An Inquiry into Animal Rights Vegan Activists' Perception and Practice of Persuasion

by

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2006

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

in the
School of Communication

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2012

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Abstract

This thesis interrogates the persuasive practices of Animal Rights Vegan Activists (ARVAs) in order to determine why and how ARVAs fail to convince people to become and stay veg*n, and what they might do to succeed. While ARVAs and ARVAism are the focus of this inquiry, the approaches, concepts and theories used are broadly applicable and therefore this investigation is potentially useful for any activist or group of activists wishing to interrogate and improve their persuasive practices.

Keywords: Persuasion; Communication for Social Change; Animal Rights; Veg*nism; Activism

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List of Acronyms or Glossary

AR – Animal Rights

ARA – Animal Rights Activist

ARV – Animal Rights Veg*n

ARVA – Animal Rights Veg*n Activist

CAFO – Concentrated Animal Feedlot Operation

CLOW – College Leafleting Outreach Work

CoP – Community of Practice

DM – Diffusion Model

HoYP – Holocaust on Your Plate

IFAF – Industrial Food Animal Facility

PET – People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Veg*n – Vegetarian and/or Vegan

Introduction

People, including those of import and status, have publicly advocated for the consideration of the 'rights' and welfare of non-human animals since the time of Pythagoras. Yet it is only in recent decades, following the publication of Peter Singer's (1975) *Animal Liberation,* that an explosion of animal advocacy communication has occurred. Concomitantly, the topic of animal advocacy communication has become more salient in society and among social scientists. Since the early 1990s the study and analysis of the social and cultural impact of animal advocacy communication—particularly in the context of promoting vegetarianism and veganism (hereafter referred to collectively as veg*nism)—has been steadily and increasingly appearing in academic journals and movement literature. Yet, despite increasing attention, awareness, and movement support (as evidenced by considerable growth in both the membership and operating budgets of animal rights based veg*n advocacy groups such as Vegan Outreach and Mercy For Animals) the percentage of North Americans who are practicing veg*ns remains largely unchanged at 2-3%, and per capita consumption of animal products is increasing domestically and globally. This raises questions about the efficacy of animal advocates' current communication efforts, and the willingness and/or ability of their audiences to actually implement dietary changes in response to these communications.[1]

This thesis looks at the rhetorical practices of a group of animal advocates—Animal Rights Vegan Activists (hereafter referred to as ARVAs)—for the purposes of

[1]There are, of course, myriad additional, oftentimes countervailing forces at play that must also be taken into account: while animal advocates' efforts have dramatically increased, so too have the efforts of the producers of animal products. The challenges this presents are discussed throughout the paper.

determining why and how ARVAs fail to communicate effectively (i.e., persuasively), and presenting concrete examples of how ARVAs could surmount the shortcomings of their present communication strategies.

In conducting this investigation I draw on scholarship concerning two distinct yet intertwined general subject areas: Animal Advocacy and Suasory Discourse. My initial interest in writing this thesis was to produce a document that ARVAs could use to become more effective communicators. However, as I developed my arguments it became clear to me that the tools and approach I was taking to both understand the problems of ARVAs' suasory failures and to identify potential pathways for more successful communication could just as easily be deployed to serve the needs of any activist or group of activists wishing to interrogate and improve their rhetorical practices. So, while this thesis centers on an examination of communication problems that ARVAs encounter and create, because I am concerned specifically with matters of persuasion (as opposed to, say, morality or social movement theory), my inquiry neither requires nor would benefit from engaging to any great extent with the 'particulars' of animal advocacy. Thus, I tend to offer 'issue specific' details only if and when they are needed to make sense of the question or problem at hand. Otherwise, I them leave aside. In keeping the focus centered on an interrogation of contemporary ARVAs' communication practices I generally elide or disregard distinctions (e.g., vegan vs. vegetarian, liberationist vs. rightist), which although often extremely important and contentious for movement insiders, arguably have little or no bearing on the general public's understanding of and/or response to the ARV rhetors and texts that they encounter. I do not include information pertaining to such things as the philosophical and substantive differences between animal welfarists, rightists, liberationists and abolitionists, nor do I chronicle the history of the animal rights movement. These details are certainly interesting, but, again, they are neither necessary nor particularly useful insofar as the core interests of this thesis are concerned. In fact, the particulars are often so convoluted and contested that to engage with them is to risk becoming distracted and/or embroiled in a related but ultimately different story. All too often issue 'insiders/experts' become so caught up in masterfully articulating, theorizing and/or debating the finer points of the subject they are addressing that they lose sight of the fact that their work has become so nuanced, detailed and obscure that it is neither accessible nor relevant

to the everyday, non-specialized audience with whom they are concerned and, ostensibly, aiming to affect. This is a criticism that has often been leveled at 'ivory tower' academics and I believe it could be just as aptly directed at authors of animal advocacy texts.

A considerable and growing body of literature exists on the subject of what can broadly be referred to as 'animal advocacy.' There are numerous ways of categorizing animal advocacy literature, but for the purposes of this thesis the key distinction I draw is between partisan literature (e.g., Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*) which advocates for animals, and scholarship that ostensibly takes a neutral, objective position to scrutinize and evaluate the efficacy of animal advocacy work (e.g. Freeman, Herzog; Mika). A great deal more of the former than the latter has been produced, but in both cases the author is, more often than not, an avowed animal advocate of some stripe. Hence, even in the latter category it is quite rare to come across a discussion of animal advocacy work that does not betray the author's personal opinions, judgments and position on the subject she is discussing. That an author's pro-animal orientation should be evident is not inherently problematic. What is problematic is when the author takes a normative approach, and instead of evaluating the efficacy of the original argument/text more or less enters the fray either by explicating the moral reasons why such an argument/text ought to be persuasive or, worse, disregards the question of efficacy altogether and instead proposes a rhetorical strategy based on personal values and/or ideals. This scenario is aptly illustrated by Freeman who prefaces her article, *Framing Animal Rights in the Go Veg Campaigns of U.S. Animal Rights Organizations,* with the declaration, "In support of *ideological authenticity*, this paper recommends that vegan campaigns emphasize justice, respect, life, freedom, environmental responsibility, and a shared animality" (2010:163. Emphasis added). These are pitfalls I strive to avoid. To reiterate, my aim here is not to weigh in on the legitimacy or morality of ARVAs' position, but to interrogate the efficacy of their suasory practices.

Persuasion has been the subject of formal study and debate for thousands of years. Once primarily the conceptual domain of sophists and philosophers, the study of the art of rhetoric has transcended time and discipline to also, and perhaps more commonly, become conceived of as a science of persuasion. Those who continue with the practice of rhetorical criticism come predominantly from university English and

communication departments and these scholars tend to be less concerned with evaluating the efficacy of persuasive texts and more with interpreting them, or constructing new frameworks for interpreting them (Dues & Brown, 2003). Conversely, researchers from an array of fields (including but not limited to: biology, neurology, psychology, political science, and marketing) take a more instrumental, empirical approach as they seek to discover and understand the mechanisms, means and processes of persuasion. The diversity of interested parties—some less benign and academic than others—addressing the subject of persuasion has resulted in the production of an extensive range of theories and perspectives, data and hypotheses. A sophisticated knowledge base detailing myriad aspects of individual, group and societal decision-making triggers and processes now exists—the result of countless experiments and studies (Ibid).

In recent years popular non-fiction books such as Robert Cialdini's Influence (2000); Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* (2000); George Lakoff's *Don't Think of an Elephant*! (2004) Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt's *Freakenomics* (2005); and Drew Westen's *The Political Brain* (2007), and have drawn on and expanded this knowledge base, amalgamating and (re)interpreting existing studies to bring the scientific study of persuasion out of the academy and into the mainstream. The findings that these authors relate regarding how and why human beings are, and can be, persuaded are often surprising as they are frequently contrary to the modern reader's self-image as a rational, reasoning being. For example, Westen details voters' unconscious proclivity for voting according not to a logical evaluation of a politician's platform but rather according to (unconscious) emotional responses to things such as the politician's height and her/his ability to appear "presidential" (p.7). Yet, however surprised readers might be by findings such as Westen's, it should be kept in mind that many of these research findings merely add detail to a picture first outlined over 2000 years ago.

In *On Rhetoric* Aristotle defines rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (p.13). This definition reflects his practical interest in identifying and understanding the tools and techniques for creating and delivering persuasive speeches. Aristotle posits that audiences are influenced by a number of elements and that the effectiveness of many appeals had little or nothing to do with the speaker having provided and proved the "plain facts" or "truthfulness" of a

case. Instead, audiences often agree with a speaker who offers proofs of a different sort: "…some are in character [ethos] of the speaker, and some in disposing the listener in some way [pathos], and some in the argument [logos] itself, by showing or seeming to show something [often via enthymemes]" (p.37). So, when Westen offers up survey data indicating that voters are influenced by a candidate's ability to appear "presidential" he is (again) really only elaborating on Aristotle's 2000 year old observation regarding the power of ethos: the speaker must "construct a view of himself as a certain kind of person [with the qualities of] practical wisdom, virtue, and good will […] a person seeming to have all these qualities is necessarily persuasive to the hearers" (p.120).

It is important to note that unlike Aristotle, contemporary scholars and professional practitioners of persuasion tend to be least interested in logos—unless they are explicating why it has comparatively little effect on audiences today (see Duncombe; G. Lakoff; Westen for discussion). Although the argument (logos) is frequently the least influential form of rhetorical proof for *audiences,* I would hasten to add that logos, particularly the enthymeme (an opinion-based expression of deductive, syllogistic reasoning), has great significance insofar as the rhetor (i.e., the person making the argument) is concerned. For this reason, examination of the enthymeme's descriptive value provides the framework for chapter two.

A neo-Aristotelian approach, for many years the dominant if not sole analytical method employed by rhetoricians was, for all intents and purposes, jettisoned from the field of rhetorical criticism in the mid 1960's, following the publication of Edwin Black's highly influential *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (1965). At this time rhetorical criticism moved away from an evaluation-based approach, which had been championed by Herbert Wichelns and other influential scholars, and took what is commonly referred to as an "interpretive turn." Much of Black's indictment of the approach rested on the fact that Aristotle had written *On Rhetoric* more as an encyclopaedia or instructional guide for rhetorical construction rather than as a treatise of rhetorical critique. Thus, its utility as a normative text was largely misapplied and its de facto supremacy in the field

consequently meant that the interpretive capacity of critics was severely curtailed. For the purposes of my work, however, a neo-Aristotelian inspired[2] approach is appropriate and useful as my interest centers on evaluating the efficacy of rhetorical situations, texts and rhetors, not interpreting them.

The second chapter of this thesis is taken up with exploring the truthfulness (i.e., factual accuracy) of a particular piece of ARVA rhetoric: ***If slaughterhouses had glass walls everyone would be vegetarian.*** This oft-repeated statement is attributed to Paul McCartney, and so I refer to it as *McCartney's Enthymeme*. I argue that the statement is emblematic of ARVA ideology and succinctly embodies and expresses central tenets of a worldview shared by many ARVAs. Using the premises contained in the enthymeme as a structuring device, I identify and investigate some of the ways that ARVAs' (unsubstantiated) assumptions about human nature, communication and social change impel them to unconsciously –and, I argue, detrimentally—pursue certain rhetorical strategies/tactics and eschew others. By parsing each premise and determining where and how 'the world ARVAs see' differs substantively (and therefor problematically) from 'the world as it is' (i.e., as empirical evidence shows it to be) I uncover some of the core reasons why ARVA rhetors and rhetoric persistently fail in their efforts to persuade their audiences to become and stay veg*n.

In the third chapter I continue to use a rhetorical perspective to direct my inquiry. Although I rarely use traditional, strictly rhetorical terminology, my aim is, to paraphrase Aristotle, "to observe in any given case the available means of [and obstacles to] persuasion." I examine how ARVAs' problematic assumptions regarding human nature, communication and social change manifest in and constrain their rhetorical practices. By using both theoretical and everyday insights and observations, I consider some of the ways these problems could be mitigated or even avoided.

[2] It is important to note that a neo-Aristotelian *inspired* approach is most certainly not the same as neo-Aristotelian approach. The rhetors, rhetorical situations, and rhetorical texts that Aristotle considered generally bear faint resemblance to that which I, or any other modern scholar of rhetoric, attend. Indeed, this was another reason why a neo-Aristotelian approach was abandoned.

The fourth chapter consists of two case studies. In the first, I examine People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA) controversial 2004 *Holocaust on Your Plate* campaign. I outline why, and in what regards, the campaign failed (e.g., evoked overwhelmingly hostile viewer responses) and succeeded (e.g., garnered a great deal of mainstream media attention). I illustrate the practical utility of observations made in previous chapters by applying them to the campaign, showing how it could be altered to mitigate the negative consequences and retain the positive effects. In the second case study I examine the increasingly popular ARVA practice of leafleting on college campuses. Campus leafleting is an activity that ARVAs (despite strong evidence to the contrary) believe is highly effective—but one that I argue should be seriously scrutinized and substantially altered. Again, by applying observations made in previous chapters, I aim to illustrate the practical utility of these observations. I include these case studies because I believe it is vitally important to demonstrate that this thesis need not merely be taken as an intellectual exercise, as academic discussion 'about' something, but rather that it can be appreciated as a practical tool 'for' something. The case studies are intended to show that the work contained in this thesis has applied value and could indeed help ARVAs to become more effective communicators.

The thesis concludes with a brief review of the key points and concerns raised throughout the paper and reasserts that there is a demonstrable need for ARVAs to identify and interrogate their assumptions if they wish to persuade more people to become and stay veg*n.

Chapter 1.

There's No Such Thing as Empty Rhetoric: The Enthymeme as Embodiment of Worldview

> The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. ~ Gandhi
>
> Truly man is the king of beasts, for his brutality exceeds theirs. We live by the death of others: we are burial places! I have from an early age abjured the use of meat, and the time will come when men such as I will look on the murder of animals as they now look on the murder of men. ~Leonardo da Vinci
>
> I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other. ~Henry David Thoreau
>
> Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet. ~Albert Einstein

Quotations from well-respected, historical figures almost always appear in animal rights-based veg*n literature. The powerful ethos of humanitarian leaders and visionaries such as Gandhi, da Vinci, Thoreau, and Einstein serves to lend legitimacy to the movement, and the perceived moral authority and artfully worded pronouncements of these figures combine to implicitly assert the right-thinkingness of an animal rights perspective. The use of sage quotations for such purposes is a widespread practice, hardly particular to the animal rights movement, and initially I gave them little more than passing thought. However, over the years, I noticed a particular phrase appeared again and again: **If slaughterhouses had glass walls everyone would be a vegetarian.** These words are attributed neither to a world leader nor an intellectual giant, but to a contemporary musician and celebrity: Paul McCartney.

I came across McCartney's words so often that I became suspicious of them. I wondered: Is McCartney engaging in thoughtless hyperbole or is he in earnest? He delivers the statement as if it was a matter of fact, but is it? Does he believe it is? Is it description or prescription? Is it a moral directive? Why does he say it? Why do animal rights veg*n[3] activists (hereafter referred to as ARVAs) repeat it so often? How does the audience (primarily other ARVAs) interpret these words? What effects do these words have?

The ubiquity of McCartney's words and the affirmative matter-of-fact manner in which they are integrated into AR texts suggested to me that they represented far more than the empty rhetoric of a catchy marketing slogan. And while the appeal of the quotation no doubt derives in some part from McCartney's iconic status, I would argue that its widespread usage is only partly a consequence of its having been uttered by the former Beatle. I have come to believe its persistent repetition is attributable to the fact that it is emblematic of ARVA ideology: the statement succinctly embodies and expresses central tenets of a worldview shared by many ARVAs.

Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) observation that "taste[4] classifies the classifier"(p.6) and Jack Solomon's (1999) view that "supposedly neutral descriptive terms can serve an underlying ideology, turn one group against another and present a stereotyped picture of the world" (p.376), I believe that probing these words yields insights into how ARVAs perceive and order the world; specifically: how they regard the relations among human nature, persuasion, and social change. More significantly, it can tell us why ARVA's act as they do. For although "most people are not compelled to make fundamental changes in behavior because of belief, [research has found that] animal rights activists are" (Herzog, 1993:117). Thus, probing this commonly expressed ARVA

[3] Throughout the paper I use 'veg*n' to refer to vegetarians and vegans collectively. While there are, of course, important distinctions between the two, for my purposes these distinctions, unless otherwise noted, are irrelevant.

[4] By taste Bourdieu essentially means classification.

belief can also potentially offer some insight as to why ARVAs consistently deploy and endorse the use of certain persuasive tactics and reject and/or neglect others.

"**If slaughterhouses had glass walls everyone would be a vegetarian."**

A useful way to investigate the significance of McCartney's statement is by studying it through the lens developed by rhetorical scholarship. According to theorist Kenneth Burke, all communication is inherently rhetorical: "the use of language is a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (1969:1). In other words, to communicate (effectively) is to persuade: "Where there is persuasion there is rhetoric and where there is meaning there is persuasion" (Burke cited in Stewart, Smith and Denton, 2001:152). Thus, in Burkean terms, McCartney is not simply uttering a statement. (Indeed, no one ever is.) He is making an informal argument. Regardless of any awareness or intent to do so he, like any other speaker, aims to persuade (or depending on one's view, invites or expects) his audience to see the world as he does, to agree with him.

McCartney's sound-bite of suasory discourse is delivered in a form first described by Aristotle as an enthymeme—albeit a layered, convoluted enthymeme. According to contemporary discussions of Aristotle's work (Borchers, 2006; Dillard and Pfau, 2002; Johnston, 1994;) an enthymeme is a 'truncated syllogism' wherein either the major or minor premise is absent but implied. A syllogism is a type of deductive reasoning. There are a number of types of syllogism but the classic illustration is as follows:

Premise 1: All men are mortal
Premise 2: Socrates is a man
Conclusion: Socrates is mortal

In the syllogism both premises are true and so, as the conclusion is contained within the premises, it logically follows that the conclusion is also true.[5] However, in an enthymeme a premise is omitted/suppressed. Generally this is done because either its truthfulness is self-evident (thus to state it would be redundant and needlessly time consuming) or it is contested and to explicitly state it would be to draw unwanted attention to it and possibly invite disagreement. In any case, the speaker leaves the premise unspoken and it is up to the audience to fill in the blanks. The familiar syllogistic structure of an enthymeme may serve as a prompt to acquiescence by giving the audience the impression that the suppressed premise(s) is/are true and that the conclusion is also then, logically true. Of course, the suggestive structure alone is often insufficient to the task and for any number of reasons audiences may refuse or be unable to supply the suppressed premise(s). In these cases the speaker and/or his argument is likely to seem unpersuasive and may even strike the audience as being offensive or absurd.[6] Conversely, if the audience is willing and able to supply (and agree with) the suppressed premise(s) they and the speaker effectively 'share a reality' and so the speaker and/or his argument will likely appear to be truthful and persuasive (quite literally 'common sense'). In such cases it may be said that the perceived persuasiveness of the speaker and/or his argument is chiefly, although not solely, a function of the speaker (re)articulating that which the audience already accepts as true and so in that sense they are not so much persuaded as they are reminded that they are already in agreement. In other words, enthymemes are centrifugal and centripetal everyday linguistic devices: they simultaneously draw in those who share meaning

[5] Some logicians would debate the idea that the conclusion is contained in the premises. Nonetheless, it is a widely accepted way of explaining that the truth of the conclusion is guaranteed by the truth of the premises.

[6] Ingrid Newkirk, cofounder of PETA, has stated on numerous occasions that, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." She regularly expands the claim in a variety of ways: "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. They're all animals." "When it comes to having a central nervous system, and the ability to feel pain, hunger, and thirst, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." "Animal liberationists do not separate out the human animal, so there is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights. A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. They are all mammals." These are only a few examples. Despite her clarifications many people still find the root claim outrageous and offensive.

systems and repel those who do not. Arguably, enthymemes operate on a largely subconscious level; we generally only become aware of them when we disagree with them, can't understand them, or dislike the speaker.

McCartney's statement, "If slaughterhouses had glass walls everyone would be a vegetarian" is something of a hyper-enthymeme. It contains a number of suppressed premises, some of which might look like:

Premise 1: What goes on inside a slaughterhouse is concealed/unseen
Premise 2: No meat-eaters have ever seen the inside of a slaughterhouse
Premise 3: What takes place inside a slaughterhouse upsets/would upset everyone who sees it
Premise 4: Everyone who is upset by what (s)he sees reacts by modifying her/his behavior
Conclusion: People continue to eat meat because they haven't seen the inside of a slaughterhouse
Therefore: People can be converted to vegetarianism by showing them/making visible what goes on inside a slaughterhouse.

Cursory observations of everyday life reveal that not just one, but all of these premises are false. Nevertheless, despite abundant evidence to the contrary, it has been my observation that high profile ARVAs (e.g., Ball, Francione, Friedrich, Newkirk) tend to proceed as if these premises are true and that following the course of action indicated by the conclusion will yield the desired results.

The more I pondered McCartney's statement and the suppressed premises it contained, the more I wondered if I had taken him too literally. The premises are so clearly implausible and fraught with problems that I feared I was creating a straw man. It might be interesting to dissect this enthymeme, but to argue that it embodies a movement's worldview and subliminally engenders and perpetuates ARVA's rationales

for adhering to a particular repertoire of persuasive efforts would surely be overstating its significance.[7] Wouldn't it?

My doubt subsided when I came across the following passage in high profile, professional ARVAs Matt Ball (of Vegan Outreach) and Bruce Friedrich's (of PETA) co-authored book, *The Animal Activist's Handbook* (2009):

> Paul McCartney has pointed out that, "If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian." This concisely captures the main problem of vegetarian advocacy: people don't have to see the animals they eat being imprisoned in factory farms and butchered in industrial slaughterhouses. Someone can order a chicken sandwich, and to that person, it's just a sandwich. (p.17. Emphasis added.)

Ball and Friedrich go on to clarify that they believe the 'problem' of meat-eating is largely due to the way society is "set up" and cannot be resolved by one-off encounters with slaughterhouse reality (as McCartney' words might imply). They then offer a modified, expanded version of McCartney's enthymeme: "If the realities of factory farms and slaughterhouses were as visible as the meat they produce, all thoughtful, compassionate people would be vegetarian advocates" (p.17).

Ball and Friedrich's version isn't as catchy as McCartney's. It feels less artfully rhetorical, less hyperbolic, and consequently more honest. In part this is simply because they have tailored the words to suit their audience—readers of *The Animal Activists Handbook*. For example, "vegetarian" is replaced with "vegetarian advocates." Yet it is also partly attributable to additional modifications that suggest that the authors recognize that at least some of the premises contained in the original version are problematic or outright false. Nevertheless, they evidently intend to leave the spirit of the original intact as they give McCartney's statement only a superficial finesse rather than a significant revision. Indeed, while attaching the adjectives "compassionate" (*sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it*) and "thoughtful"

[7] This is discussed in detail later in the paper.

(*given to or chosen or made with heedful anticipation of the needs and wants of others*) to the prospective "vegetarian advocate" gives the statement greater specificity and clarity, it also works something of a sophist's trick. The refined language tightens the metaphorical strings and it actually becomes more psychologically difficult to disagree with the statement or to dismiss it as empty rhetoric. For example, in disagreeing the reader would, for all intents and purposes, be identifying himself as someone who precludes non-human animals from the purview of thoughtfulness and compassion. Given that a great many Americans identify themselves as animal-lovers (Brady and Palmeri, 2007), disagreeing with the statement would feel uncomfortably incongruous, at odds with their self-perception.

We can reasonably assume that Ball and Friedrich do not make their statement in order to spark philosophical discussion –they are after all activists not philosophers. Their aim is to prod and affirm their neophyte readers' interest in becoming an ARVA. To *Handbook* readers, the authors seem to be saying:

You (like us) are aware of what goes on in factory farms and slaughterhouses.
You (like us) are a thoughtful, compassionate person.
You (like us) include non-human animals in your definition of others.
Therefore, it only makes sense that you (like us) would be a vegetarian advocate.

As discussed earlier, if the audience identifies and agrees with the speaker then it is likely that the statement and the speaker and will seem truthful and persuasive – because the speaker and the audience already share an experience and an interpretation of reality. In Burkean terms, they are *consubstantial*; 'Ah yes, it's true,' the reader (subconsciously?) thinks to herself, 'I (like you) have become aware of what goes on in factory farms and slaughterhouses and because I (like you) am a thoughtful and compassionate person – I feel that what I have seen is unacceptable. Therefore, it makes sense that I would act as you do, which is to say I will try to change reality by becoming a vegetarian advocate.'

Certainly it may be true that Ball and Friedrich and I (or any other reader of *The Animal Activist's Handbook*) are thoughtful and compassionate people who, upon learning how meat is produced, have or wish to become vegetarian advocates. Yet,

however inspiring this truth may be to ARVAs, empirical evidence/everyday reality overwhelmingly indicates that they represent the exception rather than the rule.

If it isn't true that "if the realities of factory farms and slaughterhouses were as visible as the meat they produce, all thoughtful, compassionate people would be vegetarian advocates," why do Ball and Friedrich say it? Do they naively believe that they are stating facts? Consider their choice of words: "Paul McCartney has *pointed out* that, if slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian." They do not say McCartney *argued*, or McCartney *opined*. They say *pointed out*. This is a strong indication that they believe that McCartney is reporting a truth.

On the other hand, it is possible that they are intentionally engaging in what Wayne Booth (2004) has dubbed *rhetrickery*, "shoddy, dishonest communicative arts producing misunderstanding –along with other harmful results" (p.10). In using the term rhetrickery here I do not mean to suggest that their intentions are malicious; quite the reverse. It is only that I wonder if they might not be purposely issuing normative declarations, reciting not what they know is true but what they and other ARVAs think *ought* to be true in a effort to boost movement members' morale and affirm movement legitimacy. According to at least one scholar, this sort of 'preaching to the choir' is a common practice within social movement organizations in general, where "the primary appeal of the rhetoric of protest is to the protestors themselves, who feel the need for psychological refurbishing and affirmation" (Gregg cited in Stewart, Smith and Denton: 194). In itself, engaging in this sort of rhetorical practice seems harmless enough—particularly when it seems that the only people activists are 'tricking' are themselves. However, if issuing untrue statements leads to ARVAs uncritically accepting a mistaken impression of social reality, and this in turn causes them to pursue fruitless advocacy work, it may indeed be considered harmful—to the success of the movement.

A brief review of ARVA literature and organization websites (e.g., Best, 2006; Ball & Friedrich, 2009; Francione, 2007; Joy, 2008; Maurer, 2002; PETA; Vegan Outreach) demonstrates the applicability of Gregg's observation. The following example, taken from Mark Hawthorne's, *Striking at the Roots: A Practical Guide to Animal Activism* (2008: 12) is just one of countless instances wherein normative, subjective statements are presented as descriptive, objective accounts of social reality:

> As we work to make the world a kinder place, it helps to keep constantly in mind that we in the animal-rights movement have science and rationality on our side. We have justice on our side, and we also have public opinion on our side. Our goal is simply to help people understand the ways in which their own actions may not be congruent with their ethics. Everyone opposes cruelty, but the general public has no idea how animals used for food, clothing, experimentation and human entertainment suffer. Our task then is not to change people's ethics; it's simply to educate them about the reality of other animals' suffering as vigorously as we are able, using the tools provided by this book. We can do it, and we can do it in our lifetimes.

Representative of ARVA claims-making practices in general, Hawthorne's words are essentially a detailed and expanded version of the enthymemes discussed in this paper and they are illustrative of the earnest and sincere manner in which ARVAs consistently make such claims. Interestingly, while there are significant, often irreconcilable, differences between ARVAs in terms of philosophies, long and short-term goals, strategies and tactics, and so forth, most ARVAs nevertheless tend to proceed as if the premises contained in the enthymemes above are true, and that this truth provides a legitimate basis and roadmap for action. Furthermore, the earnest manner in which activists such as Hawthorne articulate their versions of the enthymemes strongly suggest that ARVAs misstate reality out of ignorance and/or wishful thinking rather than any conscious intention to misrepresent.

Henry Spira,[8] observing that, "too many activists mix only with other activists and imagine that everyone else thinks as they do," urged animal activists to "try to understand the public's current thinking and where it could be encouraged to go tomorrow. Above all, keep in touch with reality" (Spira and Singer, 2007: 215). Contemporary movement leaders such as Ball and Friedrich repeatedly echo his sentiment, saying that effective animal advocacy work requires that activists "set aside personal biases" and "…challenge ourselves to approach advocacy through a straightforward analysis of the world as it is…" (p.10) Clearly, this seems like common

[8] Spira is a well-know American animal activist who initiated numerous successful AR campaigns in the 1970's and 80's. He died in 1998.

sense, yet in so many respects the world that ARVAs persistently report seeing is demonstrably (and quite often obviously) inconsistent with "the world as it is." I would argue that this disparity seriously undermines their persuasive efforts. To increase efficacy ARVAs must be willing to heed their own advice, even when it requires dismantling and abandoning long and dearly held beliefs.

Unsubstantiated Assumptions: ARVAs' Take on Human Nature, Persuasion, and Social Change

To begin determining where the 'ARVA world' and "the world as it is" problematically diverge, this chapter dissects McCartney's and Ball & Friedrich's enthymemes. Although the latter is essentially an outgrowth of the former and the two are variations on a theme, I include both as the subtle differences sometimes provide illuminating contrasts. There are several reasons why I have chosen to proceed via a detailed examination of these enthymemes. As noted earlier, the enthymemes succinctly embody key aspects of an ARVA worldview, which in turn influences ARVA's behaviour. Hence, the premises provide a useful entry point and framework for discussing the causes and effects of what social movement scholars would refer to as ARVAs' "repertoire of contention." According to Sarah Soule (2004: 300):

> The repertoire of contention is the complete set of protest tactics available to a social movement at any given time (Tilly, 1978). Historically and culturally specific, the repertoire is what actors "know how to do and what others expect them to do" (Tarrow, 1993:70)… Social movement actors "do not have to reinvent the wheel at each place and in each conflict. Rather, they often find inspiration in the ideas and tactics espoused and practiced by other activists" (McAdam and Rucht 1993:58).

