard doesn't count as ecotourism." (p. 169) This norm may be violated by students as a protest against the perceived dullness of the birdwatching experience, or as a way of changing its meaning by adding fun to it:

Some students engage seriously in the birdwatching exercise, but not everybody seems enthusiastic. The class and the teachers are soon dispersed in smaller groups. Some walk ahead of the others, and some keep lagging behind. Now and then, a couple of students simply sit down in the middle of the path and talk to each other instead of looking for birds.

The first-year student Johanna tells me that she finds the birdwatching exercise uninteresting as you can't really see anything – just a tiny dot that is flying. /.../ She tells me about a previous birdwatching occasion, when they had zoomed in on cows with their binoculars instead of birds. (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

We continue our walk through the reeds. Where the path turns and the forest begins, we stop to wait for the rest of the group. Daniel and Per stand behind me. Daniel asks Per what we all are looking at as we stand facing the sea. "The sheep over there", Per replies jokingly. (Excerpt from field notes June 3, 2004)

Domestic animals function here as a comical antithesis to the "real" targets of wild birds and do not count as "proper" targets. To be ascribed value in this context, the animal has to be a bird and it has to be *wild* (Donnelly, 1994). This characteristic was expressed as "spontaneously emerging" in the list of bird species the students received as a guide for their birdwatching (*Miniförteckning över Sveriges fåglar*, 2004).

Counting

Another dimension the students were encouraged to focus on concerned the *quantity* of animals, in terms of both number of individuals and species and this became a central dimension of the birdwatching exercise. During a visit to a bird observatory with Falkskolan, we learnt from our guide that a "good" year (and a "good" day) at the research station is when many birds are caught, since keeping statistics on bird populations and their variations is a main task of the research work at the observatory (field notes June 2, 2004). Similarly, in the written

information provided to the students by their teachers in preparation for the excursion, it was stated that "On a 'good' day [in April] 100,000 birds [eiders] can pass by!" (*Fåglar*, 2004).

Birdwatching is thus primarily about (symbolic) *collecting*, preferably of rarities (Donnelly, 1994; Sheard, 1999). The birdwatching excursion at Falkskolan I followed was a ritualized activity that strongly adhered to these formal elements (albeit in a leisurely atmosphere):

We left our hostel very early in the morning. A list has been distributed among the students, *Miniförteckning över Sveriges fåglar* ("Mini list of Sweden's birds"), with all wild domestic bird species listed. The idea is that the students, divided into small groups, will try to see as many species as possible, and tick them off on the list. The group finding the largest number of species will be rewarded with a prize. The teacher Bengt tells us what is considered as cheating and the students have been equipped with binoculars and bird guidebooks. The teachers carry additional equipment. Bengt instructs us how we can distinguish between bird species by the sound of their singing. (Excerpt from field notes June 3, 2004)

On the bus home, all the groups are asked to report about how many bird species they have been able to tick off on the list. The winning students, who have seen far more than 50 species, are rewarded with a bag of sweets as the first prize. Sanna, who is sitting beside me on the bus, belongs to the group that came second. Her group has also found more than 50 species.

Suddenly Sanna finds a tiny green caterpillar on her hand. The teacher Bengt sees it too, and says with faked seriousness that Sanna must return to the excursion site and leave it there, since the caterpillar won't like a new environment. Sanna, however, apparently does not perceive this as a joke. After a few minutes of thinking, she takes her bird list on which she has ticked off the 50+ species and starts tearing it apart. She carefully constructs a small paper box out of the list. I ask her if I can help her by holding the caterpillar while she is folding the box. She nods and places the caterpillar in my hands. When she is finished she holds up the box and I place the caterpillar in it. Then she finishes her construction by folding the last paper flap over it as a cover, and attaches the box to the seat pocket in front of her for safe transportation of the caterpillar back home. (Excerpt from field notes June 3, 2004)

Sanna creatively changes the function and meaning of her bird list by putting it to *concrete* use. As her successful symbolic collection of birds is transformed into a temporary housing for the caterpillar, the focus is also shifted from the

quantifiable and “countable” aspects that structured the birdwatching exercise, to the intrinsic value of an individual creature.

Aesthetics and emotions

Some wildlife watching situations encouraged a gaze that could be described as *spiritual*. According to Pierson (2005), some nature films represent nature “as a great eternal moral and spiritual entity”, invoking the idea of “the Great Chain of Being” of which all creatures are part (p. 709). A part of this image is what Bousé (2000) defines as the tendency to depict “visual splendor” in wildlife; magnificent scenery that suggests a still-unspoiled, primeval wilderness, and a sense of timelessness where the presence of humans is concealed (pp. 14-15).⁴⁹ A few of the films watched during my field study also displayed almost spiritual overtones in human-animal interactions. In a sequence of the film *When Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry*, a nature-film producer says that “I have seen [emotions] in everything from mollusks to killer whales /.../ I have experienced deep emotions in invertebrate animals /.../ When I am emotional, I get emotions in return” (field notes April 29, 2004).

In ecotourism settings, Desmond (1999) has formulated the spiritual dimension in religious terms as special pilgrimages to sacred and utopian sites of purity, communicated through both the ritualized procedures for access and behavior at the site and in the hushed voices and the sense of awe evoked by the scene. Desmond’s description is not very far from the evening visit with Falkskolan to a seal colony - a voluntary activity that a lot of students nevertheless chose to join:

The bus trip to the site takes a long time. The bus has to stop at the beginning of the path leading to the sea, as it may not be able to turn around further ahead. The teacher Bengt says that he doesn’t know whether there will be any seals there at all, but if we want to see any, we must be very quiet. It is quite a long walk, 30-40 minutes. On the way, the teacher John finds a toad that he shows us, and we stop for a few moments. One student says that she thinks the toad is really cute.

When we reach the shore, the sun is setting. A huge full moon shines behind us. Soon we discover a couple of seals some distance out in the water. The students are silent, observe the seals through their binoculars and appear to be moved by the experience. John turns to me and remarks that this is a different thing compared to seeing them [the seals] at a zoo, a more powerful sight somehow. “They are as curious as we are”, he says.

⁴⁹ In one film shown at Falkskolan, entitled *Ghosts of the Great Salt Lakes*, the role of the researcher was, however, emphasized (field notes May 3, 2004).

Madeleine, a student standing next to me, lends me her binoculars so that I can see the seals better. Kristina who is standing beside us says that it is really an experience to see them free.

It is getting dark and we start walking back to our bus. On the way I speak with Sanna. I say to her that when you are used to seeing seals as zoo animals, seeing them free becomes something special. Sanna agrees and says it makes you think about the situation of the seals in the zoo. (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

The seal watching experience is framed as one of “minimal constructedness” that is ascribed value as a “truer” real (Desmond, 1999 p. 190) on the basis of contrasting it to the zoo context.⁵⁰ Appreciation of the aesthetics and tranquility of both the animals and the entire nature scene visited was not only an added dimension of the wildlife watching experience, but sometimes also a response explicitly or implicitly *expected* of the students. This was also suggested in the written learning material compiled by the teachers at Falkskolan prior to the birdwatching excursion, which stated that “Looking at birds is first and foremost amusing, but it is also easy to be impressed and amazed!” (Fåglar, 2004). Not all the students, however, conformed to the “prescribed” gaze of awe:

On our walk through the forest Johanna criticizes the birdwatching exercise to Kerstin, one of the school staff members. Johanna’s voice sounds as if she is bored. She complains that she finds the activity pointless. Kerstin replies that the birdwatching experience is about atmospheres and moods that nobody can give Johanna, but which she must discover herself. (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

In this case, receptivity to the “spiritual” dimension seems to be, if not an explicit part of the learning objectives, at least a characteristic desirable to instill in the students, who also receive guidance from the school implying that it is more or less expected behavior.

Animal and human society in wildlife films: Comparisons and analogies

Although wildlife films are about nature, they are cultural products with values that tend to permeate the film scenery and narrative and affect the way they are viewed (Bousé, 2000; Mitman, 1999; Pierson, 2005). According to Bousé (2000), wildlife films have a great potential for *naturalizing ideological values*. They are often produced in a manner that lets us “find” in nature, for instance, “virtues” of

⁵⁰ I tested this assumption in my conversation with Sanna in the field notes excerpted above.

personal responsibility such as devotion to the nuclear family, diligence, courage, commitment, and self-sacrifice. The following example is a sequence from a film entitled *When Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry*⁵¹ shown in an ethology class at Falkskolan:

The voice-over mentions “loyalty” and “compassion”, previously believed to be found only in humans. One example is a mongoose. The film shows a mongoose that has confronted a jackal and gets weaker and weaker from her injuries. She won’t survive on her own in the desert. The flock slows down to give the injured member a chance to keep up, but eventually she gets so weak that she collapses. The entire mongoose family returns to her, and won’t leave her. She didn’t die alone. The film then asks the question: “What is the difference?” What is it that distinguishes human beings from all other living creatures?

When the teacher (who has been absent during the film) comes back, she asks her class to give a summary of what the film was about. The words “sorrow” and “soul” are mentioned. One student remarks that the animals have a soul, not only learned behavior. (Excerpt from field notes May 26, 2004)

The “hero” theme was also discernible. In the film *Ghosts of the Great Salt Lakes* about hyena research, the main research subject is given the name “Bom” (which, according to the film, is a common name among “bushmen”). At the end of the film, when another hyena is found dead (run over by a car), Bom is found uninjured and the researcher, Glynn, can reunite with him. The voice-over concludes: “Bom and Glynn have reunited /.../ Glynn, like Bom, is a wanderer at heart. Two soulmates /.../” (field notes May 3, 2004). The storyline here resembles the traditional genre of Western films that “usually center on strong, heroic leading characters who outlive the weaklings that surround them” (Bousé, 2000 pp. 162-163).

A few films explicitly stated that it is possible to ascribe human emotions to animals, and when we study them, another picture of animals’ emotions takes shape (field notes April 29, 2004). This was the message of the film *When Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry* shown at Falkskolan. However, it also conveyed a moral lesson on what constitutes a “good mother”:

The voice-over talks about elephants: “It is known that elephants are good mothers”. A film team followed a flock of elephants with a newborn baby with a leg deformation making it difficult for it to stand up. The students exclaim “No!” as they watch the baby elephant’s problems. We are shown how the mother tries to help her baby to stand up. “Oh, how

⁵¹ This film was not really a wildlife film, although it contained sequences of filmed wildlife.

terrible!”, says one student. When the flock moves on and the baby is unable to keep up, it starts making sounds. One of the elephants in the flock runs back to the baby. Then two of the elephants walk slowly to wait for it. The voice-over says that the mother is old and experienced, and knows what she must do for her baby. She gives it time to practise standing up. (Excerpt from field notes April 29, 2004)

Responsible parenting was also the issue in the following sequence from the film *The Zebra – The Striped Horse* shown in a zoo management class at Falkskolan:

The film shows a zebra foal and plays soft background music. The voice-over says, “The family flock wanders in ranking order. /.../ Also the males must look after the little foals but that is not always an easy task, since the foals are both lively and mischievous.” The film shows a foal that has run astray. When the foal makes a noise, a male zebra finds it and brings it back to the flock. “The mother is angry at the foal that ran away”, says the voice-over. (Excerpt from field notes May 11, 2004)

Wildlife films not only project human (typically Western) social and cultural patterns and moral categories on nature, but also allow us to see our own familiar structures and values enacted among wildlife in ways that reconfirm them as *natural*, as universal biological “truths” rather than as social constructs (Bousé, 2000). Ganetz (2004) refers to this double process as a “cultural boomerang” (p. 209). Also this message was explicitly expressed when watching some films, such as *How do they know?* shown at Ormskolan:

The teacher Robert turns the video on. The voice-over introduces the film with the statement “By studying the behavior of other animals, we can also learn more about ourselves”. Robert writes on the whiteboard:

23/11 How do they know film

Hereditry and environment

1) kangaroo: the baby has innate behavior seeks the pouch [of the mother] and “sucks” the nipple.

After talking about macaques and another monkey species, Robert focuses on kangaroos. He speaks about *survival of the fittest* and *the winner takes it all* (referring to the famous ABBA pop song) among newborn kangaroo babies. One student asks if the baby is aware of what it is doing. Robert replies that “it absolutely does not know about anything whatsoever”.

He turns the video on again. The film now speaks about the phenomenon of imprinting. Robert writes on the whiteboard:

2) Wildebeest calf is imprinted at birth

Robert says that researchers have attached wildebeest hides to poles in order to see if wildebeest babies will run to the poles. "This has been done to monkey babies too, rather *horrible* experiments", Robert remarks. He makes an analogy to what happens to humans who are not allowed to grow up in a natural environment: They develop aggressiveness, lack of empathy. He compares with gang formations among humans that build on solidarity through exclusion. (Excerpt from field notes November 23, 2004)

When biological "models" are used to explain aspects of human society and political and sociological factors are downplayed or ignored, as in the above extrapolation of wildebeest and monkey deprivation to humans, complex and problematic human social conditions may appear simplistic and even predetermined. Together with the "survival of the fittest" and "the winner takes it all" image of the natural world as a game between winners and losers, the approach accords with what Bousé (2000) calls "Darwinian projections": an implication that our own social organization and economic theories are natural laws of society.

Critical perspectives on wildlife films

Although there are a variety of wildlife film models, storylines and types that serve different social functions and can give rise to different "readings", most of them are industrialized commodities that must be adapted to the economic and institutional agendas of the producing companies and be sold for profit on a competitive global media market. By means of varying camera angles, editing, slow-motion, close-ups, voice-over narration, dramatic or ethnic music and the like, camera images are manipulated, intensified, dramatized and fictionalized to reflect certain views (typically those of the countries that produce and export the majority of the films or the countries with the largest audiences) (Bousé, 2000).

Bousé (2000) applies a critique of wildlife films in an analogy with the critique of Hollywood-style filmmaking that was developed by some film theorists in the British journal *Screen* in the 1970s. Bousé argues for the wider applicability of this critique on the grounds that wildlife films largely derive their formal structure from the Hollywood conventions of film production, although they explicitly claim to represent "the real". The critique focused both on the ontology of visual images in realist cinema (i.e. the notion that film simply is an expression of reality) as well as on its ideological tendency to simplify the complexities of reality. The critics argued that a kind of false consciousness is

systematically promoted when motion pictures represent reality through a series of multileveled fictions or narratives:

According to this perspective, events that are contingent appear inevitable; situations that are contrived appear natural; actions and values that derive from culture appear to derive from nature; society's rules thus appear as "natural laws". (Bousé, 2000 p. 17)

This way of producing film narratives makes the values of the dominant culture and its hierarchies appear "natural", legitimized, and immutable to change (Bousé, 2000). As an example, Chris (2006) mentions the heteronormativity⁵² that has largely structured the wildlife film genre as in their preoccupation with births and parenting, which were also alluded to in films shown at my field schools (cf. Ganetz, 2004). The ideological overtones may be further illustrated by the representation of "otherized" humans in wildlife films. In the early 20th century wildlife film era, many films had the form of exploration trips that documented white expeditions in colonized territories. Besides establishing wildlife filmmaking as a largely masculine project and as a manifestation of imperialist rights to global natural resources, these films also articulated racial ideologies for popular consumption (Chris, 2006). Ganetz (2004) remarks that historically, white people have not appeared in wildlife films except as masters, experts or presenters of nature, whereas native peoples have usually appeared in the role of bearers or as part of the landscape. Like the tradition of museums and zoos that juxtaposes indigenous peoples with wildlife and in this way reproduces a conception of their position as "closer to nature", the presence of people of color in wildlife films may still serve a similar purpose and reinforce conventional stereotypes. The following example is from a film shown at Ormskolan:

The teacher Robert turns the film on. He writes the film title, How Do They Know (cont.), on the whiteboard. One sequence is about the nesting behavior of a certain finch species. "Here you will see something really, really funny", comments Robert. The female finch tests the strength of the nest built by the male. When the nest collapses, Robert and the students laugh. He comments that it must be tough to build a nest without any tools, just a beak: "It is skillful anyway to be able to do something like this with only a beak", he says, and adds that he has tried it himself. Thereafter, the film shows people weaving grass baskets. Robert describes how the people, who are from Namibia, proceed when they

⁵² Chris (2006) notes that when homosexuality is represented in wildlife films, it is usually free from the associations between animal and human behavior that often accompany heterosexual representations as well as other aspects of animal life in the genre.

work. One student asks, “What the hell do they think [when white filmmakers come to them]?” Robert then refers to “cultural clashes” and remarks that these may become even more devastating in the future. (Excerpt from field notes November 30, 2004)

In this example, in the film, the native people and the wildlife in the area are both sorted under the category of exotic “others”. In contrast to the Western researchers in the film entitled *Ghosts of the Great Salt Lakes*, the native people are observed when performing manual labor and depicted without any heroic, intellectual or authoritative aura (cf. Jernudd, 2000).

In none of the situations involving watching wildlife films in the classroom that I participated in were the meanings, values, or production methods of the films discussed.⁵³ In the classroom, the messages of the films were normally treated as mirrors of “reality”, but this does not necessarily mean that students internalize what Bousé (2000) refers to as “false consciousness” (p. 17). Jeanette, a former student at Falkskolan, told me about how her choice of profession as an animal caretaker has also influenced her zoological gaze in her leisure time:

You get to see animals in another way after some time. You don’t want to watch nature films anymore, unless there is something that you really have a special interest in, since you switch on your professional gaze all the time. This also applies to animals you meet in your leisure time: you immediately look at what their fur looks like, what breed and sex they are, and so on. /.../ I get annoyed when animals in nature films are given [personal] names, or when the filmmakers add smacking sounds when the animals eat. Moreover, in nature films they choose which animals are “good” and which are “bad”: The audience may never see when a group of dolphins takes a female away from her flock to rape her for several days before bringing her back to her flock again. (Excerpt from field notes April 2, 2004)

Concluding remarks

In wildlife watching activities we find reflections of different notions of human-animal relations and intertwined with these are oscillations within a binary structure of similarities and dissimilarities between humans and animals. As

⁵³ At least not in ethology or zoo management classes. In animal protection classes, where the objectives were not primarily to learn basic facts about the animal species dealt with, the pedagogical approach was somewhat more critical and as far as wildlife or other animal related films were used as learning materials in these classes, a critical analysis of their messages was often encouraged.

school activities, watching wildlife took place in different settings and with different degrees of formalization, but was in general structured by explicit or implicit expectations regarding the students as to *what* to look for, *how* to look, and how to *respond* to their observations.

There seems to be more to watching wildlife than just formal learning of basic ethological facts and consolidation of a shared professional and scientific discourse. Teaching about animal behavior by making references to human behavior is often a pedagogically motivated approach, but may also imply a hidden curriculum manifested as a lesson in character education with several layers of values and meanings. In wildlife films, this hidden curriculum may (in analogy with the findings of Bousé, 2000; Chris, 2006; Ganetz, 2004 and Pierson, 2005), on the one hand be seen as an anthropomorphic imposition onto the animal world of values and structures recognizable from above all contemporary Western society. On the other hand, a reversal projection seems to be taking place when biologically determined models of explanations evoked in wildlife films are applied to human society. As Bousé (2000) has suggested, the projection process thus operates in two parallel directions and in this manner both reinforces and universalizes its messages.

The first of these is the fact that the text is written in a very simple and direct style, which is characteristic of the author's writing. The second is the fact that the text is written in a very simple and direct style, which is characteristic of the author's writing.

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Concluding remarks

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Part V
BODY

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BODY

Animal corporeality: A theoretical overview

The four chapters that follow are linked by different notions of the *body*. In each chapter, the animal body is explored as a primary focus of interest and also as an object of domination and exploitation. The purpose of this brief introduction is to indicate a few ways in which the animal body is conceived of not as subjected to the animal's own integrity, but as accessible for manipulation and control by human beings. In this manner, the body becomes not only an object of, but a *vehicle* for domination. As will be demonstrated throughout the following chapters, this understanding of the animal body as open to human use is in many cases both controversial and contested, and may be viewed as a site of struggle between competing discourses and systems of meaning.

Many contexts of human-animal encounter and use seem to entail an idea that animals *are* their biological-material bodies, entrenched within a realm of ahistorical biological fixity (Birke, 1994). Their cultural meaning *is* as bodies, not as selves (Birke & Parisi, 1999). Animal bodies are conceptualized as commodities, production units, "renewable" natural resources, trophies, and as "models" for various human diseases. This reduction of the individual being to her biological functions is a form of subordination that animals throughout history have shared with categories of "otherized" humans. Such overlaps between meanings ascribed to animal and (some) human bodies justify the formation of a "body politic" that includes both. Moreover, as Elder, Wolch and Emel (1998) write, animal bodies can be used as vehicles to racialize, dehumanize and maintain power relations between human beings (for instance, when the animal practices of certain cultural traditions are used to mark ethnic groups as "uncivilized" and to legitimate the animal practices of the dominant culture).

To conceptualize animal (and human) bodies beyond a mere collection of biological functions and processes, a number of theoretical devices have been used. Bodies may be seen as surfaces that can be coded, marked, or inscribed with various ethically and socially charged meanings (Birke, 1994; Elder, Wolch & Emel, 1998; Philo & Wilbert, 2000; Twine, 2001), but also as active agents engaging with social inscriptions, for instance, when a "lab rat's" biting and squealing disrupts the data produced from the experiment (Birke, Bryld & Lykke,

2004). In a more technical vein, Haraway (1991) speaks of biological bodies as objects of knowledge whose meanings are actively generated in scientific discourse by an “apparatus of bodily production” (p. 200).

The discursive “marking” of bodies is a process that facilitates their exploitation and control. Twine (2001) has analyzed the social construction of marked human and non-human bodies, and sees marking as a process of literal or symbolical status devaluation; as three examples when literally as well as symbolically inscribed marking of bodies have taken place, Twine mentions slavery in the United States, the Nazi Holocaust and modern farming procedures. Through a wide set of discursive markings, *otherness* is constructed relative to normative, “unmarked” bodies, since the meanings of the markings carry certain assumptions about identity, ability and agency that are ascribed to the individual. Twine (2001) notes that especially the literal marking processes are often integrated parts of some economic purpose or commodification arrangements. Particularly animal bodies have become objects of commodification, since the commercial circulation of them has expanded dramatically within an increasingly globalized capitalist world order (Emel & Wolch, 1998). In order to reconfigure the “body politic” that discursive markings inform and sustain, Twine (2001) suggests analyzing the effects of marking on differently oppressed bodies and attending to their similarities; a point which I also pursue in the subsequent chapters and which implies intersections of human and animal oppressive practices.⁵⁴

The perspective Twine (2001) emphasizes, the body as a site of contest over essence, power, and “truth” when explaining human and animal otherness, has been extensively explored also by Desmond (1999). She has termed the epistemological framing of the body as a repository of truth, that which is really “real”, as “physical foundationalism” (p. xiv). She remarks that bodies function as material signs for categories such as gender, race, cultural identity, and species. This means that (perceptible) bodily differences are seen as meaningful in themselves and are “marked, calibrated, measured, and mobilized politically to naturalize various social relations” (p. xxiv). In this manner, the body functions epistemologically to anchor paradigms of social difference and classifications as well as certain ideological formulations. The power of this conception of the

⁵⁴ During my field study, practices of (literal) marking of wildlife, lab animal and companion animal bodies were discussed in the classroom on a few occasions (field notes November 12, November 22 and November 29, 2004). In one wildlife management class, a parallel was drawn with the literal and symbolic marking of humans (criminals) that has been carried out throughout history. The teacher’s brief analysis ended with the remark: “Being branded is not fun, it hurts.” (Field notes November 29, 2004)

body is reflected by human and non-human typologies and taxonomies of which bodily difference is a basis (Desmond, 1999).

