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# One Struggle, One Fight! Human Freedom, Animal Rights!

Grassroots Animal Rights Activism: Incorporating Animal  
Liberation and General Liberation Ideologies.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
Social Anthropology  
at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

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2003

## ABSTRACT

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This thesis reports original research conducted among grassroots animal rights activists (GARAs) in Dunedin, New Zealand. The principle finding is that GARAs are unique in that they operate according to a dual-ideology of animal and general liberation. Much has been written about animal rights activism and the animal protection movement but few differentiate branches and groups beyond the basic philosophical distinctions of welfarists and rightsists. This study argues that differences in the organisational, lifestyle and tactical choices of specific groups represent more than simple differences in tastes, and proposes a Six-Axis model as an appropriate tool for investigating ideological positioning that may indicate reasons for difference. Drawing on information gathered through participant-observation and in-depth interviews, this study applies the Six-Axis model and explores the experiences GARAs have in grassroots groups and with animals.

**KEYWORDS:** Animal Rights, Grassroots Activism, Animal Protection Movement, Social Movement, Post-Citizenship Movement, Liberation Movement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank the dedicated animal rights activists who participated in this study: without you this research would not have been possible. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives and showing what it is like to live by a worldview I had previously not known. You tolerated my ignorance, my constant, sometimes stupid questions and my limitations as an inexperienced researcher. Many of you became my friends and most knowledgeable critics, and I hope that this paper does justice to the passion and commitment that is such a huge part of your lives.



## PREFACE

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Informally, the present study began when I made the life changing decision to become vegetarian six years ago. I was overseas at the time and I found myself in an unusual position. Choosing not to eat meat, I suddenly had to explain myself and my actions daily when food was presented. A dietary change that began as an attempt to better my health quickly developed into an interest in the nutritional and global advantages of a vegetarian diet as I sought information to back up a choice that originally seemed natural. I soon realised that by refusing to participate in certain rituals of food consumption I was challenging a structure of values far greater than I imagined. What were these values and why was my abstaining from meat eating so confrontational?

On returning to New Zealand I found that although vegetarianism was far more common and easily accommodated, it was no less oppositional to the dominant ideological position. Like so many New Zealanders, I am a first generation “townie” who comes from a long line of farmers for whom animal husbandry was a natural means to human ends, i.e. economic profit. This lifestyle was not only unquestioning of animal subjugation but was pervasively symbolic of a New Zealandness iconised by black woollen singlets and gumboots, barn fresh eggs and farm dogs. In our own popular culture, New Zealand became a nation built on the back (economically and culturally) of the hardworking man of the land: the Kiwi Farmer<sup>1</sup>. From economics (e.g. export industry of beef and dairy) to recreation (e.g. hunting and fishing), and urban practices (e.g. pet ownership) to rural routines (e.g. Sunday roast dinner), animal use is well established in New Zealand culture and not only taken-for-granted but celebrated as an expression of national pride.

I was not the first in my family to jump on the vegetarian bandwagon. From a young age the sight of cooked meat on the bone had revolted my older sister and she soon

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<sup>1</sup> For example see popular icons such as Billy T James and Footrot Flats

took to voicing her protest, beginning with refusing to eat roast lamb. Although I did not realise it at the time, the ensuing disputes that erupted at our dinner table, regarding eating etiquette (e.g. eating what you are given) and what is/is not categorically food (in our house, as with most in New Zealand culture, it was taken for granted the “meat” constituted food), gave me my first impression of the important role food plays in relationships, culture and identity forming, and provided active examples of individual protest. As Finkelstein points out (1998:201), “[s]tyles of eating are elaborate gestures that enunciate and perform a culture’s specificities”, so it would follow that refusing to participate in these “elaborate gestures” is a rejection of that part of the culture to which they are specific.

My own experience of vegetarianism was considerably less confrontational, as I was older and more independent when it began, but required no less re-evaluation of culture and identity. At this stage I maintained that my decision to abstain from meat eating was made out of consideration for my own health rather than animal interests, thus playing down my resistance to the Kiwi national farming culture. I did not actively look for other vegetarians who shared my worldview (although, in retrospect I note that my friends were mostly non-meat eating), nor did I seek to share that view with the world. I had found a compromise between my practices and beliefs and those of the larger society, and as other issues took the foreground, as they do in day-to-day living, vegetarianism soon became less of a conscious discourse between my nation’s culture and myself and more of a position of tolerated dissent.

It was from this position that the present study formally began. In February 2001 I heard an interview on student radio with a Wellington based animal rights activist, who was acting as spokesperson for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). He was trying to express to the interviewer and audience that, ideally, one day we would have a society free of all animal exploitation in which animals and humans lived in harmony. I turned to Laura<sup>2</sup>, a friend who is involved with the broader animal rights movement and was listening with me,

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<sup>2</sup> To protect the anonymity of participants in this study, all names have been changed. See Appendix A for discussion of ethical issues.

and said “That is a bit unrealistic isn’t it?” Her reply was short and simple, “Isn’t that what people said about the abolition of slavery?”

Her statement (for it was posed more as a statement than a question) brought sharply to my attention a framework I had previously taken for granted. Yes, I was a practicing vegetarian<sup>3</sup>, and yes, I had previously questioned the morality of eating animals; but I had never before been made so aware of a structure of ideas ingrained in our culture that placed humans within and animals outside of a moral boundary that informed how I, and other people, live and think about the world. The analogy with human slavery suddenly presented a parallel through which I could conceive of an enormous lapse in ethics that allows animal exploitation and which exposed to me my own anthropocentrism. I decided to explore further the worldview and actions of animal rights activists through the approaches offered by anthropology and began research for an initially smaller project that has now been extended into the present thesis.

Keen and unpractised, I was very conscious of the ethical issues regarding informed consent and consequently rushed in to telling everyone who would listen about the project before I really knew what I was doing myself. Fortunately the many mistakes I made early on with my eager approach have proven repairable. Although a few people felt uncomfortable at first at the prospect of being researched, nearly all became less reluctant as I showed through my involvement in protests that my interest was not entirely self-serving. I tried to respect the rights of individuals who remained uneasy and either avoided events where they would be present or simply did not question these individuals directly. The study would not have been possible if I did not have a genuine interest in animal rights.

One of my major ethical concerns has been how I, as an anthropologist, can research the beliefs and actions of animal rights activists without taking the focus away from the animals whose suffering they are trying to expose. However, the focus of this thesis is the activists not the animals. The ethical dilemma this has posed in my own research is far from being resolved yet I have attempted to address the problem by

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<sup>3</sup> I then considered eating gelatine, eggs and dairy products to be in line with vegetarianism.

----- PREFACE -----

beginning each section with extracts that will, I hope, urge the reader to consider the many cultural constructions of animals in contemporary western societies. These are taken from scientific, philosophical, and agricultural sources as well as popular culture and animal rights texts. Some demonstrate the cruel nature of animal use; others exhibit anthropocentric attitudes; and still more undo capitalist mystification techniques. The purpose of this thesis is not to preach animal rights philosophy. By including these extracts I wish only to invite the reader to look through the eyes of the 'native' and explore the human-animal relationship from an animal rights activists' point of view.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

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AAA	Auckland Animal Action
ALF	Animal Liberation Front - under this name small groups of people commit acts (usually illegally) in the name of animal freedom, e.g. animal liberations and property destruction such as breaking butcher shop windows. There is no formal membership and anybody can call himself or herself ALF at any time as long as action/s fit a short list of guidelines.
Animal Liberation Ideology	An ideology related to animals that incorporates an animal rights philosophy, abolition objective and no-compromise approach.
Animal Protection Movement	All groups that take action to try to better the treatment of animals. It includes welfarists and rightsists.
Animal Rights	Philosophy in which animals are seen to be sentient beings of inherent worth that should not be used for human benefit.
Animal Welfare	Philosophy in which animals are seen to be sentient beings that can be used for human benefit so long as they are not subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering.
AWA	Animal Watch Aotearoa
Civil Disobedience	Moral protest actions that break laws but are conducted in a non-violent way, e.g. sit-ins, lock-downs, disruptive public demonstrations.



----- GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS -----

Conscious Living	A style of living that requires every choice to be made according to an individuals' ethical framework. In GARAs it is most evident in a vegan diet and specific product choices.
Demo	Demonstration, public protest.
GARA	Grassroots Animal Rights Activist – Individuals who follow an animal rights philosophy, actively campaign for radical changes to current systems of animal use, and do so through grassroots groups.
General Liberation Ideology	An ideology related to issues of general human oppression that is marked by worldviews which are anti-domination, anti-oppression, anti-hierarchy and are in favour of egalitarianism, equality, and individual autonomy.
HARD	Hamilton Animal Rights Defence
Home-Demo	Protest or demonstration held outside the place of residence of an individual who is involved in an animal-use industry, e.g. scientist who practices vivisection, intensive farmer.
Open-Rescue	An animal rescue involves liberating/stealing animals from farms, laboratories, or any other place where they are kept for human use. In an open-rescue activists carryout the operation in broad daylight and admit to having done it.
Postering	Placing posters with animal rights messages or advertising animal rights protests in public/private spaces.
SAFE	Save Animals From Exploitation
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

----- GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS -----

Stickering	Placing stickers with animal rights messages in public/private spaces to draw attention to animal issues.
Rightsist	An individual or group that follows an animal rights philosophy.
RNZSPCA	Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
VARA	Vegan Animal Rights Activist
Vegan	A non-dairy vegetarian diet that excludes all food and by-products that comes from animals. Veganism is also a lifestyle in which followers do not buy animal-based products (e.g. wool clothing, cosmetics tested on animals etc) or support any animal use industries (e.g. circuses and zoos).
WAA	Wellington Animal Action
Welfarist	An individual or group that subscribes to an animal welfare philosophy.

## PART ONE: THE ARGUMENT

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Imagine someone placing your head in a stock. As you stare helplessly ahead, unable to defend yourself, your head is pulled back. Your lower eyelid is pulled away from your eyeball. Then chemicals are poured into the eye. There is pain. You scream and writhe hopelessly. There is no escape. This is the Draize test. (Singer, 1998:ix)

Squeamish? The majority of New Zealanders who encounter this kind of descriptive information about animal testing feel disgusted, outraged and uncomfortable in learning that non-human animals are routinely subjected to similar torture in the name of science, curiosity or commercial advancement. Very few of that same majority, however, are moved to the point of making behavioural or attitudinal changes that could save the lives of one, one hundred or even one million animals. This project explores the worldview, actions and daily lives of a few New Zealanders who are taking animal rights seriously and who bring their ethics into action.

Part One of this paper introduces the grassroots animal rights activists at the centre of this study, reviews literature, and builds an argument for greater differentiation of animal protection groups in writing and research. Chapter One introduces the project and offers some background to the present study. In Chapter Two I give a brief overview of the history of the animal protection movement in New Zealand. I explain how the project came about and present a Six-Axis model that is the major thrust of my argument. Chapter Three introduces Animal Watch Aotearoa (AWA), the group at the root of research, and incorporates profiles of four GARAs. Chapter Four reviews existing literature relating to animals, humans and the animal protection movement abroad. Here I note that particular emphasis has been given to philosophical and ethical arguments for and against animal rights and the implications for society of human structures of domination. Chapter Five, the

----- PART ONE: THE ARGUMENT -----

final chapter in Part One, looks at texts that have focused on the animal protection movement from a more specific, social movement theory perspective. I elaborate on the argument that radical and conservative branches of the animal protection movement can be differentiated according to philosophy, lifestyle, organisation and strategies and propose that by looking at GARAs, as a unique group, one can see evidence of a general liberation ideology.

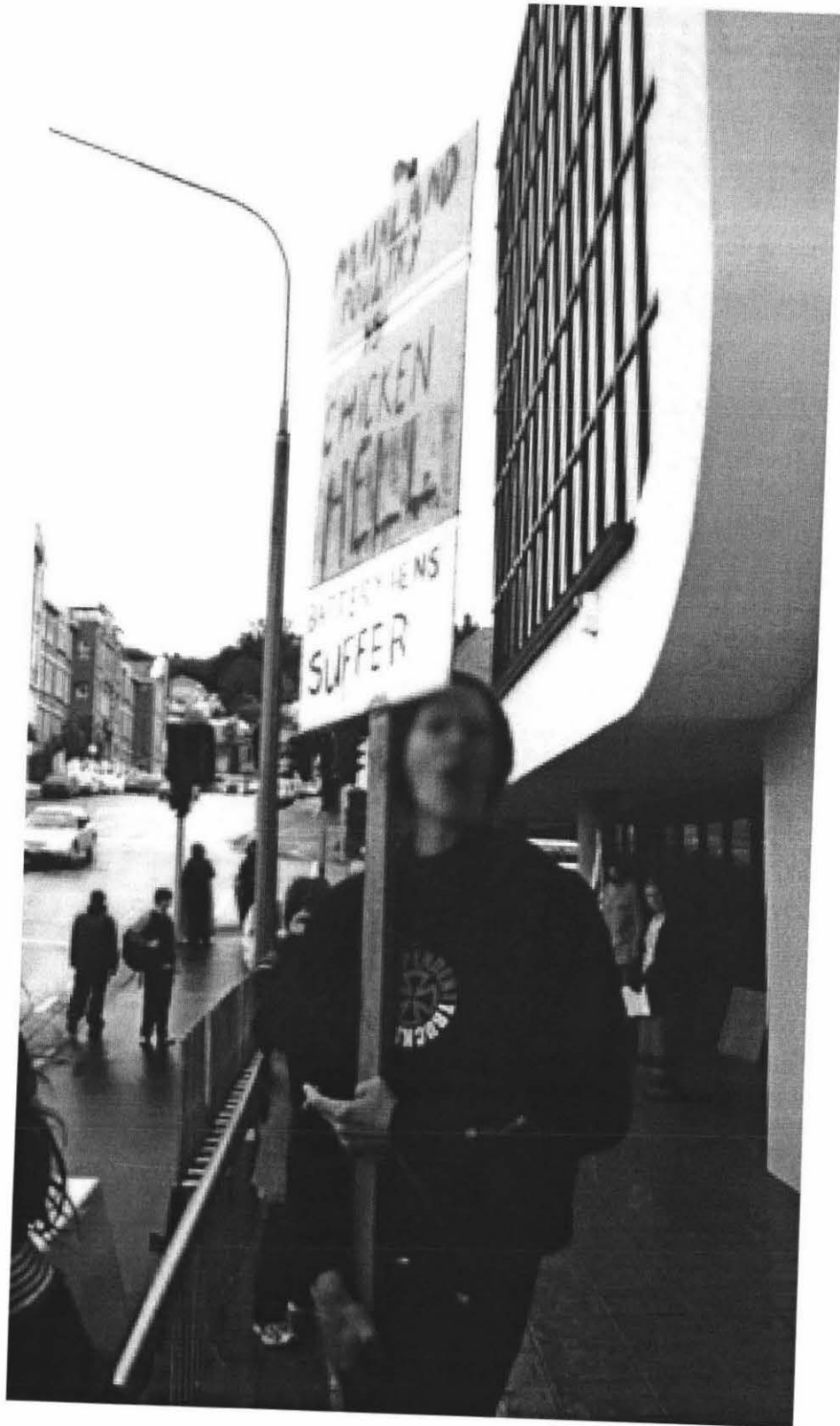


Image 1: Protestor Outside Mainland Poultry Head Office

## 1 – INTRODUCTION: THE PROJECT & THE PEOPLE

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My first contact with grassroots animal rights activists (GARAs) was initiated in 2001 through Laura, a close friend who has for several years been active in campaigning for animal rights in Dunedin. At the time, I was searching for a topic for a small research project that explored the lifestyle and philosophy of a group of New Zealanders and Laura's enthusiasm for the project spurred me on.