As Soule notes, activists do not pluck their ideas and tactics out of thin air—they get them from other activists. And so one of the reasons these enthymemes are worthy of serious consideration is that they function mimetically; these omnipresent statements encourage neophyte ARVAs to perceive ARVA challenges in particular ways, to deploy particular tactics to resolve them, and in turn to encourage others to follow suit; as Doherty observes: "tactical repertoires as learned and shared understandings of how to protest are shaped by the values of the movement" (cited in Munro, 2005: 76). The self-

perpetuating, behavior-producing quality of the enthymemes is partly a consequence of their being (about) beliefs about communication. They tell the reader what he already believes about how communication works and offer him a prescription for persuasion based on that belief. (It does not matter that the belief is empirically unsupported or that the prescription regularly fails to deliver.) In this way it could be said that these enthymemes present ARVAs with a model of/for not only social reality generally, but of/for communication specifically. According to James Carey, "Models of communication are…not merely representations of communication but representations for communication: templates that guide, unavailing or not, concrete processes of human interaction, mass and interpersonal" (1992: 32).

In anticipation of the discussion that follows, I offer four preliminary observations:

First, although ARVAs make use of a variety of tactics there appears to be a common underlying tendency to conceive of effective, explicitly persuasive communication as something that predominantly occurs in a uni-directional, linear manner. Linear views of communication include the Transmission Model (Shannon and Weaver), The Hypodermic Needle (Lasswell), and Dissemination (see Peters, 1999, for discussion).

In modern communication theory linear models are often dismissed as having been superseded by newer, more sophisticated approaches to human interaction based on approaches such as hermeneutics and semiotics. It is also common to read that the idea of the active audience has displaced older and more passive accounts of human communication as these are represented by various linear models of communicative practice. But as Bauer and Gaskell (2008: 338) point out, this account is far from complete:

> [Although] linear models of communication transfer have been much criticized, they have not disappeared. Their currency value continues unabated and is shored up by institutions of strategic communication and corporate affairs. The staying power of the 'transport' model of communication is a puzzling social phenomenon in itself. Reddy (1993) suggests that 'transport' is the core metaphor of natural language (at least in English) for talking about communication; it is difficult to displace by another way of talking. Language itself is the dragon we are riding. Despite all criticisms, transfer notions are alive in meta-communications,

not least in social psychological models of attitude change and message design.

Second, ARVAs appear inclined, and again I would posit unconsciously, to think and act as if problematic issues and practices such as meat-eating and factory farming can be largely explained, and more importantly remedied, according to the hypothesis set out in the Information Deficit model (ID) wherein information is provided by experts and received by a heretofore ignorant public who, once in possession of 'the truth,' appropriately modify their behaviors in the manner predicted and prescribed by experts (Tonnesen, 2002:2; Nerlich, Koteyo and Brown, 2010:100).

The ID model fits neatly with a Transmission (linear) view of communication and together they are at the root of many ARVAs' persistent, primary preoccupation with endeavoring to bring about change by "getting the message out there" (Dawn, 2007; PETA). Inarguably, providing the public with information and perspectives that are hidden from mainstream view or otherwise marginalized is an essential component of animal rights veg*n advocacy work. However, unconscious subscription to and promotion of a communication-as-transmission metaphor likely has a 3-fold effect on ARVAs' beliefs, actions, and outcomes:

- It narrows and distorts ARVAs' understanding of the causes, effects and connections between individual and social change
- It determines, limits, or at least 'flavors' ARVAs' actual and potential rhetorical repertoire
- It limits the overall efficacy of ARVA's suasory efforts

By (unconsciously) believing that the fundamental problem they seek to resolve is one of *information deficit* and that the 'natural' solution to that problem is *information transmission* ARVAs essentially fall into the (largely unavoidable) conceptual trap identified by Reddy (1979) who observed that, "the stories English speakers tell about communication are largely determined by the semantic structures of the language itself" (p.285). According to Reddy, the *conduit* is the default conceptual framework for speakers of English, and this conceptual framework so deeply, fundamentally entrenched that it is virtually inescapable. The effect of what Reddy describes is very

much akin to what Kaplan and Maslow refer to as “the Law of the Instrument,” wherein it is tempting, if the only tool you have [or can conceive of having] is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail.

Third, viewing communication as a *unidirectional* act of transmission with a *sender*, a *message* and a *receiver* is mutually reinforcing with a view of change as being primarily an individual psychological process, rather than a social one. Donna Maurer (2002) observes that most vegetarian leaders tend to “focus more on how individual people change than on how ideas and political structures and other institutions in society change” (p.90). I would suggest that this is not only because effecting individual change seems more do-able (particularly for grassroots ARVAs) but also because individual change is regarded as the means by which changes in social consciousness and political structures and other institutions in society occur. Whether or not this is actually the order of things has long been a matter of debate (e.g., the “Great Man” theory set out by Herbert Spencer in the 1840’s, rebutted by Thomas Carlyle in the 1860’s). Nevertheless, a ‘self’ centered view, however problematic, appears to provide grassroots activists with a deeply felt sense of agency and legitimacy. This is largely due to the fact that such a view is entirely in keeping with deeply entrenched modern western democratic ideals that elevate and celebrate the power of the individual (Maniates, 2001). Amongst ARVAs a belief in ‘the power of one’ appears to be unshakeable and profound. This is clearly evidenced both by the title and in PETA’s introduction to founder Ingrid Newkirk’s 2008 book, *One Can Make Difference*:

> Ingrid has compiled more than 50 thought-provoking essays written by an intriguing and diverse group of individuals. Featured authors include celebrities, such as Oliver Stone and Brigitte Bardot; renowned physicians; and **private citizens** who, **armed with nothing more than the power of their own beliefs, have made a positive impact on the world**. As readers peek into the psyche of these amazing personalities, they will discover that all it takes to create an entire movement is the desire and determination of *any one person*. (My bold. Italics in the original.)

Similarly, a visit to the Vegan Outreach website reveals hundreds (if not thousands) of articles, anecdotes and testimonials, all containing essentially the same message:

> After leafleting Shasta College last month, Brian Grupe reports: "I approached three students reading the material during a slow period and we had an incredibly productive conversation, after which all three pledged to go veg at least twice a week with the intent of moving towards total vegdom!"

The above quotations succinctly illustrate how the view that the individual is a powerful agent of/for transformation converges with the ID and Transmission Model of communication to create a narrative of (and concomitantly recipe for) ARVAs' success. Furthermore, entirely absent from this narrative, as I later discuss in detail, is any sort of 'validity check' or follow up: The activists and/or respondents are taken at their word; positive incidents are routinely offered up as representative of all activists' encounters/efforts (or at least ones done right); and it goes unquestioned that the outcomes of outreach interactions are wholly positive and lasting.

Given that ARVAs exist within a broader culture where attention to the individual is normalized, prioritized and valorized, it is unsurprising that they are becoming increasingly interested in learning how to communicate effectively with individuals. Consequently, ARVA how-to literature frequently contains references to the works of pop-culture personal influence gurus such as Dale Carnegie and Robert Cialdini. Exhortations to follow the persuasive strategies and techniques outlined by Carnegie and Cialdini are now commonplace. ARVAs' evidence a clear desire to "Win Friends and Influence People"(Carnegie, 1998) by mastering the "Science of Influence" (Cialdini, 2009), as Friedrich's 2002 article, "Stealing from the Corporate Playbook" clearly illustrates:

> We need to work as hard—and, more importantly, as smart—as the people on Wall Street work to sell stocks and advertisers work to sell the latest SUV. Although our goals are different, the mechanisms of reaching other people and selling the message (in our case, of animal liberation) are well established.
>
> The point of this talk, "Stealing from the Corporate Playbook," is to discuss ways of becoming more effective. There are two "playbooks" that nearly every successful businessperson has read—*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey and *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie.

Nevertheless, despite an increasingly sophisticated understanding of such things as decision-making heuristics and how to engage them, ARVA literature reveals a dearth

of critical analysis regarding the obvious discrepancies between "the world as it is" and the world ARVAs purport to see. The critical gaze is rarely turned inward and basic assumptions remain unquestioned. As a result, ARVAs appear to believe, and proceed almost entirely as if, the problem they face is one of blocked or garbled communication and that the solution(s) necessarily involve such things as improving rhetor ethos (e.g., credibility, likeability), increasing access to mainstream media outlets, and 'reframing' key terms and issues (e.g., meat as flesh). And because the sensibility of the ARV project itself is rarely interrogated by movement insiders, ARVAs for the most part concern themselves with, to use Langdon Winner's expression, "learning how to build a better mousetrap." In other words, they aim not to develop new approaches but to keep doing the same things they've always done—but better. The outcomes ARVAs desire may be radical, but their methods are not. For example, much of ARVAs' recent 'how-to' literature focuses on how better to get the message of truth about meat and animal suffering to the public/people (see Adams, Maurer, Ball & Friedrich, and Hawthorne, for examples). Consequently there is an increasing emphasis on activities such as leafleting. Yet this is a tactic that animal activists have been using for decades—with little tangible success.[9]

Fourth, in terms of "building a better mousetrap," ARVA strategies and tactics targeting individuals consistently fail to produce the desired long-term, broader outcome. Despite concerted efforts, the percentage of Americans who are veg*n hasn't changed much in the last 20 years, increasing perhaps 1%, 2% at the most (Vegetarian Resource Group). Arguably, this failure is, at least in part, attributable to the fact that the preponderance of ARVAs' strategies and tactics are predicated on the unspoken assumption that animal-positive attitudes (i.e., a professed love for animals) will lead to animal-positive behaviors (i.e., veg*nism). Cause and effect relationships often do exist between knowledge and action and/or attitude and behavior. However, problems arise when it is assumed that these causal relationships are certain (Cialdini, Perloff, 2003; Westen, 2007). Suasory efforts shaped by a conviction that attitudes toward animals

[9] Defining 'success' is problematic. This is discussed in detail later in the paper.

necessarily influence behavior toward animals, and that knowledge about animal suffering *necessarily* leads to action to prevent animal suffering have consistently failed to deliver significant results for ARVAs. Here again it can be seen that dominant ARVA notions regarding the role and workings of individual decision-making psychology are very much in accord with a Transmission view of communication and the Information Deficit model –both of which have been widely criticized and abandoned by those who make it their business to exhaustively study such matters (Bauer and Gaskell, 2008).

Before embarking on a detailed analysis of the enthymemes it is important to note that I am highlighting and addressing what I see as being problematic tendencies and trends, not absolutes. Not all ARVAs view communication or social change in the ways I have described above. Nor do all ARVAs direct all or even most of their energy into actions geared toward effecting individual change. Organizations such as The Vegetarian Resource Group concern themselves more with effecting structural change:

> Our health professionals, activists, and educators work with businesses and individuals to bring about healthy changes in your school, workplace, and community. Registered dieticians and physicians aid in the development of nutrition related publications and answer member or media questions about the vegetarian and vegan diet.

Similarly, organizations such as PETA devote considerable resources to legal/legislative work.[10] Furthermore, a (growing) number of ARVAs are academic philosophers (e.g., Best, Regan, Singer), and as such take a much more rigorous, analytical approach to the subject matter. In discussing the history of the AR movement in America, Jasper and Nelkin argue that,

> As 'professionals' of moral discourse, philosophers who deal with ethical questions have a natural—and central—role to play in moral

[10] PETA regularly challenges laws and regulations, e.g., in 2002 PETA filed suit against the California Milk Advisory Board for false advertising (re: "Happy Cows" campaign) -but the California Supreme Court refused to hear the case on the grounds that as a government agency, the CMAB cannot be sued for violating California state advertising laws. In 2003 PETA petitioned the Florida Department of Education to "…prohibit or severely restrict sales of flavored milk products in vending machines in public schools" (PETA, 2002).

> crusades and they were crucial to the birth of the animal rights movement…Philosophers served as midwives of the animal rights movement in the 1970's." (cited in Singer, 2004:86)

However, AR philosophers (then and now) tend to focus on discussions of why people ought to think and act toward animals in particular ways, rather than on how ARVA's ought act in order to bring about the prescribed thinking and acting in others. These are, I would argue, two markedly different projects, yet the former has a great deal of influence over, and perhaps even determines, the latter. It is interesting to note that AR philosophers (e.g., Best, Singer, Regan) and other AR academics (e.g., Dawn, Francione, Kahn) expend considerable time and energy publicly arguing (often violently) with each other about what ARAs ought to be doing and why. Despite possessing highly trained critical minds these movement leaders appear to be utterly oblivious to the richly instructive potential that such an enduring 'failure to persuade' offers.

These preliminary observations are discussed in detail in the following chapter's consideration of how the unstated premises in the enthymemes (unconsciously) constrain ARVA's thought, beliefs and actions.

Chapter 2.
Unpacking the Enthymemes

Premise 1

McCartney: What goes on inside slaughterhouses is concealed/unseen

Ball & Friedrich: The events that take place inside factory farms and slaughterhouses are not as visible as the meat they produce

Let us begin with Ball and Friedrich's modified premise, as I think we can safely say that it is true; it is an indisputable matter of fact that the events that take place inside factory farms and slaughterhouses are nowhere near as visible as the meat they produce.[11] Precisely how much more visible is a matter for speculation, but between its corporeal presence and mediated images, animal flesh in some form is nearly omnipresent in our day-to-day lives: bacon at breakfast, deli-slices at lunch, roasts for dinner; supermarket flyers display chucks, rumps and chops; café billboards portray drawings of salami subs and hot dogs; in addition to the countless KFC, Pizza-Pop, and McDonalds spots, television ads for everything from cruise ship vacations to beer feature images of meat being prepared and consumed; wealthy characters on television programs are shown dining upon steaks and veal; at home, families watch the game over slices of pepperoni pizza or buckets of fried chicken; children are 'treated' with hotdogs and ice cream. The list goes on and on.

[11] Unless one happens to work in an Industrial Food Animal Facility, and even then, given the high turnover rate of slaughterhouse workers, in the course of a lifetime even an IFAF employee will almost certainly see more 'meat' than 'animal'.

We are a meat-eating culture and as such, meat is not simply visible, it is, as the above examples illustrate, deeply *meaningful.*[12] It is literally and symbolically woven into the fabric of our lives through relationships, actions and narrative (Adams, 2003). Conversely, slaughterhouses and factory farms are almost entirely absent. In the US, 80% or more of land animals killed for food die in 1 of 20 or so major processing plants (Foer, 2009; Kenner, 2008). These enormous industrial facilities tend to be remotely located and few Americans will ever see, let alone set foot inside, one. This is also the case with most concentrated animal feedlot operations (CAFOs), industrial egg production facilities, dairy operations and so forth (Ibid). This means that, by and large, meat and other animal products come to the average American as commodity fetishes, as myths: full of attached, superimposed meaning but empty of history.

In discussing the systemic mystification of meat and other animal products, Carol Adams (1990) uses the term "absent referent" to describe the (once) living animal from whom a part or product is taken for human consumption. Using Adam's notion of the absent referent as a point of departure, we can see that in purely practical terms, as modern consumers of animal products, the animals' absence means that we do not have to do things like reach past crated, anemic veal calves to squeeze a mastitis inflamed teat every time we want a carton of milk.[13] Nor are we compelled to walk by macerating machines filled with freshly hatched male chicks (being ground up alive) before putting our hands into a filthy cage crammed with de-beaked, sore-encrusted hens each time we retrieve a carton of eggs from the dairy case.[14] Instead, when we procure foodstuffs like ice cream, eggs, or a bucket of fried chicken, the only 'animals' we will encounter are

[12] All foods are meaningful, to varying degrees. McIntyre et al's (2007) paper, "Milk as Metaphor" reveals the incredibly powerful association low income lone mothers make between good parenting and cows' milk: not only do these mothers see cows' milk as being absolutely essential to their children's health, an inability to provide it makes them feel inadequate and anxious.

[13] Veal is a little known by-product of the dairy industry. See http://www.peta.org/issues/Animals-Used-For-Food/Cows-Milk-A-Cruel-and-Unhealthy-Product.aspx for details.

[14] Male chicks are a 'discarded' by-product of the egg industry. See http://www.upc-online.org/chickens/chickensbro.html) for details.

the ones depicted on the containers: simply drawn or airbrushed, reassuring in their pristine pastoral settings.[15]

These depictions are no doubt intended to bring to mind the family farm of yesteryear, yet the spotless and folksy past depicted on egg cartons and ice cream containers is idealized and partial; it is a simulacrum. Farmyards and farmyard animals free of unappetizing features such as flies, excrement, sex-organs, anuses, slaughter, blood, guts and butchering is a thing not of the past but a thing of fiction. This becomes easier and easier to 'forget' as fewer and fewer traditional, local farms survive and populations become increasingly urban and less and less likely to have any personal contact with farmed animals or direct experience of food animal production (Dupuis, 2002; Foer, 2009; Pollan, 2006).

In addition to a near absolute absence of any unmediated experience of farmed animals and modern, industrial food animal production, most consumers also lack significant mediated experience of industrial food animal production. As noted earlier, it goes without saying that sanitized representations of meat and animal products are infinitely more prevalent than images of feedlots and slaughterhouses. This gross imbalance in representation does not mean, though, that images or descriptions of slaughterhouses are entirely absent from the arena of public discourse, or are in any way inaccessible to the average citizen. For example, a simple Google image search of "animal slaughterhouse" brings up more than 250,000 images, and while many are duplicates and not all actually depict animals in slaughterhouses, a great many do contain graphic, unvarnished, arguably disturbing, documentary type depictions of animals in slaughterhouses. Given the availability of imagery one might reasonably begin to wonder how and why it is that ARVAs would assert that what goes on in slaughterhouses is concealed/unseen, which brings us to McCartney's premise:

"What goes on inside slaughterhouses is concealed/unseen."

[15] See footnote 10, re: PETA's effort to challenge the CMAB to adhere to the truth in advertising standards so flagrantly contravened in their "Happy Cows" campaign.

Rather than simply reject this premise out of hand for being too absolute, which as the above discussion indicates, it is, for the sake of inquiry let us water it down by modifying it with the word 'largely' and carry on: "What goes on inside slaughterhouses is *largely* concealed/unseen." What might this mean? 'Concealed' implies intent. To say that what goes on inside slaughterhouses is concealed is to say that the owners of these places intentionally prevent the public from apprehending what goes on inside. 'Unseen,' on the other hand, is somewhat different because although something may be unseen due to its having been concealed, a thing could also be unseen because it simply hasn't been encountered. Alternately, a thing may be unseen because an individual does not want to see it; the individual is aware of the thing's existence but he actively resists or refuses to see it –in effect he conceals it from himself.

So, the questions that we could ask here are: Do the owners conceal the goings-on inside slaughterhouses? And, do people resist or refuse to see?

As noted earlier, in America large-scale, industrial slaughterhouses (as well as feedlots, chicken barns, piggeries, etc.) are, by dint of their scarcity and remoteness, not easy places to which one can gain direct, unmediated access (Kenner). Geisler reports that in 1940, 25% of Americans were farmers. In 1999 the figure had plummeted to 2% (cited in Friedlander, 1999). Concentration of ownership and the rise of centrally-controlled mega-facilities are largely the consequence of unfettered capitalism and corporatism (Kenner; Mason & Finelli, 2006; Rifkin). That facilities are remotely located could easily be attributed to the same causes. However, it hardly needs stating that most citizens or business owners are unlikely to be clamoring to have an industrial piggery, chicken barn, or abattoir for a neighbor. The noise, smell, waste products, heavy traffic and largely uneducated, immigrant workforce associated with industrial food animal facilities (hereafter IFAFs) tend to be inflexibly regarded as unpleasant and undesirable, by all but the poorest and most desperate of communities (Eisnitz; Foer; Kenner; Ladd & Edward, 2002; Rifkin). Thus, even if the facilities were conveniently located, it is difficult to imagine that many people would choose to visit them. There are, of course, exceptions. Some people do want to see inside slaughterhouses and they are undeterred by offal or geography. These interested parties tend not to be the idly curious. Rather they are journalists and ARVAs, people who want to not only see for themselves but also to document for the purpose of making what they have seen

public—to see for others.[16] These people are categorically refused entry. Some comply with the prohibition. Others do not. In the former category, for example, is journalist-for-hire and contemporary food issues pundit Michael Pollan, author of the widely read, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006). In response to being barred from entering the processing area to document the slaughter and butchering of his own steer (referred to as #454) Pollan simply notes that "…the kill floor is not something that journalists are allowed to see, even if they own the animal" and leaves it at that (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/meat/interviews/pollan). Similarly, Jonathan Safran Foer (2009), author of *Eating Animals*, was also denied access:

> I couldn't get near the inside of a large slaughter facility. Just about the only way for someone outside the industry to see industrial cattle slaughter is to go undercover, and that is not only a project that can take half a year or more, it can be life-threatening work. (p.227)

Despite the obstacles, each year a handful of ARVAs undertake this time-consuming and dangerous task. An ARVA, who in this capacity is most likely (although not always) working for a large AR organization such as PETA, Mercy for Animals, or Vegan Outreach, will infiltrate a slaughterhouse or IFAF by going undercover, as a worker. For weeks and even months, using hidden recording devices, the ARVA documents what goes on behind closed doors in these facilities. The AR organization that he or she is acting on behalf of then conveys the footage to the public via ARVA leaflets, websites and, ideally, through press releases that garner mainstream media coverage (Balluch, 2007; Dawn, 2007; Friedrich & Ball; Hawthorne, 2008; Park, 2007).

[16] The value of witnessing is beautifully illustrated by novelist Ann Marie Macdonald who writes, "…all who live so bravely on four legs, so tirelessly on two wings, on bellies and between fins; the heartbreaking courage of animals; the lonely death of a dear brother…were they very frightened? Oh if only we could visit them at the hour of their death –not to intervene, because that is impossible, but simply to witness. To love them as they leave, not seek to make their suffering invisible. All they ask is that we picture it. *Watch me*" (p.745).

Mainstream media coverage of IFAFs can potentially draw critical public attention, create controversy, lead to calls for regulatory reforms and/or have a negative impact on product sales (Ibid). In what some argue is part of a concerted industry effort to eliminate this kind of critical coverage of IFAFs, ARVAs have, in the last decade, been publicly branded, and in some cases legally defined, charged and jailed as *eco-terrorists* (Best, 2006; Francione, 2007; Lovitz, 2007). In the wake of 911, antiterrorism bills that "contain specific prohibitions against the unauthorized possession or taking of documents, information, or data by any and all means, including video and photography [in and of IFAFs]" have been passed in approximately 30 states (Lovitz: 84). While the bills were not drafted specifically for the purposes of hindering ARAs, ARVAs worry that they nevertheless provide a convenient means by which IFAF owners can legally intimidate, restrain and prosecute investigative ARVAs (Runkle, 2011).

In another bid to make it difficult for outsiders to gain access and witness operations in IFAFs, parent corporations such as Tyson Foods[17] may embed contractual prohibitions that bar their subsidiaries from allowing media and other outsiders from setting foot inside the premises (Kenner). Thus, subsidiary IFAF owner-operators—who may otherwise be willing—generally lack the autonomy/authority to grant outsiders such as ARVAs or journalists access to their facilities and can face dire legal and financial consequences if they disobey.[18]

While many ARVA's interpret the obstacles they face as being issue-specific (i.e., *about and because of the animals*) it is useful to take a broader view and consider that the opaque walls and metaphorical moats and dragons surrounding IFAFs may not be particular to *animal* food production but, as the 2009 documentary *Food Inc.* argues, are common to all types of industrial food production. Secrecy (as it is a means of securing

[17] Tyson Foods Incorporated is the world's second largest processor and marketer of chicken, beef, and pork. It has over 115,00 employees. In 2010 Tyson had sales of over $28 billion (Tyson FactBook).

[18] A recent survey of Iowa voters conducted on behalf of HSUS found that 65% oppose and 21% support House File 589, the bill currently before the Iowa Legislature that prohibits "whistleblowers" from taking photos or videos at factory farms, puppy mills, or other like facilities. www.humanespot.org

power and control) is arguably a feature of all successful corporations, including those giant agribusinesses that are today's dominant food producers (e.g Monsanto, Cargill).

Corporations' secretive and proprietary attitudes regarding food production are also evident in their stance on information about the meanings of food and food information systems.[19] This is nothing new. In recent years, however, a great deal of critical scholarly and public attention has been devoted to gathering and sharing important information that industrial food producers have sought to conceal from consumers (see Fine, 1998; Foer; Linklater and Schlosser, 2006; Nestle, 2002; Pollan; Woolf, 2007 for books and films discussing everything from USDA food pyramid politics[20] to the ubiquity of corn and its deleterious effects on public health and the environment.)

Interestingly, in contrast to corporate industrial food producers, 'traditional' animal-food producers appear not to be nearly as secretive (Foer; Kenner; Pollan). For example, Joel Salatin, owner of the independent and, thanks to the attentions of Pollan and Kenner, increasingly well-known Polyface Farm, runs a business that is relatively transparent and open to public scrutiny. According to the Polyface website, visitors can book tours or simply turn up and wander around the property (www.polyfacefarms.com). Although the Polyface website offers no pictures or discussion of the animals' deaths (euphemistically referred to as "processing" by Salatin's son in a film clip), in Kenner's 2009 documentary film, *Food Inc*., Salatin allows the crew to film his outdoor chicken 'processing' operation. Using decidedly low-tech apparatus and methods, Salatin and his farmhands slaughter and dismember hens in full view. The farmhands chat easily to the

[19] In a famous 1996 example, Oprah Winfrey's declaration that she had been "stopped cold from eating another burger"—in response to what she had learned about the beef industry (namely that the spread of bse/mad cow disease was caused by feeding the ground up remains of sick cows to healthy cows)—provoked a firestorm of industry protest. Oprah was sued, unsuccessfully, by cattle producers.

[20] Nestle reports that on her first day on the job, in 1986 when she was hired to manage the editorial production of The Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health, she was "given the rules: no matter what the research indicated, the report could not recommend 'eat less meat' as a way to reduce intake of saturated fat, nor could it suggest restrictions on any other category of food" (p.3).

film crew as they deftly twist the heads off of the live birds and hang the inverted corpses to bleed out before being scalded, plucked and gutted. Salatin clearly takes pride in his work and he and his workers (which include several family members) appear cheerful and entirely at-ease with their task. It is telling that in the slaughtering segment the chickens are almost incidental. The birds are front and center –certainly not 'absent referents' in any physical sense—yet they are also strangely invisible. No one speaks of the hens or their deaths. Rather, Salatin's attention is directed toward assuring viewers that his open-air "processing operation" is far more hygienic than any factory. In slaughter, the hens are viewed not as living creatures, but as objects, as meat, as *product* to be *processed*. At Polyface Farm's outdoor chicken slaughterhouse there are no walls, glass or otherwise. For loyal customers—and Polyface has several thousand—this transparency appears to be appreciated as major a selling feature (www.polyfacefarms.com). Salatin's attitude and the positive public response to 'humane meat'[21] suggest that if the rigorous concealment IFAFs engage in is specifically on

account of the animals (rather than just a general practice) it likely has more to do with the *manner* in which animals are slaughtered and the *scale* on which slaughter takes place than it has to do with the essential act of animal slaughter in and of itself. In other words, if animals are killed 'properly' i.e., 'humanely' most people tend not to object. A number of ARVAs recognize this as a distinct possibility. Hence, they militate against present AR actions that endorse or take a 'welfarist' approach (focus on the reduction of suffering). They argue that in order for animal rights activists to make real change they must take a strictly 'abolitionist' or 'rights' approach and work towards abolishing the property status of non-human animals altogether. For example, Gary Francione (2007) blames the failure of the AR movement on a welfarist approach, stating "things are

[21] Some might consider this an oxymoron, nevertheless, there seems to be a rise in popularity of what my stepdad calls 'one bad day' meat. What he means by this is that he believes his free range, local, farm-raised chicken lived a good life and the only bad day she had was the day she was slaughtered. He, and many others, find this to be a perfectly acceptable, perhaps even ideal, arrangement. Such notions are supported by well-know IFAF expert and reformer Temple Grandin who maintains "properly performed, slaughter is more humane than nature" (cited in Sacks, 1996: 268).

worse for animals now than they were one hundred years ago; the present [welfarist] approach is simply not working" (p.5).

In the ARVA community there is a great deal of heated debate over matters regarding welfare and/or rights approaches and objectives. Francione (2007) observes that, "curiously, the only real disagreement about a distinction between animal rights and animal welfare, and about the significance of such a distinction, exists *within* animal rights movement itself" (p.32). Personally, I do not find this "curious" in the least. Detailed philosophical positions and the nuanced particulars that attend them generally fall outside the scope of interest of anyone but group insiders (regardless of the group). At any rate, although ARVAs disagree about many things they appear united in the conviction that what goes on in slaughterhouses is concealed. If ARVAs take issue with McCartney's statement I am unaware of it.

Regardless of whether an ARVA is a staunch 'rightist" or a pragmatic 'welfarist,' many paradoxical social facts remain. For example, although "people disapprove of inhumane killing at an abattoir…they do not disapprove of eating meat from an abattoir which uses inhumane methods of killing" (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 1982, cited in Knight et al., 2003:11).[22] This seeming hypocrisy cannot be explained away as arising out of the survey respondents' ignorance of what goes on inside a slaughterhouse.

Historically, many cultures have designated specific individuals (as determined by caste, gender, trade, etc.) to oversee the majority of animal husbandry and slaughter. Yet it is only fairly recently, in modern, urban, industrial times, that the rearing and slaughtering of animals has become almost entirely invisible to the general population (Dupuis; Rifkin). Decreased visibility (and concomitantly decreased awareness) has coincided with increased consumption: In 1950, American per capita annual

[22] This finding is from a fairly outdated study but I can locate no recent evidence that would refute its ongoing applicability. In fact Hal Herzog points out that the number of animals killed for food in the US has risen dramatically since the 1970's (due largely to a 200% increase in poultry consumption) and that each year Americans spend 150x more money on killing animals than saving them (See Herzog, 2011).

consumption of meat was 144 pounds. In 2007 this had increased to 222 pounds (www.humanesociety.org). Whether or not this is a relationship of anything more than co-incidence is debatable. Certainly it is possible, yet it seems more plausible that increased per capita meat consumption is attributable to other factors such as lower relative cost, increased availability, the growing popularity of animal-product-based fast and prepared foods, larger portion sizes, and so forth.