Conceptions of the body have ethical implications. Bodies have been described as ethical territories, or “the medium through which ethical consideration either sticks or falls away, and which ethically charge, or otherwise, the spaces that the bodies concerned are occupying.” (Jones, 2000 p. 285) If the individual body is conceptualized as part of some collective of abstracted bodies rather than as an ethical unit in itself, the body and the spaces surrounding it may be left invisible, as ethical “blanks” (p. 285). The ethical “blanks” derived from the abstraction of the animal body facilitate the killing of animals in agriculture, laboratories and hunting fields; practices that are also challenged in some classrooms in this study.

The multiple ways in which animal bodies have been disciplined, standardized and put to use in animal agriculture, biotechnology and entertainment industries are facilitated by the conceptualizations of the body outlined above and have been analyzed in terms of Taylorist, Fordist, Foucauldian, as well as post-humanist theories (Desmond, 1999; Franklin, 1999; Noske, 1997; Novek, 2005). In the industrial manufacture of animal bodies, some bodily characteristics and behaviors are seen as non-profitable or otherwise undesirable and simply done away with, whereas others are enhanced or (if not there from the start) artificially produced. In these ways, animal bodies are moulded and incorporated into human-controlled enterprises (Noske, 1997). As Desmond (1999) remarks, it is imperative to uncover the various meanings of physical presence and how the focus on its qualities operates within systems of social differentiation, legitimates exploitation and obscures the complexities of its historical origins that have legitimated human and animal oppression with a similar logic. This is a common theme of the following chapters.

Predators, omnivores, and “militant” vegans. The school as an arena for meat normativity

Introduction

Among all dimensions of the human-animal relation, one of the most habitual activities in which we interact with animals takes place at the dinner table when we sit down to eat them. Consuming animal body parts and animal body fluids functions as a reference point justifying a range of other animal exploitation practices and is a part of the socialization process for most people in Western societies. The present chapter (and the one that follows) explores the various explicit and implicit roles the school may take in this process of food socialization.

Beardsworth and Keil (1997) emphasize eating as a fundamental part of human experience that potentially carries powerful and multifaceted symbolic charges related to broader social, economic and political processes. When we eat, we not only consume nutrients, but also meanings and symbols, so food thus provides us with a useful perspective from which to study society (Bildtgård, 2002). Through eating, the individual becomes accustomed to distinguishing food from non-foods and learns the food categorization system of her or his culture (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997).

Beardsworth and Keil (1997) use the concept of “menu”, defined as “those sets of principles which guide the selection of aliments from the available totality” (p. 67), to analyze eating habits and preferences. From this perspective, a *traditional menu* is based on customary eating practices whose supporting beliefs, authority and legitimacy have been established over several generations. The hegemonic status of traditional menu norms involves viewing certain food choices as “natural” and taken for granted rather than as an option among a range of possible alternatives. In the light of a traditional menu, non-conforming food selection practices risk being viewed as deviating from the created food normativity.

I argue that in contemporary Swedish society, animal-derived products such as meat, milk and eggs dominate the traditional menu and the consumption of these products thus carry normative elements. Beardsworth and Keil (1997) point out that there is also an argument for an innate taste for meat; an inbuilt “meat hunger” in humans due to evolutionary and physiological factors. Meat consumption in contemporary society cannot, however, be understood solely on biological grounds. Twigg (1983) and Eder (1996) speak of the modern Western context as an “ideology of dominant meat culture” (Twigg, 1983 p. 18) and as “carnivorous culture” (Eder, 1996 p. 150). In Twigg’s analysis, the dominant culture accommodates a hierarchy of foods in which meat is most highly regarded (to the degree that it even stands for the very idea of food itself).

Throughout this chapter I will use Gålmark’s (2005) definition of meat normativity (formulated with inspiration from Tiina Rosenberg’s queer theory research):

Meat normativity is the institutions, structures, relations and acts upholding the norm of other animals as living objects for man to use in whatever way found appropriate, especially as matter in the production and consumption of everyday “meat”. (Gålmark, 2005 p. 67, author’s translation)

What, then, *is* meat? In her ethnographic study of slaughterhouse practices in France, Vialles (1994) distinguishes a range of strategies employed to make slaughter morally acceptable and to see the animal slaughtered as something edible rather than as a repulsive corpse. She found a highly complex system of relationships and representations operating inside the slaughterhouse, such as a series of dissociations surrounding the moment of the kill and conceptually keeping it at a distance. Vialles concludes that “meat” is neither the animal nor the corpse of the animal. Through a physical and symbolic process of de-animalizing, the animal is transformed into foodstuff, a *substance*, with all the links that attached it to a once living body severed.

What are the symbolic meanings of meat, which make it *the* central component in a complex eating pattern? According to Twigg (1983) and Franklin (1999), since eating meat involves the literal incorporation of the animal body into one’s own, certain qualities and powers of what is perceived as the “animal nature” (such as physical strength, energy and passion) are imagined to be promoted by meat eating. Fiddes (1991) adds that the privileged position of meat in our food system primarily derives from it symbolizing human domination over the natural world. It follows from this view that meat is valued *not in spite* of the domination and exploitation of animals involved, but *because of*

it. Meat has other connotations as well, some of which will be discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

The first part of this chapter focuses on different expressions of the meat norm in the school context, and the last sections discuss research on connections between meat and issues of social justice.

Meat normativity in the school context

The impasse of meat

Neither the vocational animal caretaker programs nor the theoretical programs I visited specialized in food production or the animals within that system. There was therefore no apparent reason to promote any particular food-related values over others in the students' formal education. Despite this, food narratives that offered no real alternative to meat were often prevalent in the students' learning contexts.

In the animal protection course at Falkskolan the teaching and learning material "Animal Ethics" (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003) produced by the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture was frequently used. One section in the material, entitled "The last journey" (*Grisarnas sista resa*), is a report from a pig farm. The report reproduces a range of elements for perpetuating the hegemonic position of meat (such as toning down the elements of domination and coercion inherent in meat production) while effectively dismissing any counterhegemonic (vegetarian) voices. It does so by applying two main strategies: By depicting a happy narrative of a largely problem-free situation for the pigs destined for slaughter, and by refuting a number of *imagined* counter-arguments from voices that are not allotted any space for expressing themselves in the material. The first strategy claims that the pigs themselves actually have something to gain from their position as slaughter animals ("Pigs are bred for the sake of human beings. This is the precondition of their life. Otherwise they wouldn't have existed." [Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003 p. 16, my translation]). The second strategy indicates that there is a subordinated critical discourse the text has to act on in order to maintain its convincing power ("Equating animal and human value and ascribing animals human feelings is alien to [Annika, the pig farmer]." [p. 19, my

translation]). In this manner, the text also makes the human-animal boundary appear “natural” rather than socially constructed.⁵⁵

As one of the main textbook materials used in the animal protection course, the content of “Animal Ethics” to a great extent helped shaping classroom activities. These focused on alternatives to *conventional* production systems, not on alternatives to animal agriculture as such. By comparing in detail “organic” systems of animal agriculture to conventional, the former are presented as unobjectionable, and during the animal protection lessons the label for organically produced products, KRAV, is continuously underscored as standing for “good environment, good animal care, good health and social responsibility”. In a written assignment given to animal protection students at Falkskolan, they were asked to suggest measures for making more consumers choose KRAV-labeled products when shopping (November 15, 2004).

To the students, the alternative to choose organically produced animal products as the *only* feasible alternative to exploitative animal agriculture practices has an appealing power as a way to manifest concern about animals without a fundamental change in consumer habits (cf. Jönsson, 2005). After one animal protection lesson, one student says to her classmate: “Now when I get home I will say to my parents, ‘don’t *ever* buy anything else than KRAV-labeled products!’” (field notes September 27, 2004)⁵⁶

Also the issue of slaughter was dealt with in the animal protection course. The students were given the assignment to compare information on the websites of the NGO *Animal Rights Sweden* and the Swedish meat producers’ association *Swedish Meats*. The students were asked to describe their impression of these two websites and to discuss them in class. During the discussion, the teacher Sofie encourages critical analysis of both photos and texts on Swedish Meats’ website, and even employs a form of immanent criticism in her teaching approach. Nevertheless, the classroom discussion ends by accommodating the meat normativity discourse:

Sofie expresses with irony in her voice her own impression of Swedish Meats’ website: “The best thing that can happen to a pig is to be slaughtered by Swedish Meats! That really is pig heaven!” She asks her

⁵⁵ It is possible that the text has been produced with some intention of “objectivity” as pictures and descriptions from the actual slaughter process are included and the author asks the farmers and slaughterer a few critical questions, but critical aspects are not given priority.

⁵⁶ In an interview with an animal protection teacher, she described her promotion of KRAV-labeled products in the classroom as a first step in raising student awareness rather than as an endpoint, believing that empowering students to make *one* small movement toward positive change would trigger a snowball effect. (Interview transcript October 24, 2003)

students if they have reacted to the cute farm and the [agricultural] cycle on the website. She remarks that they [Swedish Meats] write “The *meat’s* way” and not “the *pig’s* way” from the farm. Sofie encourages her students to give critical viewpoints on both websites [Swedish Meats’ and Animal Rights Sweden’s]. One student remarks that Swedish Meats wants to sell products, but that that is not the aim of Animal Rights Sweden. Another student says that if you’re a meat farmer, what choices do you have? Students’ comments on Animal Rights Sweden also argue that the organization may generalize bad examples of slaughterhouses, and that they try to attract new members. /.../ Sofie asks where the students believe the truth is to be found. “In between”, the students suggest. (Excerpt from field notes October 4, 2004)

The critique initially laid out in the classroom situation above is incorporated (by teacher and students together) into a grey zone in which what is perceived as “extreme” positions on both sides is avoided. However, by dealing with the two organizations as if they were equals,⁵⁷ the power relations structuring the different conditions in which each actor operates are obscured. The teacher’s initial critique is transformed into a reinforcement of the meat normativity discourse, which remains in an unthreatened authoritative position. This position was further maintained by the teacher explaining “blunders” in the slaughter process (such as stunning failures) by “the human factor”, thus describing animal welfare problems as a responsibility of individual slaughterhouse workers rather than as a problem inherent in the structures that make the routine slaughtering of animals for human consumption at all possible. When asked what the reasons might be for “blunders” happening, the students came up with suggestions such as “lack of manpower, saving money, pure negligence, and insufficiently educated personnel” (field notes October 4, 2004). By questioning certain *practices* in the animal agriculture industry rather than the industry as such, student attention is channelled in the direction of keeping the animal production system intact.

The “productivity” of the meat norm

In Foucault’s (1984) analysis, the effects of power are *productive*, in the sense that power actively produces reality and rituals of truth. In his dissertation on the regulation of Swedish food habits by medical discourses, Bildtgård (2002) uses a Foucauldian conception of power when analyzing how eating is productively

⁵⁷ Swedish Meats is a group (owned by farmers) with a workforce of 3,800 and annual sales of SEK 9 billion (Swedish Meats, 2006). Animal Rights Sweden is an NGO with 27 employees (Djurens Rätt, 2006).

regulated by certain societal actors and discourses. I argue that the normativity embedded in the hegemonic position of meat shares elements of productivity inherent in Foucault's conception of power and in Bildtgård's analysis of the regulation of eating habits at large. In this respect, the productivity of the meat discourse entails not only a passive expectation to adhere to a normative eating pattern, but an *active reinforcement* of these norms. In order to be effective, the reinforcement or regulation of eating habits must permeate the individual's privacy and achieve a self-regulation of the subject (Bildtgård, 2002). An example could be when non-vegetarians criticize the situation of animals in the food production industry but still defend their choice of a meat-based diet, or the other way around when vegetarians seek to neutralize their choice of a plant-based diet by subtly advocating meat normativity. Both are examples that I encountered during my field study.

A school has numerous venues in which to enact such regulation of eating habits. In the schools I visited, eating regulation became most visible *outside* the classroom environment, on study visits and excursions when teacher-student interactions developed in a more informal and (seemingly) less authoritarian atmosphere as social ties were formed around rituals of eating. Avoiding animal-derived products myself, in these situations I had the opportunity to partake in the actual *experience* of the minority of students and staff who were vegetarians, rather than just observing how their "deviant" eating patterns were dealt with. Misunderstandings and confusion in planning or pre-ordering of vegetarian meals, vegetarians having to wait for their meals, and other food-related restrictions (limited supply, or even lack of vegetarian food) that applied only to the vegetarians or to those who simply preferred to eat vegetarian foods for the moment; never to the meat eaters, were patterns that occurred with some frequency.

On a three-day long excursion with Falkskolan during which the responsibility for the purchase and preparation of meals was circulated between small teams of students (under school staff supervision), vegetarian students were largely left to cater for their own food purchases, more or less excluded from the meal community of the larger group. The purchase of food supplies for the excursion was planned in advance by the school staff and carried out in an organized manner at certain selected supermarkets or grocery shops on our way to our final destination. Vegetarian foods were not included in the planning. On these occasions, when the bus stopped, the staff asked that the vegetarians go inside the supermarket and buy their own food, whereas the meat was purchased collectively under the guidance of a staff member. After arriving at our hostel, it

became clear that the vegetarians had not been sufficiently informed about how many meals they had to plan for, resulting in their quickly running out of food and being reduced to eating the vegetables accompanying the “collective” main (meat) dish (field notes June 2, 2004). At the breakfast table, the following morning all cheese is gone. Only slices of meat are left for the sandwiches:

Several students express dissatisfaction. “I want cheese!” says Elin with irritation in her voice. Somebody finds a leftover, dry cheese rind. Another student remarks that it is probably unhealthy to eat it. This morning, a number of us have bread with cucumber slices for breakfast. (Excerpt from field notes June 3, 2004)

Lunch the same day was planned as a picnic, and once again the vegetarians were asked to buy their own food. The only vegetarian food found in the grocery store that did not require heating or preparation was bananas and soft cheese, eaten together with potato salad from the “collective” meal, which consisted of various sorts of meat. During the picnic I hear some students discuss vegetarianism. One student says that she could never be a vegetarian. Her classmate (Elin) replies that she managed to be a vegetarian for two weeks, then it did not work any longer. (Field notes June 3, 2004)

The “deviance” of these students’ food choices was thus *imposed* on them by giving them different conditions compared with the normative food behavior of the larger group. They were subjected to various acts of exclusion from the normal food routines and were marked out by a variety of more or less subtle mechanisms, whereas the “non-option” of meat eating was the unmarked, self-evident, “normal” and natural way to behave that never required further explanation:

Back at our hostel for lunch on the first day. Enormous amounts of sausage are being prepared. Three of us are frying soy sausages (Fanny [a student], Roger [a teacher], and myself). Then we sit down beside Bengt (another teacher). On the table in front of Fanny lies the empty soy sausage package. Bengt jokes about the soy sausages. He asserts that they are made of meat byproducts. Fanny joins in the joking. She pretends to read the list of ingredients on the package and confirms Bengt’s claim about meat byproducts with the intention of scaring Roger (the vegetarian teacher). A discussion starts on the nutritional value of the soy sausages. I hear no such discussions about the other (animal derived) sausages. (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

In the next example, another student, Elin, chooses a contrary strategy to Fanny by *challenging* the coercive meat eating rituals. She does this by evoking the formal knowledge taught in another school context – the animal protection course.

When she expresses this act of resistance, Elin is met by different attitudes than those encountered by Fanny above:

Elin and her classmate Maria sit down beside myself, Bengt and Kerstin (school staff). Kerstin (the staff member assigned responsibility for the overall meal planning during the excursion) appears proud over the food she planned for dinner, which she refers to not in terms of “the food”, but “the meat”. Elin remarks disapprovingly that it could be broiler chickens and says with an obstinate voice: “If it is broiler chickens, we’ll call Gunilla!” (Gunilla, who didn’t join the school trip, teaches the animal protection course.) Elin gets no response from Bengt or Kerstin. The discussion is discontinued. On our way back, Kerstin says to me that it would have been nice with some red wine with the tasty meat. She does not mention Elin’s earlier comments. (Excerpt from field notes June 2, 2004)

Elin breaks an unarticulated social norm by requiring conceptual space to make visible the silenced third party who has been made invisible in the meat normativity discourse – the slaughtered animal and her previous experiences as a living, sentient being. But there is no such conceptual space available. Theoretical knowledge learnt in the animal protection course about the situation of animals in the agriculture industry turned out to have little relevance or application to the real, lived relation to animals manifested by Elin’s school outside the animal protection classroom. At this moment, these two situations constitute two very separate realities.

Meat and identity: The vegetarian other

Bildtgård (2002) underscores the significance of food for the perception of our identity. In spite of the common view of food as something intimately tied to the private sphere of individual choice and preferences, it is nevertheless a marker of social identity and group affiliation. In this section, I will investigate how the meat-eating subject is constructed in the school context – a process mainly operating through the construction of its antithesis, the vegetarian or vegan other. Primarily in relation to the vegetarian antithesis, the positioning of the meat norm becomes most meaningful or comprehensible (cf. Bickford, 1997).

When the vegan or vegetarian “other” was constructed in classroom interaction during my field study, the focus was typically on presumed deficiencies in the vegan/vegetarian diet, health problems and other difficulties and potential threats associated with a meat-free lifestyle (such as the fear that animals will become too numerous if they are not eaten). Positive aspects were rarely raised. Meat, on the other hand, was in general presumed to be a problem-

free or even necessary nutrition source for humans. Meat hazards were rarely discussed, although BSE was brought up at a few occasions.⁵⁸

In the following example from Falkskolan, the students had been given the assignment to do Internet research on various animal protection organizations and to present their findings to the rest of the class. A list of organizations was provided by the teacher Gunilla as examples. Two students, Johanna and Rebecka, chose the Vegan Society in Sweden (an organization on Gunilla's list):

When Rebecka and Johanna finished their short presentation of the organization and of vegan ideology, one student in the class asks if they [Johanna and Rebecka] could imagine themselves going vegan and gets the reply "[Vegans] are crazy!". One of the girls says, however, that she could be a vegetarian, but being a vegan feels "a little too way out". Another student in the class asks: "All [vegans] are not like that, are they?" /.../ Gunilla wonders if a political position is part of veganism. Johanna and Rebecka read out aloud from their notes: ethical reasons, health reasons, environmental considerations and (global) food supplies. They remark that if you look at the organization's website, there are very distinct guidelines [on how to live]. Gunilla mentions another school where there have been problems with pupils (she refers to these students as "militant vegans", but says that she doesn't like using that word) who refuse to feed reptiles with mice. It is a strange situation, she says, animals can't be vegans. They [the "militant vegans"] confuse things. A student in the class comments that some people force their children to be vegans. Her classmate confirms that her cousin does that. Gunilla says that it is possible to do it [be a vegan], but very complicated. And it is tricky when you go to a restaurant. (Excerpt from field notes March 17, 2004)

Gunilla's use of the epithet "militant", however reluctantly, is a marker of the vegan as the "other". Being a meat-eater, on the other hand, is presumed as the "normal" and *neutral* antithesis of veganism: No question is raised about what political position comes along with meat consumption. As one student put it, children are sometimes deliberately raised (or "forced") by their parents to be

⁵⁸ In a discussion on animal ethics in a social science class at Ormskolan, a student regarded the "mad cow" disease as positive for the animals in the meat production industry since it resulted in nobody wanting meat from countries other than Sweden anymore due to fear of the disease (field notes December 1, 2004). BSE was also the subject of an ethology lesson at Falkskolan. Although both teacher and students expressed criticism of the animal breeding practices that led to the outbreak of the disease, the teacher ended the lesson by remarking that when the issue is not raised by media, it is not on the agenda anymore and you forget about it. During a visit to London recently, she ordered veal at a restaurant, without thinking about BSE (field notes May 26, 2004). In the classroom, meat hazards were thus not seen as a significant reason for choosing a meat-free lifestyle.

vegans. Meat eating, on the other hand, is thought of as unmarked, self-evident behavior, in effect beyond the realm of (reflective) choice. Clearly, being vegan is defined as being outside the norms of the social community constructed in the classroom.

In the learning materials I investigated, vegetarianism or veganism was rarely mentioned, at least not in a positive context. A material on environmental issues used at Teknikskolan is introduced with the following text: “What do you think about when you hear the word ‘environment’? /.../ Do you think about politicians dressed in suits, about business leaders or about militant vegans and correctly-fitting shoes? Or do you think about yourself?” (Holm, 2003b p. 6, my translation) The student targeted in this material is obviously not expected to be vegan. As an exception, a social science textbook at Falkskolan mentions veganism in the same context as feminist, anti-racist and other social justice movements in a chapter entitled “Politics”, but all these movements are depicted as attracting mostly young people. While this aspect may attract students’ interest, it also risks giving counterhegemonic resistance an aura of transience. In a chapter on “Economy”, however, the extensive meat consumption in the industrialized countries is briefly recognized as an environmental threat (Cronlund, 2003). In a biology textbook by Ljunggren *et al.* (2003) vegans are allocated place in the food chain as “herbivores”, but the explanation concludes with the characterization of humans as *omnivores*, thus securing a place for meat in the human diet.

Meat-based and plant-based foods are thus depicted as intimately tied to certain identities and subject positions. The differentiation is not only endorsed by the school but the positions are also valorized - usually in favor of the normative, traditional menu of meat.

Gastrocentrism: The animal as “meat”

A way of upholding meat normativity is to ontologize animals as “naturally” consumable (Adams, 1993) and to focus on the animal as reduced to the product she/he produces. This tendency to conceptually reduce animals to meat-producing entities has been termed *gastrocentrism* by Linzey (2004). During my field study, I found that gastrocentrism was often incorporated into contexts where the food dimension was *not* the central issue.