In April 2001, the Animal Liberation Convergence was held in Wellington, and my attendance allowed me my first intense experience of the animal protection movement. Approximately fifty-five activists attended the conference from various groups and positions that represented a spectrum of the animal rights movement within New Zealand, as well as a few visitors from Australia and the United States. Individuals ranged from veterans affiliated with specific groups to newcomers. Amongst the experienced campaigners were representatives from radical and conservative groups in animal protection movement and the attendees held a wide range of views regarding animal issues, from welfare to rights and from reform to abolition. They represented local grassroots as well as centralised national organisations and had a variety of issues that were their main concern<sup>4</sup>. The conference was catered for by animal activist volunteers and was entirely vegan<sup>5</sup> however approximately half the attendees were vegetarians and only one admitted to eating meat<sup>6</sup>. I soon realised that the vegan diet was almost synonymous with the liberationist position and this relationship became the focus of my initial study.

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<sup>4</sup> The main issues discussed at the conference were vivisection and factory farming of pigs and hens.

<sup>5</sup> See Glossary for definition of 'vegan'.

<sup>6</sup> Apart from having a gut feeling that animals required better treatment, this was her first experience of animal rights philosophy and when she left the conference she said she had become a vegetarian

Broadly speaking there are approximately fifty to seventy GARA individuals<sup>7</sup> in New Zealand spread across six main cities (Dunedin, Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, Christchurch and Palmerston North), five of which operate organised grassroots groups that have been established for anything from a few months to ten years. GARAs are mostly followers of a rights philosophy and take a no compromise stance in their defence of animals. They operate in decentralised grassroots groups and, although the groups are in close contact and may come together to form coalitions under particular circumstances, the day-to-day running of each group in terms of actions and finances is independent. Nearly all GARAs are involved in animal rights activities as unpaid volunteers and show commitment independent of the prospect of material gain. In this sense animal rights activity can be classified as a NAMBI (Not About My Best Interests) cause.

The initial study, carried out in 2001, involved several short participant-observation experiences over an eight-month period: at the initial Animal Liberation Convergence in Wellington; for a week in Dunedin; on several day trips to Hamilton; and for five days in Christchurch. I attended two major protests organised and attended by GARAs from across the country, both of which gained national and international media coverage. These events were: a protest and open-rescue at a battery<sup>8</sup> farm near Wellington in April; and a week of anti-vivisection activity protesting a conference of the International Union of Physiological Scientists (IUPS) held in Christchurch in August. Both these events proved valuable opportunities for learning about protest procedure and proved crucial in developing contacts. This initial period of research focused on achieving an overview of the grassroots animal rights movement across New Zealand and created a sound base for the second stage of research that has resulted in the present paper.

The second stage of fieldwork involved fulltime participant-observation in Dunedin for five months from the beginning of 2002 and concentrated on gaining an in-depth understanding of the workings of one grassroots group. I chose Dunedin for two reasons. Firstly, in 2001 I had made positive contact with members of AWA, the local animal rights

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<sup>7</sup> It is hard to get an exact number as GARA are spread across New Zealand and may be more or less active in collective actions depending on external life pressures.

<sup>8</sup> I use the term "battery farming" throughout to refer to battery-cage egg farming.

group, and key AWA people had shown an interest in the previous study. Second, AWA came across as a well-organised and active group that held regular meetings and protests and would provide a good environment in which to study<sup>9</sup>.

The participant-observation stage involved attending meetings and social gatherings, assisting with protests and stalls, and generally ‘hanging out’ with activists and doing whatever they were doing. During my time in Dunedin, AWA organised several protests, mostly against battery farming, with a series of protests over Easter weekend (2002) being the largest in terms of numbers and preparation time.

In 2001 I conducted six formal interviews, four recorded and two unrecorded, with GARAs from across New Zealand. While only a few direct quotes from these initial interviews have been included, they were instrumental in helping me to gain a basic understanding of what it is like to be an animal rights activist. Towards the end of the second stage of research, I conducted a further twelve recorded interviews: nine with members of AWA in Dunedin and three with GARAs who attended the Easter demos from other cities. Only one interview had sound quality too poor to transcribe and was consequently followed up with an online interview. All other interviews were transcribed and returned to interviewees, allowing them a chance to make changes and withdraw comments as they saw appropriate. Direct quotes used in the final draft were also returned to interviewees for approval. A few participants from Dunedin and across New Zealand have taken particular interest in the project. They have discussed ideas, read drafts and challenged theories and interpretations that I put across.

The paper that resulted from the initial period of research studied the philosophical position of animal rights activists and attempted to locate animal rights philosophy within the broader movement of Environmentalism, specifically Deep Ecology, Social Ecology and Ecofeminsim. Although I maintain that this is a useful approach, academic discussion of animal rights philosophy is in reality far removed from the lived experience of most

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<sup>9</sup> After careful consideration of the content of this paper and any possible harm that could come from identifying the group, it was decided to not use pseudonyms for AWA or Dunedin. See Appendix A for detailed discussion of ethical concerns relating to anonymity.



grassroots participants. Malinowski once wrote that the final goal of ethnography is “to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world” (1922:25). Following this principle, a key agenda of this paper is to illustrate with rich ethnographic description and interview extracts what it is like to be a grassroots animal rights activist in New Zealand: GARAs’ experiences with animals, with each other and with systems they consider oppressive.

Throughout this paper I use the term animal protection movement to refer to the entire movement including welfarists and rightsists<sup>10</sup>, national organisations and grassroots group, and promoters of reform and revolution. The term ‘GARA’ is reserved for those individuals and groups at the centre of this research who are rightsist in philosophy, prefer non-hierarchical organisational style, are radical in their action strategies, and practice a lifestyle of conscious living<sup>11</sup>.

Extensive literature surveys have turned up no published literature that focuses on animal rights activism in New Zealand and the small amount that is written about the animal protection movement overseas tends to classify all activists and groups within the movement as a homogenous entity. This paper calls for future researchers and theorists to pay greater attention to differences between animal protection groups. The aim here is to begin to fill the gap in social science discussions of animal rights activism and contemporary human-animal relationships, by beginning a literature on animal rights activism in the New Zealand context.

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<sup>10</sup> Terms ‘welfarist’ and ‘rightsist’ will be elaborated in the philosophy section.

<sup>11</sup> The term ‘conscious living’ is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

**“an egg-producing machine”**

Singer (1975:108) quoting Haley in *Animal Liberation*

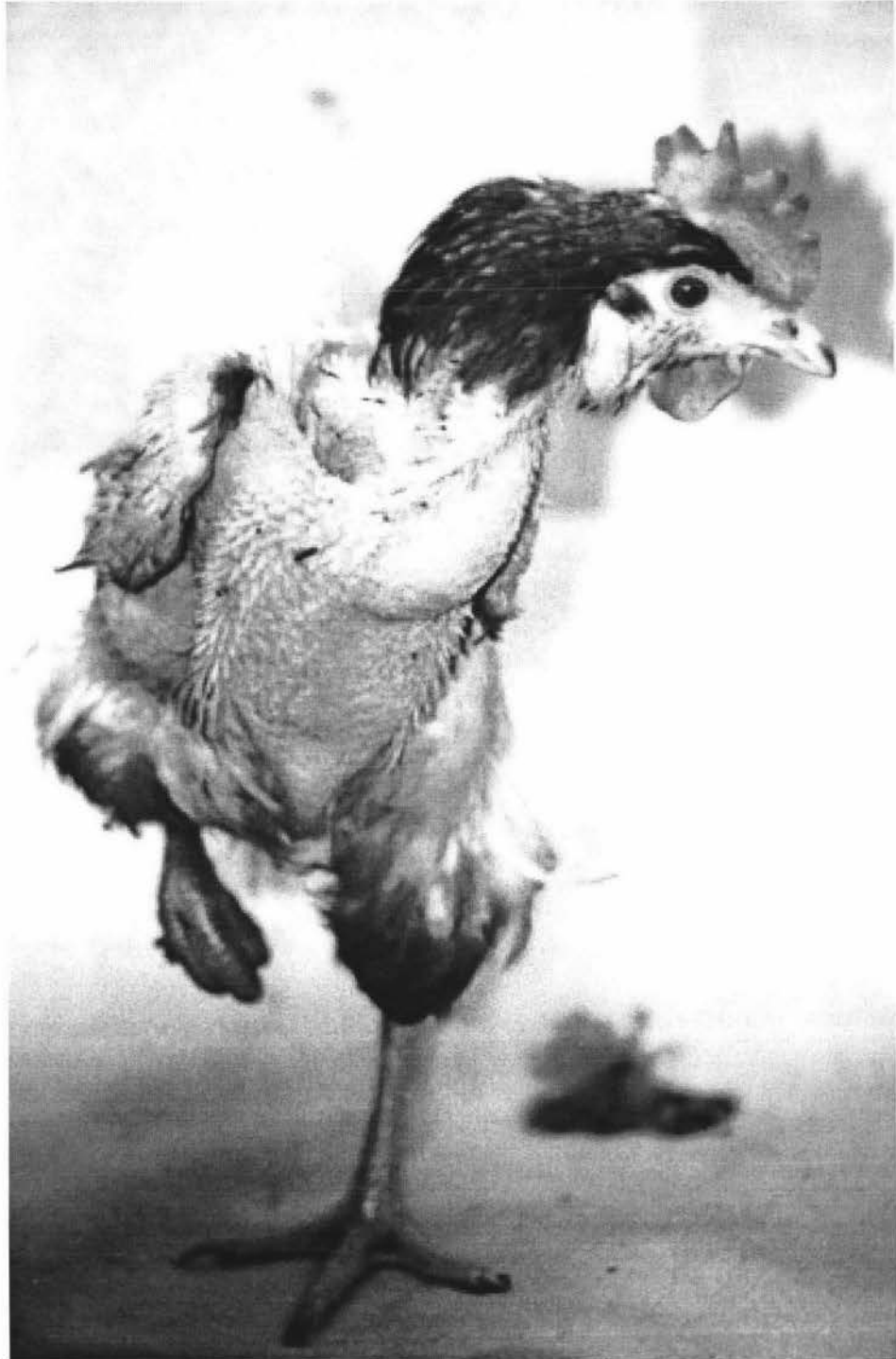


Image 2: Rescued / Liberated / Stolen Hen.

## 2 – SETTING THE SCENE

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The animal welfare movement began in England in the early 1800s after a sixty year period in which an increasing amount of animal focused literature critiqued the cruelty to animals prevalent in British society and introduced the notion that humans have a moral duty to protect animals in their care (Silverstein, 1996:30). While the arguments presented were not typical of the mainstream sentiment, Niven (1967) claims that this literary effort was “slowly softening up the resistance of the general public to change” (cited by Silverstein, 1996:55). Through the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, animal welfare issues were being raised both within the realm of government and through organised activism. In 1822 Britain saw the first legislation<sup>12</sup> passed to protect animals in law and two years later the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was formed to enforce the new law (Silverstein, 1996:31).

In New Zealand, the animal protection movement has its roots in the sensibilities brought from Europe by early settlers. The first SPCA was established in New Zealand in Dunedin in 1882 and was soon followed by Wellington in 1884 and five other main centres before the turn of the century. Like its British counterpart, the organization was concerned primarily with the reduction of wanton cruelty to domesticated animals (Silverstein, 1996:31), such as horses, cats and dogs, and soon followed European models by creating shelters for strays and bringing animal cruelty prosecutions to the courts. From the outset, the animal protection movement in New Zealand met with a similar fate to its early European counterparts. In both cases “ridicule seemed to accompany the humanist.”(RNZSPCA, 2002). Today, a national council centrally governs the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RNZSPCA). This council is responsible for approaches to government, liaising with overseas welfare groups,

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<sup>12</sup> Martin's Act – designed to protect cattle.

coordinating district activities and training fifty-four chapters. RNZSPCA is New Zealand's largest welfare organization.