To sum up: industrial meat producers such as Smithfield and Tyson clearly do aim to prevent the public from seeing what goes on inside their slaughterhouses, yet they are not always successful. Despite efforts to prevent it, numerous images and detailed descriptions can easily be found in a variety of print and electronic media, including (occasionally) the evening news. And although it may be true that "most news stations refuse to air any graphic footage of animal suffering [as] they say people find it too disturbing and will just change the channel and watch the station's competitors" (Dawn, 2007:198) it seems to me that this is shifting. In the past year or so, not infrequently when I turn on the radio, rent a movie, go to a bookstore or look at a newspaper online I encounter a story about food politics. Not always, but often, these stories include images and/or verbal descriptions of the insides of IFAFs, including slaughterhouses. In addition, and likely fuelling mainstream media coverage, in recent years AR groups such as PETA, Mercy For Animals and Vegan Outreach have handed out millions of leaflets, had tens of millions of visits to their websites and further generated countless millions of views of documentary-format Youtube clips that graphically depict and detail the experiences of animals living and dying in IFAFs. My point here is simply that if one is interested in seeing inside a slaughterhouse, one does not have to look hard or far to do so, because what goes on in slaughterhouses is, to varying degrees, available for (mediated) viewing. But does the availability of imagery mean that people look? And, if so, how do they *see* what they look at? What does it mean to 'see' something?

Thus far I have approached the matter of 'seeing' largely in terms of it being a straightforward, linear act consisting of the sensory input of data. This seems to be how ARVAs tend to conceive of it. However, even in this limited linear view there is an interpretive aspect to seeing that must be accounted for as without it seeing is effectively meaningless. For example, if a man sees a thing but does not recognize or know the

meaning of what it is he sees, say for instance a page of text in a language he does not know, some might argue that the man has not really *seen* the text, at least not in any meaningful sense: unable to understand the language he has not read the signs. In a similar vein, when we ask someone, 'Do you see what I'm saying?' we deploy 'see' as a metaphor to ask, 'Do you understand/agree with me?' This is another way of asking, 'Do you share my interpretation of reality?' We ask because we know it is not only possible but very common for people to physically input the same data set but to interpret it very differently, a phenomenon anthropologist Karl Heider (1988) famously dubbed "The Rashomon Effect."

Not only do interpretations vary between individuals, they vary within individuals. It is not uncommon for a person, either over time or suddenly, to change her interpretation of what it is she sees or has seen. In some extreme instances the interpretive shift has an instantaneous, epiphanic quality and may be experienced as spiritually transformative and/or utterly life-changing (Gardener, 2004). Individual, perspectival rebirths or awakenings have been celebrated[23] throughout history and across cultures; well-known examples include the biblical story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, and the hymn *Amazing Grace,* wherein the author, John Newton, relates the awakening of his belief in God.

The interpretive aspect of seeing (whether it be epiphanic or automatic) operates more-or-less independently of the physical act of seeing. What one 'sees' in the interpretive sense is determined more by socio-cultural, personal and circumstantial conditions than it is by physical conditions to do with access or optics. Yet, 'seeing' (inputting data) has so long and so often served as a metaphor for knowing or understanding that we tend to take them as being one and the same. Of course they are not the same, and so this conflation can result in a number of problematic presumptions. This brings us to the second premise.

[23] Transformations can, of course, also be regarded with hostility and suspicion, depending on the nature and direction of the transformation.

Premise 2

McCartney: No meat-eaters have ever seen the inside of a slaughterhouse

Ball & Friedrich: All people who are not vegetarian-advocates have seen meat more than they have seen the realities of factory farms and slaughterhouses[24]

Let us first consider 'see' in the non-interpretive, physical sense. The first premise is clearly false. Indeed, it is highly probable that those that have directly seen the inside of slaughterhouses most often (e.g., slaughterhouse workers, owners, inspectors, etc.) are meat-eaters. It is difficult to imagine them being vegetarians. Certainly some might be, but if they are it is likely for reasons that may have little to do with their feelings for animals: more than 50% of America's 6-8 million adult vegetarians adopt a meatless diet for health reasons (Maurer, 2002; Vegetarian Resource Group). This is roughly twice as many as those who cite animal-based reasons for converting to vegetarianism. Also citing non animal-related motives, a small percentage of Americans avoid meat for religious reasons, and still others are vegetarian or partially vegetarian for environmental or ethical[25] reasons (Ibid). So, while it is indeed likely that most meat-eaters have never seen the inside of a slaughterhouse (and certainly not directly) it is

[24] This appears to suggest that people are vegetarian-advocates *because* they have seen as much or more of factory farms and slaughterhouses as they have of meat. One need only consider the enormous amount of factory farm and slaughterhouse viewing this would require in order to recognize that this premise must be false.

[25] For example, Bruce Friedrich claims to have become a vegetarian because he was appalled by the way grain crops are fed to animals while people starve.

also likely that the majority of vegetarians haven't seen the inside of a slaughterhouse either (or have seen it and been unmoved).

The modified premise, while no doubt true, is no doubt true for vegetarian activists as well, rendering it a rather moot point. As discussed earlier, the ubiquity of meat and meat images in our culture means that it would be difficult to conceive of a scenario where anyone, with the exception of slaughterhouse workers, would see as much or more of a slaughterhouse as he or she would of meat.[26]

It is important to note that here, as elsewhere, my objective is not to make extreme, absolutist-type arguments so that I might disregard any counterarguments altogether. I do not doubt that a greater percentage of (animal-motivated) veg*ns than meat-eaters have seen, via media, the inside of a slaughterhouse. I am merely pointing out that what ARVAs tend to suggest is a tight and deterministic connection between awareness and action is in fact loose and inconclusive.

As previously noted, each year ARVA groups produce and maintain countless websites and distribute hundreds of thousands of pieces of advocacy literature. For every 100 "Why Vegan" or "Vegetarian Starter Kit" type leaflets handed out—each containing half a dozen or more graphic images and descriptions of animals suffering in IFAFs—Friedrich estimates that 1 recipient will change his or her eating habits (Ball & Friedrich:19). This means that, of the millions of individuals who have seen the leaflets or any other piece of ARVA media, the overwhelming majority eat meat and will continue to do so after encountering the 'truth' conveyed via these media. Furthermore, research indicates that nearly all of those who eliminate meat (for whatever reason) will resume eating meat within a few years (Herzog, 2011; Vegetarian Resource Group; MMR,

[26] Eisnitz notes that there is an exceedingly high turnover rate amongst workers in slaughterhouses, so, in the course of a lifetime even a slaughterhouse worker is far more likely to see less of a slaughterhouse than of meat/meat images.

2010).[27] According to the Vegetarian Resource Group's estimates, approximately 3% of the US adult population is veg*n (and less than half are motivated by animal related concerns). Although there are a small number of long-term adherents, the veg*n population overall is in flux, and so at any given time the majority of veg*ns could be accurately, if cynically, described as *meat-eaters on hiatus*.

The mutability of the veg*n population further complicates what researchers agree is an already difficult task of making any hard and fast distinctions between those who eat meat and those who do not (Mooney & Walbourn, 2001, Perry et al., 2001; Vegetarian Resource Group). The majority of self-professed veg*ns are inconsistent in their consumption habits. For example, in surveys that use the term 'vegetarian' but do not define it, 7% of respondents identify themselves as being vegetarian (Vegetarian Times). Yet in surveys that use specific, itemized questions (such as those conducted on behalf of the Vegetarian Resource Group), only 3% of respondents indicate that they never eat meat; never eat fish; never eat chicken; and so forth. These contrasting findings indicate that more than half of those who commonly identify themselves as vegetarians sometimes eat meat, particularly chicken and fish (Vegetarian Resource Group). This disparity between word and deed could potentially lead to some interesting discussions about why a meat-eater would identify herself as a vegetarian.[28] Doubtlessly, some inconsistencies appear as a consequence of methodological/measurement issues (e.g., definitions of terms/variables). More often though, as Wollschleger & Beach (2011) observe, discrepancies between belief (with clearly pre/proscribed behaviors) and action are a consequence of the rift between

[27] Herzog finds that in the US 'lapsed vegetarians' outnumber current vegetarians by 3:1. A recent study by MMR found that (self reported) vegetarians represent about 6% of the UK adult population and that lapsed vegetarians represent about 10% of the population.

[28] For example, for the past 20 years I have been *mostly* veg*n. I will go months, often years without eating animal flesh. I will, however, on occasion eat just about anything. Generally I think of and identify myself as a vegetarian, simply because I am far more vegetarian than not. Less simply I also identify myself as vegetarian because I prefer to be (identified as) vegetarian, and as long as I'm not eating "too much" animal flesh I don't feel that I'm being particularly dishonest. The trouble here is that "too much" is entirely subjective.

abstract, black and white moral absolutes and the shades of grey that color negotiated, lived reality.[29]

Meat-eating and the resumption of meat-eating—by those that had once been stirred by ARVA media—is something that Ball and Friedrich attribute to the dominance of meat-positive cultural norms—and to the lack of ongoing exposure to the realities of IFAFs: "Even detailed, take-home illustrations, videos, and information about factory farms don't always stick with every individual" (p.17). On the face of it this claim seems easy enough to accept. Clearly, meat-positive cultural norms play an enormous role in determining individual meat consumption. Yet if we scrutinize it, we can see that the claim is problematic. The word that points to the trouble is *stick*. Usually the word *stick* employed in this manner would be taken to mean something like 'remember,' as in "…information about factory farms isn't always *remembered* by every individual" but can this be what they mean? I would posit that when Ball and Friedrich use *stick* they are implying something more akin to *affect*: as in, people see the material, are moved by it, and then change their consumption practices[30]. Regardless of whether Ball and Friedrich mean *remember* or *affect,* they disingenuously imply that the information usually does stick with/move every individual, when in fact the numbers (i.e., the 1% post viewing shift in consumption habits) indicate that the information rarely, if ever, either sticks with or affects anyone at all (Ball & Friedrich; Maurer; Vegetarian Resource Group). Furthermore, it seems unlikely that 99% of the people f*orget* what they have seen, and far more plausible that they are able to recollect it but weren't/aren't significantly moved by what they saw, or at least not for any significant length of time.

[29] Classification, as Bourdieu asserts, often tells us more about the classifier than the classified, and as Solomon argues, serves to reinforce an underlying ideology: Notions of 'purity' often masquerade as being about 'impartial' measurements of physicality (e.g., 'purebred') but often the only purpose such classifications serve is to empower the measurers.

[30] If they were not using stick to mean affect then it would not matter in the least if the information *did* stick with viewers. The assumption here is that the information has a profound effect, but only at the moment of viewing, and once it is out of sight it is out of mind. This fits with the assertion of Ball and Friedrich's enthymeme and explains why they think that people need to see the reality of IFAFs on a regular basis.

For an ARVA who has been (and continues to be) deeply moved by what he has seen, that others can view the same data and not be moved in the same way is likely to be an alienating and uninspiring thought.[31] In the context of building enthusiasm for advocacy work, ARVAs, including the above authors, tend to lay the blame for the lack of message stickiness/affect not on the audience, message or the messenger (although these are certainly blamed in other scenarios and contexts) but on forces outside individual control: "Society is set up not only to conceal the realities behind meat and divorce it from the actual animal, but to celebrate inanimate pieces of meat in and of themselves" (Ball & Friedrich, 17). What they are describing here could be described as the *mystification* of meat.

Barthes' (1973) concept of the *myth* provides a useful entry point for a broader discussion on how, why and to what effect the meaning of meat is constructed. Barthes' myth has much in common with Marx's (1999) *Commodity Fetish*. Both Marx and Barthes posit that when an object is fetishized/mythologized it is divorced from/emptied of its material history/production and filled with new meanings. These meanings –which have nothing to do with the concrete reality of the object itself and everything to do with normalizing and confirming relationships of power—appear as entirely commonsense and complete to the populace. Myths serve to perpetuate the status quo and benefit those in power. In the case at hand it is useful to consider that, in terms of who the mystification of meat benefits, *all* humans are the 'ruling class.' Industrial meat producers clearly reap immense financial benefits from the 'meat myth,' yet everyday consumers of meat, those who find it pleasurable to ingest a rib, loin or breast, inarguably benefit as

[31] It is also likely that such a thought would seem contrary to the anecdotal evidence they tend to rely upon: "78% of [nonprofit] foundation officials think their foundation is effective in creating impact, only 8% could describe the specific types of information or pieces of data that lead them to believe they are likely to achieve at least some of their goals, according to a recently completed national survey…
Respondents do report using a variety of data sources to inform their sense of progress against strategy but not necessarily defined performance indicators or metrics. Instead, they more often rely on anecdotal information such as conversations with stakeholders and site visits." (Massnonprofit.org). Presumably in this respect ARVAs do not differ from other philanthropists.

well.[32] Neither Marx nor Barthes considered power relations between humans and animals, and so while their general concepts are useful, we can look to neither for issue-specific insights. For Marx (1999) animals are simply "instruments of labour along with specially prepared stones, wood, bones, and shells" (p.117). For Barthes, animal flesh, in this case a steak, has many symbolic or connotative meanings, yet at its denotative level he sees it as nothing more than "a lump of meat in which blood is visible…it is the heart of meat, it is meat in its pure[33] state" (p.62).

Although they discuss neither Barthes' nor his concept of the Myth in their books, Carol Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat (*1990)*,* and Melanie Joy's more recent (2009), *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows,* are nevertheless Barthesian style interrogations and deconstructions of the meat myth. Unsurprisingly, most ARVAs including Adams and Joy, are not content with the intellectual project of demystifying meat merely for its own sake. They position mystification as *the reason* people eat meat; i.e., when people eat a steak they do so only because they do not 'see' the cow from which it came but rather 'see' a consumable which represents such things as status, manliness, vigor, etc. Similarly, Barthes posited that for French intellectuals the steak is not a piece of cow's flesh so much as "a redeeming food, thanks to which they bring their intellectualism to the level of prose and exorcise, through blood and soft pulp, the sterile dryness of which they are constantly accused" (p.72). Barthes' interpretation of how the meaning of meat can be manifested is useful in terms of its ability to help us understand how mystification works. However, when the powerful insight that 'meat is myth' is drafted away from the arena of cultural analysis and conscripted into the service of generating rhetorical strategy it loses its magic.

[32] Wendell Berry distinguishes between *responsible* eaters—those who make informed choices about their food based on careful consideration of the manner in which it was produced—and *industrial* eaters, passive victims of the food industry. Certainly it is an interesting distinction, but in the case of veg*nism I am not sure that it makes any real difference; in this case so-called *responsible* eaters eat traditionally raised and slaughtered 'happy' meat.

[33] Barthes notion that steak is "meat in is pure state" is worth considering. What does he mean by "pure"? Would Barthes as easily declare the severed hand of a child or a mound of offal as "meat in its pure state"? If not, why?

Demystify meat by showing people how it is produced! Restore meat's history by reconnecting it to the animal from which it came! This is the transmission-style solution that demystification offers. Yet to insist, as ARVAs do, that the average American consumes meat primarily because he is ignorant of what meat 'really' means (i.e., its origins) is to effectively disregard the fact that meat-eating is an ancient, pan-cultural practice which began long before humans conjured elaborate meanings to account for their actions. It is highly unlikely that the 'problem' of meat-eating is simply a consequence of meat being a myth, indicating that demystification cannot be relied upon to provide a reliable antidote. This is the only way to explain how it is that meat eaters can see inside a slaughterhouse[34] and continue to eat meat.

In 2002 Bruce Friedrich wrote and directed a short video for PETA entitled, *Meet Your Meat*. According to the PETA website: "In a moving narration, actor and activist Alec Baldwin exposes the truth behind humanity's cruelest invention - the factory farm" (petatv.com). As the title suggests (and the description tells us), the video relies upon a demystification-based strategy: the "truth" is "exposed." However, the problem we encounter with the use of demystification as a persuasive strategy is that demystification can only ever be partial. At best it is a stop on the way to the creation of a more egalitarian, less self-serving myth (Barthes). Just as sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) famously argued that there is no neutral or "essential self," and that who a person is depends upon the situation and environment in which he finds himself, it can be argued that there is no neutral or essential meaning of either of meat or of animals (or anything at all for that matter—as Barthes argued). Meaning exists in time, in experience, in and as relationships, in and as contexts; it does not exist independently (Hall, 2006). Thus,

[34] Millions upon millions of Americans have viewed meat demystifying films such as "Meet Your Meat," "Earthlings" and "The Animals Film" and remained meat-eaters. Similarly, Temple Grandin, Michael Pollan, Michael Specter among other modern cultural and intellectual icons have observed firsthand, and rigorously documented the treatment of animals in IFAFs, and remained meat-eaters.

the ARVA mythologist's[35] seemingly simple task of revealing the 'true' nature of meat and/by reattaching its history/animal origins is not quite as straightforward as it seems: How far back in time ought the mythologist go? Which connections, relationships and interests will she include, and which will she omit? None of these considerations are unique to the ARVA mythologist. They are, consciously or unconsciously, decisions we make in the course of any communication. However, for the ARVA mythologist, who is challenging rather than building upon the status quo by attempting to unmake the comfortable myth of meat, these questions take on (or perhaps more accurately *ought* to take on) a special importance.

Looking at *Meet Your Meat* (which is perhaps PETA's most widely viewed piece of media) we can observe that Friedrich introduces and weaves together an array of external elements that have no inherent connection with the subject matter (meat and animals) for effect/affect. The goal of *Meet Your Meat* is not simply to apprise viewers of what goes on backstage at IFAFs; it is also, and more importantly, to produce a story that will evoke in the viewer a strong, animal-positive/meat-negative reaction. This goal is pursued in a number of ways. For example, consider how the meaning of the subject is affected through actor Alec Baldwin's narration. Baldwin's distinctive all-American, intimate-yet-authoritative voice conveys a host of meanings that flavor the viewer's perception of the subject. The particular words in the script Baldwin reads from also convey meaning—both subtly and overtly: *Subtly*: when Baldwin refers to a cow as a *she* rather than an *it*. *Overtly:* when Baldwin literally tells the viewer the meaning of the footage: "What you are about to see is beyond your worst nightmares." The grainy surveillance camera footage of cows, chickens and pigs being beaten and slaughtered is accompanied by jarring, atonal music. The aural cacophony serves to emphasize the monstrosity of the events. Narrator; music; script: These are key rhetorical elements that are carefully selected and brought together in an effort to massage the viewer and coax

[35] Mythologist, somewhat misleadingly, is the term Barthes uses to refer to the person who exposes/challenges/deconstructs the myth. The creators of the myth are, according to Barthes, the bourgeoisie, who use them as ideological tools to control the masses. The myth serves the interest of the ruling class. (Of course, as noted earlier, in relation to animals *all* humans are the ruling class.)

her into believing that what she is seeing is the unvarnished 'truth' about meat *and* that a decent human being (such as herself) finds this truth horrific and unacceptable.

From our earlier discussion we can conclude that ARVAs tend to regard the concept of seeing rather equivocally. Data input and data interpretation are not treated as discrete experiences but rather as points on a continuum, steps in a process. For Ball and Friedrich, a quantity of seeing produces a quality of seeing; repeated, persistent (to the degree that it is on par with meat imagery) exposure to the hidden realities of slaughterhouses and factory farms would, they assert, bring about changes in viewers' thoughts and actions. This differs from McCartney's version somewhat, where the suggestion seems to be that to see is to immediately understand (as McCartney does) and a single encounter with the 'truth' (seeing the interior of an abattoir) is, or at least ought to be, sufficient to permanently affect the viewer.

The difficulty with both positions is their shared underlying assumption that there is only one possible avenue of interpretation for what could crudely be called the slaughterhouse 'data,' the only difference being whether or not the interpretation is formed eventually/after repeated exposures, or immediately/upon a single viewing. In either case, for McCartney et al, to have seen the inside of a slaughterhouse is to have seen the unnecessary, unacceptable suffering and *murder* of sentient beings. This 'truth' is the message that the ARVA believes is contained in the data that he is sending, thus it is the message that he believes will be received.

According to an ARVA worldview, no person, particularly no *thoughtful* and *compassionate* person, would want to be responsible for the unnecessary suffering and death of sentient beings, certainly not merely for the sake of a momentary gustatory pleasure (Foer). Thus, from an ARVA standpoint, for a meat-eater to have seen such a thing and then forgotten it means that she hasn't interpreted what she has seen correctly. If she has interpreted what she has seen correctly (i.e., as a veg*n interprets it) then she will not be able to forget it as, "once you know something you can't not know it" (McDonald: 9). At the same time, ARVAs accept it as possible that a persistent meat-eater may interpret what she has seen correctly and then repress or block out what she has learned (McDonald: 11). Repressing and blocking are certainly forms of 'not

knowing something that you know' but they are not the same as forgetting (or sticking) as they indicate an intentional[36] rather than accidental 'putting out of mind.'

In her 2003 treatise, *Living Among Meat Eaters: The Vegetarian's Survival Handbook,* Carol Adams expounds upon the commonly held ARVA notion that a meat-eater is a "blocked vegetarian."[37] Adams tells her readers "… you should see every meat-eater as a blocked vegetarian" (p.12). Like Ball, Friedrich, and Joy, she asserts that, "our culture produces blocked vegetarians" (p.14) and advises her readers that the best, most constructive approach to interacting with meat-eaters is to "recognize them as *blocked* vegetarians, but relate to them as *potential* vegetarians…[and to recognize] their reactions to you as symptoms of being blocked" (pp.14-15). A "blocked vegetarian" is someone who in some way resists, refuses or denies seeing what the ARVA sees. She wears internal blinders that block her view, shape her perspective and constrain her actions. According to Adams, the meat-eater's blockage is fear based, and she lists over a dozen fears, ranging from "losing their sense of humor" to "losing their cynicism," that she believes prevent meat-eaters from becoming vegetarians (p.20). Like most ARVAs, Adams supports her claims anecdotally, drawing examples from her own life and from interviews and letters sent to her by fellow veg*ns.

I do not dispute that Adams' findings aptly describe *some* peoples' experiences and beliefs. However, her reportage feels distinctly lopsided and the arguments have an uncomfortably tautological ring. As an exercise I played with removing the word *vegetarian* and substituting nouns like *Jehova's Witness* or *homosexual*. I found that while the particulars might be different, the concept of 'blockage' allowed for very similar types of arguments to be generated for just about any group wishing to explain why others are not like them. One is either an *X* or one is a *Blocked X*. There is no other

[36] Intentionality implies consciousness, yet it is not unusual for victims of trauma to unconsciously block or repress memories of traumatic events. However, while ARVA texts might be deeply upsetting it hardly seems reasonable to suggest they induce the kind of trauma that triggers unconscious repression/blocking.

[37] Social psychologist Melanie Joy coined the term 'carnist' to refer to a meat-eater. Joy has a slightly different take on the concept, but for the most part the terms 'blocked vegetarian' and 'carnist' could be used interchangeably.

legitimate option. Every instance of difference, resistance, or lack of acceptance can be explained by 'blockage.'[38] This results in large holes, in the form of alternative, dissenting perspectives, appearing in Adams' book, reminding us once again of the disparity between the world that ARVAs see and "the world as it is." Surely in the "the world as it is" there must be any number of explanations other than "blockage" that explain why upward of 97 percent of Americans –which by necessity includes the vast majority of those who have been exposed to AR literature—are not veg*ns. A consideration of what these explanations might be brings us to the third premise.

Premise 3

McCartney: What takes place inside a slaughterhouse seriously upsets/would upset everyone who sees it

Ball & Friedrich: What takes place inside a slaughterhouse (or on a factory farm) seriously upsets/would seriously upset every *thoughtful*, *compassionate* person who sees it as a regular part of his or her day

This premise is the enthymemes' moral center. It is rooted in the assumption that the average person cares about the lives and wellbeing of non-human animals—if not openly and actively then deep down in his 'heart-of-hearts.' According to the enthymemes under investigation, exposure to one or more incidents of animal suffering activates dormant and/or increases active concern for animals. The feasibility of this stimulus-response scenario depends upon the existence of an a priori concern; if a person does not possess some genuine and arousable feeling of concern for animals then seeing an image of, say, a veal calf secured by the neck on a chain so short and in a pen so small that it can barely turn around, will be about as upsetting as seeing an image of plant that has outgrown its pot. Excluding the estimated 3-6% of Americans who are thought to suffer from some form of antisocial disorder and therefore lack the capacity to empathize (Wright, 2004), one might reasonably expect that the vast majority

[38] Attempting to reposition vegetarianism as the norm and meat-eating as deviant using this kind of language-game no doubt seems entirely legitimate to Adams. I, for reasons noted, find it somewhat worrying.

of Americans would find the image of the penned calf at least somewhat upsetting. Indeed, any person who did not exhibit at least some degree of emotional disturbance (e.g., a shudder or a grimace) upon coming across such an image whilst, say, browsing through a copy of *Readers' Digest,* may well be regarded with aversion and suspicion by others (Thomson & Gullone, 2003). As Jenni (2005) observes, "One who does not feel distress on seeing the torment of living beings is a sociopath, not a pillar of reason; and one who feels little or transient distress reveals vices of callousness or indifference" (p.9).

However, just because a person is upset by seeing pictures of a chick having her beak 'trimmed' or a piglet having his tail 'docked'[39] it does not mean that the person's upset will *manifest* in a way that is particularly useful insofar as ARVA's interests are concerned, because, to re-emphasize a point previously made, there is little to suggest that the average person's upset manifests, either internally or externally, in a way that significantly resembles an ARVA's upset (Herzog, 1993). Such a discrepancy is not novel, nor does it have anything to do with animals, per se. Rather, it is a typical case of viewers interpreting and responding to the same data differently—just as they do with information and images about victims of wars, sweatshops, famines and other human trauma. Certain tendencies may dominate, yet different interpretations of, and responses to, information and events are bound to occur because, as Stuart Hall (2006) reminds us, it is ultimately not the data so much as the viewer that makes meaning—and viewers differ.[40] This point is so basic, and once it is recognized, so obvious that one would think it hardly needs mentioning, never mind repeating, yet I belabor it because it is a key feature of social reality that ARVAs frequently appear inclined to disregard. Almost certainly the vast majority of ARVAs would agree that 'the viewer makes meaning' in the abstract, yet when it comes to the events and ideas to which they are most attached

[39] ARVA distributed images of beak trimming and tail docking trimming are customarily accompanied by full descriptions, leaving little room for a viewer 'misunderstand' the image.

[40] Subjectivity has long been a matter of intense discussion and debate amongst philosophers (e.g., Nagel vs. Churchland). Hall certainly was not breaking any new ground with this observation.

they seem unwilling or unable to recognize the finer points[41] of what this actually means. Consider author and ARVA, J.M. Coetzee's book-jacket endorsement of J.S. Foer's *Eating Animals:*

> The everyday horrors of factory farming are evoked so vividly, and the case against the people who run the system is presented so convincingly, that anyone who, after reading Foer's book, continues to consume the industry's products must be without a heart, or impervious to reason, or both. – J.M Coetzee, author of *The Lives of Animals*

Coetzee sounds remarkably like McCartney, and even more like Ball and Friedrich. His familiar words epitomize a sentiment and line of thought that ARVAs express again and again. Unfortunately, however compelling it may be for the converted, in terms of leading to an understanding of why the vast majority of readers will in fact "continue to consume the industry's products" post-read, such a line of thought is a dead-end. Worse, in positioning the 'truth' as so unavoidably persuasive that only a flawed audience could fail to be moved by it, ARVAs' attention is drawn away from any serious consideration of what, other than learning the 'truth' about IFAFs, might persuade people to go veg*n.[42] Additionally problematic is the possibility that, rather than serving its intended purpose as a centripetal enticement and/or a positive response cue for potential readers, a statement such as Coetzee's (particularly when it is made by a overtly partisan animal advocate such as Coetzee) may act centrifugally, repelling general audiences and decreasing message receptivity (see Cialdini; Westen for discussion). Imagine: The average bookstore browser, who has little more than a passing familiarity with AR issues and veg*nism, picks up the book and flips it open. The first words she encounters are those written by, "J.M.Coetzee, author of *The Lives of*

[41] It is important to remember that the differences in interpretations can be very subtle, particularly in *self-reported* interpretations.

[42] This is not to say that AR groups, particularly PETA, do not use a variety of appeals –they do, but as I discuss in the next section, these appeals tend to be deployed only as a means of getting public/media attention so that PETA can then tell viewers the 'truth' about meat/animals.

Animals." Chances are that the browser has never heard of J.M. Coetzee. She can see though that he has written a book entitled *The Lives of Animals*, which indicates he is probably involved in the AR movement. Coetzee's ARVA-centric hyperbole isn't too confronting as he squarely lays the bulk of the blame for animal suffering on the system of factory farming and those who run it. However, he makes it clear that the only thing that absolves the non-veg*n potential reader of her share of the blame is her ignorance. Thus, if she reads the book she will no longer be able to defend her consumption practices with the exculpatory claim, 'I didn't know.' This in itself may be sufficient to deter her from reading the book, fearing that if she reads it she will feel terrible and guilty and have to change her life –*or*- that she will be judged as terrible and guilty because she won't change her life (McDonald). Either way, Coetzee promises that the contents of the book will horrify her, call her character into question, and demand that she take action. Presumably none of these are particularly appealing prospects. ARVA literature is rife with anecdotes detailing how veg*n converts typically initially resist engaging with ARVA material for precisely these reasons (Adams; McDonald). Finally, we can see how Coetzee's words could subtly re-enforce the non-veg*n's burgeoning suspicion that animal rights supporters are a holier-than-thou lot, smug and self-righteous. This is a view of veg*ns, particularly ARVAs, that is not uncommon (Adams; Maurer; Mika, 2006). Nor does it seem altogether unfounded, given that statements such as Coetzee's (and Ball & Friedrich's) barely conceal the ARVA's assertion that 'if, after taking in the data I have taken in, you do not come to think and act as I (think you ought to) think and act, the only possible explanation is that you (unlike me) are emotionally and/or mentally defective.'[43] Such a message, whatever good intentions it might be wrapped and delivered in, is for obvious reasons, likely to have a counterproductive, repellent effect – however subtle. It seems likely that a less vehement endorsement coming from a well-

[43] Ironically, *all* of the high profile ARVA's I have discussed thus far, including Coetzee, have written at length about ARVAs' image problems and the damage it does to the cause. They repeatedly advise grassroots activists on how they ought to present themselves in order to counter and repair the ARVA image. Yet when it comes to their own actions they seem inclined to disregard their advice. PETA provides numerous examples of 'do as I say not as I do' philosophy in action.

known, neutral, non-ARVA would be a more productive choice. Rather than substantiate this claim here I forgo further discussion until the following chapters as here I am actually less interested in the potential reader's possible response to a dustcover endorsement and more with what it is that leads ARVAs to persist in publicly making such claims.