Gastrocentric views applied to wild and domesticated animals alike, in learning materials as well as in lectures, sometimes combined with explicit encouragement of students to eat meat. In a natural science textbook used at Falkskolan, a fact section on crustaceans is introduced with the following text

encouraging students to go crayfishing; an activity connected to the seasonal custom of crayfish consumption in Swedish culture:

August nights

Taking part in crayfishing is a real experience. Warm August nights, the rowing boats move along creeks and lakesides. Crayfish cages prepared with pieces of fish are placed on the muddy bottom at 1-2 metres depth. Usually you can't see the bottom. You can only get an idea of the muddy habitat of the crayfish. The cages are marked with a buoy. A couple of hours later they are inspected. One after the other they are lifted up into the boat and emptied. Soon a rattling sound is heard with scores of crayfish crawling around in buckets and boxes. August nights are wonderful! (Andersson *et al.*, 2000 p. 52, my translation)⁵⁹

Gastrocentric messages are commonly coupled with euphemistic language that glosses over elements of domination and violence in the human-animal relation, as in the formulation "Ducks have been bred to *give* more meat" in a section on evolution in a biology textbook used at Falkskolan (Karlsson *et al.*, 2000 p. 203, my translation and emphasis). Similar formulations are found in several other learning materials. In a chapter on genetics in a natural science textbook used at Bokskolan, the cattle breed *Belgian Blue* is called "a specialized meat producing unit" and described as being *adjusted* to meat production, giving an image of an almost natural process (termed "animal improvement") largely without invasive human interference (Henriksson, 2000 p. 165, my translation).⁶⁰ Andersson *et al.* (2000) raise the issue of Belgian Blue in a slightly skeptical manner – but not for ethical reasons: "Is this a 'practical' breed for Sweden, since we are not allowed to give the animals growth hormones? Would other breeds suit us better?" (p. 167, my translation)⁶¹ The same material describes the practice of insemination as "[a] technique that we have accepted. Our cows have in this way changed to become very high-producing both when it comes to meat and milk. They belong to the world elite!" (p. 158, my translation)

⁵⁹ The same book states that "Crayfish are tasty animals, which are both easy and interesting to dissect. Give it a try!", and "Lobster is a familiar crustacean delicacy." (Andersson *et al.*, 2000 p. 52, my translations). In a biology textbook used at the same school, a factual description of a certain deep-sea fish species ends with the remark: "Despite its name, this fish still belongs to the delicacies after it has left the frying pan." (Ljunggren *et al.*, 2003 p. 227, my translation)

⁶⁰ The "animal improvement" process may be analyzed in different terms. Noske (1997) speaks about farm animals being alienated from their own body in the modern animal production system since the animal body has been manipulated to work against the animal's own interests. I find Noske's analysis especially applicable in the case of the Belgian Blue breed.

⁶¹ Critique against Belgian Blue was, however, briefly expressed by the teacher Bengt in an endangered species class at Falkskolan. (Field notes March 9, 2004)

Also other parts of the physical school environment displayed gastrocentric messages. At the animal facilities at Ormskolan, the information sign next to the cages often contained information on whether the animal species displayed is used for human consumption or not.⁶² During the introduction week for the new first-year students, the supervising staff actively reinforced the gastrocentric perspective when presenting the animals to the students. In the example below, I have joined a student group, which is given a guided walk through the premises of “the barn”:

At one rabbit cage, Mia (supervising staff member) tells the student group: “In here we have a Gotland rabbit. Some people eat Gotland rabbits, but we *don't* eat them.” Other rabbits are introduced in a similar manner: “These are also meat rabbits, they are very big, you get a lot of meat from them.” When we reach the henhouse, Mia goes into the house and comes out with a hen in her arms. It is a traditional rural breed. Mia explains that this breed has been part of Swedish agriculture for several hundred years, and that it is used in meat production: “There is quite a lot of meat on them”, she says as she carefully removes a loose feather from the hen’s body. She explains how to hold the hen and says that now we will carry out a health check. “Hi there, now I’ll mess with you a little”, she says softly to the hen as she shows us different parts of the hen’s body and tells us how to check whether she feels well. Mia lets us touch the body of the hen. “Quite a lot of meat on her. From what I have heard, they are supposed to taste great. I’m afraid I have not tried them and will probably not do so either”, she remarks. (Excerpt from field notes September 14, 2004)

While the surface structure of the lesson above focused on the animals as living, sentient subjects, the recurring remarks by the supervisor operated in a different direction and conceptually transformed the animals into inert objects predestined for human consumption. Students were asked to actively reproduce this transformation process during the guiding course in the second year when they were trained to guide groups of visitors at the school’s animal facilities. They were then told that the hens should be presented using the terms “meat breed” or “egg-producing breed”.

⁶² A few signs displayed a geographical and/or temporal distance to consumption of the meat of certain companion animal species: “Wild guinea pigs live in South America’s grassy areas. There, they were kept by the Indians, who enjoyed eating their meat. When the Spaniards arrived they found [the guinea pigs] so cute that they brought some of them home to Europe.” “Originally this [rabbit] breed was bred for slaughter production but is today a very popular pet rabbit.” (Field notes September 14, 2004, my translations)

The meat norm as biologically determined

In an outline on gender theory, Moi (1997) has shown how the argument of biological determinism has justified subordination of women in society. Biological determinism builds on the idea that societal norms are based on biological facts (such as biological differences between the sexes) that have their origins in nature and that they therefore must follow what is perceived as “natural laws” so that social arrangements (however oppressive) may thereby be accepted as “natural”. In the case of human-animal relations, human consumption of animals is often explained on the basis of a biological deterministic logic by deducing human meat consumption from (carnivorous) animal behavior. In this kind of argument, humans are *meant* to eat animals which are, in turn, *meant* to be eaten (since animals eat each other). Human consumption of animal flesh is thereby perceived as more or less a “law of nature” rather than an act of choice that reflects primarily a structure of meat normativity. An information leaflet about an exhibition entitled “Between us predators” (*Oss rovdjur emellan*) visited by Falkskolan may be mentioned as an example. With an ambition to refute fears of and prejudices towards “the five big predators” in Sweden (i.e. bear, wolf, wolverine, and lynx. The fifth one, as claimed by the leaflet, is the human being), the leaflet states that “We [human beings] are also predators” and in a “fact column” the human being is described as an omnivorous animal and a predator. To underscore and enhance the predatory determinism in humans, a recipe for a reindeer meat dish is included in the text (Elander *et al.*, 2003).

In some of the meat narratives I encountered in the schools, biological determinism overlapped or merged with the idea of “the chain of being”, a conception with religious overtones of the universe as a rational, intelligible, continuous order in which nothing is arbitrarily constructed and in which there is for every being an ultimate reason (Lovejoy, 1957). This conception could be traced in some of my interviews, such as in the interview excerpt below with a teacher from Ormskolan, in which the teacher describes how he has dealt with a vegetarian student who has expressed ethical concerns about killing animals in school. His description takes the form of a reconstructed dialogue with the student:

“Are you going to *kill* all these baby mice?” [the teacher imitates a sobbing student] “/.../ What do you think happens in nature? The snake takes a few, the buzzard takes a few, the fox takes a few. What do you think? [*inaudible*] are you stupid /.../?” She [the student] was resigned. She replied like this, “Yes, of course, if you think about it. But isn’t it a little bit sad?” “I don’t know if I think that it is sad”, I said. “We are born on a

planet and as long as we can't leave this planet and some creator, /.../ or some system, has seen to it that we should live in this manner, it is actually the way we live. And in principle, you are a vegetarian. Do you really think it is fair to cut off plants by the roots, you might cut off a life." [The student] had *never* thought about that at all. "What makes you think that a lettuce thinks it is fun to get cut off by its roots?" Complete silence. "I suggest that we don't talk about this anymore, let's move on." She graduated with *very* high marks, very high marks. (Excerpt from interview transcript September 24, 2003)

Using biological determinism and "the chain of being" as tools for asserting his own authority, the teacher assigns his student to an intellectually inferior position by telling her that her conscientious doubts about killing mice (and, by extension, her vegetarianism) are irrational, inconsistent, and against a natural order.

The logics of biological determinism and "the chain of being" emerged not only in the natural science context. For instance, the pig farmers portrayed in the Ministry of Agriculture's material "Animal Ethics" justified their business with the argument "Pigs are bred for the sake of human beings. This is the precondition of their life. Otherwise they wouldn't have existed." (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003 p. 16, my translation), and "For [Annika, a pig farmer] it is self-evident that animals are part of nature's cycle where they are also used and eaten by human beings." (p. 19, my translation) In a written assignment in a social science lesson at Ormskolan when the students were asked to reflect on questions in the material, with few exceptions most students said that meat consumption is natural or even *necessary* for human survival.

The narrative of biological determinism did not always pass by unchallenged in the classroom. For instance, in a lesson on animal ethics at Bokskolan the general theme was the philosophy of Peter Singer and the concept of speciesism, and on the basis of this theme the teacher (Johan) initiated a critical discussion of meat consumption. However, he encountered resistance among his students. In the example below, a student claims that animals have no feelings and live according to their instincts, and that therefore eating them is justified. Johan questions the argument, but the discussion still ends with a reinforcement of the meat norm:

It is the question of suffering that is interesting, regardless of how developed their emotional life is, Johan says. Another student argues against his teacher: "Eating animals could give their life a purpose". "Is there a purpose with a cow's life, to become an entrecote?", Johan asks with some irony in his voice, and turns to the rest of the class: What do

you say about that? One student comments skeptically: "That's a good purpose." Another student then raises the issue of painless killing. Johan picks up the philosophy textbook and reads out aloud a long section from it: /.../ *But provided that an animal ending up on our plate has been treated well and slaughtered in the right way, it has after all been given a possibility to live a fairly comfortable and carefree life ... probably a better life than if it had been living in the wild. The animal would probably not have even existed unless it was bred to be slaughtered. So despite the animal ending up on our plate, the fact that it has been given an existence should mean that the total amount of interests attended to is larger, at least as long as the animal has received good care.* (Quoted in Persson, 2003 pp. 77-78, my translation) (Excerpt from field notes October 5, 2004)

The message of the story recited by Johan above is that humans actually act altruistically toward (meat-producing) animals. That this relation is necessarily an unequal one based on dominance and coercion is obscured. The relation is, rather, depicted as a form of social contract of mutual benefit and interest, a win-win situation, where the exploitation of the subordinated is justified as being for her own good (cf. Gålmark, 2005 on paternalism). Adams (1993) argues that concern about whether (meat-producing) animals can exist without being destined for slaughter reproduces their ontologized status as exploitable.

In a seminar on animal ethics in a social science lesson at Ormskolan, the meat discussion followed a structure roughly analogous to the above, but with the counterhegemonic arguments coming from the student group rather than from the teacher. In one of these dialogues, a student defended human slaughter of animals on the grounds that slaughter has been developed from the animals' own way of getting food. Another student, referred to below, challenged the biological determinism in her classmate's argument, but in the end the discussion was brought back to the stabilizing domain of "humane" treatment of animals in the meat-producing industry:

We have bred the pigs to produce an additional row of cutlets so that there will be more meat on them. There are incredible amounts of meat, we eat meat almost every day, at several meals a day. It is terrible to see. It is so unnecessary to kill so many animals. We human beings are small creatures, we don't need so much meat. To be an animal friend we would have to take all these animal breeds away, let them die, since they can't manage outside if we release them.

The student's classmate replies that as it is now, the pigs are not allowed to exercise their natural behavior. It would feel much better to eat meat if they [the pigs] had a better life, I don't understand why they can't legislate so that selling meat is not permitted unless the animals can exercise their natural behavior. The farmers get so many subsidies from the EU. (Excerpt from field notes December 1, 2004)

Intersections of meat normativity with other power arrangements

Roles of meat in the production of human “otherness”

Meat normativity has implications that stretch beyond human-animal relations. Fiddes’s (1991) analysis of meat as a symbol of human power over the natural world extends also to meat as a symbol of power over *human* others, typically women and people of color (who historically have been attributed characteristics locating them closer to nature than the white male). There is also a class dimension to meat consumption. From these perspectives, the meanings of meat are located in a fabric of power hierarchies and unequally distributed resources and may be seen as part of a strategy to preserve this order.

A number of implications are therefore embedded in the context when meat is elevated as a norm and as *the* traditional menu; implications that go beyond the perceived nutritional value of animal-derived products and link meat normativity to issues of gender, ethnicity and class. A few of these implications were occasionally highlighted in the learning environments I studied and there is a significant body of research that has analyzed these perspectives. I present a brief summary of some of these works in the sections that follow.

Meat and gender

Adams (2002), Derrida (1995) and Franklin (1999) (as well as a number of other theorists) have tied ideas of masculine identity to the production/consumption of meat. In the West, meat consumption has traditionally been linked to the development of “masculine” attributes such as strength, health, muscle power, vigor and virility (Franklin, 1999). Franklin (1999) remarks that the association of masculinity with meat is found in everyday norms and assumptions and does not only concern the *consumption* of meat. Activities around meat production (such as hunting and butchering) and the skills required to perform these activities are often coded as masculine (cf. Vialles, 1994) and also form key masculine rites of passage in many societies.

The roots of gendered narratives of meat can be traced back to material conditions of the past (Adams, 2002; Nibert, 2002; Willard, 2002). An example comes from the WWII era when the supply of meat was limited and reserved for men (primarily soldiers). The association of meat consumption with building a nation of physical strength and ability was explicitly expressed as a foodrationing strategy. As material conditions change, the narrative articulations that support

meat eating also change, but remain framed by a patriarchal structure (Willard, 2002).

Adams (2002) has developed analytical tools for investigating the multiple meanings of meat in relation to patriarchal rationales, such as the overlap of cultural images relating sexual violence against the human female body to the exploitation of the animal body in the meat-producing context. To Adams, patriarchy as a gender system is implicit in human-animal relationships. By speaking of the “patriarchal texts of meat” she develops a way of conceptualizing the meanings of meat and situating their production within a political-cultural context. Adams defines the recurring messages of these “texts” as including associations of meat with masculinity and attitudes that violence toward and objectification of other beings is a necessary part of life. As with the position of women in patriarchal narratives, the animal’s role in the texts of meat is to be the possessed object. These perspectives relate to what Derrida (1995) has termed *carno-phallogocentrism*, which refers to the schema or image that implies “carnivorous virility” (typically of the adult male) as the determinative center of the subject.

Meat as a Western “food regime”

In an analysis of the “racial” meanings of meat, Adams (2002) notes that advocates of white supremacy in the 19th century endorsed meat as a superior food, implying that plant-based foods (seen as “lower” than meat in the food hierarchy) were appropriate for “savage” races and other “lower” classes of society (including white women). These ideas prevailed into the 20th century when there was a notion that meat eating contributed to the preeminence of the Western world. According to Adams, the imperialist history of meat is upheld each time meat is articulated as the “best” source of protein, since the emphasis on the superiority of meat reflects the role of industrialized countries to determine what food is highest in the hierarchy. Franklin (1999) adds that the support of Western countries for intensified animal protein production may be explained not so much by Western food orthodoxies as by Western trade and market interests. Today, the highly organized business of intensive “livestock” production has been defined as part of a “food regime” (linkage of food production and consumption to capitalist forms of accumulation and regulation).⁶³ The global necessity of increased animal protein production was emphasized by the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

⁶³ For reviews of facts and figures on the animal agribusiness industry, see, for instance, Holm (2003a) and Nierenberg (2006).

in 1967 in order to fight world famine, in spite of a widespread recognition that plant protein production could be more efficient for this purpose. Western countries have supported the idea of intensified animal agriculture on a global scale and turned it into a “food regime” through favorable subsidies, policies and a range of other strategies. Meat-producing corporations have organized themselves into powerful political lobby associations that operate with an interest in advancing their industries rather than from an interest in human nutrition and health (Franklin, 1999). When Third World countries are forced to set apart land for the production of raw materials for the Western animal agriculture industry, food imports become necessary to feed their own population, whose dependence on the West increases (Noske, 1997).

Industrialized killing of animals and humans

Another intersection between meat and oppression of certain categories of humans is indicated by the parallels that have been drawn of the mass slaughter of animals and large-scale exterminations of human beings, such as the Holocaust. At a technical level, the two phenomena bear many similarities (but also differences in purpose)⁶⁴ (Patterson, 2002; Sax, 2000). In Vialles’s (1994) analysis, this analogy needs to be rendered invisible if industrial animal slaughter is to be considered acceptable. The focus on slaughter standards and regulations “rescues” the process and makes it possible to experience it as a neutral necessity.⁶⁵ This focus on slaughter regulations in animal agriculture is in particular a product of modernity which juxtaposes notions of technological efficiency with ideas of the humane, as seen in electrical stunning techniques: “The goal of pain reduction, or its complete disappearance, also entails slaughter at its most orderly and mechanistic.” (Burt, 2006 p. 131) In “humane” killing methods, a clinical element is incorporated that positions the idea of animal pain and awareness as an object that can be measured by technological devices and

⁶⁴ Comparisons tend to focus on the practical arrangements and the logics of argumentation characterizing the two, rather than on the presumed experiences of the human and animal victims. Sax (2000) writes that the Nazi death camps resemble abattoirs in several respects except that the killing in the former case is carried out largely without practical utility. Both industrial slaughterhouses and concentration camps are organized as factories where rationalized and mechanized large-scale killing is taking place. Sax suggests that the concentration camps may even have been modeled after industrial abattoirs. Furthermore, many Nazi practices also made killing of people seem psychologically easier by blurring the boundary between animals and humans, for instance by forcing the victims to crowd together naked and by branding and herding them like herds of cattle or sheep (Sax, 2000). Patterson (2002) analyzes these and other parallels in further detail.

⁶⁵ This strategy has also been applied when the victims have been human beings. Forsman (1992) refers to a statement by an Auschwitz doctor indicating that the technical details of the killing procedure at concentration camps were focused on rather than ethical concerns about the killing as such.

decided on by scientific authorities (Burt, 2006). As Pick (1996) and Smith (2002) point out, these “humane” orders of killing may justify and render neutral and “clean” deaths on a rationalized and large scale. In the school context, the importance of natural behavior of animals and “humane” slaughter methods seemed to serve a similar function of toning down the emotions that emerged among some students when discussing the killing of animals for food.

Class perspectives on meat

An analysis of meat consumption in Western society needs to consider its historical origins as a class marker and how it is situated in the capitalist system of production. Franklin (1999) describes meat as “the very consumption of wealth” (p. 145), and Fiddes (1991) notes that in medieval Europe meat was consumed in greater than average quantities by those who particularly sought political and economic power. To the elite, meat consumption was a way of manifesting privilege and social status and marking their differentiation from common people. The symbolic capital of meat was manifested not only in the quantity consumed, but also in its quality and variety. Consumption of desirable “choice” cuts of animal flesh was a symbol of social class hierarchy (Nibert, 2002).

As Nibert (2002) remarks, in capitalist society food is produced to generate profit, and in modern capitalist agricultural systems meat is mass-produced. It follows that “factory farming” and similar abusive practices are not to be seen as occasional anomalies in an otherwise benevolent food producing system but as a *logical outcome* of a meat normative capitalist order (Adams, 1993). Noske (1997) has described how animals have become incorporated into production technology in the process of mass production. By artificial inseminations, genetic manipulation, mutilation and other measures, the animal is modified and designed to suit the production system and optimize productivity. Animals, or features of them, that cannot be made productive tend to be eliminated by this system. In a Marxist analysis, Noske links the deanimalization of animals in agriculture industry to the dehumanization of workers in the capitalist production system by showing how Taylorist principles of scientific management apply not only to human workers but to animals as well (considering the precise calculation of animal physical and behavioral traits in terms of gains and losses, and the devices used by the industry to optimize animal output).⁶⁶ In the process, animals are being alienated from their own

⁶⁶ Noske’s use of this theoretical model has, however, been criticized on the basis of differences in conditions between human workers and animals (Novek, 2005).

bodies and bodily products (that have been appropriated by the factory management), from their bodily functions when they are streamlined to become specialized in a certain “skill” (such as producing meat or offspring), and from their natural environment (the ecosystem) (Noske, 1997).

There are also other aspects associated with meat in relation to social inequalities. In a discussion on animal ethics in a social science class at Ormskolan, one student said that we would be able to feed many more people in the world if we stopped eating meat and instead cultivated crops in the areas now used for grazing “livestock” (field notes December 1, 2004). Her statement highlights the links of intensive meat production and consumption to the world economy. Franklin (1999) outlines how modern “livestock” production developed out of exploitation of militarily acquired and colonially organized land (frequently involving slave labor) for purposes of economic expansion in the 16th–19th centuries. Overstocking and overgrazing quickly degraded the pastures, leading the industry to continuously look for opportunities to appropriate new grazing lands (for instance virgin rainforests). As a symbol of social progress as well as a tool for capital accumulation, meat has had a function of serving the interests of elite classes over the ages (Nibert, 2002), and one consequence of this is the environmental problems generated by intensive animal agriculture (Noske, 1997). FAO has recognized the “livestock” sector as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems at both local and global levels (Steinfeld *et al.*, 2006).⁶⁷

Conclusions

At a symbolic level, meat carries multiple connotations that reach beyond functional nutrition. Deeply tied to these values is a meat normativity that structures, regulates and delimits eating rituals of individuals in society. In school, this normativity is institutionalized to become part of a hidden curriculum that permeates several dimensions of education (including dimensions that are not formally related to food). Normative narratives of meat are productively created and re-created by a range of verbal, visual and action-oriented strategies in the school environment, leaving little conceptual space for counterhegemonic (vegetarian) resistance.

Although attempts to situate the authoritative meat narrative within a critical framework (of, for instance, social justice) were occasionally raised in

⁶⁷ For an analysis of how environmental degradation particularly affects disadvantaged human and non-human social categories within a capitalist framework, see McLaren & Houston (2005).

classroom discussions, negotiations on which level criticism should be located usually ended up in a "safe" domain where the meat normativity paradigm remained in an unthreatened hegemonic position. However, certain legitimating conceptions seem necessary for the "naturalizing" of meat to appear morally acceptable and obscure the structural relations of power and domination involved in its production. Examples of such conceptions are "humane" treatment and slaughter of animals and the consumption of "organically" produced meat as well as the logics of gastrocentrism and biological determinism. The legitimating conceptions were sometimes delivered to the students by the school, and sometimes co-constructed in teacher-student interaction or among students themselves. In Adams's (1993) words, these conceptions depoliticize meat normativity, re-affirm its supposed neutrality and strip it of historical materialist relationships.

The relations between the meat norm and challenging perspectives appear, in many classroom situations, at first to be loosely structured with a potential for counterhegemonic voices to gain persuasive power when critical perspectives are initiated and encouraged. Despite challenges and negotiations, at the end of the school day the meat norm seems to retain an authoritative position with most learning materials, teachers and students taking part in its reproduction. The transition from criticism to maintenance of the status quo may occur in a gradual fashion or more abruptly, but either way the meat norm emerges as a framework setting the stage for how classroom interaction will evolve.