Before the establishment of the RNZSPCA, the British welfare movement experienced a split due to the desire of some members to broaden its focus and protect animals that suffered in scientific experimentation and in the 1860s the anti-vivisection branch of the movement was born (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992:56). The second longest-running animal protection organization in New Zealand has its roots in this tradition and was established in 1932 as an Auckland branch of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection. Over the next seven decades, the group expanded its scope from a narrow vivisection focus to a broader animal rights agenda. After several name changes, the group eventually settled on 'Save Animals From Exploitation' (SAFE), the name by which it is known today. On its website, SAFE describes itself as "New Zealand's only *national* organization dedicated to campaigning for the *rights of all animals*"<sup>13</sup> (emphasis added) thus differentiating itself from the more narrowly focused national anti-vivisection groups, such as New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society (NZAVS), and national welfare organizations such as RNZSPCA. The third distinction in this statement is between SAFE as a *national* group unlike the locally based grassroots rights groups that have been the focus of this research. SAFE has a National Executive Committee and two fulltime directors who coordinate the campaigns and resources of smaller pilot chapters around the country (SAFE, 2002).

Both SAFE and RNZSPCA are funded by donations, legacies, subscriptions and fundraising and both also incorporate a mixture of paid and volunteer positions. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that both these organizations operate on generous budgets that afford them the freedom to launch nationwide media campaigns which, in the last two years, have included widespread advertising on buses, a \$125,000 cinema advertising campaign, a series of ads on nationwide television and major poster and submission promotions. SAFE also produces two issues of a full-colour magazine each year, which are distributed free to its members.

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<sup>13</sup> Quote from SAFE website, 'profile' section

The early welfare and vivisection movements were primarily the domain of middle class women, as animal issues were “socially accepted as appropriate to female skills” (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992:59). Humane societies saw cruelty as coming primarily from uneducated and abusive individuals rather than institutions (1992:5), and they approached animal protection issues from a perspective of compassion that concentrated on reducing pain and suffering but generally accepted that animal use was inevitable if not desirable. They would, for example, call for a reduction in *unnecessary* pain but not the complete abolition of research (1992:59). To this day, dedication to reform as distinct from abolition remains a central tenet that divides the animal protection movement into welfarists and rightsists.

Although there was a general slowdown in activism during the first part of the twentieth century, the 1960s saw a climate of increasing concern for animals and following the publication of Peter Singer’s book *Animal Liberation* in 1975, the contemporary animal rights movement began (Silverstein, 1996:32). While Singer’s book was in fact advocating a utilitarian approach to animal use, it had the effect of inspiring a new ideological thrust towards the concept of ‘rights’ over compassion and called for the abolition of animal use in areas as diverse as research, entertainment and agriculture (1996:28-32). Pressing for a consideration of animals as ends in themselves rather than means to human ends, the rhetoric of the new animal rights movement grounds cruelty in systemic institutional mistreatment rather than the isolated behaviours of maladjusted individuals (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992:6). The new groups that were formed in Britain and America were more radical in their actions and extreme in their demands than the welfarists had been previously and grew rapidly in the 1980s.

The grassroots animal rights activists (GARAs) at the centre of this project have come from this latter tradition of rights rhetoric and belief that there are systemic, institutionalised problems that result in animal mistreatment. The history of early GARA groups in New Zealand has been difficult to trace for two reasons. Firstly, there is no published written history dedicated to documenting the grassroots movement in New

Zealand. GARA groups tended to be short-lived and, while many did publish magazines and newsletters, it is a task beyond the scope of this project to review these early documents and rebuild the movement's history. Secondly, with a few notable exceptions, throughout this research my participants have been individuals involved with animal rights activism for less than five years. This made the collection of oral histories and finding corroborating sources very difficult. The following paragraphs are based on a brief history told me by Mark Eden, a GARA of several years' standing. He traces grassroots animal rights activism in New Zealand from the 1980s when a few small groups began to appear in main centres, however they seldom lasted more than a year or two.

The 1980s was also a time when direct action tactics were becoming more popular in New Zealand and Animal Liberation Front (ALF) activities started to appear. Meat trucks, vivisection labs and butcher shops were among the targets as well as McDonalds and KFC outlets, and a Christchurch Zoo. ALF activists liberated research dogs, broke windows, took Keas from the Zoo and even firebombed some specific targets.

During the 1990s SAFE grew and started to organise nationwide protests and several new individuals began to get involved with animal rights. In the mid 1990s, two groups were formed, Auckland Animal Action (AAA) and Wellington Animal Action (WAA). AAA and WAA are still in operation today, making them the longest lasting grassroots groups in New Zealand. From the outset, these groups were more radical than the existing animal rights/welfare organizations, both in philosophy and, more notably, in their tactics. As Mark Eden put it, "[GARA at the time] were convinced that the more [they] got arrested, the faster [they] would achieve animal liberation" (personal communication, September, 2002).

During the past five years, grassroots groups have organised at least two national conferences, helped new groups start and supported nationwide campaigns against factory farming, vivisection and more specific issues such as the killing of the Kaimanawa horses. Also during this time, a national email list was set up to aid active groups and individuals in sharing information, news and coordinating activities. At the same time, groups have

persisted with individual campaigns against local targets and reports of ALF actions have continued to appear in national media and animal rights magazines.

## **SIX-AXIS MODEL**

The purpose of this very brief history is to give the reader a sense of where the animal protection movement has come from, and to situate AWA both philosophically and historically. While there are certainly other organizations working in New Zealand for animal issues<sup>14</sup>, only the RSPCA, SAFE and grassroots groups are described here because between them they portray the full range of variation within the New Zealand animal protection movement.

Groups in the animal protection movement may all be united by the principle that animals deserve better treatment from humans, but they are diverse: in their philosophies concerning what form better treatment should take, i.e. welfare or rights; and in their objectives regarding how better treatment can be achieved, i.e. reform or abolition of animal use institutions. Similarly, closely linked to the latter is each group's perspective on whether better treatment can be achieved within the current political, cultural and economic environments. I argue that useful analysis of the entire animal protection movement requires discussion of the similarities *and* differences between groups' perspectives regarding animal protection issues. However differences do not only present themselves in a group's basic beliefs relating to animals and animal protection issues. Divergences in areas as primary as what a group does and how it does it are also widespread. Ethnographic research that focuses on a specific group or branch can reveal a lot about participants' ideological positioning in relation to other social issues by paying particular attention to the group's operational activities.

The purposeful actions of grassroots animal rights activists (GARAs) against the animal use industry are phenomena of post-modern culture that work at two levels. First

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<sup>14</sup> E.g. Wellington Cats Protection League



and foremost, they are articulations of the animal rights philosophy that sees animal use as an unacceptable and unnecessary exploitation of sentient beings; neglectful of the animal-human contract<sup>15</sup>; and an example of blatant speciesism<sup>16</sup>. Second, these actions are examples of resistance to society's cultural norms as dissatisfied humans form their ethical standpoint in opposition to taken-for-granted species and human hierarchies, reject existing power structures that create inequality between humans and negotiate their daily lives in relation to a world they perceive to be immoral while campaigning to change it. In this way, GARAs show they are concerned not only with the rights of non-human animals but also with more general liberation ideals of anti-oppression and anti-domination of humans as well.

This paper argues that existing research fails to sufficiently differentiate branches of the animal protection movement beyond the basic distinctions of welfare and rights. I propose a Six-Axis model as a tool that explores worldviews held by groups relating to animal protection and general human issues. The Six-Axis model is displayed in Tables 1 and 2 and discussed thereafter.

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<sup>15</sup> For full discussion of the Animal-Human contract see Desmond Morris' (1994) BBC Documentary series, *Animal Contract*

<sup>16</sup> A term devised by Ryder and expanded in detail by Singer (1975) that suggests we consider our treatment of animals as a form of prejudice that has parallels with racism and sexism.



IDEOLOGY	↓ Six Axes ↓	CONSERVATIVE ← Continuum →	RADICAL
1. ANIMAL	PHILOSOPHY	Welfare	Rights
	OBJECTIVES	Protection & Reform	Liberation & Abolition
	APPROACH	Accepts Small-Step/ Incremental Changes	No-Compromise
2. GENERAL	LIFESTYLE	Group Does Not Promote Full Integration of Animal Ethics	Group Promotes Conscious Living -Total Integration of Ethics and Actions
	ORGANISATION	Centralised Power - Hierarchical	Grassroots – Groups Aim for Decentralised Power & have Egalitarian Political Values
	TACTICS	Official Channels	Civil Disobedience

Table 1: Six-Axis model of differentiation in the animal protection movement

IDEOLOGY	↓ Six Axes ↓	CONSERVATIVE ← Continuum →	RADICAL
1. ANIMAL	PHILOSOPHY	SPCA	SAFE, GARA
	OBJECTIVES	SPCA	SAFE
	APPROACH	SPCA, SAFE	SAFE
2. GENERAL	LIFESTYLE	SPCA (promotes moderate lifestyle changes that are restricted to animal issues, e.g. buying free range eggs)	SAFE (promotes more dramatic lifestyle changes, still for animal reasons, e.g. buying cruelty-free cosmetics & vegetarianism)
	ORGANISATION	SPCA, SAFE (Groups often have directors and executive boards)	GARA (promotes lifestyle of conscious living which includes awareness of human and animal issues)
	TACTICS	SPCA, SAFE, GARA (GARA support conservative campaigns to lobby government but seldom initiate these actions)	GARA (Groups use the term 'grassroots' to show they value non-hierarchical organisation)
		SAFE (do have public demos but unlikely open-rescues or property damage will occur)	GARA (It is not uncommon for public demonstrations organised by GARA to result in arrests or property damage)

Table 2: Examples of specific groups' location in the Six-Axis model

In this thesis, I argue that there are six main areas in which animal protection groups can be differentiated. These are based in the animal ideology and the general ideology and are represented in the Six-Axis model as separate axes. The purpose of the Six-Axis Model is to illuminate elements of similarity and difference between specific groups. It does this in two ways.

Firstly, the Six-Axis model identifies three axes in animal ideology. These are animal protection philosophy; animal protection objective; and approach to achieving animal protection. The model differentiates specific branches according to whether they are welfarists or rightsists, whether they promote reform of existing systems or complete abolition, and whether they accept small-step and incremental changes or take a no-compromise stance. I argue that when researchers refer to all non-welfarist groups as animal ‘rights’ groups, they overlook fundamental differences in philosophy and practices that make groups unique.

Secondly, the Six-Axis model identifies three axes in the general ideology. They are form of organization; choice of tactics; and the lifestyle promoted by the group and followed by its members. I argue that the choices a group makes in each of these areas indicates their commitment to worldviews that go beyond animal issues and that are concerned with issues of oppression and domination of humans and the environment more generally.

I suggest that important elements of the radical-conservative distinction that go beyond basic animal protection philosophy are not given enough attention in current literature about the animal protection movement. It is for this reason that many defining characteristics of animal protection groups, specifically different groups that follow a rights philosophy, are often underemphasized and overlooked. Differentiating groups solely by their philosophical approach to animal protection can indicate where a group is situated in relation to others. However, it does not follow that a radical position in animal protection philosophy necessarily corresponds with a radical approach to achieving animal liberation, nor a radical objective of abolition. Similarly, animal protection philosophy does not

determine how a group will be organised, their choices in tactics, or the lifestyle members will lead. It is in these latter three areas that the group's worldviews relating to broader social issues are most clearly expressed. I therefore propose the term 'animal liberation ideology' to refer to the principles of those groups who take a radical position on all three animal-axes and the term 'general liberation ideology' to refer to the principles of groups who take a radical position on all three general-axes.

Each axis will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, but for now, note primarily the continua from conservative to radical and the positioning of specific groups within this. Typically, GARAs occupy positions at the radical end of the spectrum, the SPCA is near the conservative end, and groups like SAFE, while having a rights philosophy, are varied in their radicalism according to the axis. It should be stressed that the radical and conservative views are extreme positions and groups may shift their stance over time as different issues arise and as members change.

Applying the Six-Axis model to grassroots animal rights groups, we see that GARAs are unique in that they take a radical position on all six axes. This indicates that a dual-ideology of animal liberation and general liberation is in operation. Far from being incidental, the general liberation ideology expressed by GARAs is an essential part of what makes them distinctive. Chapter Three will proceed with a more detailed introduction to the GARA group at the centre of this research, Animal Watch Aotearoa (AWA), and some AWA members. I argue that AWA operates according to a dual-ideology, of animal and general liberation, and summarise the worldviews that inform it.

A cause to die for . . . animal protesters play dead outside the Dunedin offices of Mainland Poultry shareholder Howard Paterson yesterday morning, as Andrew Richard (with loud hailer) promotes their plight.