Let us return to the core assumption of the premise, (the premise within the premise) which is that **people care about the lives and wellbeing of non-human animals.** Surveys, ARVA's frequently note, tell us that the vast majority of Americans care about animals (Hawthorne). But do they *really*? What does it mean to care? Is care a feeling (noun) or an action (verb)? Does the care people have for animals remain constant or does it wax and wane? Is it absolute or is it relative? Is it independent or is it contingent? Is it inherent or is it enculturated? How can care be observed, measured and verified? These are all important questions, but they tend to remain unasked by most ARVAs.

As a rule, ARVAs tend not to (publicly at least) challenge the common wisdom that people care about animals (Herzog, 1993). Instead, survey findings are regularly presented and used as a legitimizing basis for ARVA's action (see Newkirk 2010). For example, Mark Hawthorne in his 2008 animal advocacy manual, *Striking at the Roots,* cites a Gallup Poll finding that "96% of people in the US oppose cruelty to animals"[44] (p.15) and claims, "…people are revolted by animal exploitation –once they learn about it" (p.16). Similarly, PETA (2007) states that they believe "…that most animal abuse stems not from malice, but from a willingness to accept the status quo with little curiosity about how animals are treated" and Herzog reports that "…activists commonly assumed that major causes of the abuse of animals was public ignorance rather than indifference" (1993:112).

[44] Hawthorne neglects to mention that the original article in which the poll findings are reported is entitled *Public Lukewarm on Animal Rights*. Hawthorne has been rather selective in his choice of which statistics to use and which to leave out.

The assumption that people care about animals is useful to ARVAs, yet there are several reasons why it ought not be relied upon as a basis on which to proceed. Let us first consider why it is useful. It is useful in that it allows ARVAs to optimistically see themselves and their fellow citizens as fundamentally like-minded. Believing, as Hawthorne does, that,"…everyone opposes [animal] cruelty" (p.11) also allows ARVAs to tell themselves that "…our task then is not to change people's ethics; it's simply to educate them about the reality of other animals' suffering…" (p.12). Claims similar to this are much repeated by ARVAs. Philosopher and influential ARVA, Steven Best, unequivocally asserts "…the approach used by the vegetarian/vegan movement is one of persuasive education, not enforcing ethics or dogmas on others, however strongly scientifically and ethically grounded the arguments are" (2006: 25).

To many ARVA's,[45] who are more than likely to be educated, older, white females with a post-secondary education and left leaning political values (Jamison and Lunch, 1992; McDonald, 2000; Maurer, 2002; Neuman, 2010; Plous, 1991; Plous, 1998), an agenda of *ethical* reform would no doubt carry about it an unpleasant whiff of manipulation and indoctrination, which are at odds with core liberal values of rationality and individual rights (Lakoff, 2004; Westen, 2007). Seeking to *educate* people likely seems a much more palatable and achievable goal than does changing their ethics. In the same vein, if ARVAs hold, as Carol Adams encourages them to, that meat-eaters are "blocked vegetarians" whose fears, ignorance and culture keep them from embracing their true/higher inner vegetarian values/nature, then meat-eaters can be seen as potential converts rather than as adversaries, as victims[46] rather than as victimizers. This is a far more optimistic, acceptable and motivating view than the alternative: If ARVAs believed that most people *do not* really care about animals their work would seem impossible, their goals unattainable.

[45] Here I have assumed that ARVAs are likely to be quite similar to the ARVA 'types' (self-identified animal rights activists, animal welfare volunteers, etc.) surveyed in the research I have cited.

[46] 'Victims in the sense forwarded by Wendell Barry, who described "industrial eaters" as passive victims of the food industry (cited in Adelman and Sandiford, nd).

Interestingly, some ARVAs such as Peter Singer (2002: xxi) argue that caring about animals is irrelevant to the issue of animal rights:

> The assumption that in order to be interested in such matters one must be an "animal-lover" is itself an indication of the absence of the slightest inkling that the moral standards that we apply among human beings might extend to other animals. No one, except a racist concerned to smear his opponents as "nigger-lovers," would suggest that in order to be concerned about equality for mistreated racial minorities you have to love those minorities, or regard them as cute and cuddly . . . The portrayal of those who protest against cruelty to animals as sentimental, emotional "animal-lovers" has had the effect of excluding the entire issue of our treatment of nonhumans from serious political and moral discussion.

Singer claims that he himself is "not especially interested in animals" (ibid). Regardless of whether or not he is being truthful, his argument – avowing that support for animal rights has a basis in strong, rational, logical ('masculine') thinking rather than weak ('feminine') emotion—is useful for ARVA's wishing to rebut the common accusation that their concern for animals is *merely* sentimental (Foer; Herzog,1993; Herzog et al. 1997).

Arguably it matters little whether a concern for animals is, or ought to be, based in reason or emotion, or whether it is genetic or cultural.[47] ARVAs who rely upon tactics geared toward 'demystifying' meat will, if they look closely at the 'meat is/as myth' construct, inevitably be confronted with a reality that they cannot deny: Across the globe, all manner of human beings have—in addition to revering them and keeping them as treasured pets—hunted, farmed, and killed animals for sustenance and/or pleasure since their earliest days. These activities have been, and in some places still are, parts of everyday life in which all members of the family participate. As the example of PolyFace Farm illustrates, hands-on animal slaughter by 'average' people is neither a thing of the past nor is it a practice of 'somewhere else.' Similarly, it is interesting to

[47] Smith (2004) notes that humans have "certain evolved, endemic tendencies: for example, a tendency to respond differentially to creatures with frontal versus dorsal eye-placement or to creatures that move bipedally rather than slither, scurry, swim or fly" (p.4).

consider the popularity of hunting. In 2006, 12 million Americans over the age of 16 went hunting, and although the overall numbers of American hunters are declining, it is surprising to note that one demographic with increasing participation is girls aged 6-15, representing a rise of 50% in the last decade (US Fish and Wildlife Service). Each year in the US an estimated 200 million wild 'game' animals are killed in the 'sport' of hunting. Countless millions more are injured or maimed (In Defense of Animals).

In addition to killing animals for food, humans kill animals for enjoyment. Taking in the spectacle of another being's suffering and death (real or simulated) has been, and still is, widely regarded as pleasurable pastime: Bullfights, cockfights, dogfights[48], bear-baiting, fox hunting, public torture and executions[49], trans-species blood-sports of the Roman Coliseum, UFC, *Jackass* movies, Youtube's infamous *Bumfights*, Hollywood's new and disturbingly popular 'torture-porn' genre, and the *Animals that Kill* series*,* to name just a few, collectively suggest that most humans are far from inherently disturbed by the suffering of human or animal others, particularly if this suffering is framed as natural, necessary, deserved, inevitable or entertaining.[50]

Until recently, Westerners, with few notable exceptions, have neither demonstrated nor declared much concern for animals—particularly the ones they intend to eat. For the most part, animals have been (and for all practical intents and purposes still are) regarded as little more than animate property (see discussions of animal law in Francione; 2004; Lovitz, 2007; Sorenson, 2003). Despite the enormous increase in vegetarian meat and dairy analogs, "Dog Whisperers" and vegan fashions, evidence indicates that that in recent decades the reality for the vast majority of animals

[48] In 2007 CNN reported that "an estimated 40,000 people in the United States are involved in professional dogfighting…"

[49] The public delight shown at the deaths of Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, and Muammar Gaddafi are three recent examples of the ongoing appetite for a public execution.

[50] Inflicting pain, harm or death upon an animal is generally only considered abuse when committed by unauthorized individuals for abnormal purposes. For example, if a pretty woman crushes a kitten under the heel of her stiletto for profit –because someone enjoys watching her do this, it is considered appalling, but if the same woman were to eat a piece of veal for the same purposes it might be considered odd, but little more. Yet clearly the rationale makes no difference to the cat or the calf.

(particularly ‘food’ animals) in North America has become worse, not better (Francione, 2007; Herzog, 2010; HumaneSpot.org).

Perhaps one of things that compels ARVAs to believe that the mystification of meat is at the root of the meat ‘problem’ is that today far more people than ever before proclaim themselves animal lovers and yet these same people (including many self-identified animal rights activists) also habitually dine upon the flesh of animals (Plous, 1991; 1998). It certainly looks like a resolvable paradox. Nevertheless, given the diversity of human culture and history and the widespread prevalence of meat consumption (and the growing ‘conscientious’ support for ‘humane’ meat), it seems clear that the (seeming) contradiction between Americans’ animal-loving claims and meat-consuming practices cannot be explained away as a consequence of mystification. This is particularly true in the case of ‘lapsed veg*ns.’ Mystification may be a part of the story. But only maybe, and only sometimes.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that while ARVAs routinely state that two of their major goals are to help people recognize the hypocrisy of their ‘I love them but I eat them’ actions and to encourage them to act in line with their morals, the same standard for congruity does not seem to apply when they are dealing with owners or CEO’s of large corporations that make a profit from selling animal products. Often, when corporate managers make any move at all toward procuring more ‘humanely’ produced animal products they are, unlike everyday consumers, cheered by ARVAs and given a ‘pragmatic pass’ regarding their professional actions. This is particularly true in the event that the business owner/CEO is a practicing veg*n.

One might cynically suggest (as Francione does) that ARVA support of such limited actions, e.g., switching from ‘battery cage’ to ‘cage-free’ eggs, does the movement more harm than good by allowing consumers to continue, and feel better about, consuming animal products. Mackey (2007) inadvertently provides an excellent illustration of how a CEO (a very wealthy CEO) is able to justify his ongoing exploitation of animals (for profit) by simultaneously representing himself as a compassionate advocate for animals and as a blameless ‘cog-in-the-wheel, powerless before the dictates of capitalist logic and the demands of his consumers. Speaking with ARVAs Karen Dawn and Lauren Ornelas, Mackey says:

> Whole Foods exists to meet the needs and desires of its customers and not to pursue the personal philosophies of the founder/CEO . . . If our customers didn't want to purchase animal products, then we wouldn't sell them, but the fact of the matter is that if we tried to do that, we would very quickly go out of business. Well, actually, that's not quite true, because before that happened I'd be fired as CEO and replaced with somebody who was willing to put the customers' needs first. (p.212)

Dawn diplomatically responds that while anyone in the fur industry could say the same thing, she thinks it is possible that what Mackey is doing (selling some veg*n options in a store popular with non-veg*ns) might be a good way to introduce shoppers to veg*n food (Ibid, 213). [51]

The way Dawn responds to Mackey is illustrative of the moderate 'hate the sin but love the sinner' approach increasingly recommended by ARVAs (Freeman, 2010). Although Francione and others reject its utility, I would argue that it is useful in that it gives ARVAs the benefit of appearing less militant and also gives potential converts multiple 'outs' or ways to save face in the event that they do convert. The new veg*n can say, 'I didn't know' or, in the case of the CEO 'the customers/shareholders demand(ed)' and thereby be absolved of transgressions and accepted, as allies, into the fold (Freeman, 2010). In recent years ARVA groups such as PETA have become increasingly involved with corporations such as KFC,[52] working to secure incremental changes that they believe will, however minutely, decrease the suffering of animals (Newkirk, 2010). Like most individuals, these corporations insist that they care about animals and it is arguably in ARVAs' interest to allow them to make this claim unchallenged—despite the fact that their actions are wholly inconsistent with such a claim. Interestingly, even critics such as Francione, no matter how vehemently they object to animal advocates working with industry in this way, do not say that they think

[51] I would add that the same thing could be said of a fur shop selling faux fur items.

[52] In response to KFC launching its "veggie chicken" burger Peta sent out mass emails urging its supporters to go out and buy one. I know because I got an email.

people[53] do not care about animals (Freeman, 2010). Rather, they decry ARVAs for their hypocrisy and the approach for its failure to produce results.

That people not only care about but 'love' (or at least like) animals is a truism; moreover it is a truism that we all, by and large, *want* to be true. We *expect* people to say that they care about animals. For someone to say that he does not like animals is, morally speaking, akin to him saying that he does not like children—and only bad people, sick people, *evil* people do not like animals and/or children. This is what common wisdom (and no small amount of research) tells us. However, in the course of researching this paper I was surprised to discover that there is, in fact, no shortage of people who vociferously insist that they *do not* like or care about animals.[54] Online, I came across numerous declarations of 'I don't care' variety.[55] My first inclination was to assume that these posters were either 'industry plants'[56] or independent 'trolls'[57]—bored provocateurs stirring up controversy. They couldn't possibly be as hateful and callous as they made themselves out to be. Or could they? It occurred to me that perhaps in the anonymity provided by the online environment, unbounded by cultural norms and constraints, at least some of them were probably actually being honest.

In his discussion of morality depicted in Lewis Carroll's poem, *The Walrus and the Carpenter,*[58] Philosopher Philip Hallie notes Alice's difficulty in deciding who she dislikes more, the Walrus or the Carpenter. Both have eaten the oysters they have recently pretended to befriend. Initially, Alice says she most dislikes the Carpenter

[53] Francione says that companies only make these changes because iti s profitable to do so, yet still he does not vilify CEO's personally.

[54] The Facebook group *People for the Eating of Tasty Animals* whose tagline reads "For every animal you don't eat I'm going to eat three" has now been cleared out.

[55] One of the least offensive and most persistent refrains accompanying the comments was "If God didn't want us to eat animals, why did he make them out of meat?" I believe this is a bumper sticker.

[56] Some ARVAs claim that employees of industry sponsored groups like consumerfreedom.org regularly post disingenuous messages on veg*n discussion boards.

[57] "Trolling," according to PC Mag is "posting derogatory messages about sensitive subjects on newsgroups and chat rooms to bait users into responding."

[58] The poem in its entirety is available at http://www.jabberwocky.com/carroll/walrus.html

because he is unapologetic and without remorse for his actions. However, once Tweedledee reminds her that the Walrus actually ate more oysters—in spite of his theatrical expressions of remorse (and perhaps even using his remorse as a ruse to get more oysters)—Alice declares that she dislikes the Walrus more. When Tweedledum points out that the Carpenter ate as many oysters as he could get Alice gives up trying to decide who is worse and says, "Well, they were both very unpleasant characters" (p.43). Hallie parses this poem in order to make the point that "the victims are as essential in morality as the presence or absence of sympathy inside the head of the moral agent" (Ibid). In other words, since it makes no difference to the oyster, veal calf or broiler chicken[59] whether or not the person who eats their flesh feels bad about it/says he cares about them, it really makes very little difference at all. To trot out the old cliché: "Actions speak louder than words." This is undeniably true when considered from the point of the acted upon.

Hallie goes on to argue that the opposite of cruelty is not kindness but "freedom from that unbalanced power relationship" (p.11). He calls this freedom "hospitality," which he defines as "unsentimental, efficacious love" (p.14). Hospitality it is not an attitude or feeling within the agent (both being internal experiences that have no effect upon the subject); rather it is an action (quite possibly independent of sentiment) wherein the agent gives/behaves in a way that genuinely provides the subject with the experience of equality.

Regardless of whether ARVAs are aware of or would agree with Hallie's argument, it is useful to consider what it might mean for them if he is correct. If most people do not, for all *practical* intents and purposes, care much about animals (which is not to accuse them of being 'Walruses' although they might bear some uncomfortable similarities) then it might be that proceeding as if they do hinders rather then helps

[59] Hallie includes an instructive discussion of the morality of Nazis, via the work of Arendt, but I am reluctant here to go this far into his work as the introduction of Nazis into any other discussion of morality inevitably causes problems. (This is actually discussed in the next chapter).

ARVAs' efforts to get people to quit eating animal products. Yet most ARVAs appear to be utterly decided that most people care about animals, and though this care may be dormant/repressed it only need be awakened and nurtured –by ARVAs.[60]

Most ARVA literature, not surprisingly, focuses –oftentimes exclusively—on animal-related reasons why people choose to eliminate animal products from their diets. Anecdote after anecdote is offered in which veg*ns attribute their conversion to veg*nism as the consequence of having, nearly always via some form of media/text, learned the 'truth' about how animals become food in today's IFAF system (Ball & Friedrich; Newkirk; McDonald). As a consequence, the notion that people who care about animals become veg*n *because* they care about animals is both described and prescribed as a straightforward matter of fact, and the significance of the interplay between care for animals and other key determinants such as a person's social environment, habits and addictions[61] while acknowledged, tends to be under-emphasized. The problems that this presents are discussed in the next section.

Premise 4

McCartney: Everyone who is upset by what (s)he sees reacts by modifying his/her behaviour

Ball & Friedrich: All thoughtful and compassionate people who are upset by what they repeatedly see react by modifying their behaviour.

All of the premises that have been discussed are, to varying degrees, interdependent and the integrity of the enthymeme overall depends upon their congruence. However, in terms of dictating tactics this premise stands out as the most

[60] In opposition to the premises underlying McCartney's enthymeme a great deal of ARVA media is, in fact, geared towards "persuasively educating" (to use Best's phrasing) people about animals' cognitive abilities, emotional lives, capacity to suffer, etc. In this they seem to tacitly acknowledge that people might not particularly care about animals (even on a sentimental level) and must be given reasons to care. In other words, it is not that people don't know, it is that they don't know *better,* i.e., as ARVAs do.

[61] For discussion of compulsive overeating/food addiction see Brownlee (2005) "Food Fix: Neurobiology Highlights Similarities Between Obesity and Drug Addiction."

instrumental. Many of the 'animal-specific' particulars have already been covered in the discussion of other premises, so here I will endeavor to not repeat myself. There will, nevertheless, be some necessary overlaps. For the sake of inquiry I disregard the absoluteness decreed by the use of the word 'everyone,' sidestep the definitional snares set out by the adjectives 'thoughtful' and 'compassionate,' assume that people are upset by images of animals in IFAFs, and look to see if there is any truth to the underlying claim, which is that information is the impetus for action. Or, more specifically we might say that: information enters into the body, is filtered through any number of attitudes thereby stimulating an emotional and/or cognitive response, which is the impetus for action (Dillard & Pfau, 2002). Intuitively this makes sense. For example, I bite deeply into an apple. My friend Ingrid points to a severed piece of a worm hanging from the core. Upon seeing it I feel shock and revulsion (and perhaps even some concern for the worm). I spit out the piece of apple I just bit off. My (dormant) feelings about worms, specifically my attitude regarding ingesting worms has been awoken and called into play by the information I have received. Ingrid did not persuade me to spit out the apple, she merely pointed out the presence of the worm and I acted in accord with the feeling(s) that resulted from the activation/stimulation of one or more already existing attitudes.[62] Presumably, this is the type of stimulus-response sequence the ARVA has in mind when she delivers her information regarding such things as veal-calf confinement and beak-trimming practices; If A=B and I have declared that I do not want to be a party to B, then it seems reasonable to assume that I wouldn't want to be a party to A either.

As discussed previously, incongruities –oftentimes significant—between stated attitudes (or beliefs) and subsequent or ongoing behaviors are the norm when it comes to people and animals. This 'attitude-behavior problem' as it is known, is a phenomenon that is widely observable in all aspects of everyday life. Psychologists and those in

[62] Melanie Joy tells a fictional story about a dinner guest discovering that the meat stew he finds so delicious contains the flesh of a Golden Retriever rather than a cow. Tellingly, Joy sees the guest's reaction of horror as being the consequence of his mythical (in the Barthesian sense) understanding of cows, not of Golden Retrievers.

related disciplines have studied it intensively for decades (de Bruijn, 2010; Dillard & Pfau, 2002; Liska, 1974; Liska, 1984).

An attitude is said to be an "intervening variable…an internal mediator that intrudes between presentation of a particular overt stimulus and observation of a particular overt response" and most researchers "posit that attitudes are motivational or drive producing" (Dillard & Pfau, pp.12-13). For researchers, part of the 'attitude-behavior problem' stems from the fact that attitudes cannot be directly observed or measured—yet they exist. Another part of the problem is that there are so many possible dimensions to these 'internal drive producers' (e.g., strength, intention, magnitude, etc.) and other/intervening variables (e.g., context, consequences, culture, other attitudes, etc.) that attitudes are notoriously inconsistent despite rather paradoxically being "defined as an underlying mechanism by which consistency occurs" (Liska, 1974:261).

Given the many difficulties that plague the study of attitudes, Dillard and Pfau suggest that persuasion researchers could "abandon their reliance on mediating processes and focus exclusively on behavioristic analyses of persuasive effects" (p.13). This is not to say that attitudes are irrelevant, but rather that if behavioral outcome is what one is interested in then it is perhaps behaviors, which are observable and measurable, that are the more useful objects of study. No doubt many would worry that subtracting attitude from the equation is a bit too much like subtracting the individual from the equation and that without accounting for attitude what we are left with bears an uncomfortable likeness to what Skinner had when he conceived of the "black box" (Gardener). This worry may be well-founded, and my point here is not that ARVAs ought to dispense entirely with attempting to persuade people to bring their actions in line with their (stated) attitudes, but that they ought to reconsider the degree of certainty they place on a (stated) attitude's ability to influence behavior.

The success of the majority of ARVA tactics depends heavily upon their ability to mobilize (the presumably influential power of) people's stated attitudes towards animals. Tactics designed to grapple with any of the myriad other complex, countervailing variables (including other attitudes, beliefs, habits, addictions, etc.) that, for up to 97% of the population, evidently override their attitudes towards animals nearly every time they fill up their grocery carts or sit down to eat, are not entirely uncommon –but rarely are

these variables treated as independent, as separate or separable from attitudes toward animals. Social and cultural elements are given importance only insofar as they are seen as the 'spoonful of sugar' that helps the medicine (message) go down' i.e., as lubricants or impediments to message delivery and reception.

Oddly, when it comes to tactics ARVAs seem not to recognize that behavior may be responsible for the formation of attitude, rather than the other way around (Valente, et al, 1998). I say oddly because as previously discussed, in other respects—specifically when it comes to elucidating the dominant practice of meat-eating—ARVAs are quick to observe that culture plays a, if not *the*, central role. But what is culture except the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought? To posit that behavior precedes and produces belief is not new. Over 150 years ago Marx argued for a "materialist conception of history" wherein the "mode of production" (essentially actions/behaviors) is understood as giving rise to consciousness (ideas, attitudes, etc.) and famously declared, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."

The payoffs that could result from taking a 'materialist' approach, and by this I mean focusing on tactics that work toward cultivating veg*n-positive social environments that provide opportunities for sustained *behavioral* practices that strengthen group cohesion and identity, rather than on tactics that aim to influence individuals to independently change their behavior in order to achieve moral consistency (i.e., bring their actions in line with their attitudes), are potentially significant. This is discussed at length in the following chapters, and so I won't elaborate here, except to say that this type of co-creative, behavior-first, cultural approach to instigating change has been used more-or-less successfully by a number of 'school food reformers' such as educator Antonia Demas and celebrity chefs Jamie Oliver and Alice Waters.

Returning to the core assertion of the premise, which is that information/knowledge leads to action, we recognize that this assumption is also the basis of the Information Deficit Model.[63] The sender of the message presumes that the information she sends, which she believes the receiver was heretofore ignorant of, will have a specific effect on the receiver. She believes that the new information contained in her message will activate a pre-existing attitude, trigger an emotional response and/or prompt a rational decision-making process, and that any and/or all of these will cause the receiver to now act in the way intended by the sender. This seems a reasonable expectation, particularly if the receiver has previously indicated that he has an attitude or outlook that that will incline him to respond positively to the information he receives. However, it is plainly evident that in situations where a new behavior—no matter how emotionally, logically or morally right or desirable it might seem—involves real or perceived danger,[64] discomfort or forfeiture of a familiar, pleasurable sensation, most individuals are unlikely to act on the basis of (new) information alone.[65] Similarly, the second or attending assumption imbedded in this premise, that caring leads to acting is equally naive and refutable as caring is, unless enacted, nothing more than a quality of attitude.

Finally, it is important to remember that at any given time the receiver is inputting a great deal of attendant information, not just the specific message regarding meat or animals or veg*nism that has been packaged and sent by the ARVA. The message also contains contextual information about what ARVAs are like and what it means to be a veg*n. Furthermore, the receiver is simultaneously being bombarded by information and behavioral and ideological cues coming at him from myriad other sources including his immediate social and physical environment, memories, media, and so forth. In today's

[63] It is also the basis of what Paolo Freire referred to as the "banking" model of education.

[64] This could involve anything from the loss of status/ridicule to physical injury.

[65] In grossly oversimplifying I may have bungled the explanation, but any number of real-life examples could be drawn on to substantiate this claim, e.g., otherwise decent people who did nothing to stop the Nazis; philanthropic soccer-moms who buy bargain goods made by children in developing world sweatshops; health-conscious cigarette smokers; obese over-eaters, etc.

advertising saturated world of hyper consumption, competition for attention is fierce and the ARVA's message is only one of very many that an individual will receive in a lifetime. Simply by dint of its relative scarcity and its opposition to so many other pro-meat messages it is likely to have little impact. Ball and Friedrich draw attention to this when they stress the importance of repeated exposure to images of animal suffering: people must be constantly exposed to information in order to find it persuasive. Arguably, repetition may be as or more important than content when it comes to imbuing a message with persuasiveness as repetition leads to familiarity and may also imbue whatever is repeated with a sense of legitimacy. This likely explains why corporations and politicians spend such enormous sums of money on advertising.[66] But whereas corporations and politicians tend to urge individuals to perform simple, often singular actions that conform to cultural norms (e.g., make a purchase, cast a vote) in the case of the potential veg*n, the changes advocated by ARVAs are far-reaching, ongoing, and 'deviant.' The behavior (of being veg*n) must be performed repeatedly, consistently, both in private and in public. Furthermore, the new veg*n not only has to change what he eats (which can be extraordinarily difficult –just ask any dieter), how he eats will be changed as well. By *how* I mean that while the meat-eater dines in anonymity and solidarity (because he behaves like nearly everyone else) the adoption of new dietary practices will invariably draw attention to the new veg*n as he rejects group norms and (however silently) expresses his negative judgment on group practices. Each time the new veg*n expresses his difference by choosing not to eat what his friends, family, or co-workers are eating he is setting himself apart from the group. Numerous studies of veg*ns and ARVAs document how difficult and socially alienating it can be for people to practice veg*nism—particularly if they are involved in the animal rights movement and/or openly express their reasons for not eating animal products (Adams, 2003; Herzog, 1993; Kahn, 2011; McDonald, 2000; Maurer, 2002). In this we can see how any feelings of upset that resulted from exposure to ARVA literature may be displaced or overridden

[66] At the same time overexposure may produce a numbing effect or hostility toward the messenger.

by feelings of upset that occur as an immediate and visceral consequence of the new veg*n's behavioral change.

Scholars have developed countless theories to identify and understand the various elements that influence individual decision making processes; to explain how and why individuals exhibit and reconcile significant differences in attitude and behavior; and to explain why individuals often do not act rationally—or even in their own self interest (Perloff, 2003). ARVAs, although not explicitly wedded to any formal theory, seem to be most inclined to look to what sociologist Stanley Cohen, after abandoning his quest for a more formal and awe-inspiring name, refers to simply as "Denial." As noted previously, ARVA authors regularly cite 'denial' as a full or partial explanation for why it is that people eat meat or continue to eat meat, despite knowing (and feeling bad about) the 'truth' of how it is produced. In a recent series of articles written for Humanespot.org author Carol Glasser (2011), drawing on the work of Cohen, writes:

> According to Cohen, denial can be literal, interpretive, or "implicitory." Literal denial is when someone actually does not know about something (either because they don't know, they block it out, or they choose to forget). Interpretive denial is when someone does not interpret something as problematic or immoral. Implicitory denial is when the implications resulting from the behavior or the issue are either ignored or interpreted as unproblematic or nonexistent.
>
> The animal protection movement is battling all three of these types of denial.
>
> …One thing that research on denial teaches animal advocates is that simply educating people may not be enough… humans have an astounding capacity to deny the suffering around them. The challenge for advocates is how to educate and overcome the denial that keeps people from making choices to help end the suffering that animals face. Unfortunately, there is relatively little research to show advocates the best methods to overcome this denial and persuade people to take action.

It is readily apparent that what Cohen and Glasser call "denial" bears a distinct resemblance to what Adams calls "blockage." And while I do not doubt that just like "blockage" denial certainly exists and aptly describes some states of being, I assert that insofar as ARVAs' interests are concerned it contains too many assumptions about social and psychological reality to be entirely useful: Glasser, rather paradoxically,

appears to (inadvertently) acknowledge that denial might not be the (whole) problem, yet the (only) solution is (still) to overcome it.