Chapter 19

The milk phenomenon

Introduction

Cow's milk and milk products are part of the staple diet in most Swedish households and have (alongside meat) been ascribed a role as representing food as such, but the meanings carried by milk as a drink for human consumption are multifaceted and changing. According to DuPuis (2002), 19th century milk reformers in the United States created an image of milk as a complete and *essential* form of nutrition, consumed by human beings universally over time and space. When Barthes (1999) characterizes the symbolic value of milk, he sees it as a substance with a calm, white, lucid strength that joins, covers and restores. Milk is associated with purity and the innocence of the child. Also Kjærnes (1993) sees milk as associated with a spectrum of positive values such as “a harmonious relation between human being and nature” (p. 79, my translation) as well as a strong national symbol (in the Norwegian context).

Jönsson (2005) has studied the phenomenon of milk in a Swedish context, and found that the versatility of milk has contributed to the special position it holds as a foodstuff. According to Jönsson, milk is associated with sensual pleasure, an expression of a desire to take care of children, health considerations and a range of different political standpoints. In Sweden and in other Scandinavian countries as well as in the United States (DuPuis, 2002), milk has also been attributed with qualities related to the narrative of modern progress.

However, milk also symbolically and materially represents domination and exploitation of animals as well as over categories of human “others”. These are issues that will be explored in this chapter, beginning with an overview of different manifestations of milk in the school environment.

The milk lobby in Swedish schools

Jönsson (2005) has traced the prevailing association of dairy products with good health back to ideas related to popular medicine in the old Swedish agrarian community. He remarks that, with slight exaggeration, “the entire modern

Swedish childcare system is built upon milk” (p. 31, my translation). The organization The Milk Propaganda (*Mjölkepropagandan*), formed in 1923, operated with schoolchildren as an important target group and arranged special milk lessons in schools.⁶⁸ With the aim of increasing milk consumption, the organization cooperated intimately with the dairy companies and also with the Swedish authorities, which was a politically uncontroversial issue since all political parties took a positive stance toward dairy products. Especially the Social Democratic Party saw free school milk as an important part of a progressive social policy (Jönsson, 2005).

The dairy industry has managed to maintain its historically privileged position in Swedish society, which is reflected in the space allotted to milk advertisements in schools. Jönsson (2005) notes that the dairy companies seem to be the only commercial actors that can expose their company names and logotypes more or less free of the restrictions that other companies encounter in schools. In all the schools I visited, milk messages were to a greater or lesser extent allotted space in the physical premises of the school. These messages often carried the name or logotype of an agribusiness or other food (dairy) related company.

One company brand in particular – the dairy company Arla – seemed to dominate the school environment, typically the school canteen areas, encouraging increased consumption of (Arla-produced) milk. At Ormskolan, color posters (with Arla’s logotype) depicting grazing cows under a blue sky decorated the school canteen, as well as a poster depicting large glasses of milk with the text “smarter, more alert, more fun! The energy drink from arla”. An Arla-produced poster depicting a cow saying “I am not only a cow, I am organic as well”⁶⁹ conveyed an image that the cows actively endorse their own exploitation (field notes August 18, 2004, my translations).⁷⁰ Arla’s presence in the schools was recognized in my interviews with students and staff. A teacher at

⁶⁸ cf. the National Dairy Council in the United States, organized in 1915 to promote dairy products, primarily among schoolchildren, by speeches, distribution of publications, and activities such as poster contests, milk plays and milk songs (DuPuis, 2002).

⁶⁹ From a Marxist perspective, DuPuis (2002) sees organic food production as just another form of “postindustrial” capitalism where the industry tries to meet new consumer desires for the purpose of greater profits.

⁷⁰ The creation of “speaking” animals in advertisements has been analyzed by Glenn (2004) as a discursive strategy of the animal agriculture industry to sell its products. The creation of animal “subjects” selling themselves not only conveys an idea that they consent to being eaten or otherwise exploited by humans, but also disguises the violence they are subjected to by the industry. An alternative reality is thereby constructed, hiding the actual reality from the consumers’ view. (cf. the imagery of “research-friendly” mice in laboratory animal advertisements, conveying an impression of these animals as altruistic “helpers” or “saviors” who consent to being used in research. [Birke, 2003])

Bokskolan told me about contacts and meetings with Arla representatives, and a student at the same school recalled having seen pictures from Arla in his school canteen (field notes November 4, 2003).

The canteens were not the only school areas where the presence of Arla was encountered. At the student office at Falkskolan, a large poster with the title "Hippology", depicting horses, carried the logotypes of Arla and another agriculture-related actor. A message at the bottom of the poster read as follows: "A greeting from Sweden's most beloved cow /.../ Milk gives you real horse power /.../" (field notes April 22, 2004, my translation). Also, centrally located in the main hall at Teknikskolan, colorful and trendy promotion postcards from Arla promoting the company's new products were freely available for all students to take (field notes September 16, 2003) and in learning material on environmental issues used at the same school, a section entitled "Food" is illustrated with a photo of a breakfast table with two packages of dairy products. Arla's logotype is clearly visible on both packages (Holm, 2003b p. 52).

Whereas symbols of milk (and meat) normativity were permitted by the schools to occupy a range of different spaces in the school environment, vegan or vegetarian messages (to the extent that they appeared at all) seemed to be restricted to certain pre-defined areas, typically student bulletin boards. A compilation of arguments for vegetarianism was posted on the student bulletin board at Falkskolan (field notes May 12, 2004).

A Swedish documentary TV program, *Uppdrag granskning* (2005), has examined powerful political and economic forces that influence the special position of milk in Swedish society, as well as its relation to health problems such as child obesity and heart disease. According to the program, the EU-subsidized school milk scheme serves the economic function of disposing of the overproduction of dairy products caused by the milk quotas created to give European farmers a guaranteed income. The surplus dairy products that cannot be sold by the farmers are purchased by the EU and disposed of through, for example, the school milk scheme, protected by the milk lobby, in spite of its potentially detrimental health effects on consumers. Also in the United States, the government and the dairy council have collaborated to increase milk consumption in schools as a solution to dairy farm income problems (DuPuis, 2002).

Foucault's (1984) analysis of the productive effects of power may be applied to an analysis of the contexts of milk production, representation and consumption. When two social science textbook materials used at Teknikskolan ask us to imagine what a future society could look like (Andersson, 2003;

Sandén, 2003), they presuppose that our daily lives will be lived in an environment characterized by technological advances. In these high-tech future scenarios, it is also assumed that the traditional menu of cow's milk consumption will retain its hegemonic position. In a graphic representation of an imagined future scenario we are told how an "intelligent refrigerator" will work: "The fridge is out of milk and automatically sends an order to the supermarket" (Sandén, 2003 p. 68, my translation). Further, a question suggested for discussion in one of the books asks us to envision "what you think that the milk package of tomorrow will look like" (Andersson, 2003 p. 13, my translation). These examples illuminate how milk normativity subtly operates in actively creating the preconditions for its own perpetuation.

Milk and gender: Exploitation and representation of femaleness

From the image of milk as essential for good nutrition, it follows that milk must be available at a low price all the time (DuPuis, 2002), and the female (cow's) body needs to be appropriated and put to use in this production. As indicated in the canteen at Ormskolan, it is the image of the cow that is used as a primary marketing tool by the Swedish dairy companies. In Jönsson's (2005) analysis, the cow functions as a fetish, in the sense that she evokes a certain reality (or image of reality) by simulating it. The cow in the dairy advertisements represents a yearning for the authentic, the pure and the real; a yearning for an idyllic agrarian context that has never actually existed (Jönsson, 2005). The image hides the actual situation for female animals in the agriculture industry, where their exploitation relies on manipulation of their reproductive system. Cows are kept pregnant so that they can be milked constantly and are killed when their productivity, reproductive efficiency and profitability ends (Adams, 2002). In her ethnographic study of Italian cattle breeding practices, Grasseni (2005) concludes that "Milk and cows are the end products and the focus of investment of farmer and breeder who wish to sell their milk for high prices" (p. 46). The value of the cow in a capitalist order lies in her "genetic capital", which is calibrated by quantifying her functional potentialities. This "industrialization of organisms" (p. 35) is the result of a process of commodification in which the bodies of cows (and bulls) are economically calculated, translated into a set of criteria of "excellence" and inscribed into diagrams, listings, and genetic indexes (Grasseni, 2005). In the milk advertisements, however, these arrangements are made invisible.

While the exploitation of femaleness in the dairy industry is (primarily) focused on the cow, the *representation* of femaleness in the industry's marketing strategies is not limited to *animal* others. DuPuis (2002) notes that milk advertising in the United States has reflected changing ideas of motherhood and the role of the female. Pastoral images of a milkmaid tending the cow and overseeing the purity of the milk connect images of motherly nurturance and "the natural". By the turn of the century, new images of authority had been created. The milkmaid was replaced by an industrial (male) expert who mediated the relationship between women and their children in nutrition campaigns that predominantly took place in schools, providing an ideology of the healthy body. In Scandinavia, a different kind of strategy was applied in 2003 by the dairy company Arla to market new product concepts of flavored milk in Denmark. The "ambassadors" for the new products, the "Mini girls" (*Minipigerne*), whose bodies were exposed in the advertising campaign, were supposed to sell Arla's milk with physical sexual attraction (Jönsson, 2005). Here, one female body – the human – is used in order to perpetuate exploitation of another female body (the cow's).

Milk and ideas of white supremacy

One of Arla's promotion postcards, which were made available for free to the students at Teknikskolan, depicts a woman of color under a shining sun whose lip has stuck to one of Arla's products, a bottle of cold coffee with milk. The visual message of the postcard appears to both align and contrast with Jönsson's (2005) historical analysis of the connection of milk to sentiments of Swedish nationality, according to which milk was seen as an important tool in the creation of the welfare state and the idea of modern progress. The national governments in the Nordic countries attempted in the 1920s and 1930s to make milk a means to produce a population of muscular fitness and health, thereby creating a new national identity. Similar ideas were developed in the United States, with the message that by drinking milk, the perfection of the body and the perfection of society go hand in hand (DuPuis, 2002). Jönsson's (2005) analysis relates these ideas to the white color of the milk, not only as a symbol of modernity, cleanliness, hygiene, progress and order, but also as a relation to white skin. He remarks that what the milk propaganda promoted as a perfect food would make a majority of the world's population ill, since a large majority of the people living outside Northwestern Europe and North America are lactose intolerant. In this way, milk could also be used as a tool for emphasizing the supremacy of the white race. When white Northern Europeans and North

Americans claimed that milk was a perfect food, they simultaneously emphasized their own perfection and the perfectibility of the (white) physical body (DuPuis, 2002). This is illustrated by a drawing from 1934 reproduced in Jönsson's (2005) dissertation, in which a black boy is standing beside a white girl. The text reads as follows: "You, Negro boy, keep your coffee! And you, Swedish girl, drink the nice, white milk!" (p. 41, my translation) The picture was drawn by a child inspired by a medical doctor's lectures on health on the radio and in schools.

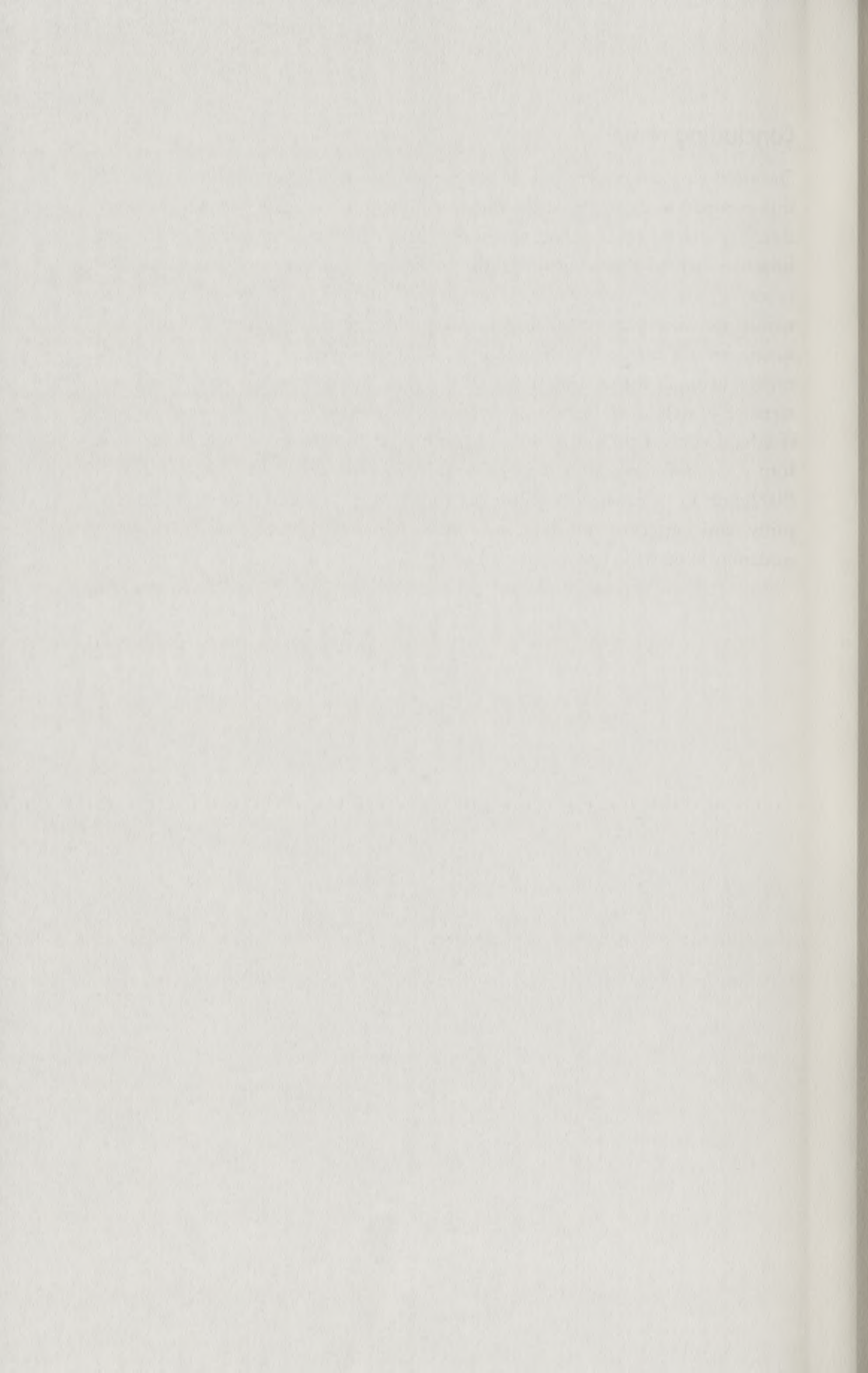
Some elements of meaning that used to connect white skin with (healthy) milk and black skin with (unhealthy) coffee, and to separate and valorize these two categories, are still detectable in Arla's promotion postcard displayed at Teknikskolan, although their demarcations seem to have blurred. The visual message of the postcard may be viewed with DuPuis's (2002) analysis as a background. She compares the identity politics of contemporary U.S. milk advertisements with those in the 1920s:

Yet there is one significant difference between these ads and the 1920s versions. The old milk ads portrayed one form of physical perfection: white beauty and athleticism. The new milk mustache ads instead portray a wide diversity of people in terms of race and social background, including the comedienne Whoopi Goldberg and the Clinton cabinet member Donna Shalala, both of whom have more than a 50 percent chance of being genetically lactose-intolerant. Yet in the eerie similarity of each picture, the voice of authority ("Got milk?") implies that milk drinking is a universal, everyday practice, no matter what your race, culture, or social background might be. The image is a classic example of the politics of perfection. (DuPuis, 2002 p. 218)

The role of coffee in Arla's marketing strategies is explained by Jönsson (2005) as a way to use the contemporary coffee trend to increase declining milk consumption among young people. The company's strategies extend toward the Third World, a new market for Arla. Jönsson (2005) notes that Arla in 2003 became known for dumping the price of milk powder in the Dominican Republic with the help of EU subsidies, depriving small-scale local farmers of their possibilities to sustain themselves. In 2005, it seems to be China that is in focus for the dairy company's market expansion efforts. One reason is reported to be a growing interest in milk consumption in Chinese schools. The widespread lactose intolerance among Chinese people seems not to be seen as a problem by Arla, since "studies show that it is possible to get used to milk" (Beck-Friis, 2005).

Concluding remarks

The symbolic values of cow's milk are part of the privileged position of milk and milk products as elements of the traditional menu in Swedish society. However, there are several problematic conditions pertaining to dairy products and the industries behind them, including the intersection of animal exploitation with issues of gender and ethnicity within a commodifying framework. These conditions were present neither in the commercial advertisements of dairy companies nor in more subtly milk-promoting messages exhibited in the physical environments in the schools I visited. Instead, these messages reproduced the narrative of milk as an "innocent", perfect and even necessary foodstuff, devoid of ethical concerns. From these perspectives, the normativity of milk rests on both a symbolic and on a materialist, politico-economic basis. Or, as DuPuis (2002) puts it, "[t]he story of milk /.../ shows us the way ideas about modernity, purity, and perfection must be continually renewed to keep the machine of modernity in working order." (pp. 241-242)



Chapter 20

“We have to kill the animals so that they won’t die!”

Classroom discussions about hunting

Introduction

This chapter explores how hunting issues are dealt with in the classroom. At Ormskolan and Falkskolan, the animal caretaker programs included hunting issues in courses on wildlife management and animal protection, respectively. Although Bokskolan did not have this animal caretaker profile, there was a course in the theory and practice of hunting and two philosophy lessons on animal ethics that included some discussions on hunting. The hunter education course was an optional course students were able to choose from amongst a range of other “complimentary studies” alternatives. It was the second consecutive year that this course was offered and 26 students had registered to take it. When I asked the teacher Martin on whose initiative the course was organized, he believed that it was on the initiative of Bokskolan’s principal who, at that time, was in the process of taking a hunter’s license himself (field notes March 17, 2004). In these contexts, hunting issues were focused on although they were not a central dimension of the curriculum at any of the schools.

During my field study, I was interested in finding out how relationships between humans and animals are socially constructed in the classroom as part of discussions about hunting. This chapter is structured around four main themes: After a brief outline on how hunter education was organized and justified in the schools, three different hunting practices (lion hunting in South Africa, British foxhunting, and Swedish wildlife management) are discussed with respect to how they took shape in the classrooms. This is followed by an analysis of how the hunted animal is constructed in each context. Finally, hunting is situated within a larger framework of previous research based on (primarily) gender analyses.

Justifications of hunter education in the schools

In the animal caretaker programs, knowledge and skills in wildlife management/hunting were seen as an important part of animal caretaker professions. At the social sciences oriented Bokskolan, hunter education was perceived by teachers and students alike as a learning opportunity that created possibilities for a recreational pastime and for achieving valuable knowledge about animals and nature. The inclusion of hunting as one among many other complimentary study options such as furniture painting, diving, and taking a driver's license, emphasized hunting as a hobby and equated it with these other activities. For Pernilla, a third-year student in the hunter education class at Bokskolan, the course was seen as a way to get easy school credits in what was otherwise experienced as a school with demanding study requirements:⁷¹

The workload did not seem too heavy... School work is heavy now in the end of the third year. /.../ I looked through the entire list of courses from top to bottom to find the one that seemed to be the easiest. I had earlier chosen courses such as furniture painting, and thought that was fun. (Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

In the hunter course syllabus, there is no mention of any critical analyses and the aims of the course are formulated as providing a background as to *why* hunting and wildlife management are *needed* (emphasis added). Susanne (a non-participant in the course), expressed a different notion about this when I asked her about her reasons for considering taking the course:

It could be very good to [spend] time out in nature and... get more knowledge about... the countryside... And some want to have hunt-..., protective hunting and so on and then... if you have more facts [you can tell the hunters] you can't shoot here and go moose hunting on this island, instead of not having any knowledge at all. They [the hunters] listen more to somebody who has more knowledge and... knows more. (Excerpt from interview transcript September 15, 2003)

Seeing the hunter education course as a tool of empowerment to confront hunters and protect animals was, however, an exception among the students I met. Acquiring knowledge about hunting in order to resist it was encouraged neither by the course syllabi nor the learning materials used. In fact in the main course textbook, *Jägarskolan* ("The Hunter School")⁷², hunting was described in

⁷¹ Even the teacher remarked in a conversation with me that the requirements for passing the course are not very high. (Field notes March 31, 2004)

⁷² The textbook was produced by the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management, an NGO that organizes Swedish hunters and represents their interests. I was informed by the teacher

deterministic terms by it being an “innate instinct, an original drive” that is “deeply rooted in human nature” (as) our “oldest expression of culture” (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 pp. 13-14, my translation) and as a “natural” form of interaction with nature. The course textbook expressed this as important for the following “corrective” reasons:

To many city connected industrial people, the killing shots of the hunter may seem repulsive. They regard the animals as almost immortal and their conception of reality is not improved by romanticized and distorted nature descriptions in the spirit of Walt Disney. (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 p. 16, my translation)

Another learning material, used at the wildlife management course at Ormskolan, justified hunting in terms of fauna preservation, regulation of animal populations, and “enhancing the availability of huntable game” (*Viltvårdskompendium*, 2000 p. 24, my translation). On its cover page, a paradox embedded in the claimed justifications for hunting was acknowledged in a quote from Uncle Jimbo (a character from the animated film *South Park*):

“WE HAVE TO KILL THE ANIMALS SO THAT THEY WON’T DIE!”

The production of an ethical “framework”

During my classroom observations, I found that hunting discourses took shape in accordance with certain criteria: The *location* of the hunt, its *purpose*, *who* the hunter is, *how* the hunt is carried out, its *circumstances* and the *animal species* hunted. These criteria constructed a complex blueprint against which various forms of hunting were judged and constitute the basis of a normative framework of the “sayable” in the classroom to which most students and teachers alike then adhered. To find out where in the “framework” students and teachers located different forms of hunting, I noted how and to what extent the different forms were criticized, and which voices (proponents or opponents of hunting) were ascribed authority. The following sections outline classroom discussions of three different hunting practices.

Beyond fair chase: Lion hunting in South Africa

Lion hunting in South Africa was the title of a critical undercover film investigation of “big-game” hunting adventure travel in South Africa that was shown to the students in the animal protection course. Prior to watching the film, the teacher,

Martin that the book was to be replaced by a revised edition, but during my field study period the old edition was still used.