Otago Daily Times, 3-April 2002

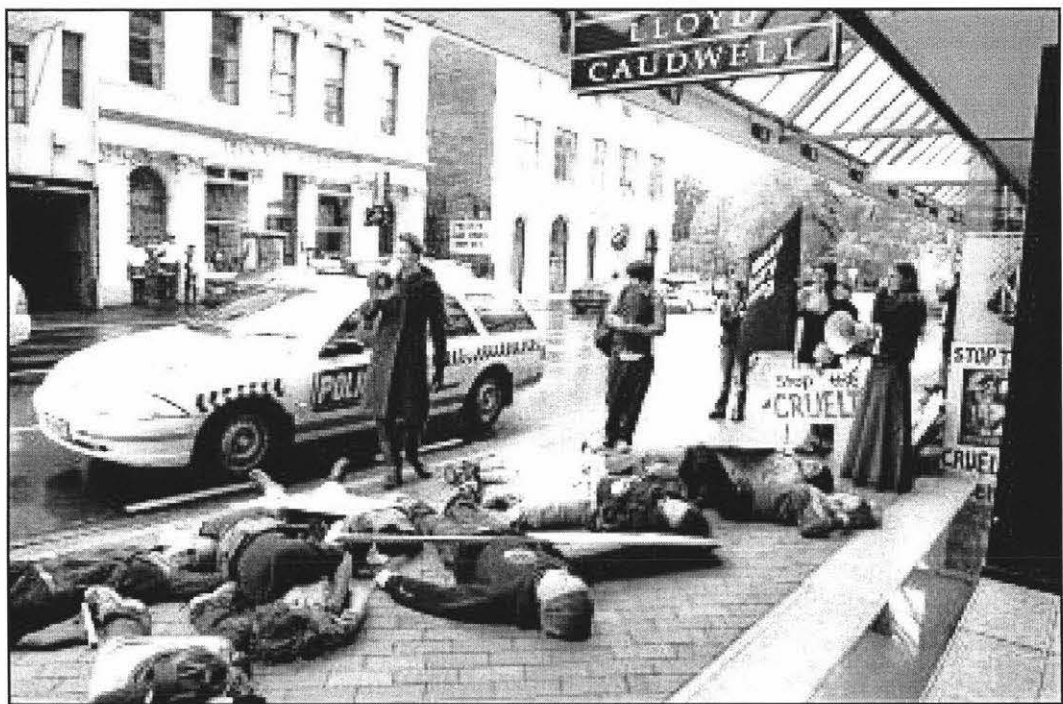


Image 3: AWA-Organised Protest, Easter 2002

### 3 - ANIMAL WATCH AOTEAROA

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Animal Watch Aotearoa (AWA) is an animal rights group based in Dunedin which, at the time of writing, has been operating for just over two years. AWA has a contact list membership of approximately 150 individuals but there are usually only fifteen to twenty active members who can be relied upon to attend demonstrations and meetings at any one time. AWA is also part of an informal national network of autonomous groups from other cities in New Zealand. These groups have positions similar to AWA regarding animal rights philosophy, objectives and modes of operation, and they come together regularly to coordinate cooperative efforts on specific campaigns.

AWA is a 'rights' group in that members adhere to a philosophy in which animals have inherent worth not dependent on their use-value to humans. They see animals as sentient beings entitled to respect and basic inalienable rights to be free from pain, oppression and death<sup>17</sup>. While it is not ever explicitly stated that no other position is acceptable, AWA acculturates new members to this position through leaflets and video material<sup>18</sup>. One of the objectives central to AWA philosophy is the complete abolition of the property status of animals<sup>19</sup>; an objective that if achieved would require an end to animal-use industries and a revolution of speciesist attitudes deeply ingrained in cultural, political and economic institutions of New Zealand society. In their philosophy and objectives, AWA takes a no-compromise stance, never promoting small-step improvements over complete animal liberation.

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<sup>17</sup> Later sections will discuss the rights and welfare philosophies in more depth.

<sup>18</sup> During my time in Dunedin, a video loop was made for AWA by one of its members that had footage from inside a broiler shed. At the end of the video the message on the screen was "GO VEGAN" and it was later mentioned to me by another member that in his opinion, although the group prior to its production did not discuss the message for the video, key members would not have accepted a video with the message "GO FREE RANGE".

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix B for full list of AWA principles

The term grassroots is used by AWA, and similar groups, to refer to a form of organisation that is localised, horizontally structured, and advocates egalitarian decision-making processes over authoritarian-based top-down approaches. AWA promises every active member an equal say in decision-making regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or 'shoe size' (AWA, 2002), and while the reality is not always an embodiment of these ideals<sup>20</sup>, non-hierarchical organisation is the goal towards which the group works. While AWA is frequently involved with campaigns to lobby government, its members generally prefer direct action tactics and often incorporate civil disobedience strategies in protest actions. In recent years, AWA has staged numerous public demonstrations, blockaded a road, employed elements of street theatre, and even performed an open-rescue in the name of animal liberation. AWA does not exclude keen newcomers who eat meat or dairy products, however they do actively promote veganism as the primary way for individuals to express their commitment to animal rights ideals and effect change through their daily lives. In summary, AWA takes a radical stance in all six axes: animal agenda, lifestyle, organisation and tactics.

So why are the people in AWA involved with grassroots activism rather than more structured and well funded national organizations such as SAFE or SPCA? There are two answers to this question. For new members, AWA is the only active group that has a presence in Dunedin<sup>21</sup>. While new members may not yet be decided about whether they support animal welfare or animal rights, or if they prefer an egalitarian or hierarchically structured group, there are no alternative animal protection groups in Dunedin. AWA is therefore the obvious choice. For lasting members on the other hand, in most cases they have previously explored less radical philosophical positions and consciously chosen rights philosophy. Similarly, most have been involved with less egalitarian, more hierarchically structured organizations before their involvement in AWA. They have subsequently come to the decision that they would prefer to forego the advantages offered by a national group<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Eight for more detail about group dynamics.

<sup>21</sup> SAFE does have a chapter coordinator in Dunedin but does not actively campaign in Dunedin or have a public profile.

<sup>22</sup> Advantages such as greater availability of funding and resources, larger membership, and more nationally recognised name.

in favour of the perceived benefits<sup>23</sup> of a grassroots group that follows a more egalitarian style of organisation.

Before AWA was established, two people who are now key members of AWA started a chapter of SAFE in Dunedin, with the help of many now active AWA members. Although there had been a chapter of SAFE in Dunedin in the past, it had long since become inactive. While they did receive support from SAFE's national body, members had to learn the day-to-day logistics of running a volunteer organization as they tried to build a membership from scratch. Although SAFE promotes itself as an animal rights group, it is generally seen by GARAs as not hard-line enough in its objectives and too ready to accept incremental change, thus promoting reform rather than abolition. Individuals in Dunedin who were responsible for maintaining contact with the SAFE network became increasingly frustrated with the lack of autonomy that came from being part of a national organization. It became clear that there was an irreconcilable difference between the ideologies of the two parties: while the individuals in Dunedin valued egalitarian organisation and direct involvement in processes that affected them, SAFE's national structure had a more top-down structure and an autocratic approach<sup>24</sup>.

...[T]he thing that I noticed relating to that was at the circus demos we had these circus pamphlets about circuses in NZ, and I remember wondering what the background to them was? I didn't want to give them out and say someone else put them together. I wanted to know what they're actually talking about". [a member] had asked SAFE Auckland, and SAFE Auckland had said, "You don't need to know. You just need to know what is on the pamphlet". I found that really annoying and thought it was quite controlling. It was a problem because people challenged us about the pamphlets and we didn't know enough to defend them. People can dismiss you so easily when you don't know background information. (Jane)

Key members of SAFE Dunedin eventually decided to split from SAFE and form a grassroots group that would operate entirely independently. The decision was met with support from active members and AWA was formed in late 2000. AWA founding members

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<sup>23</sup> Benefits such as greater independence and flexibility.

<sup>24</sup> While it has been noted by some activists that an autocratic approach was more the style of one leader of SAFE rather than the entire organisation, SAFE is still run primarily by a top down hierarchy, and important decisions on tactics and campaigns are made by a few individuals.



consciously created the group's principles, culture and organisational structure in response to the shortcomings they had experienced within SAFE, and in a way that made the fight for animal rights compatible with radical organisational and tactical ideals.

AWA members and GARAs alike become involved with grassroots groups in different ways and for different reasons and while most would agree that being surrounded by people with similar views and lifestyle is a source of support and encouragement, others have stated that at times they are involved despite the community rather than because of it. As with all groups, members of AWA have individual disputes, personality clashes, disagreements about group processes and conflict over actions, and it is the concern they feel for animal suffering that motivates them to remain active. Animal rights activists are involved with collective action primarily because they believe in justice for animals, and the group provides a vehicle for action.

## **DIVERSITY WITHIN AWA: FOUR PROFILES**

AWA is a diverse group of individuals with different backgrounds, commitments and personal boundaries. The following section profiles four activists from AWA, each of whom were interviewed for this study and were involved in AWA to varying degrees during the time of research. The purpose of including these profiles is to dispel the commonly held stereotypes of activists as longhaired, unemployed<sup>25</sup> hippies and aggressive young punks, and to give the reader a sense of who GARAs are. While GARA groups may have a large representation of students, beneficiaries and punks and a very small number of people with traditional nine-to-five jobs, by no means do all GARA fit one stereotype.

### ***Anna***

Anna was probably the only AWA member to never miss a meeting during the time of my research. She was nearly always the person who booked a room and notified others

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<sup>25</sup> At one protest in Dunedin, employees in the same office building as the target stuck signs to the windows saying things like "Get a job"



of time and place and was mostly responsible for bringing any materials that might be required, such as videos and pamphlets. While Anna usually set the agenda for meetings, she always asked if people had issues to add before beginning.

In 2002, Anna was twenty-three and had been living in Dunedin for six years. After first moving to Dunedin to pursue a degree in fine arts at the local polytechnic, Anna was working part time at an art shop during the time of research. The majority of her spare time was consumed with organising AWA events, liaising with national grassroots contacts and assisting in the development and promotion of a free-media Internet site.

Anna grew up in Palmerston North with her four brothers and one sister on a quarter-acre block that kept chickens, cats, rabbits (non caged) and sometimes dogs. Anna's parents were not vegetarian and did not raise her and her siblings with particularly animal rightsist views. Anna remembers an experience during her childhood when two roosters living with her family had their heads chopped off and she refused to eat them. This experience of seeing firsthand where meat comes from, combined with the influence of two vegetarian aunties whom she looked up to, led Anna to become vegetarian when she was about sixteen years old. The progression from vegetarian to vegan was natural for Anna and she was vegan after a few months living in Dunedin. Anna became involved with animal rights in 1999 when she and her partner were 'vegan spotted' while shopping at a supermarket near her hometown. They were buying soymilk, vegetables and vegan chocolate and the person at the checkout began to talk to them about animal rights. The activist who approached them was, at the time, a member of SAFE and encouraged them to get involved in their city. Anna and her partner decided to start a chapter of SAFE in Dunedin and attended a national grassroots protest in Wellington soon after. Even though this was her first experience of animal rights at the grassroots level, Anna preferred a more decentralised form of organisation from the beginning.

Anna was a central contributor in the setting up and running of SAFE in Dunedin and a primary instigator of the split away from SAFE and the formation of AWA. She described the process as one of growing frustration with the slowness of passing

suggestions through a centralised authority and the lack of autonomy that came with being part of a national organisation. Several months of trying to negotiate a way to operate effectively within the SAFE framework taught Anna and other core members a lot about groups and campaigning. They decided it would be preferable to give up the advantages of being part of a large organisation in favour of the freedom and flexibility inherent in a grassroots structure. When this idea was presented to the rest of the members of Dunedin SAFE, the group decided by consensus to make the change.

Anna identifies herself politically as anarchist, and she says that the Dunedin animal rights group always operated in an anarchist way, which was why it did not really fit with SAFE's style.

My interest in anarchism started about the same time as I became interested in animal rights, maybe that was a time when I was generally thinking a lot more about the world and my place in it

Anna prefers this style of non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical organisation both for the overall composition of the group and in carrying out actions. She described to me what she sees as some of the disadvantages that come from trying to control or restrict group activities in the context of a demonstration.

I think that unless you are having an extremely dictatorial action, with lots of hierarchies, you have to accept that things will be fluid, highly changeable and less easy for you to 'control'. I think organising in that manner is bad for several reasons, one because I think that fluidity and changeability are big strengths for us. If things go wrong you have to learn from them. Learning might be personally difficult sometimes, but otherwise you are not going to go anywhere

Anna was highly visible in AWA as the initiator of the majority of the projects that the group embarked upon and although she actively avoided the label of group 'leader', she was looked to by most as the person who kept AWA afloat. She had a considerable amount of experience in organizing animal rights actions and running meetings as well as a lot of knowledge about New Zealand-specific issues and the history of certain Dunedin based projects and targets. Her commitment to AWA, and animal rights generally, was very

noticeable in the amount of time she devoted to the mundane tasks of administration. This commitment, combined with her quiet confidence and ability to be very diplomatic in dealing with people from all walks of life, inspired respect and a following in AWA. From writing pamphlets and designing stickers to talking at stalls and chanting at protests Anna was, as one participant at a demonstration described her to me, “the ideal protester” because she seemed to be able to find a way to participate in, and oversee activities at the same time.

I first met Anna in 2001 at the national Animal Liberation Convergence. She struck me as being a quiet and soft-spoken person with an aura of compassion that I found intriguing. She wore flowing skirts and had long hair and a sweet face, a far cry from the stereotypical protester I had been prepared for. I soon learnt, however, that while Anna may appear to be gentle in her everyday interactions, once a megaphone is in front of her at a protest, she can be as loud and passionate as any other protester.

As we were walking through Dunedin’s back streets one day after getting some photocopying done for a demo, Anna told me that she wondered what she would think of all this in ten years time. I asked her if she thought she would still be involved, and she replied that she couldn’t imagine anything except getting “more and more hardcore”.

### ***Tony***

Tony’s interest in animal rights issues began in the early nineties when he began to explore the teachings of Buddhism. While initially he was not involved with activism, he did experience a change in his worldview, particularly relating to animals and their place in the world and this was expressed through a change to a vegetarian and then a vegan diet. It was therefore spiritual beliefs that initially encouraged Tony to cease to eat meat and eventually compel him to become involved with activism a few years ago. When I asked Tony what it was that kept him involved with animal rights when there were so few victories he responded that his spirituality continued to play a huge part.