A matter of serious concern for the ARVA, who wants total animal rights, is that an individual upon learning the 'truth' that animal suffering is a key ingredient in industrially produced animal products, will not change his own behavior but will instead demand and/or support a change in the most upsetting behavior, i.e., industrial food animal production. When individuals position IFAFs rather than themselves as responsible for animal suffering they may be able to diminish or eliminate unpleasant, dissonant feelings of guilt and shame and continue to eat meat –as long as it isn't produced in an IFAF. The rise in sales of 'organic,' 'grass fed,' 'heritage,' and 'free range' meat and other animal products suggest that this is a legitimate concern (Cole, 2011; Marcus, 2007). Nevertheless, some ARVAs see such changes as steps in the right direction –any alleviation of suffering is progress (assuming that a 'free-range,' hen suffers less than one confined to a cage (Ball & Friedrich; Newkirk; Marcus). However, since there is no guarantee (and no evidence) that these small changes in production practices lead to significant improvements or rights for animals, other ARVAs oppose them. Francione, for example, argues that ARVAs (e.g., PETA)—in working with corporations and endorsing a utilitarian, welfarist agenda that gives value to any immediate, if minute, reduction in suffering—have done and continue to do the AR movement, and animals, more harm than good (Marcus, 2007). Interestingly, Francione thinks that more education, via vegan outreach, is what is needed:

> If ten years ago, we put all of our time, energy, and resources into a sustained campaign promoting veganism, ten years later we would surely have at least 10,000 more vegans…if we had 10,000 more vegans, we would reduce animal suffering far more than we had reduced animal suffering with all the measures, all of these welfarist [policy] measures that we pursued….I think 10,000 more vegans would result not only in the reduction of more suffering, but would result in greater social change, which is really, people, what we need. The reason why the movement is failing, and the reason why the movement, is in my judgment, a pathetic failure, is that we have failed to educate people about what it is that we believe and why they should believe it as well.

In declaring, "greater social change… is really…what we need," and expressing a conviction that the ARVA movement has failed because it has "fail[ed] to educate

people," Francione inadvertently reveals an underlying presumption that individual change is the route to social change. According to Francione, society will change because/when an aggregate of individuals have changed, when individuals understand what "we [ARVAs] believe and… believe it as well." I highlight Francione's words here because, although he is generally regarded as one of the most critical, contrary and controversial ARVAs in the movement today, his underlying beliefs regarding human nature, persuasion and social change appear to be entirely typical. In his statement Francione reveals that he, like his fellow ARVAs, accepts as true the premises set out in McCartney's enthymeme. And because he believes they are true, he follows them to their natural conclusion.

Conclusion

People (continue to) eat meat because they haven't seen the inside of a slaughterhouse (often enough).

Therefore: (Thoughtful, compassionate) people can be converted to veg*nism by (regularly) showing them/making visible what goes on inside a slaughterhouse.

As we have seen, McCartney's enthymeme is immensely appealing to ARVAs. Problematically, it occurs to them not as a normative declaration of how the world ought to be, but as an objective statement of fact about the world as it is. According to an ARVA worldview, McCartney's enthymeme (including the premises, the conclusion, and call to action it invokes) both should be and is true. However, as I have shown throughout this chapter, according to the world as it is (i.e., as empirical evidence shows it to be) there is little if any basis in fact for believing that either the enthymeme or the broader worldview that it embodies and engenders represent anything more than wishful thinking. In and of itself such a worldview is harmless –indeed, in some regards (e.g., its optimism) it may even be beneficial. Yet in terms of how such a worldview shapes and constrains ARVAs' rhetorical practices we can also see that it has significant negative consequences. Figuratively speaking, it prompts ARVAs to proceed as if two plus two equals five. And just as a mathematician who proceeds as if two plus two equals five could hardly be said to be 'doing math' (no matter how eager and earnest his intentions), ARVAs who proceed as if McCartney's enthymeme is true can hardly be said to be 'doing persuasion.'

Chapter 3.

Effective Communication: Obstacles and Opportunities

In the previous chapter I presented a detailed discussion of precisely and in what specifically rhetoric-relevant regards a subjective ARVA worldview is problematically at odds with empirically demonstrable objective 'reality.' I also identified and discussed some of the pivotal, underlying reasons why it is that ARVAs who believe and proceed as if their worldview were objectively true are likely to fail in their suasory efforts. In this chapter I turn to a consideration of a more instrumental question: What could ARVAs do to be more successful? Again, because I am dealing with the subject of persuasion, I find it useful to view the question through the lens developed by rhetorical scholarship. I proceed along the path set out by Aristotle in his definition of rhetoric: "The faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle), and further elaborated by Cicero as the art of crafting "appealing" messages that, "please," "teach," and "move" an audience (cited in Killingsworth, 2005: viii). However, because ARVA appeals are made and sent via a variety of media to a broad range of audiences in diverse socio-cultural settings amidst a veritable ocean of counter-appeals made by countless far more powerful opponents (as opposed to ancient rhetors who dealt with only one medium, homogenous audiences, and one more-or-less equally skilled opponent at a time), I look to modern scholarship coming out of various fields such as social psychology, communication, sociology, and marketing as well as examples from popular culture for the answers. My aims in this chapter are threefold:

- Identify how and why ARVA's present approaches are not successful.[67]
- Present new, potentially more efficacious tactics and approaches to persuasion.
- Discuss why and how these tactics and approaches should be adopted by ARVAs.

Coming to Terms with Persuasion

Since the time of Socrates, idealists have tended to have very particular, lofty ideas regarding how and why people ought to be 'won over' (Borchers, 2006; Lakoff, 2004; Westen, 2007). Traditionally, left-of-center, liberal-humanist types have been reluctant to employ tactics other than those that represent sincere, direct appeals to logic, reason or compassion to persuade anyone to think or do anything. That the general public can be and often is more easily and effectively swayed by any number of external, seemingly unrelated factors may be reluctantly acknowledged, but to use this knowledge to their benefit tends to strike idealists such as ARVAs as inherently contrary to their values, as underhanded, manipulative and devious – something that only their immoral opponents (would) do (Ibid). They opt instead to take what they believe is the moral high road and craft appeals designed to meaningfully 'educate'[68] rather than instrumentally persuade. In doing so they often fail to win their audiences over and find themselves bested by less conscientious opponents (Borchers, 2006; Duncombe, 2007; Lakoff, 2004; Westen, 2007).

Following the insight of Aristotle who reportedly observed that "if ethical people fail to learn and skilfully use the best communication principles and tools, unethical, self-serving manipulators will have their way and control our minds, spirits and material goods" (cited in Borchers:278) I believe that it is incumbent upon ARVAs to learn and use the most persuasive communication principles and tools available—regardless of

[67] Here I move beyond the root problems expressed in McCartney's Enthymeme and consider specific examples of how they manifest in practice.

[68] I would argue that ARVAs claiming to be interested in "persuasively educating" are being naïve and/or disingenuous.

whether they appeal to their personal tastes, values, or preferences. My interests here—insofar as matters of persuasion are concerned—lie not with issues of morality but with issues of efficacy. The levers of influence I propose ARVAs learn to operate are themselves morally indifferent tools of and for effective communication. Without exception all are well known (by any number of names) and are already in use – most often by politicians and corporations, but occasionally by other activists. In recent years a growing number of mainstream American progressives have begun explicating and urging the use of an expanding range of suasory practices, some of which previously would likely have appealed to only the most risque of radicals (e.g., Saul Alinsky, Bertolt Brecht) (see Day, 2011; Del Gandio, 2008; Duncombe, 2007; Lakoff, 2004; McLish, 2009; Westen, 2007; The Yes Men, 2004 for examples and discussion).

The chief rhetorical adversaries (from McDonalds, to Tyson, to the California Dairy Board) that ARVAs must contend with are extraordinarily wealthy and powerful – members of the ruling elite. These corporate actors use any and every persuasive device and multiple levers of influence[69] to prod people to (continue to) consume, enjoy and attach all manner of positive meanings to their products (Dawson, 2003). They do this ceaselessly, without hesitation, and largely unimpeded[70] (see Nestle's discussion of her work with the FDA for example). Their presence is near ubiquitous as they use everything from product placement, school curricula, athletic sponsorship, stadium billboards and, increasingly, stealth marketing maneuvers to insert their logos, advertisements and products into all aspects of our lives (Dawson, 2003; Klein, 2000; Lickteig, 2003; Schor & Ford, 2007).

ARVAs, particularly those representing high profile ARVA organizations such as self-proclaimed "media whores" and "complete press sluts" (Specter, 2003), may do their

[69] The amount spent on market research is ever-increasing. The Council of American Survey Research Organizations claims to represent over 32,000 employees and "nearly $8 billion in global annual revenue –about 85% of the US research industry and 30% of the global research industry" (CASRO).

[70] I tend not to take a political economy perspective when looking at the problems ARVAs must contend with, not because such a perspective is not useful, but because here I am concerned with investigating factors that are controllable by ARVAs.

best to make use of many of the same sorts of persuasion techniques that are used by their adversaries (see Friedrich's, *Stealing From the Corporate Playbook*), but they tend to regard these techniques as adjuncts to their rational, pedagogic practices. Compared to their adversaries, ARVAs have very limited financial resources. They cannot afford to hire legions of expert marketing advisors to direct them.[71] Nor can they easily use mainstream media channels to disseminate their messages. Hence, their appeals frequently lack both the sophistication and broadly repeated applications required to move audiences, who are for the most part culturally, economically, emotionally, and habitually attached to the practice of consuming animal products.

In order to lay the groundwork for a critical analysis of particular ARVA texts and actions, the following pages focus on identifying and explicating some of the most important practices and problems ARVAs generate. It is useful to proceed by parsing the main question this chapter seeks to answer—What could ARVAs do to be more successful?—and clarifying two things:

- **What do ARVAs hope to succeed in/at?**
- **How do ARVAs measure success?**

What do ARVAs Hope to Succeed At?

According to sociologist and animal rights scholar Lyle Munro (2005), the mainstream animal movement's "core strategies and tactics have two broad aims, namely to gain publicity for the movement and to challenge conventional thinking about

[71] In my email correspondence with people at PETA, Vegan Outreach, and Mercy For Animals I was surprised to encounter a strong disinterest in, and resistance to, considering the possibility that what they were doing (e.g., leafleting at colleges) might not be the most effective way to achieve their goals. I suspect that, even if these groups had the financial means to hire an army of persuasion professionals to advise them, they would be unwilling to hear—never mind act on—the advice they received if it did not conform to their own personal beliefs about why and how people can and should be persuaded to become veg*n.

how we treat non-human animals" (p.75). This is echoed by PETA's Ingrid Newkirk who states:

> We strive to challenge [the] acceptance [of the status quo] by encouraging people –especially young people, who have their whole lives ahead of them—to question the ethics of how human beings have cruelly dominated other species over the course of history and to consider alternative ways of interacting with animals. (PETA, 2007).

Hawthorne puts it this way, "our goal is simply to help people understand the ways in which their own actions may not be congruent with their ethics" (p.12). Ball & Friedrich take a similar tack: "our goal is to show [people] the hidden truths, expanding their circle of consideration beyond themselves" (p.45). Alex Pachecho, co-founder of PETA, puts a slightly different spin on the agenda, observing that animal rights advocates "are, figuratively speaking, in the business of selling compassion" (cited in Francione, 2007:75). ARVA author Erik Marcus offers something of a 'complementary inversion' of Pachecho's view, stating that animal rights activists should be "selling contempt for the animal agriculture business" (Vegan Radio).

Notably, none of the abovementioned goals (which, incidentally, are merely the tip of the iceberg) actually tell us what animal rights activists ultimately hope to achieve—they are all means to a (here) unspoken end. This end, or 'ultimate goal' as the term 'animal rights' indicates, is nothing less than "total animal liberation", i.e., an end to the property status of animals. PETA defines it this way:

> Animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment . . .
>
> Supporters of animal rights believe that animals have an inherent worth—a value completely separate from their usefulness to humans. We believe that every creature with a will to live has a right to live free from pain and suffering. Animal rights is not just a philosophy—it is a social movement that challenges society's traditional view that all nonhuman animals exist solely for human use.

Distinguishing ARAs from ARVAs

In this paper I sometimes make a distinction, albeit a somewhat arbitrary one, between animal rights activists in general and animal rights *vegan* activists in specific. I do this for two main reasons. First, not all animal rights activists are veg*n, or promote veg*nism (Plous, 1991; Plous, 1998). Second, although all animal rights vegan activists are animal rights activists they are distinguishable in that they direct a large portion, sometimes all, of their advocacy energy and resources into promoting veg*nism. They do so for a variety of reasons, but most seem to proceed on the basis of the utilitarian[72] conviction that veg*nism is the best way to "maximize the reduction of suffering" (Ball & Friedrich: 14). "Our experience has shown that promoting vegetarianism offers the most effective and efficient way of decreasing overall suffering, for three basic reasons –the sheer number of animals, the enormous amount of suffering involved, and the opportunity the issue presents" (Ibid, p.14-15). Although AR motivated proponents of vegetarianism have existed for millennia, it is actually only within the last twenty or so years that a significant percentage of AR activists have begun identifying veg*nism and food animals as the most pressing areas of concern. The table below, adapted from Plous (1996:50) illustrates the trend.

Table 1. What Should the Animal Rights Movement Focus on Most?

Issue	1990 (N=346)	1996 (N=327)
Animals used in research	54	38
Animals used for food	24	48
Animals used for clothing or fashion	12	5
Animals in the wild	5	3
Animals used in sports or entertainment	4	5
Animals used in education	1	2

[72] I use the term utilitarian reluctantly here as all but a rare few ARVAs are likely to know (or care) what utilitarianism is or that when they act as ARVAs they are pursuing a goal that could (often but not always) be said to arise from a utilitarian standpoint. Furthermore, in terms of tactical efficacy I see little evidence to indicate that theoretical, philosophical, or moral standpoints or arguments have much, if any, bearing on the outcome.

Note. Figures indicate the percentage of respondents giving each answer.

The Role of Motive

Having made the distinction between ARAs and ARVAs, the answer to the question *what do ARVAs hope to succeed in/at?* may seem straightforward. ARVAs hope to succeed in getting people to go veg*n. Yet, this is not quite right. ARVAs want people to go veg*n *because* they care about animals. For ARVAs, veg*nism is an expression of a broader commitment to 'total animal liberation' and so for them it is inseparable from motive. But is this motive necessary? Insofar as the promotion or practice of veg*nism and/or the interests of food animals are concerned I would argue that it is not. To wit: studies tell us that the majority of people who choose not to eat meat do so for either entirely or primarily non-animal related reasons (Maurer, 2002; Vegetarian Times, 2008). Few ARVAs (publicly) recognize this. Donna Maurer, one of the few who does, refers to a study[73] finding that when "self-described vegetarians" were asked to name their "most important reason for becoming a vegetarian…46 percent…cited health…15 percent cited animal welfare, and 12 percent cited the influence of family and friends. Others cited ethical reasons (5 percent) and the environment (4 percent) and 18 percent checked the category 'not sure/other'" (Maurer, 2002:4). Interestingly, Maurer later claims that "confirming the health benefits of vegetarian diets is key to winning new adherents" (2002: 46), indicating a deductive assumption that more people would go veg*n if they didn't (mistakenly) believe they need to eat meat in order to be healthy. No doubt there is some truth to this, but I suspect not much. America is a nation populated by overweight, unhealthy, fast-food-eating irrational decision-makers who regularly indulge in a vast array of unhealthy

[73] This study was conducted in 1992 for Vegetarian Times. Like most of the studies Maurer refers to it is now quite out of date. However, more recent studies conducted on behalf of Vegetarian Times indicate that while many things have changed (e.g., most veg*ns used to be female, now it is fairly balanced between genders) the fact that most people become veg*n for non-animal related reasons still holds true.

behaviors.[74] They are informed on a regular basis that these behaviors are not just unhealthy, but dangerous—and still the behaviors persist. Hence, the notion that a concern for personal health is a genuine obstacle (rather than convenient excuse) for otherwise veg*n meat-eaters, and that pro veg*n health information could win the day for ARVAs seems remarkably naïve (although certainly in keeping with the ID/Transmission view of communication endemic amongst ARVAs).

I find it somewhat surprising that Maurer would make this claim, not just because it is naïve, but because it differs considerably from the value and importance that she repeatedly observes so many movement leaders place on face-to-face interaction between veg*ns and non-veg*ns. It is worth mentioning that this is not something I came upon very often –indeed most of the literature I reviewed indicates that AR Veg*ns usually have considerable difficulty productively discussing ARV issues with non-veg*ns—including friends, family members, and co-workers (Adams, 2003; Herzog, 1993; Herzog, 1997; Kahn, 2011; Kruse, 2001; McDonald, 2000). Presumably recognizing this, movement leaders (now?) generally advise ARVAs to resist engaging in anything more than brief conversations about ARVism, to set a good example (by being cheerful, approachable, and easygoing) and to focus primarily on providing the non-veg* with media/literature that he can take away and consider at his convenience (Ball & Friedrich, 2009; Hawthorne, 2008).

I have digressed somewhat, but the original point I am making here is simple: Surveys consistently find that most people who avoid consuming meat and/or animal product do so for non animal-related reasons. Hence, if ARVAs do indeed wish to "approach advocacy through a straightforward analysis of the world as it is…" (Ball & Friedrich: 10) then this information about 'the world as it is' ought to be fully explored and exploited—not ignored, pigeonholed or subverted.

[74] I am being somewhat hyperbolic here, but not absurdly so. Statistics indicate that 64% of Americans are overweight or obese, 25% eat fast food on a daily basis, 23-30% percent smoke, 50% consume alcohol, etc. Insofar as being 'irrational' is concerned see Cialdini, Lakoff (2004), and Westen for detailed examples and discussion.

Goals and Sub-Goals

As noted previously, in addition to the primary goal of persuading people to go veg*n, ARVAs have a wide array of interlocking (often poorly articulated) goals and sub-goals. These range from getting mainstream media attention to getting hens out of battery cages. Not all goals or tactics used to achieve them are seen as mutually reinforcing or as supporting the primary goal of increasing veg*nism. For example, Francione argues that PETA's use of naked women to attract mainstream media attention trivializes the AR movement, does next to nothing to improve the lives of farmed animals, and furthermore, "undermines solidarity with other social movements"[75] (2007: 76). Keeping the primary goal sharply in focus, Francione argues that all "welfarist" goals (e.g., moving egg hens out of battery cages and into 'free run' facilities) ought to be abandoned by ARVAs and that all effort ought to be directed to vegan education.

As Francione clearly articulates, one of the main goals (and means) ARVAs pursue is to educate people, or, as Francione more tellingly puts it, "educat[ing] people about what it is that we believe and why they should believe it as well" (cited in Marcus, 2007). The notion that people can/ought to be *educated to believe* is deeply problematic (and morally suspect). A great deal of intellectual ink has been spilt on the subject of belief and although it is tempting here to say more on the subject, for the investigation at hand it isn't necessary. As discussed in the previous chapter, correlations between belief, attitude and behavior are often tenuous. Furthermore, study after study reveals that when it comes to educating people about animals –in order to have them *actively* care about animals—educational approaches invariably fail to produce significant, lasting, tangible (i.e., behavioral) results. In 1980 Vockell & Hodal wrote:

> In spite of the fact that time and money are spent each year on programs that are assumed to improve attitudes toward animal life, not a single

[75] Feminists in particular have been highly critical of PETAs use of naked women (see Deckha, 2008; Pace, 2005 for discussion).

> article has ever appeared in a professional magazine or journal[76] documenting that any of these programs actually accomplish anything. There is no documented evidence that any of these programs result in attitude changes or more caring for animals. (p.19).

There is little to suggest that much, if anything, has changed during the intervening years. Thompson and Gullone (2003) observe: "Much of the writing in this area is anecdotal or theoretical in nature. Actual empirical evaluations of humane education effectiveness remain very few" (p.180). In the few peer-reviewed few studies I could locate that look at the efficacy of humane and AR education programs, there is a dearth of empirical evidence indicating that education produced long-term (or short-term) behavior change (see Nicoll, Trifone & Samuels; 2008). Even a semester long university course intended to "develop empathy and compassion in relation to other living beings and which, through the development of critical thinking seeks to affect students at the cognitive, affective and behavioral levels" had no more than a moderate, immediate impact[77] i.e., the shifts were generally barely statistically significant and there was no follow up to determine if students felt and/or behaved the same way after the course ended (Bierne and Alagappan, 2007:2). Ascione (1997) notes that a lack of follow up is a common problem in humane education research.

[76] Note the use of the distinction, "professional," discreetly suggesting that (unsupported) claims of efficacy may exist in other, non-professional publications.

[77] Rather, what I found were reports of limited affect and questionable data collection practices (see Ascione, 1996; 1997). For example, one of the survey questions Beirne and Alagappan ask students completing an "Animal Abuse" course at the University of Southern Main reads, "Please describe how this course has altered your attitudes to nonhuman animals and your actual interaction with them" (p.4). As Ascione (1997) observes, "when we do assess humane education programs, we must be sensitive to the potential for examiner bias to affect our results" (p.66). It is interesting to note that despite the lack of positive outcomes the number of post-secondary *Animals and Society* courses being offered in North America is increasing (Balcombe, 1999) and Humane Education teacher training programs are gaining popularity (see Weil for example and discussion).

How is Success Measured?

As the preceding discussion indicates, the question, How is success measured? produces no easy answers. Given the myriad goals and sub goals ARVAs pursue it is unsurprising that they have equally numerous definitions and measures of success. In practice, ARVAs appear far less interested with objectively, methodically defining or measuring success than with asserting it. ARVAs claim success in reference to a wide variety of objectives and outcomes. These include but are by no means limited to: the number and/or degree of animal welfare reforms they are able to push businesses to adopt; the number of people who turn out for a demonstration; the number of leaflets outreach volunteers distribute at a given time/in a given location; positive feedback from people giving/receiving leaflets; the number of times a website is visited; the quantity of meat analogs being sold; the increase in organization membership; the amount of money raised; coverage by mainstream media, and so forth.

Certainly, positive outcomes in any and all of the above instances may indicate success of some sort—particularly if one takes a 'glass is half full' view—but to assert that they indicate that ARVAs are succeeding in achieving either their specific goal of increasing the practice of veg*nism or their ultimate goal of total animal liberation is clearly problematic as impartial statistics tell a much different story: There has been little if any increase in the percentage of Americans who are veg*n; the per capita number of animals killed for food in America has increased,[78] and although some welfare reforms have been adopted in IFAFs, critics argue that they are so insignificant as to be ridiculous. As Gary Francione puts it, "…the gestation crate campaign, the cage-free egg

[78] I should note that although per capita consumption of meat and other animal products has risen, the greatest reason for the increase in the number of animals killed for food is attributable to the fact that Americans today consume less beef and more poultry than they did ten years ago, and the flesh of one cow provides a great many more meals than the flesh of one bird.

campaign – for me, that's putting a string band on the way to the gas chamber"[79] (in Marcus, 2007).

A distinguished professor of law at Rutgers University and staunch abolitionist, Francione is well known within the AR community as a "rabble-rouser"[80] (Animal Voices, 2004). He regularly debates other ARAs/ ARVAs, repeatedly calling attention to what he sees as both the futility and counter-productivity of virtually all ARVA's 'non-abolitionist' activities. For example, Francione argues that welfare reforms have nothing to do with a concern for animals and are only implemented if they increase profits for food animal producers. He gives evidence that these new more 'humane' practices and facilities (e.g., 'free range' egg barns) may in fact be worse than their predecessors. Francione (and many others) also asserts that, by championing these new practices and facilities and endorsing the products they produce, ARVAs do far more harm than good. ARVA support not only conveys legitimacy thereby increasing profit and power for vendors of animal products, it also increases the suffering of animals; when a consumer who is sympathetic to the plight of animals (and is open to adopting veg*nism) is given grounds to feel good about consuming higher priced, 'humanely' produced animal products, she will forgo abstinence and instead opt to consume these 'humane' products (Ibid). This observation parallels a critique that has been made of producers and endorsers of other so-called 'ethical' (e.g., fair trade and/or eco-friendly) consumer goods. Regardless of a product's comparative 'green-ness' (which is often a complete fabrication) the essential problems of (over) production and (over) consumption remain. They are simply obscured from view by a 'greenwash' that encourages people to believe that the power to effect

[79] By this he means that the welfare reforms are so limited, and so superficial as to be absurd.

[80] This is putting it mildly. Francione is known to be widely detested by other ARVAs. By his own account ARVAs have spit on him, harassed him, sent him death threats, and (on one occasion) physically assaulted him.

change derives from augmented consumption practices and so by purchasing greener products they are 'doing their part' to 'save the environment.'[81]

ARVA Is As ARVA Does

Although I find many of Francione's criticisms insightful and oftentimes compelling, I am less enthusiastic about his solutions; Francione, the uber-dissident, is surprisingly true to ARVA form in his conviction that "vegan education" (particularly leafleting and other forms of message-transmission based actions) is the route to success. In this respect Francione is reminiscent of Socrates, an otherwise brilliant thinker whose persuasive efficacy is hampered by his unshakeable certainty in the absolute 'rightness' of the 'truth.' I find it particularly interesting that Francione, an American professor of law (a 'sophistic' profession that presumably requires practitioners to be well versed in the art of persuasion) neglects to consider that there may be many other, more practical, instrumental, efficacious means to bringing about the ends he seeks. Furthermore, while Francione may very clearly identify and explicate any number of reasons why ARVAs fail in their efforts to convert people to veg*nism, he seems uninterested in recognizing (never mind attending to) his own suasory failures. For example, as far as I am aware Francione has never persuaded even one of the many high profile ARVAs he has debated to change their ways and take a strictly abolitionist approach. Yet he seems to regard himself as successful in his efforts, and appears entirely self-assured in his convictions. In this Francione is not alone.

Einwohner (2002) observes that there is a tendency amongst ARAs to see everything they do as being successful in some regard. For example, even if/when the public is unsupportive and/or expresses hostility toward an AR action, activists will say,

[81] The possibility that (far) more good could be done by say, minimizing consumption altogether by enforcing regulations that would limit or ban the production of environmentally unsustainable goods is neatly elided in greenwashing– a 'green' product might *look* new and different, but in fact it's simply the same old business as usual (see Maniates, 2001; Smith, 1998 for discussion).

"at least it gets them [the audience] thinking about the issue" (p.517).[82] She also notes that activists will take credit for producing a positive change, even if no such change has occurred (p.522). These kinds of behaviors are in keeping with more general findings from a recent (2009) study conducted by The Center for Effective Philanthropy which concludes:

> While 78% of [non-profit] foundation officials think their foundation is effective in creating impact, only 8% could describe the specific types of information or pieces of data that lead them to believe they are likely to achieve at least some of their goals.

In other words, activists and philanthropists tend to seek, offer and be satisfied with anecdotal, un-measured and unsubstantiated assertions of efficacy.

It seems reasonable to conclude then, that because ARVAs pursue not one but numerous goals and seem eager to perceive each and every effort to achieve these goals as being successful in some way, they can see little reason why they should not continue to engage in and promote more-or-less the same sorts of approaches to advocacy that they have been engaging in and promoting for decades.

The Way It Is: ARVA Communication Practices and Failures

ARVAs are producing an ever-increasing number of books, films and websites that extensively detail how and why people ought to be veg*n. Given that the vast majority of ARVAs state that their own encounters with ARVA texts was what compelled them to become veg*n (see Adams, 2003; Knight et al., 2004; McDonald, 2000; Munro, 2005), it is unsurprising that they feel that the information contained in these texts is essential to the transformation of meat-eaters. While some meat-eaters no doubt come across ARVA texts in the course of everyday life, and some happening upon them in this

[82] There is little real evidence to indicate that the general public is actually 'thinking' about the issue. It is just as likely that they are only *reacting* to provocation.

way will be willing to spend time contemplating their content, ARVAs' actions indicate that they recognize that generally unless something happens to prompt a non-veg*n to pursue these texts and the information that they contain, few are likely to seek them out, and fewer still will expend the effort to seriously contemplate the arguments and information they contain. Thus, the first order of business for ARVAs is to get people's attention so as to interest them in further engagement with the subject matter. This is no easy task in a culture with, what Herbert Simon in 1971 dubbed an *Attention Economy*, wherein individuals are, on a daily basis, bombarded with hundreds, perhaps thousands of rhetors and messages clamouring for exactly the same thing.

In an effort to attract public attention and interest ARVAs predominantly use two modes/avenues of communication: outreach/leafleting and mainstream media (Dawn, 2007; Regan, 2004). Although I do not dispute that leafleting is useful, or that mainstream media coverage is essential, I would argue that ARVAs' uses of both have been largely ineffectual, and that this lack of efficacy is mostly attributable to the fact that ARVAs have made little effort to seriously evaluate or understand precisely how and why each approach could be used to bring about the greatest positive effect. This is discussed below.

Leafleting and Outreach

Leafleting has been widely used by activists of all stripes since the advent of the printing press. Animal rights activists have leafleted for well over 100 years (Munro, 2005). In the last decade several ARVA organizations such as PETA, Mercy For Animals, and Vegan Outreach have made extensive use of leafleting. Every year, these groups hand out hundreds of thousands of full color, 15-20 page documents with titles such as *Even if You Love Meat* and *Why Vegan?* at demonstrations, music festivals and, most often, on college campuses. ARVAs focus on leafleting/outreach at these venues, asserting that it is the most effective way of targeting the nation's youth. As the following passage from an article entitled *Advocacy for the Greatest Good* posted on the Vegan Outreach website illustrates, ARVA organizations readily acknowledge their youth-centric focus and rationalize it in three ways:

1. **The Relative Willingness and Ability to Change**
   Of course, not every student is willing to stop eating meat. But relative

to the population as a whole, college students tend to be more open-minded – even rebellious against the status quo – and in a position where they aren't as restricted by parents, tradition, habits, etc.

2. **The Full Impact of Change**
   Even if students and senior citizens were equally open to change, over the course of their lives, students can save more animals. Young people not only have more meals ahead of them, but also have more opportunities to influence others.

3. **The Ability to Reach Large Numbers**
   College students are typically easier to reach. For a relatively small investment of time, an activist can hand a copy of *Why Vegan?, Even If You Like Meat*, or *Compassionate Choices* to hundreds of students who otherwise may have never viewed a full and compelling case for ethical eating.

According to ARVA reasoning, focusing on college-going youth is entirely sensible. It also seems to be effective; one need only refer to the countless testimonials ARVAs offer up—submitted to them by to those contacting and being contacted in this way—for 'proof.' The anecdotal evidence offered on sites like veganoutreach.org is overwhelming. However, independent statistical research indicates that although college students have twice the percentage of meat-avoiders (15%) as the general public (7%), college graduates have the same percentage of meat-avoiders as the general public (Vegetarian Times, 2009). In other words, some meat-eaters quit eating meat while they are in college but almost all who do so resume eating meat after they leave college.