Gunilla, used a range of pedagogical approaches to create critical awareness of this particular form of hunting. For instance, she gave her students the task of searching the Internet for information on hunting travel and asked them to find out whether there are Swedish companies selling such trips and at what prices. Gunilla then used the Internet pages her students had printed out in a critical introductory discussion for the film. She talked about the financial interests involved and that the animals are given drugs and kept in enclosed areas to make them easy targets and also mentioned that students in another class had discussed taking action against the travel organizers. After watching the film, Gunilla asked her class about their thoughts and at the same time expressed her own views: "What does it make you feel like doing [this film]? Drugging them [the hunters] and shooting them? I agree." (Field notes May 17, 2004)

In another class, a discussion unfolded as follows:

One student remarks that the travel companies try to attract customers by offering alcoholic drinks. Gunilla adds, with a critical tone in her voice, that one idea seems to be that they are supposed to drink during the actual hunt. Some students say that Swedish companies also sell such trips. "Who do they appeal to?", Gunilla asks, and continues: "It is often *men* of a certain *age*." Gunilla holds up the Internet pages her students have printed out and leafs through them. "Can you understand that people have so much money to spend on this... I think it is sick (and) as illegal as it can be /.../." (Excerpt from field notes September 24, 2004)

The critical message concerning this particular form of hunting was clear. The next example – British foxhunting – was equally strongly rejected, although its context was different.

Upper class symbolism: British foxhunting

The Hunt was the title of another film shown during the animal protection course. This film presented the heated controversy over foxhunting in Britain and was preceded and followed by a similar critical classroom discussion as the film on lion hunting in which the teacher, Gunilla, called it a "cowardly" and "entirely barbaric" form of hunting with the risk of wounding animals. (Field notes September 17, 2004)

During the actual showing of this film, no teacher was present. One of the students, Sara, took a seat right in front of the video screen and loudly commented on the film scenarios while watching. She positioned herself clearly on the side of the foxhunting opponents:

Sara raises her voice right from the beginning of the film: "Damn, how disgusting they [the hunters] are! Damned bastards – noble people!" She

imitates one hunter's speech in a ridiculing manner by grossly exaggerating his upper class British pronunciation and placing a tremendously heightened pitch on the last syllabus of his name: "My name is *Rupert!*" When we are shown a close-up of a hunter's injured arm, wrapped up in bandage, Sara laughs loudly. Shortly afterwards, she again demeaningly imitates the hunter's name: "*Rupert!*" By the end of the film, Sara echoes the exclamations of the anti-hunting demonstrators: "Scuummm!". (Excerpt from field notes October 8, 2004)

Sara's rejection of the entire foxhunting enterprise as well as the societal structures producing and re-producing it could hardly have been conveyed more effectively. The other students in the class also frequently expressed emotional reactions during the film.

The next lesson, Gunilla asked her students about the film. One student recited the hunters' explanation that they keep the fox population down so that there would not be too many foxes. "That is one thing", Gunilla replies, and then asks if the hunt wasn't cruel, too (field notes October 15, 2004). Sofie, another teacher who showed her class the same film, wrote a list on the whiteboard summarizing the arguments of both the foxhunting proponents and the opponents:

Foxhunting

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| + | - |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| (breeding!) | |
| ↗ | |
| - wildlife management | - painful |
| - right/cultural heritage | - upper class sport, leisure hunting |
| - status | - bad riding skills |
| - subsidies to the landowners | - wounding foxes |
| - job opportunities | |
| - money | |

(Excerpt from field notes November 8, 2004)

Sofie's list embodies an effort to give voice to "both sides" of the foxhunting controversy. However, her approach could only be understood as a pseudo action, since other signals, operating in parallel with the surface structure of the lesson, conveyed a different message. When talking about the arguments of the

proponents (the “+” column of the list reproduced above), her voice became sarcastic and she pointed out the immanent inconsistencies in their reasoning, thereby rendering their arguments largely invalid:

Sofie tells her class that in many places, the foxes that are hunted (purportedly to keep numbers down and reduce damage) are actually *bred* and that the wildlife management argument is therefore not correct. She further remarks that at the beginning of the film the hunter had a completely different view of the fox than at the end. Sofie continues: Some shooting teams go out before the foxhunt and fill up the [fox] burrows. If the fox manages to hide it is no real sport and then the hunters will be disappointed... The discussion ended with teacher and students co-constructing foxhunting as an upper class sport, creating a shared classroom identity in opposition to the foxhunting discourse. (Excerpt from field notes November 8, 2004)

The approach of giving voice to “both sides” was reflected in a written test a week later, where the students were asked to describe the viewpoints of the proponents as well as the opponents of foxhunting, and to outline their own thoughts about it. All the students expressed negative thoughts. Many of them referred to foxhunting as an upper class sport, which was framed as a negative feature and the fact that foxhunters shoot their hounds when they are not useful in the hunt anymore also provoked indignation among the students, seeing both the hounds and the foxes as being subjected to cruel treatment. Some students imagined themselves in the position of the hunted fox and described how they would feel in this situation. One student even compared the foxhunters to the Nazis in WWII. Another student wrote: “Hunting for pleasure is against human nature, or should be. The only form of hunting that is justified is hunting for food. Killing for pleasure is more like barbarity and all civilized societies should be above this”.

Benevolent intervention: Swedish wildlife management

In Sweden, hunting has a long history as a cultural tradition and there are almost 300,000 active hunters in the country (Åkerberg, 2005). Danell and Bergström (2005) describe the increasing emergence of the ecological perspective in Swedish wildlife management since the late 1960s as a form of all-embracing ideology, nurturing a view of the hunter’s mission as intervention in nature in order to adjust “nature’s balance”. Perhaps for these reasons, Swedish “wildlife management” was normalized in the classroom and largely escaped critique. Johanna, a first-year student at Falkskolan, explained to me that prior to the hunting discussions they had in class she thought that hunting was always wrong,

but now she thinks that animals sometimes have to be shot since we have taken all their predators away and otherwise “billions of roe deer would be running around everywhere” (field notes June 3, 2004). The rationale here is that as long as an animal population comprises a certain number of individuals, hunting is inherently unproblematic:

“How is it, are there many lynx [in Sweden]?” Peter (teacher at Ormskolan) asks. He continues: “There are so many that they *can* be shot.” He asks how many animals there must be before they can be hunted: At least 100 animals to get a stable population. When there are two to three hundred animals, hunting can be permitted. (Excerpt from field notes October 18, 2004)

The ethical underpinnings of the rationale constructed in the classrooms thus rendered “wildlife management hunting” both necessary and acceptable as a way of controlling the ecosystem.⁷³ The necessity and harmlessness of this form of hunting was further emphasized by positioning it against other more ethically objectionable forms. In the film *Lion hunting in South Africa*, it was explained that this sort of hunting is far from the annual moose hunt, which has broad popular support in Sweden. Swedish moose hunting is thus justified and framed as primarily unobjectionable and “good” by contrast. An interesting question is what happens when a student challenges this strategy:

Gunilla (teacher at Falkskolan) asks her class about their reactions to the lion hunting film. /.../ One student, Sara, explains that “I am against hunting, regardless of whether it is about minks or wolverines or what have you.” Gunilla then starts to talk about different forms of hunting. “Here, there was cheating on many levels”, she says, referring to the film on lion hunting. “What forms of hunting do we have in Sweden?” she asks. “Is it legal to hunt foxes and bears in our country?” “For some quarry, there are certain [regulated] hunting periods, why is that?” One student replies that there would be too many [animals]. What happens then? Gunilla asks, gets a reply, and continues asking: “What sort of damage do they cause?” One student suggests traffic accidents. Gunilla confirms: *So* many [people] die in crashes with moose, she says, and attempts to summarize the discussion: OK, then we agree that the [moose] population has to be kept down. Sara, who doesn’t accept her teacher’s conclusion, objects: “I can’t understand why you should kill animals for your own benefit”. One of Sara’s classmates argues against her: When these animals are hunted, at least the meat can be taken care of.

⁷³ A few teachers, however, critically remarked in the classroom that hunters want to have large populations of animals so that they can get permission to shoot them (field notes November 15 and December 2, 2004).

It is not merely trophy hunting. Gunilla gives support to the argument. Another student adds, "there was a list in the newspaper of what animals you are permitted to shoot when at home." Gunilla added: "You can take a look at the website of the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management and get a lot of correct information on regulations." (Excerpt from field notes September 10, 2004)

This classroom interaction indicates that there was a normative framework for certain forms of hunting. When a student contested the artificial consensus in the classroom, her perspective was neutralized by a black-and-white picture where the "bad" form of hunting got all the critique and the "good" form was safely protected. Opportunities for re-negotiating the hunting framework were closed off and the voice of authority – the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management – was presented as a neutral source of information and was given the final word.

The animal as hunting target: "Victim", "pest", "game", and "meat"

Depending on the context and form of hunting discussed in the classroom, the hunted animals were ascribed different roles. In the case of lion hunting and foxhunting, the animals were constructed as "victims" by teachers and students alike. The film on lion hunting, and the classroom discussions around it, emphasized that the lions are drugged and kept in enclosures to make them easy targets. Further, the film stated that: "Lions are stolen from the [nature] reserve to die without having a chance and end up on the wall of some rich Westerner." (Field notes May 17, 2004) Likewise, British foxhunting was framed in the classroom as "cruel", "cowardly" and "barbaric" with wounded animals as a potential risk. When animals are conceptualized as "victims", their sentience as individual beings is placed in focus.

In the case of "wildlife management", the hunted animals were conceived of differently. Moose, for instance, were said to increase too much in numbers and cause different types of harm and problems such as traffic accidents. In a wildlife management class at Ormskolan, wild boars were said to enter golf course areas and eat rare orchids, and beavers dig holes in and destroy roads (field notes October 25, 2004). By positioning certain animals as "problems" or "pests", justifications for killing them are defined. This rationale goes back to the 19th century when the Swedish hunting discourse often described hunting in terms of a civilizing project, a fight against "wild nature" and its pests that were considered undeserving of human protection (Dirke, 2005).

In order to justify hunting, animals do not have to be conceptualized as “pests”. “Game” is another epithet that alone suffices as a signifier of legitimate hunting. In the hunter education classroom at Bokskolan, “game” was defined as follows:

“What is ‘game’, Jenny?” asks the teacher Martin one of his students. He writes on the whiteboard:

Game – all wild mammals and birds

Hunting – [to] hunt, catch and/or kill game.

(Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

With this concise definition as a starting point, the notion of “game” animals was further elaborated in the hunter education classroom. In one lesson, a film giving instructions for how to search for animals that have been shot during the hunt was shown:

The film shows a close-up of the face of a roe deer being shot. Laughter is heard from some students. Next we are shown other shots aimed at roe deer, fox, and waterfowl. In some scenes, the shot is repeated in slow motion. When we watch waterfowl being shot and falling to the ground, the students laugh repeatedly. The dog comes running with a dead animal in his mouth, and the students laugh again. Then we watch a pigeon injured by the shot lying fluttering on the ground. The voice-over tells us: “Here, we have to send the dog quickly.” One student asks, “What sort of weapon do they use?” Martin, the teacher, does not seem to hear his question, but a classmate replies that it is probably pellets. It is difficult to shoot birds with bullets. A student sitting beside me comments to his neighbor, “Shooting birds is fun.” His classmate agrees. (Excerpt from field notes March 31, 2004)

The encounter between the students and the film indicated that an anticipated shared experience of using a weapon and the technical details of shooting are accepted as being of primary interest. A view of the animals as “game” was shaped in the classroom as part of the pleasure derived from the anticipated hunting experience, and one important element of this experience (and a marker of the success of the hunt) is the *size* of the animal killed (typically symbolized by the trophy):

(The teacher Martin writing on the whiteboard):

Moose

(Height): 180-210 cm bull

150-170 cm cow

"Can you imagine such a big moose?", Martin asks. One student asks: "Have you ever popped one like that?" Referring to the animal by the size of his antlers, Martin responds that "a 10-pointer is the biggest I've shot." (Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

Not only their size, but also the *number* of animals (conceptualized in terms of their availability for legal killing) seemed to be part of the value ascribed to the hunt:

When one student asks "Where are fallow deer found, then?", Martin explains that these animals have increased more and more in number. Another student then comments: "Out and pop 'em". Martin, echoing the student's comment, repeats: "Out and pop them, yes." He writes on the whiteboard: Wild boar – 125 kg weight – but also says that wild boar weighing up to 250 kg have been encountered: "Awesome, don't you think. Imagine driving over one of those"... One student, Karl, wonders how many moose may be shot: Are you allocated a certain number of animals that you are permitted to shoot within a specific period of time? Martin confirms this. The number [of animals] depends on the size of the area. Karl asks if the number [of animals] is [counted] per hunting team or per person. Martin replies that if you are on your own, "then you can shoot your moose". Karl laughs. Martin develops his comment by explaining that an area produces a certain value and that just now the authorities want more moose to be shot. (Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

In these classroom interactions where animals are viewed as "game", hunting is given a value that is socially constructed around certain quantitative indices, i.e. the number of animals available and their size. The animal's size is symbolized by the number of points of the antlers that will later be transformed into a trophy and by representations of the height and weight of the animal's body; both as a living creature and as dead meat. These examples of the symbolic exchange values of the hunt articulated in the hunter education classroom mean that hunting therefore cannot only be understood in purely economical or ecological terms. Hunting must also be seen as a symbolic meaning-bearing and identity-creating activity (cf. Bye, 2003; Cartmill, 1993).

There are more aspects of the notion of “game” animals. While individual animals are valorized in terms of their size, they are, paradoxically, also de-individualized so that one individual can be seen as representing all other individuals of the same species as a collective entity. Terms like “planting in” and “locating out” game (*Viltvårdskompendium*, 2000 pp. 41-42) are used that implicitly equate animals with plants or artefacts. The term “biomass” (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 p. 37) is also used. This term incorporates live animal bodies and plants in a collective quantitative/quantified entity at its most logical extreme, thereby denying them subjectivity. Although we are briefly reminded in a textbook chapter entitled “Hunting and ethics” that animals can feel fear and pain, another chapter, entitled “The effect of the shot”, presents the animal’s reaction to the shot in mechanical, Cartesian language largely devoid of such emotions (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 pp. 251 + 227-233).

Hunting is often seen as a way of actively inserting oneself into the “food chain” (and thereby achieving a direct connection with nature) (Kheel, 1999). Classroom discussions on hunting reflected this idea by including *gastrocentric*⁷⁴ dimensions, focusing on animals as producers of meat for human consumption in a discourse that was intimately intertwined with a normative view of meat consumption. In a discussion on animal ethics in a philosophy class at Bokskolan, one student remarked that “If we shoot the animals outside and eat their meat, they won’t have to experience the [animal] industry” (field notes September 30, 2004), seeing hunting as actually doing animals a favor by saving them from a destiny much worse. For this speaker, the point is that in the end animals are naturally predetermined to be consumed by humans anyway.⁷⁵

The co-occurrence of the discourses of hunting and meat consumption also took other forms. For instance, in line with Adams’s (2002) analysis of the slaughterhouse, the learning process in the hunter education classroom involved viewing the animal as a dead object, a lump of meat, even before the animal is actually hunted. One mechanism involved in this process was the concrete and abstract fragmentation of the animal body, reducing the animal not only to the sum of his/her anatomical parts but also to an object subjugated to human handling. In classroom interaction, this was expressed as follows:

⁷⁴ I have borrowed this term from Linzey (2004). See also chapter 18.

⁷⁵ The perceived acceptability of hunting animals for their meat led me to expect the issue of indigenous people’s “subsistence hunting” to be singled out in the classrooms as the most ethically acceptable hunting practice, but this did not occur in the discussions on hunting that I observed. Rather, these hunting practices were placed in a negative light, for instance, by focusing on whale hunting and bush meat hunting, which were either heavily criticized or otherwise negotiated in the classroom (field notes April 14, 2004; May 17, 2004; September 24, 2004; October 5, 2004).

(The teacher Martin writing on the whiteboard):

Carcass weight

“What is carcass weight, then, Annica?” he asks one of his students. Annica replies, and Martin comments on her answer: “You have taken out everything [from the animal body], taken away the head and [the flesh] beneath the legs.” And you have removed the skin, he adds. (Martin writing on the whiteboard): “Carcass weight: The weight without intestines, lower part of legs, skin, head, about 50%”... Martin says that it is called “carcass weight” since animals in the barn are slaughtered in the same way. “We should be able to shoot 50% of the winter [moose] population”, he remarks, adding to what is written on the whiteboard:

50% shooting

50% - calf

One student asks: “How big are the calves, approximately?” Martin talks about the carcass weight of calves. The next question from the class is: “How much can a big bull weigh?” Martin talks about the bull’s carcass weight, as well as their weight when alive. “Real beef,⁷⁶ right”, he says. (Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

In the examples above, animals are dislocated from original states of being, oscillating between their present life in the wild and their future dismemberment as dead raw material and it is in the interface between these two representations of the animal that a significant part of the hunting discourse operated in the hunter education classroom. In the process, the animal body is almost fetishized while the animal is transformed from living subject into a material and economic object (cf. Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2003).

Hunting as a gender and ethnicity marked activity

Previous critical studies on hunting include both gender and postcolonial analyses, and some of these studies have situated narrative frameworks of hunting at the intersection of gender and race marginalization and objectification (Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2003; Luke, 1998). Gender perspectives are particularly well represented in sociological research on hunting and such perspectives also emerged from my interviews and classroom observations, where occasionally a link between hunting, traditionally seen as a male domain, and gender was

⁷⁶ The word “beef” carries double connotations in Swedish: 1) A muscular body (of a living being). 2) A meat dish prepared for consumption.

explicitly acknowledged. Carina, a third-year student at Ormskolan, told me that at her school, the (optional) hunter education course was subject to affirmative action on behalf of female students, waiving the tuition fee for them. Eric, a social science teacher at Bokskolan, assumed that their voluntary hunting course primarily attracted boys, believing that male students feel that hunting is “close” to them and that female students experience more distance to it (interview transcript November 4, 2003). Eric’s assumption was supported by the fact that the hunter education class consisted of an overwhelming majority of boys (although a few girls also participated). The jargon in the hunter education classroom also affirmed the gender markers of hunting:

A student told an anecdote he had heard about a girl who shot for the first time. The teacher Martin seems to be familiar with the story, and joins in. According to the story, the girl [who hunted] had said “I have shot a little bull”. Martin reveals that it was a (big) 27-pointer. “And she [the hunter] was a girl, right”, he emphasizes, adding that the boys’ [in the shooting team] egos were probably slightly broken at that time. The boys had asked the girl [who shot the moose] to keep silent about it. The students in the classroom laugh. (Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

The perspectives expressed by the teachers Eric and Martin resonate well with previous research on hunting from a gender perspective. Bye (2003) points out that women may be welcome to join the hunting party as long as they comply with the conditions set by the men and as long as their interest in hunting does not threaten the male community. Female hunters are expected to follow the masculine discourse in which hunting skills are measured by the number of animals killed, the size of the animal, and the antlers. In Bye’s words, male hunters seek to protect the gendered (masculine) hunting space and find strategies that create a distance from feminine influence. Gunnarsdotter (2005) reports about similar experiences during her participant observations of hunting parties in a Swedish rural community.

The connection of hunting with masculine identity formation and male bonding goes deep (Cartmill, 1993), and previous studies point to several aspects of this connection. According to Bye (2003), the hunt “symbolizes and realizes modern man’s quest for the space to exercise his abilities, to build self-esteem and to manage on his own” (p. 146). But hunting has also been thought of as an analogy to warfare (Cartmill, 1993; Dahles, 1993). In the history of Swedish hunting, hunting has been viewed as a “manly” sport or war against “pests” considered enemies of human civilization (Dirke, 2005 pp. 76-79). This perspective contrasts with the contemporary view of hunting as harmonious

human-nature interaction alluded to in the textbook *Jägarskolan* (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 pp. 14-17; cf. Cartmill, 1995; Danell & Bergström, 2005; Kheel, 1999).

Studies on representations of women in hunting photos (e.g. in hunting and sports magazines) add other dimensions to the contrasting views of hunting, including gender stereotypical and sometimes sexualized ways of depicting women in hunting contexts (Bye, 2003; Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2003; Kalof, Fitzgerald & Baralt, 2004; Luke, 1998).⁷⁷ Connections of hunting with masculine identity formation are relational and may be expressed differently in different social, cultural and historical contexts, but still signal something that is potentially problematic. Narratives and representations of hunting analyzed by previous research not only indicate the objectification and subordination of human and animal others to a particular kind of masculinity, but also contribute to creating a hierarchical categorization of masculinity stereotypes in which men who do not hunt and who feel no innate urge to do so risk falling outside the normativity scale produced.

Hunting has been analyzed as not only gender marked, but also as an ethnicity marked activity. Previous research has found marginalizing or even objectifying representations of people of color in hunting and sports magazines (Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2003; Luke, 1998).⁷⁸ Links between hunting and affirmations of white (male) supremacy have a long history. Simpson's (1999) investigation of wildlife conservation in western Canada at the beginning of the 20th century illuminates how ideas of wildlife protection as securing future availability of huntable game have converged with the protection and perpetuation of ideas of white racial health and fitness. In his study of hunting in the Old South, Proctor (2002) notes that hunting was always an effective venue for the demonstration of white supremacy. Slaves were present in the hunting field as witnesses of the mastery of white hunters and as performers of menial labor in a scenario with associations to colonialism and imperialism through big-game hunting in distant continents (cf. Ryan, 2000)⁷⁹. As Cartmill (1993) puts it, colonial hunting rituals were symbols of Western dominion over the land, its animals, and its people.

⁷⁷ The learning material *Jägarskolan* used at Bokskolan contained a striking minority of illustrations (drawings and photographs) depicting women.

⁷⁸ In *Jägarskolan I* found no pictures whatsoever of people of color.

⁷⁹ Proctor (2002) describes how the meanings of the hunt changed as society changed in the Old South. Hunting became a driving force in the development and maintenance of slave culture and was reconceptualized as an activity that benefited the slave community by providing not only food, trade items, and a measure of autonomy, but also a means by which to deny the power of white hegemony.