I'd put it down to that, I think it's, yeah, I'm taught and I believe in spreading love and compassion without payoff and that's just part of what I believe... I guess that makes it easier for me not to get demoralised. I keep doing it because it needs to be done and victories come and go, there might be only a few, but at least there has been some and we're making some difference. Each time we get another victory it is another small step so that's all the pay off I think I need

Tony is in the unique position of being involved with both SAFE and AWA and brings to the group a degree of wisdom that comes from being a few years older than most AWA members. Officially Tony is the Otago and Southland contact for SAFE and has a lot of dealings with the Christchurch office through which most of the national organising is done. Tony is, however, more visibly involved with AWA in Dunedin and regularly attends meetings, assists with protest preparation and will participate in protests when he has the time. Unlike most members, Tony is primarily driven by his Buddhist belief in equality for all life and is not concerned about what group he is acting through as long as the specific action is in line with his religious convictions.

While all animal rights activists experience a certain amount of strain in their interactions with a society whose beliefs and worldview are so different from their own, this tension becomes even more pronounced for those activists whose families are actually directly involved with animal use industries. Tony comes from a family with a farming background and when he first became vegetarian he made a point of keeping the dialogue open between himself and his parents and making it clear that his choice of diet was not an attack on them.

...[W]e discussed it pretty early on so you know I made sure this is not a personal issue you know. This is my belief system and they never did anything overtly nasty to animals, they weren't part of the major problems. They were part of some of the minor problems, I mean the property issues and things like that, but they weren't part of the major cruelty issues that need to be dealt with first. They weren't factory farmers, and stuff like that.

Tony described his parents' initial reaction to his becoming vegan as one of "fear of the unknown" but says that as they became more used to the idea and the foods that he would eat his parents became more accepting and his mother will even cook for him now

when he goes home. Just by presenting an alternative worldview some of Tony's beliefs have filtered through to his family and, along with other factors, his involvement with animal rights has influenced his parents to change their lifestyles and economic pursuits.

...I talked them out of [farming]... I had a part in it... a lot of it was economics I guess. Why farm and make nothing when you could do some other job and make money and have a comfortable, or more comfortable, lifestyle? Much more time to play golf and stuff like that. I guess that was the main reason but it helped that I kept pushing things along. "You could play more golf if you weren't doing this and you were doing this instead." Stuff like that, so I'm really happy now, 'cause it has made my presence a lot easier...

### *Greg*

Another highly visible member of AWA who was almost always present at meetings and regularly involved with social interactions was an American exchange student called Greg. Although he was new to the group in Dunedin, Greg had been active in animal rights and a practicing vegan for several years. Greg came to Dunedin at the beginning of 2002 and did not actively seek out the animal rights group. He said that he had been eager to get involved with as much activism as he could but, after searching for other groups and attending environmental and socialist meetings, he came back to animal rights because he considered AWA to be the most active political group in Dunedin. Unlike other newcomers, Greg had several years' experience in campaigning for animal rights and despite being only twenty years old, had been the leader in his university's animal rights group at home.

Greg's first introduction to animal rights was through his older sister. She encouraged Greg to become vegetarian but it was his subsequent exposure to facts and arguments from a variety of points of view that convinced Greg to turn to veganism.

I was about fourteen or fifteen, in my first year at high school. My older sister was vegetarian and then vegan and the first I ever heard of that stuff and I used to like make fun of her and stuff... We made fun of her for her eating habits so it probably wasn't a very pleasant environment for her. But she is really strong-minded and so basically on a whim, I was like "oh, I'll be a vegetarian for a month for your birthday"

and so then, gosh I barely remember how it could happen, but... part way through that, I was just like "hmmm" and I thought about things a bit more and read facts, it was very much facts. A fact sheet of the environmental stuff and health stuff and the number of animals that are being killed, and my sister was president of the environmental club and so I got involved in that and after about a month I was... thinking of trying veganism... and that happened like really quickly... just a little over a month, I became vegan...

Greg was involved with a more extreme direct action group when he first began in animal rights – a group which primarily targeted businesses that benefited from animal use. The group took an economic approach to animal rights issues. Greg felt there was a straightedge, hardcore, anarchist identity that went along with this approach, which he never really fitted into.

...[W]ell in the beginning it was the hardcore vegan straightedge stuff. That scene definitely has a leaning towards ALF type stuff. I threw a rock at a fur store once... that's like the only really illegal thing. We definitely talked about other stuff "fuck shit up" but I mean, other people there are anarchists and stuff as well. That was part of the thing. I just never fit that category... I never would dress in all black and never had patches and I was never punk, but I was going along with that for a little bit and yeah people talked about gluing locks and those type illegal stuff, I don't know if that was just talk or if that ever happened (laughs) they might have done it... I think I just didn't think about it as much - I was fifteen (laughs), I was still thinking of things in the terms of facts, I had the facts memorised, I don't have facts memorised anymore, they're not important to me. Except how many animals are killed, that still blows my mind, but definitely I knew so many facts, I carried around a fact sheet with me. But I don't, I guess I saw that as being the animal rights movement...

The group that Greg became deeply involved with when he reached university had a very different approach that focused energy on achieving cultural change. The group was primarily interested in promoting veganism, and vegetarianism in so far as it was a step towards veganism. Greg saw his immediate community within the university campus to be an easily accessible audience as students lived on campus and were relatively isolated from external influences. The group chose targets from their immediate environment and worked with the science department to reduce animal experimentation, liaised with the cafeteria to get more vegan food, and created a high profile with posters and a huge presence in the school paper. These educational actions, along with videos and stalls, posed a challenge to



the dominant ideology that sees animal use as acceptable, and promoted instead a 'rights' philosophy.

Greg talked about efforts the group made to link animal rights issues to other liberation and counter-culture causes as a way to rally support. The group sought to draw on anti-domination ideals already held by specific groups and illustrate how animal rights was a comparable or even complementary issue.

... I really saw a human rights versus animal rights thing in all the activism on campus and I was really trying to tie them together. I was trying to create a coalition against factory farming which was trying to get labour, environmental, human rights and people who have a sense of social justice and even the feminist ideas, just trying to get them all together to converge against factory farmed food. I showed videos more about labour than about the animals, all about the packing workers and that was basically what I was doing last semester cause I figured the people who are most likely gonna listen are the people who are already active, so they were my target audience. And I was pushing for that, like showing videos... I had a speaker on Judaism and vegetarianism to always try to tie into another issue to get that audience...

Greg came across as being one of the members of AWA most widely read in animal rights literature. He expressed frustration about the lack of philosophical discussion and debate in the New Zealand movement. Greg saw his ethical position in animal rights as an ever changing and evolving stance that was continually being reassessed as he learnt new things and heard different arguments. In terms of his position within the movement, Greg classified himself as an extremist, but extreme in his philosophical stance rather than his choice of actions. Greg was definitely located at the 'no-compromise' end of the ethical spectrum and concentrated his energy on achieving change through education. When I asked if there was a personal pay-off to activism that kept him involved, Greg responded that activism represented a vehicle for personal expression and animal rights was the belief he chose to express.

I remember telling myself before and I said to my friends that, "it's good to everyone have a voice." People are artists and stuff, and for me, I'm an activist. [I]t's kind of my art form. This is me rationalising. Trying to figure out if people are bad people if they're not activists. So I'm trying to figure it out and, what drives me is not because

I'm a better person, it's just my voice... it's empowering to walk down the street and be like "I put that [poster] there." That's me; it's my voice, my opinion... So that's the biggest pay off. That's the biggest motivator and then comes "I am helping the animals"

### *Laura*

A long-time member of AWA who was less visible at meetings during the time of my fieldwork was Laura. She was one of the founding members of AWA and has been involved with animal rights in Dunedin since the most recent chapter of SAFE began. At just twenty-three years old, she has recently achieved a Masters degree and is currently working in the area of her training. During the time of this study Laura was less active in meetings but still largely involved with actions and informal decision-making. She became less active for two reasons. The primary reason for her reduced involvement in formal processes was due to the time restraints and pressures of her academic life. While she remained dedicated to the group and could be called upon if needed for specific purposes, Laura decided early in 2002 to prioritise her studies and allocate time accordingly. The second reason for her reduced involvement, and the reason that kept her involvement in meetings and stalls low after her thesis was complete, was that Laura was going through a period of reassessment regarding her position on specific animal rights related issues that resulted in her being selective about where she allocated her time and resources in an attempt to concentrate on actions and activities that she perceived to be the most effective.

Laura became vegetarian in her early teenage years. She describes the epiphanal moment when she stopped eating meat:

I stopped eating meat when I was about thirteen. It was a really random situation, it was at New Years and I was on my uncle's boat and I was having a ham sandwich and I just thought "yuck" (shows disgust). I had to sneak outside and throw the ham overboard because I just couldn't eat it

While initially her reasons for becoming vegetarian were "because meat was gross and not really because of ethical reasons", Laura was soon prompted to investigate information about animal rights issues so that she could defend her position when it was



regularly questioned by her meat-eating friends and family. This led Laura to seek out other people with similar points of view and while still a teenager and living in her hometown, she became a member of SAFE. While she does not recall being involved with any protests, Laura remembers taking part in “educational events” and would attend meetings and assist with stalls. She describes this time as being one of learning that she perceives as being good for her if not that helpful to SAFE. Despite finding little support for her position outside animal rights circles, Laura persisted with vegetarianism and even attempted to initiate change in those around her, although this was not always met with enthusiasm.

...I tried to do things within my school. That didn't work out very well. I had put antivivisection information up on the biology wall but it was taken down for a parent teacher evening (laughs)

When she arrived in Dunedin there was no active group and for the first two years of her stay she concentrated on remaining vegetarian and pursuing her studies. When SAFE did eventually start a chapter in Dunedin, Laura was eager to be involved from the first meeting.

It was really exciting, there was so much potential. We went around the group and said what we did and what we could contribute and there were so many really creative people. I thought, “Wow, we could achieve so much”

From the outset SAFE Dunedin was not organised in the way that AWA is now. Laura remembers that, as with many new groups, it took a certain amount of time for a social connection to grow between the members. “[Y]ou’d spend heaps of time together but it would never go outside the bounds of animal rights, but very slowly that changed”. The social side did not provide a driving motivation for Laura to be involved with SAFE or later AWA. Although she has developed many close friendships with people through the animal rights connection, Laura asserts that it is in spite of the social network, and conflicts that come with it, rather than because of it that she continues to be active. Laura is adamant that she will continue to be involved in animal rights activism whether a supportive GARA community exists or not. The animal rights cause is too important for her to allow personal difficulties to stand in the way.

## IDEOLOGY & WORLDVIEWS

The above profiles are just four out of many I could have chosen to show that GARAs come from diverse educational, family and regional backgrounds and have had varying experiences of animals before their involvement in animal rights activism. For some, like Laura, animal rights philosophy begins with a spontaneous aversion to eating meat and a change to vegetarianism that only later develops into involvement in animal rights activism. For Tony, and others, exposure to people and issues came first, with vegetarianism or veganism as the natural progression.

Whichever way they come to the movement, animal protectionists develop worldviews that incorporate ideas about animals - and in the case of GARAs, other social issues - that are different from those promoted by the dominant society. According to Jasper, worldviews can be seen as the master frames that underlie specific ideologies held by individuals and groups (1997:155). If we apply the Six-Axis model, detailed in Tables 1 and 2, to AWA, we find that various worldviews are informing a dual-ideology of animal liberation and general liberation.

The primary ideology that dominates within AWA, and is the central focus that brings members together, is animal liberation. Animal 'rights' philosophy<sup>26</sup> is coupled with the radical objectives of abolition and no-compromise. Here we see expressions of worldviews in which:

- animals have inherent worth, are sentient beings, and subjects of agency,
- speciesism, which is likened to racism, classism and sexism, is seen to be the major evil that allows continued exploitation of innocent animals by humans, and

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<sup>26</sup> Discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

- animal cruelty is seen as a result of systemic problems ingrained in cultural, political and economic institutions, *as well as* the immoral actions of individuals.

The secondary ideology of AWA, demonstrated in its members' choice of tactics, organisation and lifestyle, is more concerned with issues of general liberation. Here GARAs express concern for issues that affect non-human animals, the environment, individual people, groups of people and the human species generally. The worldviews that inform this ideology are broad in scope and incorporate beliefs that:

- capitalism, which is synonymous with big business, is profit driven and immoral (in other words, anti-capitalist),
- oppression is bad and comes from inequalities of power inherent in social, political and economic hierarchies (egalitarian),
- individuals are as much responsible for the problems in the world as are cultural institutions, and
- government and bureaucracy cannot be trusted.

Part two of this thesis will present a more ethnographic illustration of how a dual-ideology is expressed in the experiences of GARAs and in the operation of AWA. First, let us take a look at the existing literature and social science research relating to animal rights activism and animal rights more generally. Here I will discuss existing theoretical approaches that have been applied to the animal protection movement by earlier researchers.

Many sentient nonhumans apparently have the ability to learn from past experience, to anticipate future events, to change their behavior in the face of changing circumstances, to carry out short-term plans, and to solve problems in a creative fashion... rats and mice, when confronted with food-filled containers too narrow for their heads, stick their tails into those containers, then either lick off their own tails or exchange tail licks with companion rodents.