The near 100% rate of recidivism amongst college-goers suggests that it is likely the college environment, rather than anything about the students themselves or the information they receive via leaflets, that is responsible for the high rate of veg*n food consumption habits.[83] If this is the case, it would behoove ARVAs to investigate what it might be about a college environment/culture that promotes veg*nism—and to adjust their outreach efforts accordingly.

[83] At the very least it should be seen as an interaction between the three.

Such an investigation would require ARVAs to question their assumptions about youth; about the suasory power of the leaflet; and, most importantly, about how and why veg*nism comes to be adopted and practiced as part of everyday life. In order for ARVAs to fully and strategically grasp the importance of the college (or any) setting, a fundamental conceptual shift in terms of communication paradigms is required. The prevailing (unconscious) ARVA notion that communication/persuasion occurs primarily through acts of sender-to-receiver message transmission needs to be broadened to consider communication/persuasion as that which occurs as an experience of ongoing, situated, co-creation. Such a paradigmatic shift –from a transmission to a cultural model of communication—would enable ARVAs to better recognize, produce, and operate instrumental, social levers of influence that can and must be utilized if they wish to effect wider, lasting results. If ARVAs were to engage with the notion that "reality is constituted by human action, particularly symbolic action and particularly associative action" (Carey,p.81), they could begin to consider the possibility that for most people a (ongoing) commitment to veg*nism likely depends less upon any given individual's personal knowledge of AR issues or psychological characteristics and more on his or her sustained, collective, cultural experience(s).

In the following pages I discuss what this paradigmatic shift points to in terms of specific tactics and actions. However before looking to potential solutions it is important to continue exploring the costs and consequences of ARVA's present approach.

There is a kind of 'trickle-down' damage that can be, and is, caused by a blind adherence to a transmission metaphor (with its attendant ID model). To see how this manifests we need only to look to how ARVAs today rarely speak of the leaflet's role or utility as a 'gateway' or introductory text, (i.e., a means to prompt the reader to become interested in seeking out further, more robust and challenging ARVA texts) despite the fact ARVAs frequently report that they themselves found reading and viewing comprehensive texts persuasive. Presumably they would wish to lead others to engage with these texts (Frank, 2004; McDonald, 2000; Munro, 2005), but instead what we find is that ARVA organizations such as Mercy For Animals and Vegan Outreach have largely come to position the leaflet as a standalone text, as a 'magic bullet' that is 'informationally sufficient' in and of itself to compel the reader to become veg*n. ARVA leaflets, succinctly detailed and often disturbingly illustrated, are constructed and

intended to serve as standalone texts. But they are the equivalent to Cole's notes. What this means is that, in their haste and eagerness to transmit easily accessible, high-impact, bite-sized packets of textual and visual information, ARVAs disregard what they themselves (unconsciously) indicate as having been key components responsible for their own transformation: time spent immersed in and working through the subject matter in all its complexities and difficulties; time spent in the 'company' of veg*ns (oftentimes in the form of an empathetic, 'relatable' and engaging author, or similar richly developed characters in the stories/anecdotes); and, time spent with farmed animals (personified in stories/anecdotes). The reader of Vegan Outreach's 16 page leaflet *Even You Like Meat…* may be in possession of the same basic information regarding how pigs are treated in commercial piggeries as the reader of, say, John Robbins' 448 page *Diet for a New America*, but that is the extent of it. What ARVAs endorsing leafleting overlook is that time spent immersed in lengthy and complex ARVA texts is a practice and form of commitment in and of itself. It is important. Learning (or in this case, being persuaded) how and why to become and remain veg*n is about more than just learning the facts about animal products and animal suffering, i.e., 'seeing inside the slaughterhouse.' It is about building relationships, identification, experiences and commitments. All of these take time, and engagement—even if only with characters in books and films. A key problem with simply presenting the facts, particularly if the facts are unpleasant, is that once a person is in possession of them he is likely to stop there, thinking that there's nothing more to learn—and what enticement is there to continue if the facts are all grim? Here we can see how ARV advocacy work born out of a transmission-based understanding of communication can short circuit itself; if the facts are what count what reason could there possibly be not to condense them into a straight-to-the-point leaflet?

Some ARVAs, such as Che Green, editor of humanespot.org, are beginning to acknowledge that, "there's good evidence that they [data and hard numbers] do not make compelling outreach material for most audiences." However, because Green appears to be operating within the pre-existing transmission paradigm, his suggested 'fix' for the problem is simply to revamp the leaflet's contents. Citing the work of Small, Loewenstein and Slovic (2007) whose research finds that stories are more likely to persuade than data, Green urges ARVAs to consider that although it is tempting to present audiences with numbers and statistics regarding such things as "…the about

nine billion chickens killed for food in the U.S. each year…" such a temptation ought to be resisted:

> This is nearly 1.5 times the human population on the planet, and it's a number that most people understandably cannot grasp. When people do not fully comprehend something, however, they often respond by dismissing it; at a minimum, it doesn't resonate with them. On the other hand, a well-told story resonates with many more people.

To illustrate his argument, Green then refers readers to an animal sanctuary website with a page featuring a narrative he finds particularly moving, and states, "Once you've read it, I'm sure you'll agree with me that, in this case at least, the story is far more compelling than the raw data" (Ibid). In other words, to be more persuasive, the content of the leaflet just needs a little tweaking –away from numbers and into narrative. If we recall Ball & Friedrich's position we can see how, to an ARVA's present way of thinking, more effective advocacy might then seem to require little more than exposing audiences to a 15 page *narrative*-filled leaflet – repeatedly. However, although the shift to narrative is a shift in the right direction, for reasons discussed above, ARVAs are unlikely to be well served by brevity.

To be clear, my aim here is not to argue that ARVA's leaflets or leafleting activities have no use value. Neither constitutes an entirely wasted effort. They do 'get the message out there'; some people are persuaded this way; some leaflet recipients are inspired to go on to learn more and some go on to transmit the ARV message to others. However, there is little real evidence to support ARVAs' conviction that leafleting—specifically on college campuses—is the best way to maximize the amount of good they can accomplish with limited time and money (Ball & Friedrich, Vegan Outreach). To reiterate: massive, ongoing leafleting campaigns on college campuses appear to produce increased rates of veg*nism, yet, these same leafleting campaigns also appear incapable of ensuring that 'veg*nized' college students remain veg*n once they leave college. As discussed in the preceding chapter, ARVAs such as Ball and Friedrich explain this kind of recidivism in terms of the (leaflet's) message not 'sticking' but, to back up a step, what I am positing here is that there is something about the college environment that makes the message, for some, 'sticky' (i.e., affective/effective) in the first place. Inadvertently, leafleting's failure to produce/secure long-term veg*ns

underscores the fact that information alone cannot be credited with bringing about a lasting commitment to veg*nism. It also begs the question: What it is about a college environment that supports the practice of veg*nism?

The question above is explored in detail in chapter four, and so here I will only say a few preliminary words regarding the instrumentality of what Jean Lave and Etienne refer to as a "community of practice." In much the same spirit that Jamey Carey argues for a cultural model of communication, it could be said that Lave and Wenger argue for a cultural model of learning, positing that learning is not so much the individual acquisition of knowledge as it is a situated, social experience, one that occurs in a "community of practice." According to the Encyclopedia of Informal Learning,

> The idea that learning involves a deepening process of participation in a community of practice has gained significant ground in recent years… Many of the ways we have of talking about learning and education are based on the assumption that learning is something that individuals do. Furthermore, we often assume that "learning has a beginning and an end; that it is best separated from the rest of our activities; and that it is the result of teaching' (Wenger 1998:3). But how would things look if we took a different track? Supposing learning is social and comes largely from of our experience of participating in daily life? It was this thought that formed the basis of a significant rethinking of learning theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s by two researchers from very different disciplines - Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. Their model of situated learning proposed that learning involved a process of engagement in a 'community of practice'.

Later in this chapter I discuss how leafleting and similar outreach work could be made more effective. I argue that by proceeding according to the observation that "culture is the most basic cause of a person's wants and behavior" (Kotler & Armstrong, cited in Dawson, 2003:57) and understanding that social change depends upon (and represents) more than an aggregate of individual changes, ARVAs could fruitfully shift their efforts and emphasis away from transmitting information to individuals and focus more on building and supporting lasting and sustainable communities of practice. I also draw on Cialdini's findings and the precepts set out in Rogers' diffusion model of social change (discussed in detail later) to show how ARVAs rooted in a cultural model of communication could potentially learn from and exploit the recent phenomenon of what mainstream media are calling "the rise of the power vegans" (Stein, 2010). However,

before turning to policy recommendations it is important to continue on with an examination of present practices.

Mainstream Media

ARVAs are well aware that, as Daniel Schorr, National Public Radio commentator and longtime journalist says, "If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes, you don't exist" (cited in Wallack, 1994:426). In order to attract mainstream media attention, ARVAs usually do one of two things: they release footage filmed during the course of an undercover investigation of an IFAF, or they 'pull a stunt.' Although there are considerable differences between stunts and undercover investigations there are also significant similarities. In both cases the content offered up is in some way shocking. It may titillate or it may horrify, but in either case ARVAs hope that the initial story/action/statement they present will grab media and viewer attention and interest and thereby serve to open more mainstream media space (e.g., letters to the editor, op-eds), for further discussion and elaboration of the information and arguments they wish to present (Dawn, 2007). The intention is to elicit a strong emotional response, usually outrage –the promise of public outrage being fairly guaranteed to ensure media attention—and use to this to pave the way for a more prolonged, meaningful discussion of ARV issues in the mainstream media (Ibid)[84].

ARVAs generally feel that undercover footage is the most desirable and beneficial means to secure media attention (Dawn, 2007; Frank, 2004). The 'truth' of animal suffering is revealed and the resulting outrage generally flows in the desired direction: against owners of IFAFs.[85] However, it is extremely difficult, dangerous and

[84] This is a bit like waving a red flag at a bull, but then being surprised when the bull comes charging and wants to gore you. Expecting to have a calm, rational discussion after eliciting strong emotions is not very smart. It is also similar to the leaflet in that for many it will serve as 'stand alone' text.

[85] Tonsor & Olynk (2010) claim that "As a whole, media attention to animal welfare has significant, negative effects on U.S. meat demand" (p.2). Yet I could find little evidence to support this claim. Oddly, they also say that only poultry and pork (not beef) are affected. Overall, their extrapolations seem somewhat suspect.

time consuming to obtain undercover footage,[86] and because mainstream media outlets are reluctant to show depictions of 'routine/legitimate' animal suffering[87] ARVAs must obtain footage that features acts of 'unnecessary' or prohibited cruelty. Hence, ARVAs often choose to use less difficult, more contrived and theatrical means to secure media attention. Without a doubt, pulling a stunt and making a 'spectacle' does get ARVAs the media attention they want, yet if the countless op-eds, letters to the editor, and online posts I came across are any indication, it also seems to alienate and/or aggravate countless viewers. Why might that be?

*Promoting Veg*nism in a Promotional Culture*

As denizens of what Andrew Wernick (1991) calls a "promotional culture," Americans now live in "an environment in which capitalist forms of exchange… dominate all other forms of exchange" (p.4). This means, in part, that Americans have become accustomed not only to being persistently, expertly massaged by marketers urging them to consume, but also to seeing and representing themselves and others as goods to be promoted and 'sold': "we are all promotional subjects" (p.192). According to Wernick, "promotion is a condition" (p.186) and also "… a species of rhetoric" (p.184). The language of promotion is invariably positive; it allows no room for meaningful dissent. In a promotional culture everything and everyone is obliged to bend toward the affirmative: upselling is the norm; 'focus on the positive' is the mantra; obscurantism is the practice. In a promotional culture the use of spectacle, which is essentially promotional communication writ large, is *de rigueur* (Goldman & Papson, 1996).

It seems counterintuitive then, that ARVA appeals that use spectacle to attract mainstream media attention would be so widely rebuffed and even castigated by

[86] It may also soon be illegal. There are a number of bills being proposed that would make it illegal to record undercover footage (see Lovitz; Runkle for discussion)

[87] For example, I recently watched a CBC news report on a "Stop UBC Animal Research" demonstration and found it interesting that the stock footage used, presumably to illustrate 'animal research', showed no animals, only a pristine, state of the art lab containing fancy equipment and a few people in labcoats bent over microscopes.

viewers.[88] To understand why this is so we can begin by recognizing two things: ARVA spectacles are not spectacles in the usual (i.e., Debordian) sense, and ARVAs persistently fail to present themselves as, to borrow Robert Ivie's term, "rhetorically viable others" (discussed in the following pages).

Distinguishing Disruptive Image Events from Spectacles

What ARVAs offer (whether it be naked girls, art installations, or undercover footage) are not "spectacles," in the Debordian sense but rather are "disruptive image events" (Derville, 2005: 531). Delicath & Deluca (2003) define image events as "staged acts of protest designed for media dissemination" (p.315). Spectacles and image events share many of the same superficial characteristics, but they serve opposite functions. The aim of a spectacle is to lull and mystify—to distract audiences from the important social and cultural business of everyday living. The aim of a disruptive image event (DIE) is to shock and demystify—to jolt audiences into considering the important social and cultural business of everyday living. A spectacle asks nothing of the audience. It offers pleasure in the form of an abstract distraction. A DIE on the other hand, even though it may use many of the same types of images, does so in a way that it challenges and reframes familiar narratives (Delicath & Deluca; Derville). It makes the familiar strange and awful. A DIE demands a great deal from its audience and if it offers pleasure it is only so that it can snatch it away. Hence, when audiences are confronted by activists using what at first glance appears to be spectacle (e.g., a naked women on her hands and knees in a cage), as a means to insert themselves and their counter-rhetoric into normally 'positive' promotional spaces to urge viewers not to consume, and to accept the reframing of familiar, often beloved, cultural practices and consumer goods in strictly negative terms (e.g., milk as unhealthy, pus-filled and cruelly produced) there is an understandable tendency not only to bridle, but to want to 'shoot the messenger' (see

[88] Including other ARVAs. I was surprised by the number of posts online that began with something like, "I'm a vegan but I hate PETA." *Vegans of Color*, a blog collectively authored by a group of women offers some excellent discussion on this topic (see http://vegansofcolor.wordpress.com/).

Cialdini for discussion). Audiences experience the DIE as psychically discomfiting, and they recognize that activists are trying to manipulate them, to force them to think differently about that which they have (probably) always taken for granted, to reframe. This may be the aim of the activist, but, as Robin Lakoff observes, "reframing is traumatic [and] we resent being forced to do it" (2000:48). Reframing threatens the easy, acquiescent flow of everyday/status quo life. Furthermore, when ARVAs interrupt the regularly scheduled 'cultural program' to push viewers to accept the reframing of, say, beef not as 'meat' but as the 'flesh of a tortured and murdered sentient being' (and therefore a problem), they are essentially pushing viewers to participate in, acknowledge, and cede to ARVAs' side of an argument,[89] and as Garsten (2006) notes, "relatively few people are interested in listening to arguments, much less having their minds changed" (p.4).[90]

A number of scholars have addressed how, why and to what effect ARVAs frame AR issues (Einwohner, 2002; Freeman, 2010; Mika, 2006; Scudder & Mills, 2009) as well as how and to what effect mainstream media frame ARVAs and AR issues (Kruse, 2001). There is some indication that "shock tactics" (i.e., radical, (re)framing DIEs such as PETA's *Holocaust on Your Plate* campaign), bolster in-group solidarity and are perceived by activists as effective (Einwohner, 2001). However, there is little to suggest that these DIEs are received positively (i.e., compellingly/persuasively) by those who do not already agree with the new frame (Mika, 2006).[91]

Arguably, it would be exceedingly difficult for ARVAs to present 'non-shocking' messages of any sort via mainstream media. This is a problem attributable to both the

[89] And an argument they may not have been aware of as an argument.

[90] I could add to this that even fewer people are likely to be interested in changing their dietary practices. In the words of/often attributed to Margaret Mead, "It is easier to change a man's religion than it is to change his diet."

[91] This is not to say that "shock tactics" are *never* effective. In a study conducted involving 53 communication students, Scudder and Mills (2008) found that, "PETA's attack message against abuses at corporate pig farms was effective in eroding the credibility of the corporate food- industry raising animals for consumption. At the same time, PETA's credibility rose overall after participants viewed the PETA attack message" (p.162).

nature of the information they wish to convey and also to what Noam Chomsky (Achbar & Wintonick, 1992) calls “concision”:

> If you’re constrained to producing two sentences between commercials, or 700 words in an op-ed piece, you can do nothing but express conventional thoughts. If you express conventional thoughts, you don’t need any basis for it or any background, or any arguments. If you try to express something that’s somewhat unconventional, people will rightly ask why you’re saying that. They’re right. If I refer to the United States invasion of South Vietnam, people will ask, "What are you talking about? I never heard of that." And they’re right. They’ve never heard about it. So I’d have to explain what I mean…[but] you can’t give evidence if you’re stuck with concision. That’s the genius of this structural constraint… [It’s] a structural technique that’s very valuable. In fact, if people like Ted Koppel were smarter, they would allow more dissidents on, because they would just make fools of themselves. Either you would sell out and repeat what everybody else is saying because it’s the only way to sound sane, or else you would say what you think, in which case you’d sound like a madman, even if what you think is absolutely true and easily supportable. The reason is that the whole system so completely excludes it.

Concision makes it exceedingly difficult for ARVAs to present “appealing” messages that “please,” “teach,” and “move” an audience via mainstream media. Given that for the most part the information that ARVAs wish to convey is, de facto, shocking it no doubt makes sense to ARVAs to pre-package their messages in concise, spectacular, DIEs –just as it makes sense to politicians to pre-package their messages in polemic sound bites. If the media are going to make mincemeat of your message why wouldn’t you hand them a mincemeat pie? Pre-packaging may seem like the only available means to securing some form of message control.

Lack of Consubstantiality, Stereotypes, and Rhetor Fatigue

In addition to (or perhaps more accurately, *compounding*) the problems discussed above, there are a host of problems that arise out of the persistence of negative ARVA stereotypes, which are due in part to high profile ARVAs’ ongoing failure

to appear as 'relatable',[92]or, in more scholarly terms, as *rhetorically viable Others*. Drawing on the work of Kenneth Burke, Robert Ivie uses the term "rhetorically viable Other" (alongside "consubstantial rival") to describe a type of "dissenting Other [who is perceived as] as an adversary to be tolerated and addressed, rather than as the enemy to be silenced and suppressed" (p.286). Ivie argues that "credibility…rests on…studious conformity to the broader cultural values" (p.289) and so dissenters must perform "double gesture[s] of non-conforming solidarity" (p.287) to establish themselves as fundamentally of the people—critical insiders, not aggrieved outsiders, more alike than different. According to Burke (1969: 55-56)

> You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his. Persuasion by flattery is but a special case of persuasion in general. But flattery can safely serve as our paradigm if we systematically widen its meaning, to see behind it the conditions of identification or consubstantiality in general. And you give 'signs' of such consubstantiality by deference to an audience's 'opinions.' For the orator, following Aristotle and Cicero, will seek to display the appropriate 'signs' of character needed to earn the audience's good will. True, the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect; but he can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects. Some of their opinions are needed to support the fulcrum by which he would move other opinions.

Although ARVAs clearly recognize and regularly speak to the fact that they need to improve their ability to connect with the public, the conversation invariably focuses on how individual grassroots activists (e.g., leafleters) can work to combat negative stereotypes and present themselves in a more agreeable, pleasant and professional manner (see Ball & Friedrich; Maurer, 2002). Movement leaders rarely appear to consider the importance of their own public images.[93] Yet, for the vast majority of the

[92] Using the word 'relatable' as an adjective is a modern phenomenon. It sounds wrong, but it is perfectly acceptable.

[93] Although they regularly, publicly criticize each other. For example, see Ingrid Newkirk's response to "The Animals Film" director Victor Schonfeld's criticism of her and PETA at www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cif-green/2010/jan/21/peta-animal-rights-campaign

population, perceptions of veg*ns and ARVAs are likely to be largely based on partial, fleeting encounters with mediated representations of ARVAs, particularly spokespersons for high profile, professional AR groups (e.g., PETA's Ingrid Newkirk). What this means is that anyone approached by a ARV grassroots activist handing out leaflets is quite likely to already have a set of ideas, opinions, beliefs and attitudes about who ARVAs are, what they are like, what ARVism means and so forth. For the most part, the "Other" that Ivie describes has already been created; audiences that ARVAs encounter are not 'blank slates.' Impressions have already been formed; meanings have been inscribed.

The power and immutability of a 'first impression' is discussed by Leiss (1997) who observes that with further exposure,

> Previously familiar impressions merely increase in proportion; older impressions are not substantially overridden. The image of a candidate [or any political/politicized public figure], then, is determined by [our perception of] his or her personality and orientation to the world with ours. (p.399)

Drew Westen makes a similar observation regarding what he calls "the partisan brain" wherein a viewer's (pre)existing interpretation of a rhetor/rhetoric (pre)determines all subsequent interpretations. Likewise, George Lakoff points out that once a (pre)existing frame is invoked/evoked it is all but impossible to not proceed according to its command.[94] Although Leiss, Westen and Lakoff are specifically addressing viewers' response to politicians, I would propose that their observations are equally applicable in regard to people's response to ARVAs. We can look to the work of rhetorical scholar Edwin Black to see what is at the root of the phenomenon: Over fifty years ago Black put forward the notion that, contrary to the then dominant, Aristotelian-based understandings of suasory discourse (predicated on an audience composed of rational actors), "a strong

[94] Lakoff states, "When I teach the study of framing…the first thing I do is give my students an exercise. The exercise is: Don't think of an elephant! Whatever you do, do *not* think of an elephant. I've never found a student who is able to do this. Every word…evokes a frame, which can be an image or other kinds of knowledge…The word is defined relative to that frame. When we negate a frame, we evoke the frame" (p.3).

emotional response does not follow the acceptance of a belief, or even accompany it; it precedes it. Emotion can be said to produce the belief, instead of the reverse" (p.138). In other words: people tend not to be rational and/or dispassionate decoders or evaluators of (new) information/speakers. They arrive at rhetorical event as 'triggerable' as Pavlov's dogs –one need only 'ring the bell' and an emotional response is provoked, which in turn triggers message perception.

ARVAs appear to generally regard the negative impressions that people have of ARVAs and/or ARVAism as being consequences or symptoms of "enculturation" (Ball & Friedrich) "blockage" (Maurer) "carnism" (Joy), "ignorance" (Frank; Kahn) or biased media coverage (Girgen; Kruse). Yet to suggest that ARVAs, particularly high-profile, self-declared 'media-savvy' ARVAs (e.g., Ingrid Newkirk) and ARVA organizations (e.g., PETA) have no hand in effecting either their own image—and consequently the emotional responses of audiences—would be absurd. Hence, it is imperative that ARVAs, particularly those who are regularly in the media spotlight, self-reflexively examine the role they and their organizations play in engendering and perpetuating alienating stereotypes. Provocative images, actions, and rhetorical devices may serve as strong currency in the attention economy, however the fallout that results (in terms of the entrenchment of negative stereotypes and the general feeling of disconnect audiences experience when encountering ARVAs in the media and in person) may well negate any perceived gains.

When an individual encounters, either directly or via media, a rhetor/rhetors with whom she is familiar and for whatever reason(s) is disinclined to identify with (or in Ivie's terms does not recognize as a "rhetorically viable Other"), she is likely to immediately tune out or turn off. For lack of a better term I call this response "rhetor fatigue." Rhetor fatigue occurs when the rhetor (who can be either a specific, known person or a representative 'type') triggers a negative emotional response (dislike, suspicion, disgust, disdain etc.) whereby the audience consciously or unconsciously resists or refuses to openly engage with the rhetor and/or any information that the rhetor delivers. Furthermore, the more often the audience encounters the same (kind of) rhetor delivering the same (kind of) message, the more instant, automatic and entrenched the negative emotional response to the rhetor and that which he represents is likely to become. This has been empirically shown to be true in numerous studies (see Lakoff,

2004; Westen; Cialdini for examples of this kind of 'knee-jerk' reaction and discussion of how facts are interpreted fit the pre-existing frame prompted by the rhetor).

Using different terminology rhetor fatigue could very nearly be referred to as a priming or framing problem, involving issues of ethos, of credibility/authority and liking. From a marketing perspective it could be regarded as a branding problem. Using non-technical everyday terms we can define the problem quite simply: when the same (sorts of) people do and say the same (sorts of) things again and again audiences are likely to be/become 'fatigued' (i.e., resentful and resistant)—particularly if the people and the things they do and say challenge the status quo and cause the audience discomfort. Even when 'pleasant' people do and say 'pleasant' things rhetor fatigue may occur. Modern Americans have been inculcated with an insatiable appetite for variety and an expectation that this appetite will be catered to. The likelihood that any one image, brand or group of representatives could generate lasting or universal appeal is remote.[95] Multinational consumer goods corporations both foster and benefit from the public's desire for variety. They do not put the name of one brand on every product they sell or on every appeal they disseminate. Instead they create and maintain multiple distinct brands, each with its own unique identity and ever-changing appeals.[96] This serves to give consumers the impression that the brands are different, separate entities—rather than arms of the same octopus. (Insofar as symbolic value is concerned differences do exist, so the illusion is 'real'). I propose that ARVAs could benefit from taking a similar approach.

[95] The success of retailers such as Walmart, Canadian Tire or Loblaws might seem to fly in the face of this claim, but it is important to consider that, while the corporate brand itself is important, the vast majority of the products they carry bear the label of an 'independent' brand.

[96] For example, The Gap owns/is Banana Republic, Old Navy, Athleta and PiperLime. Nike owns/is Cole Haan, Hurley International, Umbro and Converse. While they do not and cannot hide this, they certainly do not draw attention to it either.

I was unable to locate any scholarly research that considers the problem of rhetor fatigue (by any name) as it is experienced by viewers of ARVA actions/texts.[97] In fact, I was able to locate few empirical studies that investigate why[98] people respond negatively to ARVAs and ARVA issues at all, and those that do ask audiences about their negative responses to ARVA rhetoric (e.g., Herzog, 1997; Mika, 2006) are oriented so differently that they bear scant relevance to my purposes. Hence, in the following discussion I am left largely to my own devices to construct an explanation of how rhetor fatigue plays out.

How ARVAs Incur Rhetor Fatigue

As a general rule, whenever ARVAs send a message, whether it be in person or via media (mainstream or otherwise), the audiences who receive it are made aware—oftentimes before the message is even transmitted—that ARVAs are the authors of the message. At outreach events such as tabling, leafleting and feed-ins, and at protests, actions and demonstrations ARVAs and ARVA organizations declare authorship (and therefore ownership) of the event (and therefore the issue) by way of prominently displayed logos. Some organizations and ARVAs, most notably PETA and Ingrid Newkirk, seem particularly inclined to emphasize their authorship.

In addition to displaying literal signs, ARVAs also tend to present a host of highly apparent cultural signs that inferentially declare and define their authorship; the irregularity of appearance, behavior and location, (e.g., a 'non-conservative' looking group of individuals occupying normally unoccupied/transient public space, wearing homemade costumes, waving placards, speaking loudly and stridently to everyone and no-one) serve to reinforce ARVAs' authorship and their identity/image/brand as a small,

[97] Susan Moeller looks at "compassion fatigue," which although similar to "rhetor fatigue" in many respects, differs in that it centers more on (audience response to) message content than on (audience response to) the messengers themselves. Moeller's concerns are also entirely centered on human issues and events.

[98] Numerous ARVA authors and scholars acknowledge that many people respond negatively to ARVA rhetoric, yet they rarely undertake to empirically discern why, opting instead to theorize and speculate.

powerless minority of aggrieved, deviant outsiders with little power, financial means or social standing, and an obstreperous desire for attention.

Further compounding the problem, when ARVA events are covered by the mainstream media not only are all of ARVA's original authorship elements in evidence, reportage of the event is typically prefaced with a declaration of who is authoring the event, e.g., "PETA protesters showed off some skin in a bid to ensure more animals can keep their pelts" (Brodie, 2011).

Overall, I believe that persistent claims and attributions of ARVA authorship may well serve to give audiences the impression that the issue(s) and event(s) have more to do with ARVAs than anything else. Hence, if viewers respond negatively to ARVAs–and from what I can see from public response[99] many of them do (and often with surprising hostility)—then ARVAs have a serious problem on their hands. Yet, as I indicated earlier, despite the seriousness of the problem, it is a problem that is potentially fairly easily resolvable; ARVAs simply need to quit appearing as the (sole) authors of AR veg*n texts and have a variety of utterly unexpected, consubstantial others appear as the authors.

To clarify, I am not saying that ARVAs ought never to appear as the authors of AR veg*n texts. Building 'brand recognition' for AR groups such as PETA is arguably useful as it gives (new) movement adherents both a sense of group belonging/identity and of being a part of something greater and more powerful than themselves. It also gives ARVAs (and ARV issues) greater legitimacy and power when they attempt to bargain with industry officials (Munro). I am also definitely not saying that ARVAs ought to use more (celebrity) spokespersons; a spokesperson clearly speaks on behalf of ARVAs and ARVA organizations and, while the use of popular spokespersons helps attract some audiences and broaden appeal, it does little to alleviate the underlying problem of rhetor fatigue as the ARV identity/brand is still positioned front and center.

[99] I am referring here to blog posts, letters to the editor, comments on non-ARVA websites, etc. Also, although the fact that ARVAs have failed to persuade many people to become veg*n does not affirm this conclusion, it certainly does not refute it.

Rather, my point here is that ARVAs would benefit if they did not ***appear*** to be the sole authors of AR veg*n texts. Regularly broadcasting ARV messages that appear to be authored by non-ARVAs—particularly those that are associated with animal exploitation and would presumably be opposed to ARVism—could potentially provide individuals who would otherwise automatically tune out/turn off at the first sign of ARVAism opportunities and reasons to perceive the issue(s) afresh and take in the information conveyed in the message receptively.