The capitalist logic of hunting

In the West, hunting thus has a history as a manifestation of the identity and privilege of elite classes (Cartmill, 1993) that is perpetuated today in, for instance, “hunting to hounds” and game hunting as a form of adventure travel. This perspective of hunting applies only partly to contemporary Swedish society, where hunting engages also members of other societal strata. Contemporary “wildlife management” articulates the exchange value of hunting differently, embedded in a terminology incorporating the animals in a capitalist logic as exemplified below by interaction in the hunter education classroom:

Martin asks his students what they think is the term for a certain animal [deer] “in the prime of his life”. Martin gives the answer: “He is called *Capital*”, he says, writing on the whiteboard:

Capital – return

12 points (referring to number of points of antlers as a marker of “capital”)

About the opposite of the term “capital”, Martin explains: “He goes in return” (referring to reversed development of body/antlers). The students laugh. One student asks: “Do they all become ‘capital’?” When Martin replies that they don’t, the student continues asking: “It is not something that all of them achieve?” One of his classmates adds to the question: “How many points will it be for the moose then?” Martin explains further, adding that in Norrland (the northern part of Sweden) they have bigger trophies. (Excerpt from field notes April 23, 2004)

When presented to the students, this perspective opens up new modes of thinking about animals, and becomes part of the socialization process of becoming a hunter. The terminology embedding hunting in financial relations was further developed in the learning material *Jägarskolan*. In the section “Hunting and ethics”, the following statement was found:

Good hunting ethics is to tax the ground on its yield. To overtax is unethical. Not to usurp the biggest possible allotment on the license, without working long-term for big and vital game populations, from which the surplus is taxed, is an example of good hunting ethics. (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 p. 252, my translation)

The concept of “taxing” was frequently used as a synonym for shooting animals in the textbook *Jägarskolan*, which thus represented animals in terms of an economic and symbolic resource and killing in terms of a routine economic

transaction for regulating what is conceived as nature's surplus production.⁸⁰ This economic notion was presented already in the introductory sections of the textbook, where the value of hunting was calculated in percentages of "recreation value" and "meat value" in a manner that also added a certain pseudo-scientific aura to the hunting rationale. Animals are constructed as "game" and "game" is construed as a renewable resource, a production unit whose successful management generate both "meat output" and "pleasures and trophies" for human beings. These constructions help to socially and economically valorize the practices and products of hunting in a kind of distanced relation to nature that was otherwise emphatically criticized in the textbook (Hermansson *et al.*, 1999 pp. 13-16).

Conclusions

Although the schools investigated differed considerably regarding the forms of hunting discussed as well as the pedagogical approaches used to deal with them, certain values tended to be embedded in the hunting discussions that developed. *Symbolic exchange value* was one of these. This value included number of antler points, the size of the trophy and the weight of the animal's body before or after killing and dismemberment. The *commodity value* of hunting was another. This value included economic exchange values such as meat and pelts, whereas *use values* of hunting included recreational and sustainability motives.

The articulation of these values in the classroom justified certain kinds of hunting by valorizing some dimensions of the hunt (such as the central role of the trophy and use values generated by hunting) negatively in certain cases and positively in others. Likewise, the same arguments that were accepted as justifying Swedish "wildlife management" (controlling the ecosystem and economic damage caused by the animals) were on the other hand rendered invalid in the case of British foxhunting. It was an effect of this that enabled different forms of hunting to be positioned as qualitatively disparate forms of activities (in terms of their perceived ethical acceptability).

"Wildlife management hunting" appeared as the most privileged hunting practice and three main aspects contributed to its position. First, the inclusion of other dimensions than hunting, such as knowledge about wildlife and their living conditions helped to form a larger context where the hunting part could be located as a "natural" activity. Second, the targets of hunting – the animals –

⁸⁰ This representation of nature in Swedish hunting discourse goes back to the 19th century when animals were seen as a kind of repository existing for the benefit of the human being (Dirke, 2005).

were constructed in ways conducive to the different hunting forms. That is, as individual, sentient subjects in lion hunting and foxhunting and as a collective mass (biomass) largely devoid of subjectivity in wildlife management. Third, as Donald (2006) notes, the condemnation of *some* forms of killing⁸¹ may serve a diversional purpose as a “false alibi” that vindicates other forms of killing and removes a sense of guilt towards them by positioning them as *not* cruel (Donald, 2006; The Animal Studies Group, 2006). Paradoxically, whereas hunting as an activity giving pleasure and status was largely rejected as unethical and distinguished from discussions about “serious” wildlife management in the animal protection course at Falkskolan, these were seen as uncontroversial and integrated aspects of wildlife management in the hunter course at Bokskolan.

In these ways, hunting discussions taking place in the classroom may employ a range of strategies that effectively disconnect certain hunting practices from others and place them beyond the reach of destabilizing forms of critique. In the process, larger frameworks of domination of human and non-human others were selectively discussed in relation to certain forms of hunting and not others and congruities between hunting practices were left unexplored.

⁸¹ I have highlighted lion hunting and foxhunting as two examples among a range of other hunting forms that were criticized in the classroom (including bush meat hunting, whale hunting, and wolf hunting).

Chapter 21

Learning to measure the value of life? Conceptualizations of animal experimentation in education and research

Introduction

In research and product testing, animals are used to “uncover the causal mechanisms that produce and direct the course of a disease or condition in animals” (LaFollette & Shanks, 1998 p. 213) and, by extension, to apply the results for the presumed benefits of humans. When animal “models” are used in education, however, the articulated purpose is to achieve other aims such as learning anatomy or performing certain practical skills.

Animal experimentation as a teaching and learning method has been the focus of numerous studies. Many of these studies have focused on the perception of dissection/vivisection exercises among students and the issue of conscientious objection, discussing potentially desensitizing effects when students are made to perform invasive procedures on animals (sometimes against their own ethical convictions) (e.g. Balcombe, 2000; Capaldo, 2004; Orlans, 2000; Pedersen, 2002; Solot & Arluke, 1997). A number of studies have also assessed the quality of alternative methods such as computer-based dissection simulation models (for an overview, see Balcombe, 2003). My intention with this chapter is not to focus primarily on these issues but rather on the school’s way of dealing with animal experimentation issues in education as well as in research. How is the “lab animal” constructed in schools, and how are the ethical implications of animal experimentation handled?

At the theoretically oriented schools, Teknikskolan and Bokskolan, I was informed by school leaders that animal dissection exercises are carried out more or less as a routine activity in natural science classes (interview transcripts September 15 and November 25, 2003). For the students in the animal caretaker programs at Ormskolan and Falkskolan, on the other hand, employment as an animal technician at a research institution is a future profession opportunity and some practical and/or theoretical experience of animal experimentation issues is

therefore seen as relevant. The animal experimentation issue enters into the school context at a practical as well as a theoretical level. At the practical level, students carry out hands-on animal experimentation exercises or other ways of handling animals in a laboratory-like environment as a part of the formal curriculum. Furthermore, for the animal caretaker students at Ormskolan, at least two weeks of workplace training at a research institution is a compulsory part of their education, whereas at Falkskolan it had previously been compulsory but is not anymore (field notes April 2, 2004). At the theoretical level, students participate in lectures or discussion seminars on animal experimentation as a research method. (In addition, the animal protection course at Falkskolan includes lessons and a written test on alternative [*in vitro* and *in silico*] methods.) I participated during theoretical classes only.

This chapter will begin with analyses of student encounters with “lab animals” in three different settings: The classroom, the school “mouse lab”, and the “real” animal research institution where students complete trainee periods. The next part of the chapter discusses some strategies used in school in order to handle ethical dilemmas arising from animal experimentation. The subsequent sections deal with teacher and student resistance to animal experimentation, and critique against the animal experimentation discourse raised by previous research.

Settings of the animal experimentation stage⁸²

Arluke and Hafferty (1996) and Solot and Arluke (1997) have explored the role of animal experiments in school as part of a socialization process into the biological and medical science research communities. The following sections complement their findings by focusing on different settings encountered by my student informants in relation with handling “lab animals” in their education. Three settings are discussed – the classroom, the school mouse lab, and the trainee workplace - reflecting three aspects of socialization into animal experimentation related work. The students’ own accounts of their experiences in these settings give an idea of how this socialization process operates and how their relationship to the “lab animal” is formed.

The classroom

At Ormskolan, the first-year students dissected mussels, squid and crayfish in their natural science class. In the classroom setting, the students were given

⁸² For a phenomenological analysis of science education as a “stage”, see Szybek (1999).

detailed written instructions on how to perform the dissection technically and how to write a lab report in a formally correct manner. The instructions did not encourage reflection on any ethical issues related to the dissection exercise.⁸³ The three excerpts from the concluding discussions of two different lab reports below reflect the students' understanding of the instructions given to them (field notes November 29, 2004. All excerpts are my translations):

Excerpt 1 (Lab report 1; dissection of crayfish):

Discussion: We discussed why crayfish turn red when they are boiled and we concluded that it is because the color of the shell is made from red, yellow, brown and blue pigment. The green, yellow and blue is susceptible to heat. So after boiling only the red and yellow remain. Therefore, the crayfish turns into a tasty red color. Lina [the student's dissection partner] would have liked [to dissect] a living crayfish, which would have made it all the more exciting. But I don't know if I agree with that. But we had a fun discussion.

Excerpt 2 (Lab report 1; dissection of squid):

Discussion: We saw the ink thing, which was fun because we had seen on TV when the octopus spurts out ink. But in this particular squid, there was not that much ink. We thought it was fun, we discussed how the dots can cause a red-brown color and that it can be due to the number of dots and the light. The suckers were out of order when they were dead which was regrettable since it would have been fun to have felt how they work. We think that everything went well and we were satisfied with what we achieved. The only [problem] was that we managed to mash both eyes when we were going to study them so we had to borrow an eye from our neighbor.

Excerpt 3 (Lab report 2; dissection of crayfish):

Discussion: It was sort of fun to look at the crayfish, but it smelled disgusting. I felt ill a long time afterwards. The shell was hard and it was difficult to open it. The antennas were long and a little sharp, so I didn't want to touch them. All its muscles were white, that is what I saw. The intestines were dark and are not so good if you eat [them]. /.../ When I looked where the heart was supposed to be I saw something strange, it was the genitals. In a male crayfish the testicles lie in front of the heart

⁸³ In interviews with teachers at both Ormskolan and Falkskolan, the issue of "ethically sourced" dissection specimens was brought up. Using slaughter offal and animals euthanized due to diseases or injuries appeared, from teachers' viewpoint, as more ethical than killing animals for the sole purpose of dissection (interview transcripts September 24 and October 24, 2003). I do not, however, have any information on the source of the animals in the dissection exercise referred to in this section.

and in a female crayfish the ovary lies underneath the heart. The two green bladders were the secretion organs. They were a pretty green color. I cut apart the stomach and there was a lot of goo. I am sure it was food.

The dissection instructions structure the way the students relate to the animals as a compilation of body parts to work on, and the students above performed the exercise in accordance with the instructions. However, as in Szybek's (1999) phenomenological study of a dissection exercise in a Swedish comprehensive school, the students add other aspects to their accounts, and we can see the crayfish (re-)constructed as food (excerpt 1) and as a repulsive, alien creature (excerpt 3), and the squid as an active, living animal whom the students could potentially have had a qualitatively different interaction with (i.e. feeling its grip) (excerpt 2). Thus, the students tend to bring their everyday experiences with these animals into the dissection exercise.⁸⁴ These experiences may also be framed as an emotional obstacle getting in the way of the learning purpose of the dissection, as when Susanne, a second-year student at Teknikskolan describes her view below:

Susanne: We have... experimented with rats, I think...squid... fish... and such. And it is very disgusting (*laughter*).

Helena: Why do you think so, that it is disgusting?

Susanne: Eh... It feels a bit strange to have real animals. If they were plants we would look at them or... maybe flies and so on but not real... as you come in contact with in ... everyday life. So... a friend of mine has rats at home ... and ... cutting and dissecting [rats] is therefore a bit disgusting /.../

Helena: Do you think many students find it disgusting or are you alone with your feelings?

Susanne: Some other students also think like that. And ... sometimes it is the smell, yes [*inaudible*]. But it depends, an ordinary perch and so on, that you are used to being in contact with, but a *pet*... That's a bit too much (*laughter*) /.../

Helena: Do you think you have learnt something? What?

⁸⁴ See Lynch (1988) for an analysis of the interrelation between "commonsense" and scientific knowledge about animals in the research laboratory.

Susanne: I guess I should have learnt *something*... (*laughter*) But...you don't really *concentrate* very much if you feel repulsed. You just do it and get it over with.

(Excerpt from interview transcript September 15, 2003)

To Susanne, a rat (one of the most common "lab animal" species) is not an animal that is appropriate to dissect, since to her the anonymous, de-individualized rat "specimen" represents her friend's pet. A fish such as a perch, on the other hand, is a "food animal" and therefore relatively unproblematic to dissect. The legitimacy of eating the fish lends legitimacy also to dissecting it.

The mouse lab

The "mouse lab" was a room located on the top floor of the animal building at Ormskolan. In written information about the school, the lab was presented as a "rodent lab to provide food for predators and to teach us how to take care of a lab in a proper way." Furthermore,

In the mouse lab, 8 species are represented. Studies in genetics may be carried out there and, for instance, different colors of mice can be brought about. To the students, the often unexpected results stimulate to a large extent their interest in genetics. The mice provide part of the feed for the snakes. (Quoted from presentation handout, my translation)

In an interview with the teacher Robert, the mouse lab was described as follows:

Robert: /.../ Then, in addition, we have, on the top floor of the house, which I haven't mentioned yet, the most sensitive issue. It is our mouse laboratory. But it is not a laboratory. It looks like a laboratory, but we don't carry out any experiments, instead, we keep the animals under the same conditions as when you do experiments /.../. And because of this we have been reported by a student who didn't *understand* better, but of course we meet all norms. /.../ So here they learn, that this is how you take *care* of the animals /.../

Helena: The session ... in the mouse lab. Is it compulsory for everybody?

Robert: It is compulsory. *Everybody* must be there and learn how to take care of [the animals]. Everybody must, yes. And there's nothing disturbing about it. It is just about feeding and changing the water. Keeping things absolutely clean, right. And taking [the animals] away so that there are not too many. Euthanize some with gas. We can use [them] as food for others.

(Excerpt from interview transcript September 24, 2003)

Although I was told that no animal experiments were actually carried out in the mouse lab,⁸⁵ this room was kept separate from the other areas of the school's animal facilities. For instance, during the school's open house event, all parts of the animal building seemed to be open to the public except the mouse lab, as in the middle of the staircase leading up to it, a huge flower pot was placed that prevented visitors from getting to the room. The door leading to the mouse lab had a hand-written sign, saying "The mouse lab is closed since the animals need calm and quiet. Only staff and students on duty work in the mouse lab. Thank you for your understanding and best regards, the Animals." (Field notes October 22, 2004, my translation)

On one of the first introductory days of training in the animal building, the group of first-year students I was following was shown the mouse lab. Inside the lab, a sign on the wall says: "This is what it can look like when rats and mice live in a laboratory" (my translation). Another sign gives breeding-related instructions. One wall is lined with laboratory mouse cages, placed on top of each other. Two large containers of carbon dioxide stand on the floor:

David (the supervisor) shows the students how to write a lab diary, and says that mice are taken away to become food for the snakes. "Not fun, but the sort of thing you do as an animal caretaker", he remarks. Jens (one of the students) points at a rat and says that if they are going to feed the snakes, that [rat] will be taken. Then he stands beside the carbon dioxide containers and poses against them. "You know what to do with these [carbon dioxide containers]", David comments with a smile. (Excerpt from field notes September 13, 2004)

The presence at the school of a pretend but nevertheless quite realistic mouse lab symbolizes a discursive practice with a meaning that differs from the other spaces in the school's animal building. The lab cannot be justified by the argument of species preservation normally applied to other parts of the animal facilities, since rats and mice for research purposes are mass produced and available for ordering from companies specialized in the commercial breeding of "lab animal models".

A possible reason for the physical imitation of a lab arrangement is, rather, to socialize students into familiarization with "real" laboratory working conditions (since the animal research industry is one significant potential future employer for these students), but also into a view of "lab animals" as a special

⁸⁵ Carina, a third-year student at the school, told me that the students are not required to perform euthanization of animals in the mouse lab, but may watch if they want to. Carina has participated in euthanization of mice but has not performed the procedure herself. (Field notes March 19, 2004)

category of animals. In the lab, human control and manipulation of the animals, their bodies and their reproductive systems becomes explicit. This is facilitated by a de-individualized and instrumental view of them, which the laboratory setting, where animals are kept in rows of identical cages, easily reinforces: The laboratory setting allows “detachment of the investigator, unimpaired observation, and relative control of the object of study.” (Shapiro, 2002b p. 445)

The animal research workplace

Doing trainee periods at a workplace is an important part of animal caretaker education. At Ormskolan, at least two weeks of training at a research institution was compulsory for all animal caretaker students, and previously this had also been the case at Falkskolan. Jeanette’s account of her trainee period below, as reconstructed from an informal interview with her, gives an insight into the experience not only as a way to increase animal handling skills, but also as a means of familiarization with and socialization into animal experimentation-based research:

The animal research trainee period was a great source of conflict between teachers and students at first. But the school prepared the students for the experience. Older students were assigned to give information to the younger ones, and study visits were carried out prior to the trainee period. Alternative methods were dealt with and it was possible for the students to some extent to influence the orientation of the trainee period. Afterwards, everybody thought that the trainee period was good. The students did not end up in places where “they stick needles into the animals”. I did my trainee period at the university. All the rabbits there had names and hopped around in the corridor. They were not only white, but looked like different types of rabbits. Operations were performed on mice only. Only blood samples were taken from the other animals. Some students have a hard time dealing with rats with big cancer tumors. A girl who had rats at home and was very interested in rats and was a member of a rat organization, had cried prior to her trainee period and wanted to refuse. She ended up staying at her workplace, as she thought she had an opportunity to learn a lot and be able to influence the rats’ situation there. Also the discussion on ethics in relation to animal experimentation changed after the trainee periods. All the students had a positive attitude and thought that it was a profession that would be O.K. to have. (Excerpt from field notes April 2, 2004)

Part of the socialization process for animal experimentation-related work seems to lie in the way the “lab animal” is constructed. Constructing the “lab animal” as a particular category is necessary since many lab animal species are familiar

from the everyday experience of the students as companion animals. At Jeanette's workplace the rabbits did not seem to be "ordinary" lab animals since they were of different colors (not only white) and were named. Phillips (1994) argues that the "lab animal" is perceived as a category of animals ontologically different from, for instance, the companion animal of the same species partly because of the common practice of not giving names to the animals in a laboratory:

Naming is viewed as a social practice that creates meaning of a particular kind, that of narrative coherence, which forms the essence of biography. Since laboratory animals are rarely given proper names, they provide a negative case that illuminates the significance of naming by showing what is entailed by its absence. (Phillips, 1994 p. 119)

Naming is thus intimately connected to identity and individuality, but not only in the laboratory environment. Jeanette mentioned in the interview that during her trainee period at a 4-H farmyard, the staff would not let the children give names to animals that were to be slaughtered (field notes April 2, 2004).

Dealing with animal experimentation as an ethical problem

Emotional tension emerged not only from direct student -"lab animal" encounters, but also from the theoretical dimensions of animal experimentation. I detected three main strategies in classroom interaction for handling ethical dilemmas arising from animal experimentation: The separation of animal and human interests, personalizing the "common good", and "piecemeal engineering" approaches to contentious issues. These strategies were present in learning materials, in teachers' instructions, or among students themselves.

Us against them: Separating animal and human interests

Separating animal and human interests as two incompatible "entities", where one must take precedence and "win" over the other, has been identified by Gålmark (2005) as one of a number of mechanisms used to sustain exploitative relations between humans and animals. It builds on the idea of a zero-sum game of ethics where different interests compete with each other and one category by definition must be assigned the role of "losers". This was an implicit or explicit message of some of the main learning materials used in relation to the issue of animal experimentation.⁸⁶ In a section on animal ethics in a philosophy textbook used at

⁸⁶ Here, I primarily refer to materials that dealt specifically with the issue of animal experimentation itself and touched on implications for animal ethics. General natural science textbooks at the schools I visited tended to deal with animal experimentation mainly as illustrations or explanations of larger

Bokskolan, Peter Singer's utilitarian view is dealt with and the ethical problem of animal experimentation formulated as follows:

In animal experiments, different interests often collide. It may, for example, be the animal's interest in surviving that is contrasted with the human being's interest in looking beautiful. In that case, it is a fairly simple thing, one interest weighs more than the other. But what about when the animal experiment is intended to produce a better and cheaper AIDS medicine? (Persson, 2003 p. 77, my translation)

Another example, a material produced by the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, comprised of a series of information leaflets with the purpose of "impartially and comprehensively shedding light on the issue of animal experiments in pharmaceutical research" (AstraZeneca, 2000, my translation). There was also a video film on pharmaceutical research and animal experimentation produced by the same company. The material was used in the animal protection course at Falkskolan to introduce the animal experimentation issue.⁸⁷ Before showing the video film, the teacher Gunilla tells her students that Astra has produced the film and that some scenarios may be unpleasant. "Gunilla, do we have to watch it?" asks one girl. Gunilla says that she wants them to watch but promises to let them know when it gets unpleasant. The student says that she wants to know beforehand so that she has time to look away. Gunilla then turns the video on:

The film is introduced by showing an old woman who has undergone an eye operation. The voice-over explains that animal experiments are a prerequisite for the possibility of curing her. Otherwise she would have gone blind and be forced to live in darkness. After this introduction, the title of the film is displayed: "Quality of life, Pharmaceutical products and Laboratory animals".

The film explains that "Pharmaceutical research gives the human being a better and longer life" and states that animal experiments are unavoidable. We are informed that 90% of all mammals in pharmaceutical research are rats or mice. When animal experimentation procedures are

scientific contexts, such as gene technology. In these textbooks, animal experiments were typically described in either neutral or positive wordings, as a step in the development of scientific knowledge and human health, but rarely problematized from an animal ethics perspective. One exception was found in a technology textbook: "[In contrast to genetically modified animals,] [c]loned animals seem to suffer from serious defects or diseases that shorten their lives. /.../ Cloned mammals often suffer from deformities and diseases. And have a shorter lifespan than other animals." (Andersson, 2003 p. 74, my translation.)

⁸⁷ Animal experimentation-related materials from the NGO Animal Rights Sweden were occasionally shown or mentioned to the students in this course, but during my field study they were not distributed to them or used as working material. These materials were thus not ascribed full authority in the classroom and were possibly more a part of the teacher's approach of showing her students "different perspectives" on the same issue (interview transcript October 24, 2003).

shown in the film, some students look away, some look bothered, and one student in the front row, Sara, protests loudly and swears. The film raises the question: Do human beings have a right to use animals? Do we have a right *not* to do it /.../?

Then comes the story of Jan, an asthmatic person, who would have been on early retirement without his medicine. We are shown a rat being anesthetized and having a cannula inserted into its body. When she watches the scenario, Sara utters a comment in an upset voice, puts her sweater over her head and pulls it down over her face.