Evelyn B. Pluhar (1995:46)

*Beyond Prejudice: The Moral Significance of Human and Nonhuman Animals*

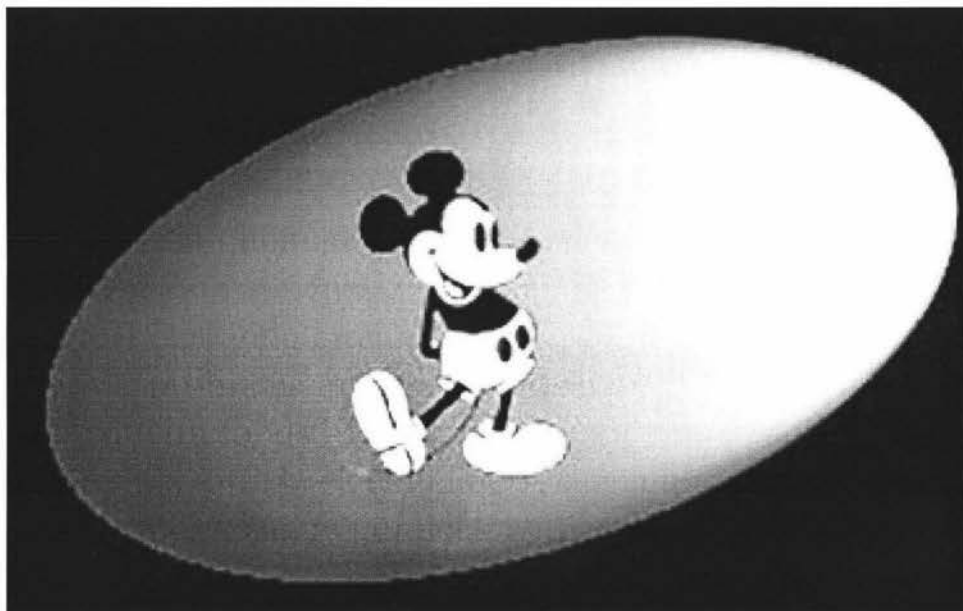


Image 4: Mickey Mouse

Three blind mice, three blind mice  
See how they run, see how they run  
They all ran up to the farmer's wife  
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife  
Did you ever see such a thing in your life  
As three blind mice?

Nursery Rhyme

## 4 - “ANIMALS ARE GOOD TO THINK WITH”

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For hundreds of millennia, humans and nonhuman animals have co-inhabited the world, maintaining various relationships in the continuum from predator to prey. Cave paintings and ancient figurines indicate the immense importance of non-human animals to the people of those times (Ryder, 2000:15) and although the balance of power has shifted considerably, the significant role animals play in human survival and progress is yet to diminish. Philosophical, religious, scientific and popular documents during the last several centuries reflect the central place of animals in the way we think about ourselves, our morality, and our understandings of our place in the natural world. The history of changing human-animal relationships is well-documented elsewhere (e.g. Ryder, 2000; Plous, 1993), and it should be noted that it is a topic which has received considerable attention from scholars of many disciplines.

One such discipline is philosophy and over the past thirty years an extensive body of literature has emerged that takes a philosophical approach to the argument for animal rights and the moral consideration of animals (e.g. Singer, 1975; Regan, 1982; Cavalieri & Singer, 1993; Regan & Singer, 1989; Pluhar, 1995; Dolan, 1999). The scope of this discussion has been broadened by contributions with economic, environmental and practicality foci (e.g. Tansey & D'Silva, 1999; Zimmerman et al., 1993). More recently, critics and theorists from a feminist position have also entered this discourse (e.g. Adams, 1994) with discussions of the relationship between animal and female oppression. While several texts have been published that discuss animal rights as a social movement (e.g. Libby, 1995; Guither, 1998), I have found only a handful of articles and books that analyse the cultural aspects of animal rights activism. Most notable are those by James M. Jasper (1997) and Jasper and Nelkin (1992).

Barbara Noske's *Humans and Other Animals* (1989) also seems to be a text singular in its critique of the way anthropologists have approached animals in past and contemporary literature. Noske notes the tendency to view animals as objects, rather than as independent social subjects (1989:82), observing, "there exists no anthropology of animals, only an (anthropocentric) anthropology of humans in relation to animals" (1989:169) (her brackets). Since Noske made this statement, a small body of ethnographic work has emerged which does focus on animals. Particularly noteworthy are works by sociologists Alger and Alger. In two articles published by *Society and Animals* magazine, they concentrate on the culture of cats in a cat shelter (1999) and "alternative interpretations of symbolic interaction that allow for the possibility of such activity in non-human animals" (1997: para 1<sup>27</sup>). The 1997 article concludes that there is evidence for a review of the idea put forward by sociologist George Herbert Mead that posits humans as active constructors of the social world who choose actions based on an evaluation of external stimuli, their own goals and past experiences. Humans are therefore subjective beings and in order to interact symbolically, they must take on the role of the other and "imagine meanings others will attach to alternative courses of action" (1997: para 9). From Mead's perspective, the fact that non-human animals do not have language means that they do not have the mechanisms for subjectivity and symbolic interaction. Mead draws a hard line between humans and non-human animals based on the above theory, which Alger and Alger dispute (Mead cited by Alger & Alger, 1997: para 10).

The last few decades have seen a boom in social science writings about the relationships between humans and animals (e.g. Plous, 1993; Alger & Alger, 1997; Opatow, 1993; Wolf, 2000; Ryder, 2000 and many more), with one contemporary bibliography citing over 900 books, videos and internet resources (Kistler, 2000), another displaying 3861 entries (Kellert & Berry, 1985), and a review of articles that catalogues 3210 publications (Magel, 1981). Scholars from areas as diverse as the natural sciences, social work and psychology have explored the morality of speciesist distinctions for their

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<sup>27</sup> Several articles quoted in this paper were obtained as electronic versions that do not maintain original formatting and do not therefore have page numbers which correspond with the print version. Where possible, accurate page numbers have been obtained, but where this was not possible, the paragraph, and, where relevant, the section have been noted.

own disciplines and in many cases called for the expansion of the community of equals to include at least primate if not all sentient beings (e.g. Wolf, 2000; Bekoff, 1998). Yet the majority of animal-related articles in social science focus on social and cultural implications of contemporary and historical human-animal relations rather than on animal protection activists themselves. In particular, Wolf introduces the interesting question of whether the profession of social work should be concerned with issues of speciesism (2000:88). Wolf links animal abuse to anti-social human behaviour (2000:89) and animal use to environmental degradation (2000:91), and does not appear to regard animals as a disadvantaged population of their own. While Wolf does encourage students and teachers of social work to investigate political, environmental and economic issues relating to animal treatment and perhaps change their personal behaviour (2000:91), this call seems to be added more as an afterthought than a genuine appeal. The main thrust of his argument is concerned with the damaging effects for humans of animal mistreatment. Similarly, a number of articles have emerged in recent times that discuss the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence (e.g. Masters, 2002; Flynn, 2000).

While the animal protection movement is regularly cited as an example in social movement theories, few writers give space to an in-depth discussion of the dynamics of the movement or the contradictions implicit in a movement made up of diverse perspectives and groups (e.g. Stewart, Smith & Denton, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; Klandermans, 1997). The following section looks at the small number of contemporary works that focus on the participants of the animal protection movement. Among these works are demographic profiles, attitudinal analyses and attempts to situate animal rights ideology within broader contexts, yet almost no attention is paid to internal movement and group dynamics. Most notable in this area are works by Jasper (1997); Jasper and Nelkin (1992); Silverstein (1996); Munro (1999a, 1999b, 2001); Kruse (1999, 2001); Nibert (1994); Muth and Jamison (2000); Lowe and Ginsberg (2002); Jamison and Lunch (1992); Einwohner (1999); Galvin and Herzog (1998); Herzog (1993); Jamison, Wenk and Parker (2000); Jasper and Poulsen (1995); Adams (1990, 1994); and Anderson (2001).



## DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Existing demographic analysis of the animal protection movement is almost exclusively concerned with American and European activism (e.g. Lowe & Ginsberg, 2002; Jamison et al., 2000), with the most regularly quoted demographic surveys being those carried out at the 'March for Animals' rallies in Washington DC in 1990 by Plous (1991) and Jamison and Lunch (1992) and 1996 by Galvin and Herzog (1998). In most analyses, activists are described as white, tertiary educated and predominantly female individuals with annual income in the medium to high bracket and who are highly likely to house at least one pet. They are urban dwelling, middle-aged and have an average period of involvement of between three and ten years<sup>28</sup> (Lowe & Ginsberg, 2002; Jamison & Lunch, 1992; Galvin & Herzog, 1998; Plous, 1991).

My own observations of the New Zealand movement indicate that while GARAs are predominantly urban dwelling Caucasians, they are demographically different from respondents of the above surveys in several ways. Firstly the spread across gender is generally more even than the 70-80% women quoted elsewhere (Galvin & Herzog, 1998). While GARA groups, specifically AWA, tend to have flexible membership with people coming and going regularly, meetings, protests and other activities are usually made up of 50-60% women. New Zealand GARAs are also younger than the average ages of 32 and 34 quoted by Galvin and Herzog (1998). The age-range in Dunedin is from late teens to mid-thirties with the majority in their early to mid-twenties<sup>29</sup>.

Very few activists house pets or have companion animals living with them, with a few exceptions that are generally due to necessity rather than choice<sup>30</sup>. An animal rights activist visiting from Europe noted that the New Zealand movement was unique in this

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<sup>28</sup> 3, 6, and 10-11 years are the average lengths of involvement quoted by Plous (1991), based on research from 1990, Galvin and Herzog Jr. (1998), based on research from 1996, and Lowe and Ginsberg (2002), based on research from 2000, respectively. The time that has elapsed between each study could indicate that the same people have remained in the movement since before 1991.

<sup>29</sup> The age spread in GARA generally is similar to that in AWA but the average age may be closer to mid-late twenties.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. One couple lives with a cat that essentially came with the flat.



regard. She expressed her surprise at seeing how few GARAs lived with animals or sheltered strays. She also noted the absence of stray animals from New Zealand streets and wondered if there was less need here for sheltering. In Dunedin, the low rate of pet ownership by GARAs results perhaps from both the younger age group and the nature of life in a student city where most people live only temporarily while they study.

This could also be the reason why average time of involvement is considerably lower for Dunedin GARAs than in the above surveys. The longest time of involvement quoted to me by any one activist was six years and the average is closer to two years<sup>31</sup>. Similarly, age could explain why New Zealand GARAs do not fit the same statistics for education<sup>32</sup>. GARAs do seem to be well educated and many have achieved some form of tertiary qualification. In AWA, the majority of members are in some way involved with the local university or polytechnic and it is reasonable to expect that if the same people who are active now maintain their activism the demographics for education will be similar to those of the American studies in a few years.

Another notable difference is in income. As has been noted, GARAs in Dunedin are predominantly students, people who have recently entered the workforce, or workers who do not have traditional nine-to-five jobs. Although I did not formally gather information regarding the exact income details of those GARAs who are not surviving on a student allowance, anecdotal evidence<sup>33</sup> would suggest that it is well below the US\$35,000-65,000 (NZ\$55,000-125,000 approx) quoted by Lowe and Ginsberg as the average for animal protectionists attending the 2000 Animal Rights conference in the USA (2002:206).

The above studies are all focused on the animal protectionist movement in general and researchers do not appear to differentiate, in conducting research or drawing results, between the different branches of the movement. It is therefore very difficult to tell the

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<sup>31</sup> This is based on informal discussions with GARA and not a formal survey.

<sup>32</sup> Jamison and Lunch (1992) found that 79% of their respondents had received tertiary education, 22% had an undergraduate degree and 19% had an advanced graduate degree.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. the nature of work taken on by GARA often seems to be part-time, voluntary and traditionally lower paid jobs (such as those in the hospitality and service industries).

reason for divergence in the demographics of New Zealand GARAs. Two possible explanations follow. First, if GARAs are demographically typical of the entire animal protection movement in New Zealand, then there is a notable difference between animal protectionists in New Zealand and those found abroad. This could indicate that animal protection here is either geared towards attracting members from a specific age and cultural group (e.g. young, counter-culture followers who resist traditional institutions such as mainstream work environments and career driven jobs) or that the movement is young and yet to establish itself fully in New Zealand. A second, and I think more likely, explanation, is that GARAs are demographically different from animal protectionists more generally (both in New Zealand and abroad). In this instance, a demographic analysis of activists across all branches of the animal protection movement in New Zealand would be likely to turn up results similar to those quoted. Also, if the above quoted studies differentiated branches of the animal protection movement, we might see similarities in demographics between the New Zealanders in this study and GARAs from groups abroad. Observations indicate that welfare groups and rights groups attract different people from different stages in life<sup>34</sup> and it may be reasonable to predict that as well as having different attitudes, GARAs have distinct demographics.

My own literature surveys have found no published studies of demographics for either GARAs, as a distinct group, abroad, or for the animal protection movement generally in New Zealand. This makes an accurate comparison impossible. The question of whether the New Zealand animal protection movement is demographically similar to its foreign counterparts will therefore remain unanswered in this paper. But I note that NZ GARAs are significantly different demographically from published studies of animal protectionists generally. This could be an area of useful further research.

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<sup>34</sup> This is based on my observations of SAFE meetings in Auckland and Christchurch that had a considerably different cross section of society from the protests and meetings I have attended that were organised by grassroots groups. Also one would expect from the large budgets of these bigger organizations that they either had a considerably more wealthy membership or a much larger membership that would include a greater cross section of people in New Zealand.

## ATTITUDINAL ANALYSIS

It is hardly surprising, given the high profile of women in the movement, that many theorists have focused attention on women animal protectionists. Peek, Dunham and Dietz (1997) attempt to explain the phenomenon by exploring the relational role orientation of members and asking whether women may have a greater affiliation for animal rights because of a learnt emphasis on caring for others. While they conclude that relational role orientation theory does not explain women's greater involvement, they do suggest that structural feminist theories, such as those put forward by feminist Carol Adams (1994), *are* likely to better explain the phenomenon. They go on to link women's experiences of structural oppression to animal rights saying that "[s]uch experiences may directly generate a greater empathy for other oppressed beings, as well as leading to general egalitarian and non-hierarchical ideologies that are applied to the treatment of animals as well as women" (Peek et al., 1997).