Above, I have emphasized the word *appear* in order to indicate that in this regard it is not reality but rather appearance that matters. The author of a pro-ARV text need not actually be, say, the CEO of Tyson Foods, he need only *appear* to be. A handful of social justice activists such as **The Yes Men** and **Billionaires for Bush** have made productive use of this tactic, which The Yes Men (2004) have dubbed "Identity Correction," and Amber Day (2011) calls "Identity Nabbing." Instead of appearing as themselves, activists represent themselves as spokespersons for the groups they oppose, e.g., George Bush supporters, the World Trade Organization, Dow Chemicals, and so forth. By passing themselves off as representatives of the 'established order,' activists are able to present information and viewpoints to media and audiences who would otherwise almost certainly automatically reject and/or filter them out. Not only does "identity nabbing" allow activists to avoid the problems associated with 'rhetor fatigue' it also allows them to capitalize on (and eventually problematize) the perceived authority and consubstantiality that their status-quo opponents generally benefit from. For elaboration we can look to Drew Westen, who highlights how partisan (i.e., already decided) voters interpret the same text differently, according to its authorship.

An ARVA View of Social Change

One of the most problematic miscalculations ARVAs make in choosing their suasory strategies and tactics is that they proceed as if the social change they seek will automatically manifest once a 'critical mass' of individuals have become AR veg*ns—and so they generally focus on changing individuals. Increasingly, ARVAs use terms such as 'critical mass' and 'tipping point' to express their conviction that individual change is invariably the key to social change.

At the root of this faith in critical masses and tipping points is, I suspect, the work of Malcolm Gladwell. ARVAs make frequent reference to Gladwell—specifically to his 2002 bestselling book, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference.* Gladwell takes an epidemiological view of social change and draws on numerous well-worn theories and studies from an array of academic fields to develop his "three rules of the Tipping Point—the Law of the Few, the Stickiness Factor, the Power of Context…" (p.29). At the risk of simplifying these rules to the point of absurdity, what Gladwell posits is essentially that particular kinds of people, particular kinds of information, and particular kinds of social environments can each produce social change, and when particular kinds of people send particular kinds of messages in particular social environments social change is bound to result. Gladwell grounds his rules in loose interpretations of numerous theories of social change, with an emphasis on Everett Rogers' theory of the diffusion of innovations. Rogers, a sociologist and communication scholar, proposed that adopters of any new innovation or idea can be categorized as innovators (2.5%), early adopters (13.5%), early majority (34%), late majority (34%) and laggards (16%) (2003:281). [100]

Of course there is vastly more to Rogers' theory[101] than what I have noted above, but for the purposes of the discussion at hand the most important feature is that it indicates that people adopt new innovations and ideas for different reasons; only a very few (2.5%) adopt an idea or innovation solely on the basis of finding the idea or innovation itself appealing. The vast majority appear to require varying degrees of social proof [102] as a prerequisite for adoption. It could even be argued that a large percentage all of eventual adopters (the late majority and laggards) are persuaded more by social proof than they are by the idea or the innovation itself. Rogers proposes that, with some

[100] This breakdown is figured according to the Bell curve.

[101] Including a lengthy discussion and explanation of *discontinuance*, i.e., the abandonment of the innovation.

[102] Robert Cialdini identifies social proof as one of six levers of influence (along with reciprocity, commitment/consistency, authority, liking, and scarcity), which maintains that people are likely to do things that they see other people doing, particularly if they can relate to the people who perform the same actions before them.

exceptions and variations, individuals tend to go through the same, ordered five-step process: (1) Knowledge, (2) Persuasion, (3) Decision, (4), Implementation, and (5) Confirmation (Rogers, 2003:21). Yet, on the surface, this seems to contradict, or at least disregard, what the adoption categories' characteristics imply (e.g., importance of opinion leaders and social proof); the sets of data considered by laggards are unlikely to be the same sets of data considered by innovators or early adopters. All adopters may go through the same general five-step process but the information that is processed and leads to adoption by individuals is likely to differ significantly.[103]

Diffusion theory is predicated on a two-step transmission model of communication, and, as Bauer and Gaskell (2008:337) relate, it has a number of inherent difficulties:

> Diffusion originally meant the "extension" of scientifically tested farming practices to ever more farmers, and later it came to mean the spread of ideas from a source to ever more people in society. The focus is on quantity; more people are aware, and accepting of an idea, a product, or a service. The concept operates with an explicit bias in favour of innovation; innovation is better regardless of the circumstances.
>
> The model embodies a concern with speed of diffusion, and advises on effective communication and, most importantly, assumes that the object of diffusion remains qualitatively unchanged in the process. An idea is an idea, it is either accepted or not, and this has no bearing on the idea itself. What varies is the speed by which the "package" moves through a system; and this is a function of the overall size of the diffusion system and the characteristics of the potential adopters. First the idea moves slowly, then faster, then slower again resulting in the characteristic sigmoid-curve, the 1st derivative of which is a normal distribution of the rate of adoption. The main practical problem is to shorten the time in which an idea reaches the inflexion point of the curve, i.e. the 50% adoption rate.

Whether or not conceptualizing social change according to a diffusion model is accurate or would be useful for ARVAs is debatable, but in any case, rather than

[103] Intra as well as inter category.

operating on blind faith that such things as 'critical masses' and 'tipping points' can and will eventually, inevitably lead to the widespread adoption of veg*nism ARVAs could benefit by considering a few key issues:

- There's nothing new about veg*nism—veg*n innovators aren't really innovating. 2-3% of the American population has been veg*n for decades. 2.5% is the amount that presumably leads to further growth, yet there has been no significant increase. The wave of early adopters that in theory follows the innovators has not materialized, despite over 20 years of ongoing, fairly intensive ARVA efforts. Furthermore, only a fraction of veg*ns stay veg*n over time, and only a fraction of veg*ns are AR motivated vegans. In other words, the veg*n population is neither static nor stable; it is polymorphous. This is not the nature of the population that typically presents at the base of an adoption curve.

- While the ARV movement has a solid core of change agents (i.e., organizations and activists associated with organizations) it has a comparatively small number of opinion leaders. Given that opinion leaders tend to be early adopters (rather than innovators) this isn't surprising—statistically speaking, in the ARVA population there aren't any early adopters, only a rolling set of innovators.

- Diffusion is understood as occurring via social networks, yet, as Bauer and Gaskell note above, "The model…assumes that the object of diffusion remains qualitatively unchanged in the process [of diffusion/transmission]. An idea is an idea, it is either accepted or not, and this has no bearing on the idea itself." In other words, what we are seeing with the diffusion model is, again, the assumption that communication is a process of linear transmission, rather than co-creation.

- There is an assumption within the diffusion model (DM) that adoption of the innovation/idea is beneficial to the adopter, i.e., it gives her something she wants or needs. For example, Rogers initially used the DM to study the adoption of hybrid corn seed (which provides the adopter with increased crop yields and therefore profits), and Gladwell later used the DM to look at the adoption of fashions (which provides the adopter with increased social capital and therefor status). Although

ARVA's *claim* that becoming veg*n is beneficial to the adopter, stating that veg*ns enjoy better health, personal integrity, etc. these claims are hotly contested and widely rejected. Most people perceive no benefit in becoming (and staying) veg*n.

- In the DM context is recognized as a key element. ARVAs' focus on college-going youth suggests that they implicitly recognize the power and significance of their audience's socio-cultural environment. However, earlier in the paper it was noted that ARVAs in fact largely regard the college environment as an attendant rather than decisive factor (see Vegan Outreach webpage excerpt on p.82).

I have outlined the issues above only briefly and specifically in the context of discussing the diffusion model, yet they are part and parcel of the broader challenges ARVAs contend with. In other words, ARVAs do not fail to persuade more people to become (and stay) veg*n simply because they lack a coherent, robust understanding of how the diffusion model of social change works. However, if they are depending on the power of the DM (as they seem to be) such a lack inevitably has a negative impact on their overall rhetorical efficacy.

Chapter 4.
Two Case Studies

In this chapter I clarify how and why two of the key tactics—disruptive image events and campus leafleting—in ARVAs' repertoire of contention fail to help them achieve the immediate and/or long-term the goals they desire. Drawing on observations and ideas presented in previous chapters and applying them to the scenarios at hand, I suggest ways that ARVAs could strategically alter their tactics to become more appealing and successful.

In the first case study I look at ARVAs' use of disruptive image events (DIEs). ARVAs produce and use DIEs as a means of attracting public and mainstream media attention –with mixed results. For this case study I focus on one of ARVAs' most well-known and controversial disruptive image events, PETA's 2003-2004 *Holocaust on Your Plate* campaign. I briefly describe the campaign and the controversy it engendered, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and, drawing on many of the points raised in earlier chapters, outline how PETA could construct and deliver a campaign that is thematically similar and equally attention-grabbing yet is also positive, appealing and effective.

In the second case study I look at ARVAs' dominant mode of outreach: leafleting on campuses. I have discussed campus leafleting in some detail in earlier chapters. In this case study I aim to avoid unnecessary repetition. My discussion focuses on why and how ARVAs ought to (re)consider and (re)formulate their approach to outreach work in ways that would potentially lead to more people becoming and *staying* veg*n.

Holocaust on Your Plate (HoYP)

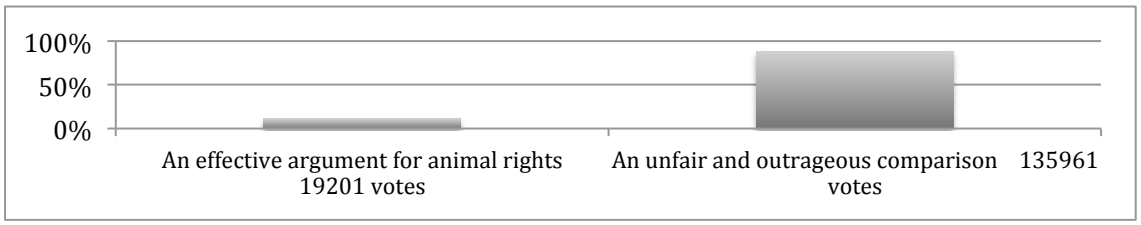
HoYP made its debut in the spring of 2003. It appeared online at masskilling.com (the site is now defunct) and as a travelling exhibit in more than 85 cities throughout Europe and North America (King, 2009; Prescott, 2006). Interestingly, a search of the PETA website returns little information on the campaign and so for a description I turn to Richard King (p.5):

> The traveling exhibit featured eight 60-square-foot panels, each of which contained two images. For example, one installation, entitled, "Walking Skeletons," displayed two rows of naked and malnourished prisoners on the left and an emaciated cow in a feedlot on the right; another, dubbed "Baby Butchers," shows Jewish youth (including Elie Wiesel) behind barbed wire and a group of young pigs in a cage—individual figures in each photograph gaze directly at the viewer; a third panel, named "To Animals, all people are Nazis," contrasts rows of crude, crowded bunk beds in the camps from which emaciated prisoners peer out with rows of overcrowded chicken coops from a processing plant; and a fourth panel, labeled "Final Indignity," juxtaposes piles of bodies—human and animal—recently slaughtered and haphazardly stacked into mounds that overwhelm the viewer. The online version (formerly posted at masskilling.com) contained the same images, presenting them with more elaborate narrative, supplementary and supporting commentaries from Holocaust survivors and intellectuals, and a charged polemic. For instance, images from the "Walking Skeletons" panel frame quotes—past and present on the Jewish experience of the Holocaust and factory farming.

King observes that "reaction to HoYP was immediate, intense overwhelmingly negative" (p.5), reporting that citizens vehemently denounced PETA's campaign as being "offensive, trivializing, hurtful, insane, misguided, dehumanizing, hyperbolic, crass and unconscionable" (Ibid). Jews, particularly those heading Jewish organizations, were among the most outspoken critics; For example, Anti-Defamation League director and Holocaust survivor Abraham Foxman issued a statement declaring, "The effort by PETA to compare the deliberate, systematic murder of millions of Jews to the issue of animal rights is abhorrent…PETA's effort to seek approval for their HoYP campaign is

outrageous, offensive and takes chutzpah to new heights" (CNN). A QUICKVOTE reader poll, included in the same online CNN article as Foxman's statement appears to confirm the campaign's failure to appeal.[104]

Figure 2.
PETA's Comparison of the Nazi Holocaust to the Slaughter of Animals for Food is:



Note. Adapted from CNN QuickVote poll of online readers (2003).

A number of scholars have written about ARVA's use/appropriation of holocaust imagery and terminology (see Davis; Dawn, 2004; King; Snaza for examples and discussion). It is a complex subject that certainly merits attention and analysis. However, for my purposes here the key point that must be considered is very simple: however apt or justifiable ARVAs might find it to compare the treatment and suffering of human holocaust victims with the treatment and suffering of non-human animals, the comparison does not make for effective rhetoric. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is effective, but only insofar as getting attention is concerned. Unfortunately for ARVAs, the attention is predominantly negative.

During the two-plus years that they ran the HoYP campaign, PETA representatives repeatedly stated that the aim of HoYP was to "stimulate contemplation of how the victimization of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals and others characterized as 'life unworthy of life' during the Holocaust parallels the way modern society abuses and justifies the slaughter of animals" (Snaza,p.9). Yet even when it became (immediately)

[104] "The QuickVote is not scientific and reflects the opinions of only those Internet users who have chosen to participate. The results cannot be assumed to represent the opinions of Internet users in general, not the public as a whole. The QuickVote sponsor is not responsible for content, functionality or the opinions expressed therein" (CNN).

evident that HoYP was not "stimulat[ing] contemplation" so much as stimulating upset and estranging countless citizens, PETA continued with the campaign. Why? What "corporate playbook" could PETA have possibly be "stealing" these tactics from? [105] It is difficult to imagine a corporation such as McDonalds or Burger King carrying on with a campaign that elicited such an overwhelmingly negative response[106] to both the brand and the product they were selling –no matter how 'right' or 'true' the CEOs thought it was or how much media attention it garnered. Yet it seems that the question of why PETA continued to run HoYP can answered by looking at precisely these two factors: 1.) PETA was certain of the truth of what they were saying, and 2.) The campaign attracted a tremendous amount of mainstream media attention. Although Newkirk did not refer to PETA's desire to attract mainstream media attention in the context of this particular campaign, she has been consistently open about PETA being "media whores" and so we might reasonably assume that it applies here. In the case of the former point, no assumption is required as Newkirk's belief in the righteous 'truth' of PETA's claims is evident in the open letter of apology she sent to Jewish groups when she finally pulled the plug on HoYP –nearly 3 years after it launched:

> We realize that many people—Jews and non-Jews alike—cannot see through the pain and horror of what was done to human beings to agree, but to our minds, both systems are hideous and devastating… By showing how humans were treated "like animals," it was never our goal to humiliate the victims further instead we hoped to shed light on the process through which any living being can be reduced to an interchangeable, disposable "thing"… Our mission is a profoundly human one at its heart, yet we know that we have caused pain. This was never our intention, and we are deeply sorry. We hope that you can understand that although we embarked on the "Holocaust on Your Plate" project with misconceptions about what its impact would be, we always try to act with integrity, with the goal of improving the lives of

[105] Bruce Friedrich, longtime upper-tier PETA employee, first gave his talk, "Effective Advocacy: Stealing From the Corporate Playbook" in 2004. Given that his advice to activists is so utterly contrary to the HoYP campaign (which Friedrich publicly defended and endorsed) I cannot help but cynically observe that this seems to be a case of 'do as I say, not as I do."

[106] To say that the campaign was wildly unpopular is a gross understatement. Indeed, it was so strongly opposed that some countries banned it outright. "Germany's high court banned PETA Germany's Holocaust display, stating that it would have made 'the fate of the victims of the Holocaust appear banal and trivial.'"

> those who suffer. We hope those we upset will find it in their hearts to work toward the goal of a kinder world for all, regardless of species.
>
> Newkirk (2005).

In her letter Newkirk does not apologize for HoYP having caused hurt and upset so much as she expresses her disappointment in both the audience's failure to understand and accept the truth of PETA's claims, and PETA's failure to make a more persuasive case. Her letter reads more like an extension of and justification for the argument made by HoYP, than a sincere apology. It is also worth noting that it seems that PETA neither tested nor vetted their campaign with any non-ARVA Jews before they sent it on the road. It is difficult to imagine that Newkirk and her staff were so naïve as to believe that Jewish PETA staff would/could represent Jews in general, yet this is that is exactly what they claim to have believed. In the same letter of apology Newkirk writes:

> Hard as it may be to understand for those who were deeply upset by this campaign, I was bowled over by the negative reception by many in the Jewish community. It was both unintended and unexpected. The PETA staff who proposed that we do it were Jewish, and the patronage for the entire endeavor was Jewish. We were careful to use Jewish authors and scholars and quotes from Holocaust victims and survivors. And since, among the monotheistic faiths, Judaism has some of the strongest teachings regarding compassion for animals, I truly believed, as did the Jewish staff members who proposed the exhibit, that a large segment of the Jewish community would support it.

Newkirk's assertion that, "we were careful to use Jewish authors and scholars and quotes from Holocaust victims and survivors" is revealing in its wording ("use"). Furthermore, if we reflect on the fact that PETA ran the campaign for over two years, despite ongoing strenuous objections from the Jewish community, Newkirk's apology hardly rings true; Insisting that a negative response was "unexpected" when it has been in evidence for more than two years is not only absurd it is offensive. If PETA had been genuinely concerned with having the support of "a large segment of the Jewish community," surely Newkirk would have halted the campaign as soon as it became clear that this support did not exist and was not going to manifest.

Being Right or Getting it Right?

In her 2004 article, *A Tale of Two Holocausts*, ARVA and scholar Karen Davis makes a case that it is morally and logically sound to compare the treatment and

suffering of humans to animals.[107] Davis argues that the Holocaust is a metaphor that can be used to draw attention to a situation as long as certain requirements are met:

> A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object, action, or experience is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them. A purpose of metaphor is to provide a familiar language and imagery to characterize new perceptions. In the case of atrocity, a key purpose of these perceptions is to generate concern and inspire action on behalf of the victims. When the oppression of one group is used metaphorically to illuminate the oppression of another group, justice requires that the oppression that forms the basis of the comparison be comprehended in its own right. The originating oppression that generates the metaphor must not be treated as a mere figure of speech, a mere point of reference. It must not be treated illogically as a lesser matter than that which it is being used to draw attention to.
>
> However, if these requirements have been met, there is no good reason to insist that one form of suffering and oppression is so exclusive that it may not be used to raise moral concerns about any other form of oppression. A perfect match of oppressions or calculus of which group suffered more isn't necessary to make reasonable comparisons between them. If a person is offended by the comparisons regardless, it may be that the resentment is more proprietary than just, and thereby represents an arbitrary delimiting of moral boundaries. (p.1).

I find Davis' reasoning both elegant and compelling. I agree with her. People who are not offended by campaigns such as HoYP are likely to have a similar response. Conversely, people who *do* object to campaigns such as HoYP are likely to find Davis' reasoning absurd. Claiming (even *demonstrating*, as Davis does) that the resentment people feel towards ARVAs using the Holocaust as a metaphor is "more proprietary than just" will not resolve the problem. Furthermore, that this "represents an arbitrary delimiting of moral boundaries" may be true, but it is hardly unusual. Humans are in the habit of arbitrarily delimiting moral boundaries –in *all* areas and aspects of life. Indeed,

[107] Davis is only one of many scholarly ARAs to have written in defense of the comparison. For example, social historian, Charles Patterson authored *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (2002) and professor, Maxwell Schnurer wrote, *At the Gates of Hell: The ALF and the Legacy of Holocaust Resistance* (2004).

how else could a moral boundary be defined if not arbitrarily?[108] So, while it is certainly it is interesting to look at the reasons why ARVAs' metaphorical invocation of the Holocaust *should* be considered appropriate and legitimate and why people *ought not* object to or be angered by such comparisons, for ARVAs interested in improving their rhetorical efficacy, it is essential that they not become distracted with considerations of how people *ought* to respond. Instead they must focus on how people *did* and *do* respond and adjust their efforts accordingly.

Public response to HoYP appears to have been overwhelmingly negative, and so it would seem reasonable to conclude that PETA should have abandoned the campaign immediately, that it is never wise for ARVAs to draw parallels with the Holocaust. However, a savvy tactician does not throw the baby out with the bathwater, rather she begins by separating the wheat from the chaff and recognizing that HoYP was immensely successful in *one* important respect: it garnered significant mainstream media attention. Referring to several HoYP related editorials and letters to the editor that were printed in major newspapers, ARVA Karen Dawn (2007) confers further success, arguing that "though many have been offended by the campaign, it has succeeded, with the help of reader feedback, in one of its aims: It has made those who read the editorial pages think, in the context of another mass killing based on prejudice, about the way we treat animals" (p.202). I disagree with Dawn –I'm not convinced that HoYP "made" (more than a handful) of people "think, in the context of another mass killing based on prejudice, about the way we treat animals" so much as it prompted them to react to the manner in which PETA/ARAs compared human and animal suffering. Media and audiences responded powerfully, *emotionally*, to HoYP. Unfortunately for ARVAs the emotional responses were largely negative, but nevertheless, HoYP got people's attention.

[108] Whether or not morality is arbitrary is a matter of longstanding debate (see Euthyphro Dilemma for example). I would argue that although (and because) there are countless 'moral codes' (some individual, some cultural, but none universal) there is, at root, an inevitable arbitrariness to morality. However, this does not mean that morality is random.

Mainstream media coverage is undeniably necessary to the success of the ARV movement. The HoYP campaign served to secure space in the international media spotlight for PETA, ARVAs, and AR issues for several years. We can see then why PETA continued to run the campaign. But while media attention is vital to ARVAs' success, I (unlike Ingrid Newkirk) would argue that is equally important that the attention they receive and the emotions they evoke are, on-balance, positive. Hence, it would be useful to mine and refine HoYP in order to produce a campaign that would elicit a reaction that would be, to modify King's words, "immediate, intense, and overwhelmingly *positive*." Is such a refinement possible? I believe that it is. Below I offer a number of suggestions. It is important to note that I do not claim that any of these suggestions would, alone or in combination, cause a significant number of people to become veg*n. As Amber Day observes, getting media attention is just "one piece of the activist puzzle" (p.184). My aim here is to build on the one success of the HoYP campaign (lots of attention) and turn it from a negative into a positive (or at least a non-negative).

Authorship and Authority

One of the biggest mistakes PETA made with this campaign was claiming authorship. Although they consistently took great pains to make a 'Jewish connection' the connection was always positioned as secondary/attendant to PETA's primary authorship (recall Newkirk's claim that PETA was "careful to use Jewish authors and scholars"). Consider the wording of this 2003 PETA press release:

> Stephen R. Dujack, grandson of Yiddish writer and Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer, is returning to his grandfather's home city with PETA's controversial "Holocaust on Your Plate Exhibit"… [the exhibit] graphically depicts the point that Singer made when he wrote, "In relation to [animals], all people are Nazis."…"The very same mindset that made the Holocaust possible –that we can do anything we want to those we decide are 'different' or 'inferior'—is what allows us to commit atrocities against animals every single day," says PETA Campaign Coordinator, Matt Prescott, members of whose family were murdered by Nazis.

By asserting (as they frequently did) that the campaign was inspired by Jewish Holocaust survivor Isaac Bashevis Singer's writing that, "in relation to them [animals], all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka" and that Jewish staff members not only supported but created the campaign, PETA clearly hoped to imbue

HoYP with legitimacy and authority. However, by consistently highlighting that the campaign 'belonged' to PETA, PETA primed audiences to inevitably perceive and position PETA as the sole author. Of the many criticisms and scholarly discussions I reviewed none positioned the individual Jewish authors and/or staff members who inspired and created the campaign as the authors—always it was PETA.[109] As long as PETA was the 'underwriter' all proclamations that the campaign was inspired and produced by Jewish individuals were rendered moot.

It is interesting to consider that despite being an outspoken, vegetarian advocate for animals, Isaac Bashevis Singer was never publicly attacked for comparing human treatment of animals to Nazi treatment of Jews. Why is this? Perhaps it was because Singer was not employed by or affiliated with an AR organization, so when he spoke on behalf of animals it was, in a manner of speaking, as a Jew first and an AR vegetarian second.[110] As a non-affiliated, 'independent' Jewish person, Singer was perceived as entitled to speak however he wanted about the Jewish experience –he spoke on his own authority. Furthermore, Singer, a well-respected author, made some of his more provocative AR statements not *himself* but via characters in his stories. For example, it was not Singer but Herman Gombiner[111], the protagonist of *The Letter Writer* (1968) who famously declared, "in relation to them [animals], all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka." There can be little doubt that a Jewish author making this statement via a fictional Holocaust survivor in the context of a short story imparts a markedly different quality than an Animal Rights group delivering it in the context of a disruptive image event. But what if it had been Singer (or his modern-day equivalent) and not PETA who authored HoYP? Would public response have differed significantly if HoYP had been presented as the creative work of an independent Jewish artist rather than as a PETA campaign? Would there have been more receptivity and less hostility?

[109] I'm not saying that this is unusual, far from it. The organization, director, brand, county, team, etc. is always the 'name' –regardless of the constituent players or parts.

[110] With PETA's Matt Prescott it seems to be the other way around –he is an ARVA/PETA representative first, a Jew second.

[111] Herman Gombiner is a 50 year old Jewish man whose entire family was killed by Nazis

To what extent was the audience's response to HoYP determined by its author? I can only speculate, but I strongly suspect that if HoYP had been (presented as) the work of Singer the audience's urge to resist and/or reject the author's authority would have been lessened (although doubtlessly not eliminated). 'Singer was never in the camps,' critics might have said. 'What does *he* know of Treblinka?' For most audiences the imagery presented in HoYP is too disturbing, and combined with the accusation "all people are Nazis" too brutal and condemning to elicit anything less than the urge to resist/reject to the speaker's authority. Is there any way such a response could possibly be avoided? What if the author was a Holocaust survivor? Even that might not be enough. What if *all* of the people depicted in the images used in HoYP had declared themselves as authors? Would that silence the critics? Perhaps. Or perhaps the source and nature of the critique would simply shift.[112]

My aim in asking the questions above is not to suggest that there is an author who could eliminate all negative responses, but to illustrate the influential power of authorship. For ARV messages there is no *perfect* author, doubtlessly however, there are *worse* and *better* authors. As many studies have shown, the desire to 'shoot the messenger' who brings bad news (or in the case of HoYP, makes unorthodox comparisons) is often overwhelming. By asserting authorship of HoYP, PETA puts ARVAs squarely in the crosshairs. They also, by asserting authorship, incur rhetor fatigue—thereby diminishing the possibility that the message, in and of itself, would be received receptively. Whatever gains PETA believes the HoYP campaign makes for the ARV movement in terms of media attention and PETA brand recognition, I would argue that they are not nearly enough to counteract the damage done by the ongoing and overwhelmingly negative public response. Neither PETA nor animals benefit from PETA attaching its name to the HoYP campaign. The cause would be better served if the

[112] Although the Holocaust is conventionally represented and understood as being a distinctly Jewish experience, it is important to remember that not all actual or intended Holocaust victims were Jewish. The Nazis also targeted "undesirables" such as Poles, Romani, Serbs, homosexuals and the mentally ill and the disabled for extermination. Hence, not just Jews but any number of peoples could legitimately find cause to object to the use of the Holocaust metaphor.

campaign had appeared as if it had been conceived, produced and delivered *entirely* by independent Jewish citizens or Jewish groups. Removing PETA as author would not have saved the campaign (i.e., guaranteed a less hostile reception), but it almost certainly would have helped to reduce rhetor fatigue and, arguably, have made the campaign more about the ideas presented and less about the ARVAs (PETA) presenting them.

Representing the Rhetorically Viable Other: Heroes not Villains, Hope not Despair

The story told in the HoYP images and text is an unrelentingly grim one. No hope is offered, only despair. No survivors appear, only victims; no heroes are referenced or implied, only villains. There is no disputing that what the Nazis did to Jews and other so-called 'undesirables' during the Second World War was atrocious. It is also known that the great majority of non-targeted German and other European citizens were, if not complicit then at least not actively opposed to the genocidal agendas and activities of the Nazis. Yet amidst the horrors there were also countless acts of resistance and decency. Heroes did sometimes surface in the sea of villainy and indifference. When searching for narratives and metaphors to mobilize, ARVAs would do well to consider that stories that tell us about these kinds of events and people are extremely powerful and appealing. For example, the 1993 film *Schindler's List* was a box office success, won five academy awards and is regarded by the American Film Institute of one of the ten greatest American films of all time.

Could the HoYP campaign be redrawn using a Holocaust metaphor to invoke the spirit not of villains but of heroes? Narratives of individual courage and moral integrity resonate strongly with contemporary Western ideals. Why not appeal to audiences by inviting them to identify with/see themselves as Oskar Schindlers rather than by accusing them of being Amon Goths? Surely an invitation is a more effective than an accusation? Of course such an appeal would need to be carefully constructed. There can be little doubt that if ARVAs were to present a HoYP–type campaign featuring large photographs of specific *animal*-rescuers such as Ingrid Newkirk next to specific *people*-rescuers such Oskar Schindler, there would be tremendous public outcry. Given that ARVAs are *already* perceived by many as being self-righteous and self-aggrandizing,

such a campaign would surely be every bit as unpopular as HoYP. What then could ARVAs do?

The success of a rhetorical appeal depends in part upon the author being perceived as consubstantial, or at least as a rhetorically viable Other. Hence, as discussed above, the first step that could be taken to create a more appealing HoYP-type campaign is to remove PETA's name from the campaign (this is not a constructive act so much as it is the elimination of a destructive aspect). Rather than presenting the campaign as the work of ARVAs it could be offered as the work of a known/recognizable, extremely unlikely author (in the tradition of "identity nabbing"), or it could be touted as the expression of some heretofore unknown, ambiguous-sounding organization (just as American business interests create groups such as The Center for Consumer Freedom in order to make and mask self-serving arguments).

The success of a rhetorical appeal also (and obviously) depends on the message. As Stephen Duncombe observes, "progressives [e.g., ARVAs] pile on the don'ts, the taboos, the guilt" and this repels audiences (p.35). Conversely, a compelling campaign offers a narrative, characters, and metaphors that "work with popular desire and tap into age-old yearnings" (Ibid, p.38). Duncombe suggests that "…instead of asking for sacrifice [progressives] could try appealing to people's hopes and dreams, weaving them into a tale that ends with their lives being better than they are now" (p.82). Let us consider precisely how ARVAs could do this *and* still use the powerful, media-attention-grabbing Holocaust metaphor.