The end of the film shows a nature scene. Soft music is played. We are shown a little boy, Anton, who had previously suffered from growth impediment problems, but thanks to his medicine, he is like any other child today. The film ends with the remark: "It is important that you acquire the knowledge you need in order to take a stance." (Excerpt from field notes September 24, 2004)

In the film, human and animal interests in survival and quality of life are kept separate and incompatible rather than seen as connected in order, it seems, to mobilize sentiment and opinion in favor of using animals in invasive experiments. This "us against them" division did not, however, seem to have a uniform effect on the students since, at least among some of them, the invasive treatment of the "lab animals" diverted their attention away from the underlying message of the film. In a discussion on the ethics of killing animals in another animal protection class, a question in the learning material "Animal Ethics" (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003) was used as a starting point: "Discuss different consequences, for both humans and animals, if the human did not exploit the right [to kill animals]." (p. 29, my translation) As a reply, the teacher delivers a message analogous to the AstraZeneca film: If we did not carry out animal experiments, we would die from simple infections. I don't think we want that. (Field notes March 3, 2004)

What if it happened to you? Personalizing the "common good"

The assessment of animal experimentation in Swedish society rests on the formal principle of utilitarianism: If the expected beneficial outcome of an experiment is estimated to outweigh the harm caused to the animals used, the experiment will be approved. This cost-benefit analysis is the working principle of the Swedish animal ethics review committees, and I found that it was also the implicit principle used to guide the classroom discussions on the ethics of animal experimentation. However, I also found a "shift" in the discussions that transformed the utilitarian principle into a focus on personal self-interest. The idea of the "common good" is thus reinforced by an idea of something that *I*,

personally, might take advantage of. Such a “shift” is performed below in an animal protection class at Falkskolan with the purpose of encouraging the students to identify with the situation of a seriously ill person (or a relative of an ill person) and see things from this perspective:

After having shown the video film, the teacher Gunilla asks for reactions. “I think that they softened everything”, says one student. “There are many who breach [the law] and make it much harder”, says another. Gunilla remarks that you must find out where it is filmed and which year, and who has produced the material. Horrifying pictures from a lab in England in the 1980s may not be up-to-date anymore. Then Sara raises her voice: I think it is horrid that a human being can lower herself so much, just to protect her own damn species. She adds that pain is a part of life. Other students in the class oppose Sara’s arguments: “If you are ill then you’ll probably be very happy that there are medicines, but at the same time I don’t think humans have a right /.../”. “Of course I feel uncomfortable, but when one is in that situation /.../”. Gunilla agrees with the comment of the last student: “In that situation your younger brother outweighs these 20 dogs”. “Think about how many lives the medicine saves”, says the next student and remarks that it concerns both humans and animals. “That is a good aspect”, Gunilla adds. The medicine is for animals too. (Excerpt from field notes September 24, 2004)

In spite of Sara’s criticism, the discussion is brought back to the rationale of the “common good” backed up by presumable personal benefits of animal experimentation. When Gunilla underlines that animal experiments benefit not only humans but animals as well, she appeals to the empathy for animals in her students that makes it problematic for them to accept the harm done to animals by animal experimentation in the first place. Her argument contradicts the strategy of separating animal and human interests as a justification for animal experimentation, but also, paradoxically, reinforces the justification by ascribing it a value of added benevolence.

Personalizing the ethical dilemma of animal experimentation was also used at Ormskolan as a strategy to elicit “correct” responses from the new first-year students on their orientation day:

Robert (the teacher) approaches a student in the group. He asks her name. Then he creates a scenario when her future child has lost his fingers in a harvesting machine and says that the surgeon at the hospital where she takes her child informs her that he practised [his micro-surgical technique] on mice during his training. Robert asks the student what she will tell the surgeon to do: “Suture” or “Not suture”? “Suture!”, the student replies. Robert faces the rest of the student group: “Is there anyone among you

girls future mothers, who would say something different?” Then he tells the group how the training on mice is carried out: the mouse is anesthetized and it ends with “letting the mouse go to sleep”. (Excerpt from field notes August 17, 2004)

The value education stage above is set by the teacher and the role of the students is to deliver the answer already laid out by the scenario and known to everyone. At the end of the lecture, however, the teacher presents the possibility of an alternative interpretation. He has earlier emphasized the importance of having been inside the “system” in order to fight against painful experiments by suggesting alternative methods⁸⁸ to other people in the research institution, and now he says that a question to bear in mind when working with animals for research purposes is “Is it necessary?” Or are there other ways of doing it? Finally, the teacher briefly challenges the use of animals in research by asking the students to consider whether human beings (i.e. persons who have committed serious crimes) could be used instead of giving monkeys diseases they normally do not develop themselves (field notes August 17, 2004). The complexity of the ethics of animal experimentation is thereby addressed, but the assumption that *certain* bodies (animal or human) are *accessible* for experimentation is left unquestioned.

When students were asked to reflect in writing on animal ethics issues,⁸⁹ animal experimentation arguments emerged that roughly followed the teaching approaches of the “common good” (many lives can be saved) and personal self-interest (my own and/or my relatives’ lives can be saved).

Piecemeal engineering

Forsman (1992) has found that two main elements dominate the approach of the Swedish animal ethics review committees: “Atomizing” and “quantification” (p. 188). “Atomizing” implies dividing a problem into diminutive parts and looking at each part separately. “Quantification” includes an attempt to measure the different parts (such as utility and suffering) by their perceived size or weight and comparing them to each other. Forsman states that this order of decision-

⁸⁸ When alternative methods were dealt with in the classroom (which happened above all in the animal protection course at Falkskolan), the starting point of the discussion was nevertheless the utilization of the animal body. Alternative methods were introduced as ways of reducing the number of animals used or to alleviate their suffering. (Field notes October 22 and October 29, 2004)

⁸⁹ In a social science class at Ormskolan, the students were asked to reflect in writing on questions appearing in the learning material “Animal Ethics” (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003) relating to the human-animal relation in general. In the animal protection course at Falkskolan, students were asked to make a list of what they saw as the “+” and “-“ of animal experimentation specifically as part of a written fact test on the issue.

making brings about a piecemeal manner of dealing with a problem and excludes a comprehensive assessment of the “whole picture”. Seeing the “whole picture” as part of a larger context of, for instance, ideology critique is even more unusual in the work of the committees. Forsman writes that what in practice is presented as a basis for decision-making is not a comprehensive plan or program but mere fragments; links in a chain that has been designed a long time ago in laboratories and in management offices. In the ethics committees, this “piecemeal engineering” way of dealing with animal experiments often results in delimiting the discussion on ethics to technical details such as the water temperature or the period to keep an animal in isolation (Forsman, 1992).

The classroom strategies outlined in the previous sections can be seen as part of a piecemeal engineering approach to teaching about animal experiments. Irrespective of whether the “learning units” are labeled values/opinions or “facts”, devoid of a larger context, they are often presented as isolated parts that are separately assessed and weighed against each other. This is in close analogy with what Forsman (1992) found took place in the ethics committees. In the following exercise at Falkskolan, the analogy is complete when the students are asked to *imitate* a committee:

The teacher Gunilla introduces the lesson by asking if her students have read the newspaper today. “I think that I have told you about the 12 macaques sitting there [at the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control (SMI)]”, she says. One student holds up the article that she has brought with her to class. Gunilla refers to a politician who is interviewed in the article and who is critical to the [BSE] experiments on macaques, and says that the issue is right now being dealt with in the animal ethics committee. The politician wants to stop the experiment. Then Gunilla refers to the comments of the responsible SMI representative in the article and asks the students what they would say if they were members of the committee. She adds that the environment for the monkeys at SMI is not good, but a long time ago she met their ethologist who said that there have been improvements. Then Gunilla asks everybody who supports the experiment to raise their hands. The students look confused. Some of them show tendencies to raise their hands. Then Gunilla asks if somebody can say an absolute “no”. No hands are raised. Gunilla remarks that the “committee” seems to have problems making up its mind. /.../ Gunilla says that making a decision is not an easy task, and that after all [BSE] is a terrible disease. (Excerpt from field notes April 14, 2004)

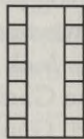
In this exercise, the ethical problem of BSE experiments on macaques is treated as an isolated issue. Questions related to a larger picture (such as where the animals came from, how they ended up at the laboratory, and assumptions and

structures on which animal experimentation rests) are not automatically part of an ethics review committee's discussion and are also not brought up in this exercise. Moreover, the students are given no explanation as to *why* they are being asked to act as if they were members of a committee, and exploring potential alternative forms of decision-making arrangements is not made part of the exercise. Other piecemeal engineering approaches to discussing animal experiments in the classroom included questions such as whether some experiments are more "right" than others (e.g. those that are expected to help many ill people in contrast to, for instance, cosmetics testing⁹⁰), whether it is (ethically) preferable to experiment on some animal species (such as mice) than others (such as dogs or monkeys) (field notes April 19, 2004), and whether it is "better" to choose experiments that cause one beagle severe suffering or 10 beagles minor suffering (field notes October 29, 2004).

"It is like glue, really; it stabilizes": Resistance to the animal experimentation discourse

Criticism of animal experimentation and its supporting arguments in the classroom followed to a great extent the atomizing and quantification approach of the "piecemeal engineering" logic, focusing on issues such as the environment of the "lab animals". The example below is from Falkskolan, when the teacher Gunilla tells her students about her own previous trainee experience at the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control (SMI):

Gunilla says that she was a trainee at SMI for 12 weeks. The monkeys were kept down in the cellar, and it was very mysterious. Gunilla was permitted to go down there just once during the 12 weeks she was there. It was not a nice experience. The monkeys were given no stimulation. She sketches a drawing of how the monkey cages were located in the cellar:



"Like a wardrobe, if you can imagine that", she says, and remarks that it looked like a prison. The monkeys were mentally disturbed and scared,

⁹⁰ The positioning of medical experiments against cosmetics testing in order to justify the former recurred in several learning materials and classroom discussions. See also the use of "false alibis" (chapter 20).

and it felt terrible. Those who went down to the cages had to bring objects to protect themselves with. Now the monkeys are better off, Gunilla says, but they are old and have been there for a long time. (Excerpt from field notes October 1, 2004)

The teacher's criticism of the way monkeys are kept at SMI is explicit, but softened by pointing out that the conditions have improved. Some students, however, responded to piecemeal engineering approaches of teaching with ideology related critique. A student at Falkskolan questioned the conceptual and philosophical basis for using animals in research when she asked in a written test, "What is it, after all, that says that the life of a human is worth the lives of 1,000 guinea pigs?". A similar response from her classmate read: "People can get a distorted picture and consider themselves as being superior to other living organisms". (My translations)

A departure from the piecemeal engineering type of criticism was encouraged by a few of the teachers, for instance, when using the AstraZeneca learning materials as a critical thinking exercise. After having seen a film produced by Astra in a philosophy class at Bokskolan, one student told me that she and her classmates found it ridiculous, biased, and more a kind of marketing activity than educational. She also remarked that the film played on sentiments of guilt and pity (field notes October 28 and November 19, 2004).

Critical thinking was encouraged in the following example when a part of the formal institutional arrangements surrounding animal experiments, i.e. the animal ethics review committees, comes under scrutiny. Having an important legitimating function by giving an aura of ethical responsibility and regulatory rigor to the animal experimentation enterprise, the perceived existence of strict institutional regulations governing animal experiments was embraced by many students as a convincing justification for using animals in medical research. Criticism of the committees could therefore be a way of undermining the credibility the animal experimentation discourse relies on in order to reproduce itself. This was done in an animal protection class at Falkskolan, after the teacher Gunilla had gone through the formal, basic "facts" about the committees. At the end of the lesson, Gunilla displays an overhead picture with the following text (my translation):

"New disclosures on the animal ethics committees' breaching of the law

The animal ethics committees should be a guarantee that no unnecessary experiments are performed and researchers often claim that in Sweden no experiments take place that are not absolutely necessary.

This is not true! Several investigations now show that the committees approve of animal experiments *in spite of* existing alternatives – a clear violation of the animal welfare legislation. The committees do not respect the European Convention and they make it difficult for the public to gain an insight into the work of the committees.”

Underneath the text is a cartoon-like drawing of a fictitious committee and an applying researcher. The researcher asks, “Can I get 2000 animals? I would like to check something out. I haven’t investigated other alternatives; it seemed to be such awfully hard work. That is O.K., right?” The committee replies: “Sure! We don’t have the energy to check either. Shoot! Neeexxt one!!!” (My translation) Gunilla comments briefly on the overhead picture: “I don’t say that this is the way it *is*, but some people think that this is the way it is done.” (Excerpt from field notes October 15, 2004)

Commonly, however, teachers or students who attempted an in-depth form of critique of the animal experimentation rhetoric were faced with objections from their class. In a seminar on animal ethics in a social science class at Ormskolan, the teacher challenges the position of the material “Animal Ethics” (Jordbruksdepartementet, 2003): “They [in “Animal Ethics”] convey an image that we should accept that animals suffer if the purpose is good. Is it really like that?” When one student in the group states that she is against animal experimentation, her classmates try to pressure her to “admit” that she would use animal-tested drugs if she or a relative fell ill. (Field notes November 30, 2004) Another example is from a discussion in an animal protection class at Falkskolan when a groupwork exercise and presentation using the Astra-produced leaflet series was followed up:

Gunilla raises issues she has been thinking about when she listened to the students’ presentations. Did the information in the leaflets influence the students in some way? Gunilla says that she got the impression earlier that some students have had very strong opinions against animal experiments before doing the exercise. /.../ Do you think they [the leaflets] are biased? asks Gunilla and adds that it is Astra who produced them. Do you think they withhold some parts? Do they *dare* do that? One student raises her voice and says in an upset manner: I don’t understand how you can say that they [Astra] withhold things, everybody does that. We don’t know how they work. /.../ (Excerpt from field notes November 12, 2004)

The discussion becomes heated when Gunilla asks her students what they think about the various laboratory professions they have studied and presented with help of the leaflets. “Could you imagine having such a job during summer vacation?”, she asks, commenting that many people who work in a laboratory

want to do as much good as possible for the animals. Do you think they can influence a lot? she asks, and with this question she triggers an emotionally charged dialogue between two of her students:

“You can show the animal love in another way”, replies Anna, one of the students. Just as it may be important to talk with a patient in a hospital for a few minutes, you can pet the rabbit in a laboratory. Her classmate, Sara, protests: In some way you become part of the research team anyway, you become a part of it all actually, therefore you facilitate hurting [the animal], too, even if you give it love right now. (Sara’s voice gets louder and more upset while she’s speaking) And that, I think, is f***ing outrageous, then all you do is suck up to an animal. Sara goes on: “If you get emotionally attached to the animal, what the hell will you do then?” Gunilla supports Sara’s monologue by saying that many people agree with her point, but Anna persists in her argument: Better to show the animals love [even if] only for a short moment, than to let them lie there and rot away. Sara replies angrily that they will lie there and rot away later on anyway, and with a furious gesture throws away the magazine she has been reading during the classroom discussion. Gunilla now interferes in support of Sara by referring to her own experiences as a trainee at an animal research laboratory. She says that those who worked there were entirely desensitized and she was given a horrifying insight into how the procedures are carried out in reality. She hopes the animals are better off today and mentions another lab where things were different. (Excerpt from field notes November 12, 2004)

Sara’s position is that showing the “lab animal” love while being part of the institutional structures that uphold animal experimentation is a defense mechanism that will eventually collapse, ending in self-deception. In this case, Sara’s view is initially supported by her teacher, but in the end her criticism is left behind and the discussion is brought back to the neutralizing domain of laboratory animal welfare.

In an informal interview with Sara, she talked about her dissection experiences from compulsory school. Having been informed about the origins of the animal body parts (slaughter offal), Sara asked to have her name deleted from the attendance list in order to decrease the statistics of student participation in the dissection class, with the intention that this would finally make the school stop purchasing slaughter offal material for dissection purposes. Sara sees school dissection exercises as yet another outlet for the products of the slaughter industry and gives her own concise analysis of the dissection lesson’s role in this context: “It is like glue, really; it stabilizes.” With this remark, Sara suggests that

the more arguments we create for maintaining the slaughter process, the more normalized it will become (field notes November 29, 2004).

(Eco)feminist critique of animal experimentation-based science

The stabilizing character of science in supporting oppressive human-animal relations that Sara intimates in connection with classroom dissection and the slaughter industry is a central element in ecofeminist theorizing. For instance, in her analysis of how the animal “other” is constructed in scientific narratives and practices, Birke (1994) has remarked that where animals are literally or figuratively located in science is an important part of perpetuating the notion of human superiority over them as well as a manifestation of control. Animals are central to the construction of scientific knowledge and have been named, described, dismembered and disfigured for this purpose. The location of animals in science is an example of authorized, institutionalized violence toward them and the rules of the experiment operate to lend legitimacy to the violent act (Kheel, 1993). Perhaps the most expressive critique of animal experimentation is formulated by Horkheimer and Adorno (2002):

It shows that because [man] does injury to animals, he and he alone in all creation voluntarily functions as mechanically, as blindly and automatically as the twitching limbs of the victim which the specialist knows how to turn to account. The professor at the dissecting-table defines these spasms scientifically as reflexes, just as the soothsayers at the altar once proclaimed them to be signs vouchsafed by his gods. Reason, mercilessly advancing, belongs to man. The animal, from which he draws his bloody conclusions, knows only irrational terror and the urge to make an escape from which he is cut off. (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002 p. 245)

Birke (1994) sees the way scientific narratives construct our perceptions of laboratory animals and what happens to them as gendered. She argues that ideas of masculinity are built into the process of emotional detachment and desensitization encouraged by laboratory culture in the struggle for scientific “objectivity”, whereas emotional responses toward “lab animals” and identification with them is often seen as a more “feminine” position and also as an obstacle to objectivity. Also the knowledge produced in the laboratory can be seen as gendered (androcentric) when animals are constructed as fixed, biological entities determined by their genes or hormones. Gruen (1993) even argues that many animal experiments in research on issues such as intelligence, aggression, competition and dominance have been designed to establish essential differences

between males and females (cf. Haraway, 1991 on primatology research and van den Wijngaard, 1995 on research on the sexual behavior of rodents).

Gender is not the only dimension at work in the interests of science. Race/ethnicity is another. Two well-known cases when the bodies of (involuntary) *human* "others" have been seen as legitimate objects of experimentation are the medical experimentation on Jewish and Slavic peoples in Nazi Germany and the medical experimentation on black men in Alabama (known as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study) that began in the 1930s (Spiegel, 1996). But there are more recent examples as well (Hubbard, 1995). As long as the victim of experimentation is marked as being of less worth, it seems as if she or he risks being viewed as accessible to science, regardless of species affiliation.

Developments in Western science have gone hand in hand with imperialist efforts. Shiva (1995) sees commercially driven biotechnology as an invasion of other species, cultures and societies that deepens the exclusion of other knowledge systems, and also Birke (1995b) argues that the development of science has been based on ignoring the accumulated knowledge of people outside the institutions of science, such as indigenous peoples, or on appropriating and renaming their knowledge. Both Birke (1994) and Nibert (2002) see the way both animals and human "others" are treated by science as logically connected to a capitalist world order⁹¹ where the profit margins of pharmaceutical and cosmetics companies require new products to continuously be introduced regardless of whether they fulfill any primary human need or are made accessible to those whose need is most acute (above all in the Third World). The animal experimentation issue thus lies at the intersection of politics of gender, race and class and contributes to forming the social and economic conditions in which it is also embedded.

Discussion

In accordance with Birke's (1994) analysis, the physical space where the "lab animal" is encountered (and the artefacts of that space) contribute to the way our perception of the "lab animal" is structured and the meanings it is ascribed, as well as how this aspect of the human-animal relationship is shaped. Other factors that contribute to the construction of the "lab animal" are the philosophies, policies, purposes and practices that constitute the laboratory animal enterprise (Shapiro, 2002b). Birke (1994) argues that the "lab animal" is

⁹¹ Nibert (2002) points out that animal (and human) oppressive arrangements preceded capitalist society but have become increasingly facilitated with the advent of political capitalism.

not really an animal or even a representation of an animal. It is rather more simply just one part of the laboratory apparatus; something that will be transformed into data.⁹² Laboratory equipment has been developed to fit standard rats, while rats are further standardized to fit the apparatus (Birke, Bryld & Lykke, 2004). "Lab animals" and their by-products are thereby standardized commodities of the laboratory that can be marketed and traded as supplies within a globalized scientific animal industry (Arluke, 1994; Shapiro, 2002b).

Much like Szybek's (1999) investigation, my study of different school settings complements these findings. To a lay actor – such as a student who has not yet completed her or his socialization into the research community – the "lab animal" may be constructed as a research object or tool but also as food, as vermin, as a playmate, or as a pet. These meanings seem to be related to the student's previous experience of the animal as much as the physical and social environment of the education setting.

The transition to the view of the "lab animal" as a research tool is facilitated by various forms of explanations or "motive talk" in school that morally elevate or at least neutralize what is done to the animals (Arluke & Hafferty, 1996). In this study, I have identified two examples of "motive talk": The separation of human and animal interests, and personalizing the "common good". In their study of the "dog lab" at medical school, Arluke and Hafferty (1996) argue that "motive talk" may be developed by students themselves but is also *provided* to them by school as a coping strategy. During my fieldwork, I found analogies with the findings of Arluke and Hafferty. Various emotional responses were explicitly or implicitly attached to the animal experimentation issue. To deal with these (or to prevent their emergence), the school provided students with certain explanations that facilitated absolving feelings of guilt and allowed students' self-definition as compassionate and moral actors toward animals to stay intact.

Through "motive talk" and other teaching strategies (such as piecemeal engineering approaches to contentious issues), the school largely reproduces the construction of the "lab animal" as ontologically *usable* (cf. Adams, 1993) and its ethics as possible to divide into quantifying and measurable units. Kheel (1993) has labeled this phenomenon "truncated narratives":

⁹² Other ethnographic studies carried out in animal research laboratories suggest that alternative systems of meaning regarding the definition of animals may coexist in the same setting and laboratory staff may both distance themselves from, and develop personalized relationships with the "lab animals" (Arluke, 1994; Arluke & Sanders, 1996).

For example, we are asked to weigh[t] the value of an animal used for research in a laboratory against the value of a human being who is ill. The problem is conventionally posed in a static, linear fashion, detached from the context in which it was formed. In a sense, we are given truncated stories and then asked what we think the ending should be. (Kheel, 1993 p. 255)

The “truncated stories” of animal experimentation education not only ask students to reflect on *certain* ethical dilemmas but not others; they also de-contextualize them by obscuring the power arrangements that produce the formulation of the dilemmas as well as the way they are embedded in a web of exploitative practices toward human and non-human others. Viewed from this perspective, the way the animal experimentation issue is presented in school reflects a microcosm of positivist ideology, detached from social and political aspects and forces that give it meaning.

Giroux (1997b) expresses one consequence of this mode of approaching a problem as creating “a form of tunnel vision in which only a small segment of social reality is open to examination” (p. 13). Moreover, the structures upholding these practices “appear to have acquired their present character naturally, rather than having been constructed by historically specific interests” (p. 13). Piecemeal engineering approaches appear not only in teaching values and “facts” of the animal experimentation discourse, but also as a way of dealing with criticism of it. Expressions of ideology critique emerge in the classroom but the status of the animal body as “usable” usually remains taken for granted (even in situations when alternative research methods were discussed) and challenges to this conception often end up being neutralized. Piecemeal engineering forms of critique may be more convenient to handle in the classroom, but they also counteract the exploration of a wider dimension that potentially could accommodate a reconsideration of human-animal relations.