Munro (2001) and Kruse (1999) have also paid particular attention to the role of women in the animal protection movement. Both scholars use survey data to explore gender based attitudinal differences in topics relating to views of nature, e.g. 'Darwinian' or 'Romanticist' outlook, and levels of environmental activism. Both studies conclude that there is more convergence than divergence in the attitudes of male and female animal protectionists and suggest the possibility that animal rights is seen as a feminine issue because the politics converge easily with women's rights issues. Munro claims that if this is the case, then the animal protection movement can be described as a "gender direct" movement, a "social movement characterised by the primacy of women's gendered experiences, women's issues, and women's leadership and decision making in feminist and women's movements." (Munro, 2001: para 10). Here again we see the link made between structural oppression of women and animal rights activism, yet neither Munro nor Kruse go on to explore the ways these values are expressed by respondents in their individual and collective actions.

While women do not feature so dominantly in New Zealand GARA groups, egalitarian values do. There is no evidence in this thesis to suggest that personal experiences of oppression lead GARAs to empathise with oppressed animals, however it is argued that GARAs do incorporate anti-oppression values into a general liberation ideology.

Recruitment and retention of membership are central issues in the development and maintenance of social movements and various scholars have tried to explain the strategies employed by activists to attract new members and keep them coming back (e.g. Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). Galvin and Herzog (1998) have also attempted to determine why some people are attracted to animal rights activism while others are not. Based on analysis of a mail-in survey distributed at the 1996 'March for Animals' that measured respondents' scores on a *Life Orientation Test*, they suggest that "a disposition toward an optimistic worldview, coupled [with] an idealistic moral absolutism, is an important component in the psychology of social activism" (1998: para 5 in section 'Discussion'). While they acknowledge that their own data may be biased<sup>35</sup> they do see the relationship of optimism and activism as a fertile area for continued research. The main drawback of Galvin and Herzog's, and many other studies, is the readiness of researchers to homogenise the animal protection movement and ignore the diverse differences between individuals, and groups. One of the major themes in this paper is the need to acknowledge the differences between various branches of the animal protection movement.

In an earlier paper (1993), Herzog identifies three main themes which emerged from twenty-three interviews with animal rights activists: diversity in attitudes and behaviours of activists; major changes in lifestyle made by individuals aiming to achieve consistency between beliefs and actions; and, parallels with religious conversion. Herzog identifies respondents as fundamentalists<sup>36</sup> and his remains one of the few published studies that

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<sup>35</sup> E.g. More optimistic activists may have attended the march or mailed back surveys.

<sup>36</sup> Herzog Jr. notes Jasper's and Nelkins' three categories, welfarist, pragmatist, and fundamentalist. The latter being those individuals who hold the belief that people do not have the right to "use animals for their own pleasures or interests, regardless of the benefits" (Jasper&Nelkin,1992:9).

focuses exclusively on activists from one branch of the animal protection movement and which takes a qualitative approach.

Unfortunately for my project, Herzog does not directly address the possible relationship between animal rights ideals and resistance to overarching issues of domination in human society. Nor does he describe the groups that he observed and their day-to-day running or systems of organisation. He does, however, stress the behavioural implications that come with animal rights involvement and the accompanying shift in activists' worldviews. For fundamentalist animal rights activists, the shift is towards a worldview based on the belief that there is a "fundamental equality between humans and other species" (1993: para 1 in section 'Thinking About Animals') and the behavioural implication is change to a vegetarian or vegan diet. While Herzog notes wide diversity among respondents on attitudinal and behavioural issues<sup>37</sup>, he stresses the widespread commitment of individuals to alter their lifestyles to fit their newfound beliefs in an ongoing struggle for moral consistency. Amongst New Zealand GARAs I note a similar commitment in the high rate of veganism. Herzog Jr, also proposed that:

For many participants, animal rights activism resulted from philosophical commitment to a lifestyle that was referred to variously as "compassionate living," "a cruelty-free life," or "living lightly on the land." Animal protection was a logical outgrowth of a lifestyle that integrated compassion for living things with a respect for the natural world. (1993: para 1 in section 'Living the "Cruelty-Free" Life')

Herzog's participants stated a desire to live free from the exploiter and exploited relations inherent in animal use. New Zealand GARAs express this desire also, but through their organisation, actions and lifestyle they show a conscious effort to reject participation in exploitative relationships<sup>38</sup> of *all* kinds: human with non-human; human with nature; and, human with human. It is here that a general liberation ideology becomes apparent. In the final section of his paper, Herzog explores four parallels between involvement in animal rights and religious conversion. These are: change in fundamental beliefs; dramatic lifestyle changes; evangelical component; and sense of sin.

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<sup>37</sup> E.g. sense of moral superiority, effect of animal rights involvement on pre-existing relationships.

<sup>38</sup> Either as exploiter or exploited.

Jamison, Wenk and Parker (2000) investigate a similar theory in a recent article. They draw on information collected in extensive interviews to explore contemporary animal rights beliefs and activism through Yinger's five components of functional religion: intense and memorable conversion experiences, new found communities of meaning, normative creeds, elaborate and well-defined codes of behaviour, and cult formation. Their paper makes a convincing argument that the contemporary animal rights movement conforms to Yinger's model. Jamison et al. also argue that approaching the movement from this perspective allows the researcher predictive and analytical power that may help to explain phenomenal growth, dedication of participants, retention of enthusiasm, and the possible future course of the animal protection movement.

While it would be an interesting area for further research, I do not propose to reproduce Jamison et al.'s work within the New Zealand context. It should however be noted that during participant-observation and interviews, I witnessed many examples of the above five criteria. For example, interviewees described formative events, including moral shocks and greater awareness of movement arguments, which contributed to moral and intellectual conversion. Similarly, most GARAs follow a strict vegan lifestyle, or at least cut down consumptive practices that involve animal products and testing. This new code of behaviour provides expression for new beliefs and accentuates philosophical distances between GARAs and their previous immediate community. GARAs also experience a strong sense of community in common values, sharing of resources, and willingness of individuals to put themselves out for others. The GARA network supplies places to stay and other forms of support to New Zealand GARAs as well as GARAs visiting from abroad<sup>39</sup>. Jamison et al. describe cult as "collective meaning expressed as symbols and rituals" (2000:section 'Cult'). Symbolic representations of group values range from what

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<sup>39</sup> It is not uncommon for animal rights activists from Europe, America or Australia to travel through New Zealand staying primarily in the homes of NZ GARA with whom they have made contact through common friends, email lists or other activists they have met in New Zealand.



people eat and where, to how they speak, and shared forms of ritualised behaviour, all of which I noted in AWA<sup>40</sup>.

A thesis presented by Jamison and Lunch (1992) based on interviews conducted during the 1990 'March for Animals' in Washington DC, offers a demographic as well as an attitudinal profile of American animal rights activists. While I would be reluctant to generalise their conclusions to the New Zealand grassroots situation<sup>41</sup>, one point is of particular interest to this paper. Jamison and Lunch state that:

It is true that respondents demonstrated a marked compassion for animals, and this cannot be dismissed as sentimentality. Yet their intensity suggests motives that reach beyond feelings for animals... We strongly suspect that there is a connection between the animal rights movement and reactions to broader issues in social and political life (1992: para 1 & 2 in section 'Conclusion').

In order to explore the suspected 'connection', the paper then draws on work by Sperling (1988) and Lansbury (1985). In Jamison and Lunch's interpretation, Sperling illustrates the "role played by animals as symbolic liaisons between people and nature and [points] out that in times of rapid technological change and social displacement, animal abuse (including animal research) becomes symbolic of humanity's estrangement from and intrusion into nature". Lansbury on the other hand points out the "importance of political symbolism" in early anti-vivisection riots. Jamison and Lunch note that most respondents reported liberal, left of centre political views and they explore various arguments for egalitarianism being a central core belief of American liberalism. Combining these three factors, they conclude that the "American animal rights movement is in part a symbolic manifestation of egalitarian political values" (Jamison & Lunch, 1992: para 2 in section 'Conclusion').

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<sup>40</sup> GARA regularly use terminology that brings attention to taken-for-granted human animal relations. For example, one participant frequently says 'flesh' rather than 'meat' and many GARA avoid using terms, such as 'pet', that reinforce the property status of animals.

<sup>41</sup> My reluctance is based on the reasons stated in the previous section for why demographics may be different.

With regard to New Zealand GARAs, I support Jamison and Lunch's theory and will attempt to explore how egalitarian political views, as part of a general liberation ideology, are manifested. At this point I wish simply to emphasise that while GARAs may choose organisational structures and strategies that express egalitarian values, they do this within an animal rights setting because animal liberation is the primary agenda. When asked what keeps him coming back to animal rights activism, one interviewee pointed out that while he does value egalitarian principles of equality and open-ness in an organisation, it is not the primary force that drives him.

[C]oncern for animals essentially. They need a voice, so the more people that give them a voice the better. Other issues are, I think they're minor concerns compared to the overall thing. The overall issue is animal rights and animal welfare. Giving animals a voice and a fair deal so that brings me back time and again. Even in a group that I found it really difficult to be involved in, if that were the only group in the area I would still work with them as best I could to try and make the issues the important thing. (Andy)

Muth and Jamison's (2000) paper, *On the Destiny of Deer Camps and Duck Blinds: The Rise of the Animal Rights Movement and the Future of Wildlife Conservation*, stands out in that they pay particular attention to distinguishing between animal welfare and animal rights on the basis of goals, tactics and philosophies. They identify four social precursors to the animal rights movement: an urban epistemology; a popularised interpretation of science; anthropomorphism; and, egalitarianism. They argue that:

[T]he emergence of the animal rights movement is related to profound sociocultural and demographic shifts occurring within modern society. It is a product of broad macro-structural conditions that, having converged in advanced industrial societies of the late twentieth century, provide fertile ground for the rapid rise and powerful influence of this philosophy (2000:841).

Muth and Jamison follow earlier theorists (Sperling, 1988; Jasper & Nelkin, 1992; Dizard, 1999; Franklin, 1999) in claiming that animal rights activism is as much about modern society as it is about animals. They conclude that for this reason the animal rights movement is a moral crusade: "the major objectives of which are to transform human society and individual human beings" (Muth & Jamison, 2000:848). Up to this point I agree



with Muth and Jamison's analysis. The authors then go on to cite Sperling and Jasper and Nelkin in saying that the animal rights movement is "about reforming society, and animals are simply the symbolic vehicles through which this reformation is to be actualised" (2000:848). In my opinion, Muth and Jamison's statement oversimplifies animal rights activism. GARAs are deeply concerned with both non-human animal and human animal exploitation and they do express resistance to structures of domination in modern society, but to imply that liberation of animals is more the means than the goal is to ignore GARAs' claims that their primary reason for involvement is a belief that animals are valuable in their own right. To support Muth and Jamison's statement would be to miss the point of animal rights philosophy and reproduce dominant systems of meaning that again reduce animals to symbols of the 'real' (human) problems: a system of meaning that GARAs fight endlessly to oppose.

What we see emerging is a trend in social science analysis to link animal rights empathy to a more general concern for societal problems. However, as I point out in the following section, critics and targets of animal protectionists are not always so generous in their assessments.

## **HYSTERICAL WOMEN & SUFFERERS OF ZOOPHIL-PSYCHOSIS**

"At present I cannot prove that the idea of animal rights is extraordinarily dangerous and inhumane; to get proof of this, we'll have to wait until the disastrous consequences of the idea reveal themselves over the next century or so. But I strongly suspect that it's a dangerous idea, and accordingly I suspect that the promoters of this idea, whatever their intentions, are enemies of the human race."

(David R Carlin: professor of Philosophy and Sociology at the Community College of Rhode Island writing in 2000 in response to the announcement of Harvard Law School's first ever course on animal rights)

"What have they [animal rights protestors] done for the poor, the hungry? They don't care about anything but animals. What about *people* who are suffering?"

(Katherine Rich, National List MP, reacting to an AWA protest targeting her 2002 pre-election campaign trail on the basis of statements she made in support of Mainland Poultry)

"I used to consider them ill-informed, but well-meaning and kind-hearted people... I [now] know them to be hard-hearted fanatics (as fanatics are likely to be), deliberate prevaricators, and impudent ignoramuses, who deserve no consideration and are to be handled without gloves."

(Dr. William J. Robinson writing for the medical community in 1897)

An accusation commonly made against GARAs, and members of the animal protection movement more generally, is that they are more interested in animal suffering than the 'real' problems that face people in their own human communities. Similar claims go back at least as far as the early anti-vivisection movement of the twentieth century, during which time neurologist Charles Loomis Dana termed the phrase 'zoophil-psychosis' to describe a mental illness suffered by people with a heightened concern for animals (Buettinger, 1993; Reiling, 1999). It is claimed that Dana's thinking was influenced by French psychology, which "questioned the mental balance of persons whose great compassion for animals seemingly left little for humans" (Buettinger, 1993: para 17). The abundance of women in the early anti-vivisection movement was credited to women's proneness to psychological disorder due to inherent inferiority in the form of smaller brains and weaker nervous systems. Rather than taking on the anti-vivisectionists by rebutting their claims, scientists and the medical community attacked activists instead for being over emotional, indifferent to fact or reason, and delusional cranks and perverts (1993).