Rather than using images from well-known events (which come with locked and loaded meanings) ARVAs could, for example, draw on an *unfamiliar,* truly remarkable story of heroism and resistance: the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. Philosopher Philip Hallie recounts:

> The French Protestant village of Le Chambon, located in the Cevennes Mountains of southeastern France, and with a population of about 3,500, saved the lives of about 6,000 people, most of them Jewish children whose parents had been murdered in the killing camps of central Europe. Under a national government which was not only collaborating with the Nazi conquerors of France but frequently trying to outdo the Germans in anti-Semitism in order to please their conquerors, and later under the day-to-day threat of destruction by the German Armed SS, they started to

> save children in the winter of 1940, the winter after the fall of France, and they continued to do so until the war in France was over. They sheltered the refuges in their own homes and in various houses they established especially for them and they took many of them across the terrible mountains to neutral Geneva, Switzerland, in the teeth of French and German police and military power. (p.13)

Hallie remarks that when he first learned of Le Chambon he wept tears of awe, because he had at last…

> …discovered an embodiment of goodness in opposition to cruelty. In the flesh and blood of history, in people with definite names in a definite place in a definite time in the nightmare of history, what no classical or religious ethicist could deny was goodness. (p.13).

One of the things that makes the story of Le Chambon so extraordinarily powerful and moving, at least for me, is that it involves so many people –3,500 villagers![113] One might say that the village of Le Chambon was a community of practice, and the practice was goodness. In this respect the story of Le Chambon contrasts sharply with the story of Oskar Schindler—a remarkable man, but an anomaly. Historical figures such as Schindler are almost certain to inspire admiration, yet somewhat paradoxically they may not be the figures most likely to inspire action as they are regarded as exceptional. We see them as larger-than-life, far above average. The average person is not and cannot be expected to behave as they do. On the other hand, it is rather more difficult to view 3,500 villagers as exceptional. 'Ordinary' people such as the Chambonaisse serve as emulable illustrations of excellence.[114]

[113] What makes Le Chambon even more incredible is the recognition that all it would have taken is *one* dissenting villager to blow the whistle and bring the wrath of the Nazis down upon the entire village.

[114] Although the 'power of one' narrative resonates strongly with Americans I think that in the context of promoting veg*nism it is less likely to be successful as veg*ns are already perceived as being outside the norm –but not in a good way. Hence, a campaign emphasizing the agency of 'ordinary' citizens, community, and collective action would have greater actual appeal.

Drawing on the story of Le Chambon, ARVAs could construct a campaign that references the Holocaust not to invoke feelings of horror, outrage and guilt but to invoke feelings of compassion, inspiration and aspiration. In order to reduce the resistant, often hostile proprietary attitude that tends to arise in response to "hav[ing] one's own suffering twinned with anybody else's" (Sontag cited in Dawn, 2004:2) stories and images of the villagers of Le Chambon and their Jewish "guests" would need to be interspersed with stories and images of people (none of whom should be well known persons) in comparable scenarios in other historical 'holocausts' (e.g., Rwanda, Yugoslavia).[115] In regard to the animal aspect: unlike the original HoYP wherein the only animals shown are food animals languishing in IFAFs, a revised campaign would include a broad range of animals in a variety of settings. Furthermore, in order to expand the potential for audience identification and liking, the people depicted rescuing and caring for animals should represent myriad 'types', not just ARVAs. Finally, reciprocity, i.e., animals rescuing and caring for people as well as animals of other species, ought to be shown.[116] Depictions of animals caring for and risking their own lives and safety to help humans not only shifts viewers' perceptions around what is both normal and possible in human-animal relationships, it also potentially prompts the viewer to experience a desire to reciprocate, to help animals as they so selflessly help us, and as Cialdini observes, reciprocity is a powerful lever of influence. It is also worth considering that insofar as ARVAs argue that animals are/ought to be given the same moral consideration as humans, for this to ring true for audiences it is necessary to depict animals as being, in any and every way possible, our equals. What better way to illustrate equality than by showing animals demonstrating that they share the best (rather than the most basic) of human traits: the ability to act in a selfless, heroic capacity?

[115] The objective here is to make numerous comparisons so that the viewer may see the suggestion of a spectrum rather than an assertion of equivalency.

[116] A revised campaign could include text and images of things such as: therapy dolphins swimming with children; a mother lion grooming a baby gazelle; a fireman rescuing a dog from a burning building; a masked activist rescuing a monkey from a medical lab; and so forth. There are countless real life examples.

A campaign designed in the manner outlined above makes use of the powerful Holocaust metaphor in order to invite viewers to identify with heroes—to see themselves as (potentially) good and heroic. In doing so it concomitantly prompts viewers to perceive that the campaign's author is motivated by good will (as anyone who celebrates and champions the goodness in others must certainly be) and this, as Aristotle informs us, is essential: "It is necessary […for the speaker] to construct a view of himself as a certain kind of person […demonstrating] practical wisdom, virtue and *good will*…a person seeming to have all these qualities is necessarily persuasive to hearers. (cited in Borchers,p.45. Emphasis added.)

This differs markedly from PETA's campaign wherein the Holocaust is invoked in order to condemn viewers as villainous, evil Nazis. In making this accusation PETA implicitly yet clearly casts themselves as 'not Nazis.'[117] In other words, PETA position themselves as being entirely unlike (and superior to) their audience. They fail to offer viewers anything or anyone (including themselves) to positively identify with and/or aspire to. So while PETA may (arguably) appear "virtuous," they demonstrate little "practical wisdom" (the public sees the comparison as invalid) and evidence questionable "good will."

To illustrate the absurdity and futility of the approach PETA took with HoYP, consider what a comparable campaign would look like for a corporate titan such as Nike: *On billboards across the country images of unattractive, slovenly, obese Americans gorging themselves on pizza and fried chicken are juxtaposed with images of filthy, enormous hogs feeding at a trough. A giant caption reads: "When it comes to food, Americans are pigs." The bottom right hand corner is emblazoned with the Nike Swoosh.* One can hardly imagine that consumers would remain keen on Nike for long, no matter how earnestly Phil Knight might insist that statistics on obesity supported the comparison.

[117] In contrast we can see that this is a far less problematic statement for a Jewish person to make as Jews cannot *by definition* be Nazis.

If ARVAs wish to be more effective they would do well to steal the page from the figurative "corporate playbook" wherein corporations are advised to consistently (re)present themselves, not as harbingers of doom and misery, but as messengers and embodiments of positivity (e.g., happiness, hope, excellence). If ARVAs want people to see ARVism as fundamentally good then ARVAs and ARVism must (re)present goodness. No matter how grim the reality is for animals in IFAFs, ARVAs must consistently conjure up and communicate both the quality and possibility of goodness. They must also be sure to position goodness not just in relation to themselves (veg*ns) and animals, but more importantly, to the people they are addressing. However reasonable or understandable it might seem to present audiences with the horrific facts and confront them with their complicity, campaigns that focus predominantly on the negative and/or use negative framing reduce ARVAs' suasory efficacy. As George Lakoff observes," Every word […] evokes a frame, which can be an image or other kinds of knowledge […] The word is defined relative to that frame. When we negate a frame, we evoke the frame" (p.3).

What Lakoff is discussing when he talks about negative framing is not exactly what I am talking about in regard to HoYP, but the parallels are clear. In the case of HoYP, PETA confronted people with a Holocaust metaphor and imagery to presumably inspire them to feel greater compassion for animals. What PETA apparently failed to consider is that they were attempting to evoke positive feelings by first evoking negative ones, and so rather than serving as levers of (positive) influence, the emotional responses to HoYP manifest as obstacles to be overcome. To understand this better we can refer back to Edwin Black's observation that an emotional response does not come after the processes of reasoning and decision-making have begun –it precedes them. Emotion is the first response, and regardless of whether it is acknowledged, it frequently largely determines the final interpretation/judgment of a rhetorical appeal.[118]

[118] As per my discussion in the introduction, the work of Cialdini (among others) gives Black's claim considerable substantive support.

It is beyond the scope of this case study to go into all rhetorical elements of a redesigned HoYP campaign in detail. My objective here has been to suggest ways that the campaign could be modified (albeit quite radically) so that while still using a Holocaust analogy, and thereby operationalizing and benefitting from the attention-grabbing power that the analogy brings, the campaign would have a compelling (centripetal) rather than a repulsive (centrifugal) effect.

Leafleting on Campus

As discussed previously, recent years have seen a number of ARVA organizations coming to focus a great deal of their resources and energy on outreach work, particularly leafleting on college campuses. Why ARVAs choose to target this particular audience in this particular way, and why it can be understood as largely ineffectual at producing the results ARVAs desire has been addressed in considerable detail earlier in this paper and so here, for the sake of brevity, I attempt to avoid unnecessary repetition and only briefly summarize before moving directly into a discussion of specifically why and how ARVAs might (re)consider and (re)formulate their approach to outreach work in ways that could potentially lead to more people becoming and staying veg*n.

As noted earlier, one of the reasons that ARVAs focus so much attention on leafleting on college campuses is that they believe that college students are the ideal audience and that leaflets are the ideal media. ARVA organizations such as PETA, Vegan Outreach and Mercy For Animals repeatedly affirm the efficacy of leafleting by referring to non-representative survey results and testimonials submitted to them by both leafleters and leafletees. For example,

> PETA surveyed people who received their vegetarian starter guide, and responses indicated that more than eighty percent of non-vegans changed their diet, with twenty-three percent going from meat-eater to an entirely vegan diet after reading the guide. (Ball & Friedrich, pp.18-19)

Ball and Friedrich acknowledge that, "clearly there's some self-selection in survey responses" and estimate that the true rate of conversion is "probably…about one percent"(p.19).[119.] However, even though they are far more conservative in their estimate, what they do not acknowledge is that research indicates that nearly all who adopt veg*nism abandon it, college students in particular. Thus, leafleting's *long-term* success rate is actually far less than one percent.

ARVA leaders making the argument for campus leafleting claim that it is the most productive thing an ARVA can do. According to Vegan Outreach founder Matt Ball (nd):

> Being a part of Vegan Outreach will vastly increase your ability to make a difference. Whether you leaflet or finance the distribution of our booklets, for every person you help convince to go vegetarian, you *double* the impact of your life's food choices. If, for example, you provide booklets to sixty new people tomorrow and just one decides to go vegetarian, you will have changed that person's life forever. More importantly, you'll have saved, with just a small investment of time or money, as many animals as you'll save with every choice you make during the rest of your life!

Similarly, in his book, *Meat Market*, Erik Marcus writes:

> When I was a teenager, my greatest ambition was to one day be a millionaire. [Later] I adapted the millionaire concept for purposes of activism . . .I wanted to [keep] a million animals out of slaughterhouses . . But is it realistic to think that a typical person could keep a million animals from slaughter? Absolutely!… At two thousand [land] animals saved per new vegetarian, this means that during your life, if you convince five hundred young people to become vegetarian, a million animals will be saved. (p.118).

Concrete numbers are appealing and potentially motivating, especially when they are large. Hence, ARVAs are inclined to produce them often. Unfortunately though, what

[119] From "more than eighty percent" to "probably…about one percent" is a rather dramatic reduction. I suspect that Ball and Friedrich are simply pulling a 'humble' number out of the air. They give no evidence to support their 1% estimate, and instead appear to rely on the reader's willingness to accept the plausibility of a 1% rate of change, as in contrast to 80% it seems more than reasonable.

ARVA fail to consider/acknowledge in their accounting is that few veg*ns are veg*n for an extended period, never mind a lifetime. And so while the numbers and testimonials of enthusiastic leaflet distributors and recipients serve to provide ARVAs and ARVA organizations with self-affirming and inspiring sound and fury, they signify little or nothing beyond themselves.

As far as I am able to ascertain, ARVA organizations make no effort to determine if people posting testimonials are authentic or if the authors actually do what they say and for how long? Anecdotes and non-representative survey results appear to be uncritically accepted (and offered up unstintingly) at face value, presumably because they tell ARVAs what they want to hear (and what they want to tell others)—leafleting works! Arguably, this is true—leafleting does work…to a very limited degree…in the short term. Targeting youth also 'works' in that college-age ARVAs are some of the most eager, outspoken and enthusiastic ARVAs. They are often willing to volunteer their time and energy to the cause (see PETA's PETA2 'Street Teams' for example). Young people find PETA's brand of animal activism appealing: "…a 2006 survey of 5,000 people ages 13 to 24 showed that PETA was the nonprofit organization most would like to volunteer for, according to the market research firm Label Networks. The American Red Cross was second" (Severson, 2007). It would seem then that the problem for ARVAs is that young people don't stay young. They grow up. As psychologist Howard Gardener observes: "Many studies have documented a shift to the left when youngsters enter college; no doubt this is due at least in part to the influence of a powerful cohort. The reverse trend often commences ten or twenty years later…"(p.58).

*Future Ex-Veg*ns*

As discussed previously, ARVAs tend to hypothesize the future success of ARVism based on a belief that it will come about via a process of diffusion. It would be helpful then if they were to consider the precepts set out in the diffusion model of social change and recognize that building and maintaining a stable base population of people who become and stay veg*n is vital. At present, for every one person who identifies him/herself as veg*n, three identify themselves as ex-veg*ns (Herzog, 2011). This is a problem because diffusion won't 'work' for ARVAs unless people who become veg*n stay veg*n; the 'tipping point' that they dream of cannot be reached unless a critical

mass is achieved. This point seems exceedingly obvious. Yet if we consider that ARVA organizations tend to devote the bulk of their efforts to conversion rather than retention (apparently taking the permanence of conversion for granted), we see that it is not so obvious to ARVAs. ARVAs appear inclined to disregard the fact that their tactics have produced little more than wave after wave of people who become veg*n for a time, and then become non-veg*n again, sometimes vehemently so (see Herzog, 2011 for discussion). Diffusion, however, requires accretion. According to the diffusion model, the role of 'innovators,' the 2.5% of the population represented at the starting point of the curve, is to provide 'social proof' demonstrating the value and utility of the idea, practice or innovation. This in turn appeals to a small percentage of the population who are 'early adopters.' This group of people in turn serve to make the (in this case) practice appealing to the 'early majority" and so on. However, if the 'innovators' abandon the practice then the bottom, quite literally, falls out of the diffusion process and no traction can be gained; instead of accretion there is slippage wherein those that ought to be in the 'early adopter category' slip down into the position that ought to be occupied by 'innovators' and so on. Arguably, this has a powerful negative/counter-productive effect; not only does the movement fail to 'diffuse' but the 'social proof' that *is* presented (by the 7% of the population who are ex-veg*ns) actually demonstrates veg*nism's *lack* of value and utility.

Given the problems outlined above concerning the overall/long-term (in)efficacy of college leafleting outreach work (CLOW) it might seem that ARVAs ought to abandon this tactic and focus on something else entirely. However, rather than throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater, it is useful to recognize successes that CLOW has produced (increased, short-term adoption rates of veg*ns who are passionate advocates), identify the nature of the failures (recidivism upon departure from the college environment, social proof of veg*nism's lack of value and utility) and use them to craft appropriate new approaches that build on the successes and minimize or eliminate the failures.

Before moving on to a consideration of what these new approaches might be, it is important to note that the efficacy of ARVAs' CLOW, although regularly lauded by ARVAs, it has never been the subject of scholarly study. The lack of methodologically sound empirical research makes it impossible to determine with any degree of certainty

whether it is in fact CLOW or some other factor (e.g., religion) that provides the impetus for, say, the higher than average rate of veg*ns, or the availability of veg*n cafeteria menu items on any particular college campus. For example, PETA names Oberlin College as number six on its list of the top ten US "Vegetarian-Friendly Colleges" noting that, "estimates put the vegetarian population of the school at about 40 percent" (PETA2). I found it surprising that PETA wouldn't give first place ranking to a college with a 40 percent vegetarian population, so I did a bit of online research and found that Oberlin College has strong Mormon roots, and Mormons are often vegetarian. Thus, Oberlin's veg*n population may be largely a consequence of/motivated by religious rather than AR reasons. If so it might explain why PETA only ranked Oberlin 6th. In any case, I refer to Oberlin not so much to speculate about PETA's ranking rationale but to illustrate that there may be any number of unknown and/or unidentified causal factors at play. And in fact the argument I'm making here is that while CLOW is likely responsible for providing the initial impetus for some college students to become veg*n, it is neither the only nor the most important factor; context (i.e., socio-cultural environment) is a key determinant.

As I have stated previously, my conviction that environment/context is a (if not *the*) key determinant is supported by the fact that nearly all college students who take up the practice of veg*nism while they are in college abandon the practice after leaving college. By exploring this one simple fact I can potentially identify what it is about a college environment that promotes and sustains the practice of veg*nism and how ARVAs might use this knowledge to increase the efficacy of their outreach work.

What is it About a College Environment That Promotes and Sustains the Practice of Veg*nism?

The single most important quality of a college environment is that it provides veg*ns with what Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger describe as a "Community of Practice." Lave and Wenger coined the term while developing a model of social learning –"Situated Learning" that looks beyond the merely experiential (i.e., learning by doing). Positing that learning is not the acquisition of knowledge by individuals so much as it is a process of social participation, and the nature of the situation (which is one of co-

participation in a community of practice) impacts significantly on the process. Wenger (2007) states:

> Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope. In a nutshell: Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Even in the event that there is no formal veg*n Community of Practice (CoP) on campus (e.g., a veg*n group) –which there often is—or that a veg*n student is a member of such a group, the campus CoP arguably still exists and asserts itself in the traces and echoes of everyday experience. A campus veg*n CoP, however loosely affiliated, serves many practical purposes: In a college environment veg*n students enact and express their veg*nism on a regular basis, as part of everyday life. For example, veg*n students frequently identify themselves and express their veg*nism in discussions, papers, outreach activities and in food consumption and sharing practices; they also seek out and make connections with other veg*n (or potentially veg*n) students and staff. A stable base population of individuals visibly performing these actions on a regular or semi-regular basis not only allows for the communication and spread of veg*nism via culture, it also allows for the development and confirmation of individual and collective veg*n identities, and reinforces a veg*n's commitment to veg*nism. As Cialdini observes, the desire to experience oneself and, even more, to appear to others as "consistent" is a powerful lever of (self)persuasion. A student who has repeatedly, publicly asserted her veg*nism and made a case for ARVism risks losing face (and the approval of her veg*n friends and peers) if she abandons the practice and reverts to meat-eating—at least while she is at college.

Reflecting back on earlier discussions of communication paradigms we can see that what I have described above in regard to a community of practice dovetails neatly with a cultural model of communication. The terminology and emphasis may vary somewhat but they are two sides of the same coin. The CoP is an environment (i.e.,

culture) in which individuals experientially, continuously co-create the lived knowledge of what it is to be veg*n. When the veg*n leaves college she leaves (instantly or eventually, partially or completely) her CoP, and as the near 100% rate of recidivism indicates: when the community goes, so does the practice. Of course this not the case with every individual, practice or CoP. For example, being part of a CoP is likely to be far more integral to a neophyte veg*n's commitment to practice than it is to, say, an established Muslim's. There are any number of possible explanations for these variations but the underlying factors are consistent, "…individual human consciousness, including its unique process of choice and decision making, is always a process that is at once willfully shaped by the person making the choices and heavily conditioned at several levels by shared group dynamics and experiences" (Dawson, 55.).

Most research aimed at identifying and investigating key variables involved in the decision to practice (or not practice) veg*nism tends to emphasize individual rather than group/environmental determinants of behavior (see McDonald; Knight, 2003; Knight et al 2004 for examples). The veg*n is situated as being a person who must be in some fundamental, characteristic way(s) distinguishable from the non-veg*n, and the researcher's objective is to identify and catalogue these differences. Insofar as the aims of this thesis are concerned this type of individual, psychology-based research, while interesting, is of little value. ARVAs, as 'marketers of veg*nism,' need to recognize that "… a sociological conception of individuals is a first principle of marketing practice" and look more closely at the "shared group dynamics and experiences" that condition decision-making (Dawson, 54-55). This is what will help ARVAs figure out how to persuade the heretofore unpersuadable.

Early in my research I came across Michael Specter's New York Times article, *The Extremist* (2003), a biographical piece about Ingrid Newkirk. I found one passage particularly illuminating:

> When I was with Newkirk, I usually ate what she ate—often a delicious mixture of highly spiced vegetables and tofu. Once or twice, however, I transgressed; tears filled her eyes the day I ordered a Cobb salad for lunch. "What does it take, tell me, what does it take to get somebody like you on our side?" she said to me later that afternoon. "I am asking you. This is my chance. You fancy yourself as a decent, socially conscious,

well-educated, literate person. How can I reach you? Where am I going wrong?"

Although Specter never directly answers Newkirk's question (at least not in words), if we look to his actions an answer of sorts is apparent: What it takes to "reach" (i.e., influence) someone like Specter is someone like Newkirk, or more generally, a particular kind of relationship with a particular kind of person; Newkirk (an ARVA) is important to Specter (he wants to interview her) and because she is important to him he is willing to modify his behavior (most of the time) when he interacts with her in order to please her *so that he can get what he wants* (an interview). Their personalities and the nature of their relationship and all of its intricacies and nuances are of course more complicated than this, but the take-away point is simple: even though Specter tells Newkirk that he is "not a vegetarian and not likely to become one" he is apparently usually willing to eat like a vegetarian when he is with her.[120]

The first time I read this passage the significance of Specter's behavior escaped me. Like Newkirk I was entirely preoccupied with trying to figure out how (someone like) Specter could be so well informed about the degree and extent of the suffering of animals in IFAFs (he discusses it in detail) yet not be moved (i.e., undergo a massive change in attitude). Like Newkirk I didn't pay attention to the fact that Specter had, through his actions, already given an answer. For (someone like) Specter social context is the key to producing behavioral change. Neither information nor attitude concerning animals effect Specter's behavior towards animals, rather it is his social relationships and/or attitude towards other people that produce behavioral change.

Developing and implementing social strategies that will help to keep veg*ns 'faithful' and thereby lower the extraordinarily high rate of recidivism should be ARVAs'

[120] While it might be tempting to attribute Specter's behavior to the lever of influence Cialdini calls *reciprocity*—Specter does something for Newkirk so that she will do something for him and/or because she is doing something for him—I think it is more nuanced than this. One could argue that all of Cialdini's levers (although perhaps not *scarcity* so much) are, to varying degrees, in play here.

top priority as retention is essential to their, and indeed *any* social movement's, success. However, assuming Newkirk can be taken as a bellwether, retention appears to be regarded as utterly unimportant by movement leaders: "…my job isn't to hold on to members, as much as I'd like to—it's to get people who just don't give a damn about this issue to look twice" (Newkirk in Specter, 2003). Although Newkirk is referring to PETA members we can reasonably assume that her sentiment applies to matters of conversion/retention more broadly. It is interesting to note that Specter, a 'non-believer' affirms that Newkirk is correct to proceed as she does (i.e., using attention-grabbing yet alienating DIEs) asserting that, "Newkirk knows [that] a vegan isn't going to start eating meat or wearing fur simply because she disapproves of a naked calendar." This may be true, but the fact remains that this hypothetical vegetarian is almost certainly going to abandon her practice for some reason(s) or other. It is one thing for Newkirk to dismiss the negative effects that PETA campaigns have on PETA members as insignificant, it is quite another if it indicates that she is dismisses the problem of recidivism altogether.

College leafleting is not the 'golden goose' ARVAs believe it is. Yet without understanding how the processes and mechanisms of persuasion and social change actually operate ARVAs are unlikely to change tactics. For example, without understanding why retaining existing veg*ns is as or more valuable than converting new ones[121] ARVAs will see little reason to forgo the instant gratification that results from leafleting college students. The easy (yet ephemeral) outcomes are too appealing. However, it is not only possible but likely that ARVAs' cause would be better served if they were to direct the bulk of their outreach-type efforts at other, more *stable* populations –groups of people with pre-existing social ties that resemble, or are capable of supporting, a community of practice over a long period of time. [122] This would

[121] I say this for two reasons: without retention there is little point in conversion *and* with retention comes increased/cascading conversion (at least according to the DM).

[122] By *stable* I mean both characteristically and spatiotemporally. College students are *unstable* insofar as they are young and transient. In comparison, members of private clubs and employees at corporations with centralized headquarters and operations (e.g., Google, Electronic Arts) are, by dint of general age and/or duration of daily affiliation, comparatively *stable*.

effectively shift ARVAs' focus from conversion to retention. Admittedly, such a shift and all that it would entail is easier said than done, as it would almost certainly require ARVAs to substantially alter their approach *and* materials. There can be little doubt that ARVAs targeting, say, members of New York's exclusive Core Club or employees at Google's head office in Silicone Valley could simply show up with a satchel full of *Even if You Like Meat…* pamphlets and expect anything other than a prompt escort off the property. Hence, the first step ARVAs need to take is an inquisitive one. The questions of who to target and how to target them for maximum efficacy need to be carefully considered from a purely instrumental perspective, informed by empirical evidence, and according to "… a sociological conception of individuals, [which] is a first principle of marketing practice" (Dawson: 55). This is an approach ARVA's would do well to seriously consider taking if they wish to create a social movement rather than a series of individual moments.

Conclusion:

In this thesis I have drawn on the work of numerous scholars of influence (suasory discourse in particular) to explicate and evaluate the efficacy of animal rights veg*n activists' rhetorical strategies. While writing a thesis is first and foremost an academic exercise, my aim here has been to create a document that has both scholarly and practical value; Ultimately, I hope that the observations and ideas I have put forward here might be useful to ARVAs who wish to better understand the nature of the problem(s) they are dealing with (which have little if anything to do with animals per se), and to become more effective advocates for animals.

As I began to compose this conclusion it occurred to me that this thesis had been so long in the writing that perhaps while I wasn't looking ARVAs had (without any help from me) already begun to interrogate their assumptions regarding human nature, communication and social change, and to retool their communication practices accordingly. In recent years there has been growing scholarly interest in the subject of AR advocacy, and so the possibility that, sometime during the years that my thesis languished in a desk drawer, someone else –inside or outside the AR movement—would have conducted an analysis and/or reached conclusions similar to mine seemed fairly strong. In the last year I had come across a few articles via HumaneSpot.org[123] in which the problem of recidivism is addressed (for example see Herzog 2011) and this encouraged me to think that it would only be a matter of time before the proverbial penny

[123] HumaneSpot.org is an online clearinghouse for AR related scholarship. (The organization's tagline reads, "Your Animal Advocacy Research Center.") I have been on the HumaneSpot's listserv for over two years now. Each week I receive an email entitled: "HumaneSpot Spotlight Selections" that summarizes half a dozen or so articles (predominantly scholarly) concerning animal advocacy issues that have been added to the database.

dropped, and ARVAs began to consider what recidivism signified in regard to the (in)efficacy of their present strategies.

A visit to the Vegan Outreach website (www.veganoutreach.org) in April 2012 reveals a homepage unequivocally endorsing the power of the pamphlet. The sidebar on the left is headed by a slideshow of photographs under the title, "Some of the Folks Who Have Stopped Eating Animals as a Result of a VO Booklet." Each image shows one or more cheerful looking college student posing with a prominently displayed Vegan Outreach booklet. The rotating images are accompanied by captions underneath: "Veg since getting booklet at UNM in '10!" reads one. "Veg for > 1 year after receiving booklet!" reads another. Several images are accompanied by the caption, "went veg on the spot." The main column of the webpage is also headed by a slideshow of photographs accompanied by text. For example, beneath a photo of a smiling young man handing a leaflet to a young woman with a backpack the text reads,

> Over Half a Million Students Reached Already This Term! This semester's Adopt a College leafleters have handed out *553,400 booklets at 641 schools.* Above: John Oberg (shown), Joe Gonzales, Nina Gonzalez, Maria Gallina, and Jon Camp handed out 3,051 *Even If You Like Meat* booklets and dozens of starter guides at the University of Pittsburgh on 4/2/12.

As we can see, little appears to have changed at Vegan Outreach. If anything the organization seems more committed to its rhetorical practices—and the worldview that legitimizes them. However, a closer inspection reveals something interesting: the names of the leafleters are hyperlinked. Clicking on a name brings the viewer to a page containing the leafleter's "leafleting stats." The page provides a minutely detailed account of the leafleter's leafleting activities (over 20 separate categories including where s/he leafleted, who s/he leafleted with and how many leaflets were handed out).[124] It could be argued that Vegan Outreach's "Adopt A College" program represents a

[124] Given that US and other government administrations are inclined to categorize ARAs as terrorists, it seems rather foolhardy to post such detailed and potentially incriminating information online.

new[125] approach to ARVAism, one that takes into account the importance of a community of practice and the organization's role as community builder. There can be little doubt that Vegan Outreach publicly posts leafleters' detailed profile information in order to foster a sense of community (and possibly competition) amongst participants as well as to appeal to would-be participants and/or ARVs. In recent years a great deal of ink has been spilt regarding the mobilizing power of online communities. However, I would argue that their utility would likely depend on the nature and needs of the community.[126] That an online community could effectively serve as a sustaining, ongoing "community of practice" for ARVAs seems possible. However, given the ongoing, highly social nature of the veg*n 'practice' (i.e., eating) it is difficult to imagine that a virtual community could take the place of a 'real' one for veg*ns in general. Of course, just because I have difficulty imagining it does not mean that it isn't a possibility worth investigating. Indeed, as I found repeatedly over the course of my research, it is precisely that which we have difficulty imagining that requires serious investigation.

[125] New is something of an overstatement. PETA2 (the youth-focused branch of PETA) has had its own website, and Facebook and Myspace pages, as well as physical "street teams" for over a decade. However, much of PETA2's work and website content focuses on animal issues other than veg*nism (e.g., fur, vivisection, circuses).

[126] For example, an online gaming community belongs online and could only exist online whereas, say an online dieting community is, arguably, a substitute for/simulation of a physical community. There are of course also hybrid online/offline communities where people meet and interact in both environments. One possible reason online communities have proven so beneficial for activists (e.g., during the Arab rebellion) is that online spaces provide tactical advantages (e.g., safety, anonymity). This differs considerably from what ARVAs need from a community: long term stability.

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