Concluding remarks

As Szybek (1999) notes, one way in which (science) education manifests itself is by making certain relations possible between humans and various categories of animals. Students struggle with their perceptions of the different categorizations (or, in Nibert’s [2003] words, “social positions”) that render some animal individuals objects of “legitimate” exploitation while others (sometimes of the same species) are ascribed subject status in everyday relationships. In line with the findings of Arluke and Hafferty (1996) and Smith and Kleinman (1989) in their studies of medical school, the schools I studied in many respects tend to guide and facilitate students’ emotional detachment processes to help them sort

out and distinguish between animal categorizations, and develop “appropriate” attitudes toward them.

Part VI

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

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Part VI

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Chapter 22

Processes and strategies in human-animal education

This study has attempted to critically analyze some social processes and meaning-making practices that form human relations to (other) animals in school, and it shows that animals are ascribed a multitude of different roles and positions. In the animal caretaker programs, where I spent most of my fieldwork time, animals are at the same time *instruments* and *ends* for learning. They are also components in the development of a professional identity and in the building and strengthening of social ties between (aspiring) members of a professional community. At a more general level, animals are used to confirm images of ourselves and the world and are at the same time vehicles for pursuing ideas of progress and development (both as embodied beings and as representations).

The subject areas where these processes have been studied in the school environment include the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences as well as practical training activities in and outside school, study visits and excursions. The social relations I have studied are multifaceted and the perspectives I present can hardly do justice to their complexity, but perhaps highlight a few dimensions as a starting point for further debate. The processes I want to summarize here (albeit in simplified form) focus on three key aspects: Human-animal *boundary work*, *contradictions* in human-animal relations, and *strategies* used in school to handle potential conflicts emerging around these contradictions. In chapter 23 I conclude with a few reflections on the significance and implications of my study.

The animal accessibility rationale: Boundary work around the animal as “other”

This study has presented perspectives that challenge dominant discourses of human-animal relations in society. In doing so, it shows that schooling not only reflects, but in many respects actively reproduces society’s “rationales” for how different animals should be perceived, related to and used. I argue that these rationales teach the *accessibility* of animal bodies. In this process of social and

cultural reproduction,⁹³ the school must also be engaged in boundary work around the human-animal divide and the image of the animal as *other*.⁹⁴ At a concrete level, animal “otherness” is performed in the various ways in which animals are physically put to use in school to achieve certain learning objectives as well as other human purposes (such as nutrition). Even the overarching aim of “saving endangered species” rests on a transformation of animals as individual subjects into generic “others” as species representatives, to conceptualize them as accessible tools for achieving this purpose.⁹⁵

At a conceptual level, boundary work may be part of pedagogical strategies to convey an understanding of animal behavior and prevent incorrect treatment of them and may operate, for instance, in social representations of animals such as the use of *morphisms*, i.e. human-animal and animal-machine comparisons. Paradoxically, I have argued that even *anthropomorphism*, despite its projection of human-like qualities onto animals, ultimately emphasizes human-animal discontinuities through a form of *mimicry* that produces animal subjects that are almost, but not quite, human (cf. Bhabha, 1994; Desmond, 1999).

Contradiction and conflict

Human-animal relations are imbued with contradictions, expressed not only in the ambivalence of “mimicry” and other forms of identity production. Our ways of observing animals, conceptualizing and handling their bodies, ascribing them social representations and positions and otherwise relating to them, and the institutions we have created for routinizing and rendering efficient these practices, frequently produce contradictory messages. In education contexts, contradiction may be expressed in, for instance, the simultaneous individualization and de-individualization of “game” animals and the financial rationales governing the practice of wildlife management hunting which is nonetheless depicted as an “original” and “natural” activity distanced from industrial society. Other examples of contradiction are the ambivalent responses

⁹³ I argue that the notions of social and cultural reproduction are linked in human-animal education in at least two forms: 1) Norms and values of human-animal relations as reproduced through practices and processes of school culture contribute to maintaining instrumental social positions of animals; and 2) The material and symbolic value derived from animals ascribed the position of “usable” through these processes is not evenly distributed across (human) social categories, and thus contributes to perpetuating a system of unequal relations between humans.

⁹⁴ This boundary work occasionally reorganizes the human-animal distinction by “othering” certain categories of humans as well, as seen in, for instance, zoos and wildlife films.

⁹⁵ This does not mean that the individual animal’s needs are left unattended to in the process. A core purpose of the animal caretaker education program is to ensure that this does not happen.

to captive animals in zoos and the way of presenting “zoo animals” either as representatives of authentic “wilderness” or as volunteering human companions within a commodifying framework that masks coercion and control. Contradiction is also present in the fact that the same animal species may be categorized both as a pet and as an object of invasive experimentation procedures, and in the creation of “speaking” animal subjects selling themselves in advertisements of animal industries (cf. Baker, 2001; Birke, 2003; Glenn, 2004). There are numerous other examples, and this study indicates that neither students nor teachers are unaware of these ambivalences, but may articulate and discuss some of them in various situations.

Benton (1993) formulates this condition of ambivalence as an “acute cultural contradiction” of historico-material roots, explained by the co-presence of Western socio-economic practices that reify animals, and representations that assign them quasi-personal status (p. 73). Quoting Thomas (1984, pp. 302-303), Benton even remarks that emerging sensibilities toward the situation and position of animals, together with the material foundations of human society that require their exploitation, present “one of the contradictions upon which modern civilization can be said to rest.” Relying on Benton’s (1993) and Thomas’s (1984) analyses, I suggest that the contradictions characterizing human-animal relations in contemporary Western society are driven by a generation of material and symbolic surplus value in which these relations have been increasingly incorporated, and that the contradictions produce different *effects* in different social and cultural contexts, such as the school.

One such effect is that normative presumptions of the “appropriate” position of different categories of animals in society may collide with students’ (or teachers’) ideas or previous experiences of animals that they bring to the classroom. These (potential) conflicts must be handled by the school in ways that allow for the students’ view of themselves as caring and moral actors toward animals to stay intact (cf. Arluke & Hafferty, 1996) and at the same time guide students into animal categorization schemes and frameworks that expand the scope of animal accessibility. I will develop this argument in relation to postcolonial analysis at the end of the following section.

Benevolence and inevitability: The production and circulation of “animal stories”

Arluke and Sanders (1996) point out that there are strategies in any culture that provide ways of working around the culture’s contradictions so as to overcome possible feelings of discomfort surrounding them and make them appear as a

normal part of everyday life. In school, the use of various forms of “motive talk”⁹⁶ that morally elevate or neutralize what is done to animals (cf. Arluke & Hafferty, 1996), and “piecemeal engineering”⁹⁷ approaches to contentious topics, are a few examples of such strategies that may be employed in discussions on animal ethics. These strategies typically *differentiate* and *valorize* certain social practices of human-animal relations to guide the development of “appropriate” student attitudes toward them.

These strategies furthermore contribute to the articulation of certain *assertions* about human-animal relations, some of which have become fixed and allowed to pass as “truths” (cf. Zeeman *et al.*, 2002). These assertions are recognizable from human-animal discourses in other societal sectors but are reconstituted in school in forms that facilitate smooth accommodation to the animal accessibility rationale. In this study they have emerged, for instance, in various learning materials, lectures, interviews, or when a class of students is given the task of reflecting “freely” on certain issues of animal ethics (and a majority of them will still arrive at identical conclusions). Another situation when these assertions are invoked is when ideas deviating from the rationale of animal accessibility reach a persuasive or destabilizing potential in classroom discussions. Even if assertions have been critically examined and counter-arguments have been raised and partly confirmed, the discussion is in the end normally either brought back to a neutralizing domain, for instance, by another assertion, or simply discontinued. I argue that these phenomena may be viewed as part of a wider function of the school as a socialization and normalization project. Assertions identified in this study may be located under roughly three main themes⁹⁸ as follows (although their exact formulations may vary):⁹⁹

⁹⁶ An example of “motive talk” identified in this study is the “false alibi”, denoting the condemnation of *some* forms of killing in order to vindicate other forms of killing and remove a sense of guilt toward them by positioning them as *not* cruel (Donald, 2006). In so doing, congruities between them or other shared rationales are overlooked. Examples from the school context are when “wildlife management”, “organically” produced meat, and animal-based medical research are morally elevated above other related practices such as lion- and foxhunting, “conventional” meat production, and cosmetics testing on animals.

⁹⁷ “Piecemeal engineering” implies approaching a problem by dividing it into parts and looking at each part in isolation, devoid of its connections to a larger context (Forsman, 1992). A typical example is the ethical assessment of animal experiments by measuring the perceived suffering of the animals used against the estimated benefits to humans, without considering, for instance, political and economic forces behind these practices.

⁹⁸ In Hyers’s (2006) study of U.S. college students’ justifications of different practices of animal use (food production, medical testing, cosmetic allergy testing, and fur production), the theoretical framework of Social Dominance Theory is applied. From Hyers’s quantitative data, eight main themes of justification (or, in Hyers’s terminology, “legitimizing myths”) of the use of animals emerged, many of which overlap the “assertions” articulated in my study as well as previous research on attitudes towards animals that Hyers refers to. She has labeled these themes “Necessity”, “Hedonic Pleasure”,

Inevitability (biological/cultural determinism)

- Humans have always eaten meat/hunted (chapter 10)
- Hunting is an innate instinct (in the human being)/an expression of culture (chapter 20)
- Animals are part of nature's cycle/system where they are also used and eaten by humans (chapters 10, 18)
- Humans are predators (chapter 18)
- Meat consumption is natural/necessary for human survival (chapter 18)
- Animals have no thoughts about the past or the future/live according to their instincts (chapters 10, 18)

Benevolence (animals may benefit from their status as "usable")

- One can be a friend of animals, and still eat meat (chapter 10)
- If we shoot the (wild) animals and eat their meat, they won't have to experience the (animal) industry (chapter 20)
- Animals are no better off in nature (than in captivity) (chapter 12)
- Animals are bred for the sake of human beings, otherwise they wouldn't exist (chapter 18)
- Eating animals can give their life a purpose (chapter 18)
- Provided an animal has been treated well/has had a good life, it is O.K. to kill (and eat) it (chapter 18)
- Zoos help protect endangered species (chapter 14)
- Medical research benefits animals, too (chapter 21)

Common good (practices of animal use may have positive consequences for society)

- If we don't hunt animals, there will be too many of them (chapter 20)
- Hunting is O.K. if the meat is taken care of (chapter 20)

"Food Chain", "Culture", "Religion", "Human Nature", "Animal Nature", and "Part of the System". Hyers found that across these themes, many of the justifications contained a sense of inevitability (a view that animal use is governed by natural or societal forces unstoppable by humans), which also resonates with my findings. Hyers also points out that justifications used for the exploitation of *humans* can be found under the same themes.

⁹⁹ Similar assertions occurred in empirical data not presented in the chapters of this dissertation. Justifications other than those mentioned here include *benevolence*: animals suffer if we don't milk them (field notes October 5, 2004) and *common good*: (medical) testing on animals is cheaper; (animal) breeding can maximize production and help Third World people; The animal industry creates a lot of jobs (field notes September 30, 2004). An argument that deviated from my categorization is "Meat tastes good", justifying meat consumption with the personal pleasure derived from it (field notes September 30, 2004).

- Zoos educate people about animals (chapter 14)
- (Animal) research gives the human being a better and longer life (chapter 21)
- If we did not carry out animal experiments, we would die from simple infections (chapter 21)

Foucault (1993) remarks that “in almost every society there are important stories that are told, repeated and varied; there are ritualized amounts of discourse recited under certain well defined circumstances /.../.” (p. 16, my translation). *I argue that a main contribution of the present study is to show the reproduction, operation and stabilizing function of discursively produced “animal stories” at the micro level of the classroom, and that these “stories”, or assertions, about human-animal relations in school constitute a shared frame of reference of commonsense¹⁰⁰ knowledge wherein contradictions usually can be comfortably accommodated* (cf. Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Baker, 2001). If we can speak of a “hidden curriculum” in human-animal education, these “animal stories” are probably part of its foundation, especially if the hidden curriculum is understood as an educational “text” about certain myths and “sacred” beliefs in society (Gordon, 1988) that relate to the production of commonsense knowledge (Seddon, 1983). Paradoxically, also the animal caretaker education program – which includes goals of professionalization and socialization into a “scientific” way of thinking about animals – frequently seems to rely on the reproduction of commonsensical “animal stories”, in effect blurring the demarcation between the two forms of knowledge (cf. Lynch, 1988). A possible explanation is that the “animal stories” form a basis of justification for institutionalized animal use; areas of potential future employment for these students. *Thus, while the school formally may work to achieve improved conditions for animals in society by professionalization into scientific knowledge about animals, it also performs a contradictory agenda. This agenda consolidates and expands the position of animals as accessible to human use, largely by reliance on commonsense knowledge about animals.*

There are also moments when this frame of reference is challenged and conflicting views of the “appropriate” position of animals in society are raised, negotiated and contested. In chapter 4, borrowing from postcolonial theory, I speculated about a potential *fragility* in the narratives supporting the position and

¹⁰⁰ I refer to a Gramscian understanding of common sense, i.e. conceptions of the world that are often fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential (Gramsci, 2000). Gramsci further characterizes common sense as “crudely conservative” (p. 346), “anthropomorphic” and “anthropocentric” (p. 344). Commonsensical conceptions are often contradictory (containing elements of truth as well as elements of misrepresentation) and are accepted and lived uncritically. Many elements in common sense make situations of inequality and oppression appear natural and unchangeable (Forgacs, 2000).

treatment of animals in society and that they need continuous repetition and recreation to maintain authority (cf. Bhabha, 1994).¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the narratives need to present themselves as *benign*, not oppressive (cf. Lundahl, 2005). Many of the assertions about human-animal relationships identified above were reformulated and repeated in different contexts, sometimes in response to conflicting views, and most of them expressed a rationale of either benevolence or inevitability. This rationale allows students to maintain a sense of self as compassionate actors toward animals, more or less undisturbed by the contradictions embedded in human-animal relations, thus reproducing the image of “benign” oppressive forces at the micro level of the classroom. Seen from this perspective, postcolonial theory may contribute with a useful analytical tool to understand some of the “animal stories” as they are constituted and circulated in school.

¹⁰¹ I proposed an analogous analysis, adopted from gender theory, in chapter 4 by referring to Birke, Bryld and Lykke’s (2004) discussion on the performativity of animality, i.e. the consolidation of animal otherness by repeated action over time.

Chapter 23

Concluding remarks and implications

In these final sections, I have attempted to briefly summarize possible answers to my initial research questions of how expressions of human-animal relations in formal education may be understood and problematized. The everyday practices and activities of the schools investigated produce a wide range of meanings about animals and human-animal relationships. These practices may work toward achieving improved conditions for animals in human society, but may at the same time also implicitly consolidate dominant paradigms of utilization and exploitation. I see this as one dimension of the contradictions characterizing human-animal relations in society.

I have argued throughout this study that practices and rationales of human-animal relations cannot be fully conceptualized in disconnection from the social, political and historical contexts in which they are embedded. Bryld and Lykke (2000) argue for an integration of the human/nature axis into “the framework of intersecting othering processes” (p. 29), since animals play a significant role in the definition of the “human” which is not a neutral, but a highly gendered and racialized category. Therefore, discourses of species, gender and race (and, I would add, class relations) are intimately intertwined. However, even in the classrooms in my study where the treatment of animals in society was heavily criticized, the connections of human-animal relations with relations between human individuals, groups, and societies were rarely highlighted, and if they were, they often became neutralized. When these (and other) educational processes and strategies are analyzed and understood, it also opens a possibility of a reconceptualization of human-animal education.

There are shortcomings in the study that may be discussed. For instance, it has been impossible to cover all relevant perspectives. The schools studied are few in number and relatively homogeneous and even though I have in some sense achieved a *cross-curricular*¹⁰² focus, a *cross-cultural* analysis is lacking. The methodological approach chosen also excludes statistical generalizability of my findings. Most levels of the Swedish education system, including teacher

¹⁰² My empirical study is cross-curricular in the sense that it covers subject areas from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences although not all courses are represented.

education, are left unexplored by this study. Furthermore, neither the perspective on animals as active participants in human-animal relationships nor the perspective of animal-utilizing (and other) stakeholders outside the school has been included. In addition, it could be argued that even if the school may be seen as a legitimizing arena of human-animal relations, the possibilities of it having any profound impact on these relations are limited, which may also limit the significance of my findings.

My ambition has been to contribute with understandings of how human-animal relations are produced and reproduced in the institutionalized context of the school, and I have made efforts to achieve validity of my interpretations and analyses by describing the research process with as much transparency as possible. Still, the study may be perceived as normative in the sense that it seeks to challenge some fundamental ideas of the position of animals in human society and in doing so goes against hegemonic discourse. This understanding of normativity is part of my critical theoretical framework and I consider it as both a weakness and a strength. It is a strength in that it highlights perspectives that are often marginalized or ignored in education research, but it is also a (potential) weakness in that the normative dimension may divert attention away from the complexity of the social processes studied as well as from the scientific basis of the investigation. Despite its normative position, it should be noted that the study does not make authoritative claims to have gained access to “truth” in any absolute sense.

Lastly, I would like to summarize some implications of my study in the form of a few pedagogical points of departure for further discussion in the areas of education, education research, and human-animal studies. These concern conditions of humans and non-humans alike (and their interrelations) and may include:

- The notion of the “hidden curriculum”: How can it be developed as a useful and critical analytical tool?
- Material and symbolic roots of harmful or oppressive practices: How can they and their effects be critically addressed from different perspectives? And how can alternatives be envisioned and evaluated?
- Intersections and interfaces of various forms of harmful or oppressive practices: How can these be explored while at the same time recognizing the unique circumstances of each form?

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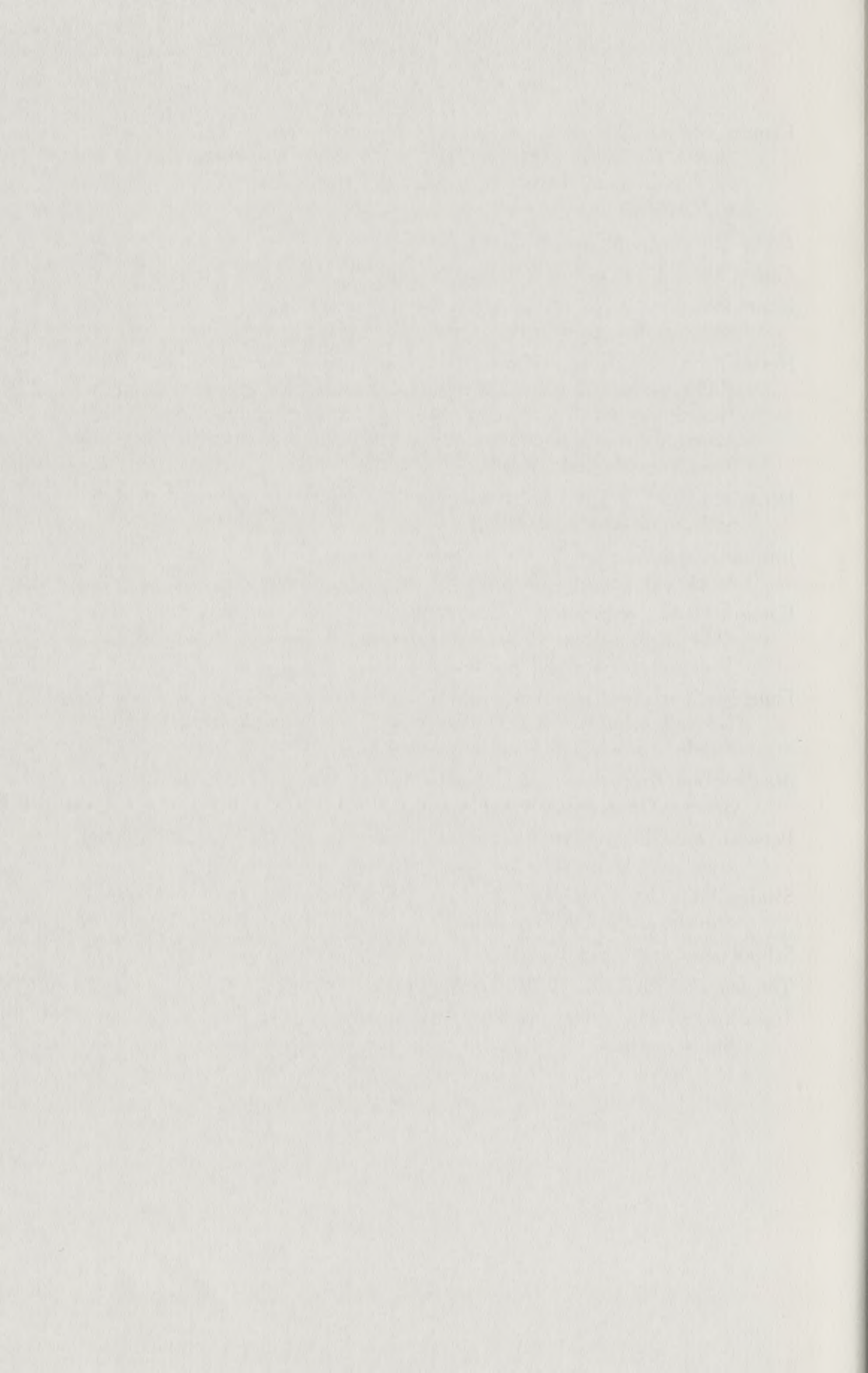
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The School and the Animal Other

An ethnography of human-animal relations in education

The School and the Animal Other explores several important questions in the field of animal ethics and education by close examination of a wide range of educational situations and classroom activities. How are human-animal relations expressed and discussed in school? How do teachers and students develop strategies to handle ethical conflicts arising from the ascribed position of animals as accessible to human control, use, and killing? How do schools deal with topics such as zoos, hunting, meat consumption and animal experimentation? These are questions that have profound implications for education and society. They are graphically described, discussed and rendered problematic based on detailed ethnographic research in the present thesis and are analyzed by means of a synthesis of perspectives from critical theory, gender and postcolonial thought.

The School and the Animal Other makes human-animal relations a crucial issue for pedagogical theory and practice. In the various physical and social dimensions of the school environment, a diversity of social representations of animals are produced and reproduced. These representations tell stories about human-animal boundaries and identities and bring to the fore a complex of questions about domination and subordination, normativity and deviance, rationality and empathy as well as possibilities of resistance and change.



Helena Pedersen has a background as a teacher and administrator in post-secondary education. She has worked with animal ethics issues on both a professional and a volunteer basis and was a Member of the Board of the Swedish Fund for Research Without Animal Experiments between 2001-2007. Her published works include articles on humane education, critical pedagogy and futures studies, and she is the recipient of the American Sociological Association's 2006 Award for Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship (the Animals and Society Section).



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