While contemporary criticism of the animal protection movement is considerably less extreme, GARAs are still frequently accused of being overly emotional, anti-intellectual and exceedingly concerned with animal problems<sup>42</sup> yet seemingly uncaring when it comes to human struggles. In fact, GARAs show high levels of concern for human problems, such as poverty, workers' rights, feminist issues, racism and classism. They are frequently affiliated with political activism in other areas from Free Tibet to Reclaim the Night and Wobblies to Food not Bombs<sup>43</sup> as well as being active in supporting and creating

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<sup>42</sup> Nibert notes that opponent of animal rights have frequently "trivialised the concerns expressed by animal activists, suggesting that their time should be better spent on more important human issues." (1994:ev)

<sup>43</sup> Free Tibet is a human liberation movement concerned with the civil rights of Tibetans. Reclaim the Night is an action organised by a feminist group that is concerned with rape and intimidation of women. Wobblies is a

forums for alternative/independent media. Far from being advocates of a single issue, GARAs are routinely involved in protesting issues that cross over into other areas of social critique and frequently link animal rights messages to broader campaigns<sup>44</sup>.

Herzog (1993) also refutes the stereotype of animal activists as overly sentimental. Based on research with 'fundamentalist' animal rights activists, he uses as evidence examples of reasoned, rational and intellectual responses to animal issues from some respondents. New Zealand GARAs are diverse in the degree of sentimentality they express with regard to animals and most are aware of the 'overly emotional' stereotype. Like Herzog's respondents, they make great efforts to present rational and logical arguments to the public and back up sentimental pleas with less emotional reasoning<sup>45</sup>.

One of the more common charges laid at the door of GARAs, in New Zealand as well as abroad, is that activists are terrorists; an accusation that reaches new degrees of gravity post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Take for example headlines such as *Terrorists Strike Again as US Congress Considers Bills to Outlaw Attacks on Animal Research Centres* (Skolnick, 1992), *U.K Science Responds to Terror* (Cherfas, 1990), and *New Federal-Legislation Can Be Effective In Fighting Terrorism Of Animal Rights Extremists* (1993), all of which link terrorism to animal rights activism, specifically direct action taken by grassroots or underground groups. Although more common overseas, the terrorist charge is not limited to foreign arms of the movement. Auckland Animal Action (AAA) has recently been the recipient of unfavourable media reports following an anti-fur protest at the L'Oreal Fashion Week in Auckland 2002, some of which likened AAA to the Islamic fundamentalist group Al Qaeda. This extract is taken from a protest update posted to a national email list by AAA.

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group that is part of the workers union movement. Food not Bombs is an anti-poverty action that distributes food to homeless people.

<sup>44</sup> For example anti-GE activists and animal rights groups worked together in November to protest against a bio-technology conference.

<sup>45</sup> For example, a picture of an oversized and crippled broiler chick may be accompanied with information regarding the health risks of eating the meat of hens that are routinely fed antibiotics.

Today there was a lot of talk on the possum issue and unfortunately most of it was pro possum killing but we always knew that this was going to be quite a difficult issue to take on and expected that we would be called just about every name under the sun but some of the reactions have just been ridiculous with one radio talk back host claiming today that Auckland Animal Action is the Bin Laden of New Zealand! How anyone can compare a peaceful protest to the attacks on the twin towers and think of them as the same is just plain crazy. But anyway they can call us what they will, but we will not stop standing up for what we know is right.

Work done by David A Nibert (1994) takes a more quantitative approach to determining whether animal rights and human rights are distinctly separate concerns. In his paper, *Animal Rights and Human Social Issues*, Nibert uses survey data to explore links between support for animal rights and opinions on eleven social issues<sup>46</sup>. The survey is limited in the conclusions it can draw about active animal rights campaigners because the sample did not specifically target animal rights activists, questions did not ascertain the level of animal rights support and, as Nibert concedes, the study was very loose in determining 'support for animal rights'<sup>47</sup>. Nibert does however draw some interesting conclusions.

Firstly, based on the fact that in seven out of the eleven questions, 'animal rights supporters' answered differently to non-supporters, "generally reporting less tolerance for violence and more acceptance of human diversity and choice" (Nibert, 1994: para 1 in section 'Discussion'), Nibert suggests that support for animal rights is related to other social issues. Second, Nibert states that although the strength of relationships was modest, "findings provide support for the assumption that the way people regard animals is related to the way they regard people." (1994: para 2 in section 'Discussion').

Helena Silverstein expresses a similar point of view in her book, *Unleashing Rights* (1996). Here she suggests that expanding the circle of rights to include animals strengthens the meaning of human rights rather than undermining it as other critics have proposed (1996:51). Silverstein asserts that one of the ways this is done is by reinforcing "the notion

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<sup>46</sup> Issues researched were gun control, acceptance of violence and rights for minority groups.

<sup>47</sup> Individuals who agreed with the following statement were taken to be animal rights supporters: "Some people say that animals have rights that people should respect. Would you agree or disagree?" (Nibert, 1994:ev).

that arbitrary demarcations, including those that justify racism, sexism, and other "isms," are inappropriate" (1996:51). The following statement by a GARA abroad expresses an opinion not uncommon to New Zealand GARAs.

I see this as protecting human and animal rights... [t]hey're related. It's not an issue of vegan or vegetarianism. It's an issue of animal cruelty<sup>48</sup>

While most GARAs do not state so explicitly that they see animal rights and human rights as being linked, as we will see in following chapters, conscious choices GARAs make show commitment to a general liberation ideology. Just as speciesism is deeply entrenched in economic, cultural and political systems so are other widespread forms of human domination that GARAs oppose.

This section has reviewed literature relating to animal rights, stressing the emphasis given to the social implications of human-animal relations. I have found that demographic and attitudinal analysis of animal protectionists, while useful, are often flawed by the tendency to homogenise the entire movement. I then went on to disprove claims that GARAs are solely concerned with non-human animals and introduced the idea that human and animal rights ideas are not only compatible but are commonly held simultaneously by GARAs. Chapter Five will explore social movement theory as it has been applied to the animal protection movement and investigate whether a theory can be found that covers the dual-ideology format of animal and general liberation at the basis of GARAs' actions.

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<sup>48</sup> Protestor quoted in *Star Ledger* newspaper article posted to New Zealand animal rights email list a few days after it was published on Monday, December 02, 2002. The protest marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) animal testing company.

## Babes in Hell

Severe confinement, monotony and constant deprivation inside piggeries leads pigs to extreme frustration and despair.

SAFE Campaign Report, 2001 (2)



Image 5: Pregnant Pig in a Sow Crate.



## 5 - ANIMAL RIGHTS & SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

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It has in this thesis been assumed that there is such a thing as a social movement based on animal rights. Scholars from disciplines as diverse as law, ethics and sociology have variously referred to animal protectionism as a 'new social movement', a 'social responsibility movement', a 'moral crusade' and a 'post-citizenship movement'. The argument for this chapter is that social movement theories that treat the entire animal protection movement as a homogenous entity overlook expressions of a general liberation ideology that make GARAs unique and fail to note fundamental differences that exist within the movement.

Social movement theory to date has been dominated by four main approaches, each of which encapsulates a multitude of divergent schools of thought. These are: classical-functionalist approaches; resource mobilization; political process; and cultural approaches. Cultural approaches have featured most frequently in analysis of the animal protection movement and of them Jasper says "[i]n the past ten years students of social movements have rediscovered the importance of culture" (1997:69) and turned their attention to socially constructed aspects of protest and collective action, which include identity building and meaning making. The emphasis on culture began with European scholars who responded to emerging social movements of the 1960s and 1970s by situating them within historical context and stressing the role of post-industrialist values in shaping grievances and protest strategies. Scholars of this approach saw that unlike 'old' social movements of the industrial era that were concerned with issues of citizenship rights and physical material benefits, the 'new' social movements were characteristic of the post-industrial society in that they struggled to change cultural meaning through manipulation of symbols, knowledge and human relations (1997:70). Where industrial movements had fought to gain political power, the 'new' post-industrial movements were suspicious of hierarchical state

and organizational power structures. A focus on culture became the new tool adopted by European scholars in approaching these 'new' movements.

While the term 'new social movement' has been widely criticised as a misleading label (e.g. Jasper, 1997:70; Klandermans, 1997:204), the emphasis on culture as an independent dimension of protest and social movement theory has been picked up in the last fifteen years by American theorists<sup>49</sup> and social dynamics such as identity, meaning construction and symbolism have also been incorporated. Jasper rejects differentiation according to historical location, i.e. 'old' or 'new', and uses instead the terms citizenship movement and post-citizenship movement to classify social movements according to types of grievances and strategies (1997:70). There are numerous different scholarly models within the cultural approaches that focus on different aspects of culture, e.g. frame alignment and identity, but at the crux of them all is the premise that culture plays a crucial role in the social construction of not only the environment within which social movements arise but also the formation of protest strategies.

A review of relevant literature may lead one to infer that each of the four dominant approaches is mutually exclusive, with some theorists noting that the "theory-bashing" rampant within social movement literature had become "so pervasive a characteristic" that the phenomenon warranted interest in itself (Loftland cited by Klandermans, 1997:199). Jasper (1997) explains the dilemma as resulting from several problems, two of which are: the tendency of new and young scholars to "carve out niches by attacking established scholars and their paradigms" (1997:19); and, the inherent narrow sightedness of a tradition of research that bases its claims on single case studies (1997:20). Jasper calls for an integrated approach to studies of protest and social movements that places new emphasis on certain dimensions of culture without ignoring the contributions of prior paradigms (1997:20).

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<sup>49</sup> Including some theorists previously associated with the resource mobilization and political process schools, such as Oberschall and McCarthy (cited in Jasper, 1997:70).



Following Jasper's lead, this paper pays particular attention to cultural dimensions in its analysis of GARAs and finds that while, on the surface, groups within the animal protection movement have similar goals and philosophies, a deeper look at philosophy and operation shows up important differences between GARAs and other animal protection groups. Social movement theories that focus only on the specific animal issues risk overlooking operational differences that reveal a lot about the group's attitudes to other social issues.

In their study of the animal protection movement in America, Jasper and Nelkin identify the movement as a moral crusade and say that most moral crusades focus on a single issue, such as abortion, pornography or drunken driving (1992:7), which crowds out other concerns. According to Jasper and Nelkin, "[a]nimals are a perfect cause for such a crusade: seen as innocent victims whose mistreatment demands immediate redress, they are an appealing lightning rod for moral concerns." (1992:8). In contrast to this position, I argue that far from having a single-issue focus, GARAs in New Zealand present a site for critique and rejection of widespread social injustice, to humans and non-humans, making it more closely related to general liberation movements.

Jasper and Nelkin refer to three kinds of moral crusades: welfarist; pragmatist; and fundamentalist (1992:8). Welfarists are said to "accept most current uses of animals but seek to minimise their suffering and pain" (1992:8) through public education and lobbying for government legislative change. Pragmatists "feel that certain species deserve greater consideration than others, and would allow humans to use animals when the benefits deriving from their use outweigh their suffering" (1992:9). From this perspective animals would be beneficiaries of moral consideration and reduced animal use is sought through legal actions such as protest, and negotiation. Fundamentalists "believe that people should never use animals for their own pleasures or interests, regardless of the benefits" (1992:9) on the grounds that animals are beings of inherent worth. Fundamentalists take an abolitionary stance that makes them far less inclined to compromise and negotiation. The illegal activities of groups such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) are classified in the fundamentalist category. However, aboveground groups like AWA that employ civil

disobedience tactics could also fit this category. An important point Jasper and Nelkin make is that these boundaries are not rigid and while a group or individual may believe in fundamentalist values, they could take a pragmatist approach in their actions.

Broadly speaking, according to Jasper and Nelkin, the three New Zealand groups described in an earlier section could be categorised as follows: RNZSPCA as welfarists; SAFE as pragmatists; and, grassroots groups as fundamentalists. Jasper and Nelkin's description serves this paper best in that it illustrates the diversity of philosophies, political positions and group structures within the movement.

In a later book, Jasper (1997) differentiates citizenship movements of the industrial era that focused mainly on gaining rights for human groups excluded from "full human rights, political participation or economic protection" and post-citizenship movements "composed of people already integrated into their society's political, economic, and educational systems" (1997:7). According to Jasper, post-citizenship movements of the last thirty years have tended to pursue 'post-industrial' aims, including animal rights. Because they are already recipients of basic rights, members of this latter type of social movement are concerned instead with pursuing benefits for others, "including on occasion the entire human species"<sup>50</sup> (1997:7). They therefore pursue moral rather than survival issues. Some other features of post-citizenship movements are ambivalence towards modern technology, an emphasis on changing the cultural sensibilities of one's society, and flexibility for post-citizenship movements to flow into one another (1997:7). According to Jasper, the animal rights movement is an example of a post-citizenship movement.

Lowe and Ginsberg (2002) tested Jasper's definition of the post-citizenship movement against their own survey of attendees at the 2000 Animal Rights Conference in McLean, Virginia. They concluded that attendees were well integrated into economic and educational structures, based on respondents qualifications and annual income; they pursued altruistic goals with little or no benefit to themselves (clearly the animal rights

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<sup>50</sup> Jasper classifies animal protection as a post-citizenship movement so in this case we can presume that members pursue benefits for other species as well.

agenda fits this bill); and they were dedicated to achieving *cultural* change, seen in the threefold increase in veganism over an earlier study (2002:203).

If we apply these three criteria to New Zealand GARAs we see a similar pattern. While activists may not be as wealthy as respondents studied overseas, they are active participants in the New Zealand economy and are mostly involved in pursuing or have achieved a tertiary qualification. They fight for animal rights because they believe in the inherent value of animals and wish to gain benefits for animals that will not affect them personally and they are almost exclusively vegan<sup>51</sup>.

There is, however, more to Jasper's post-citizenship model than the above three criteria. The following extracts comment on other important elements of post-citizenship movements discussed by Jasper that refer to worldviews concerning broader topics.

Among post-industrial movements, especially, there is considerable attention to equality within the group, to the relationships between leaders and others, [and] to democratic processes for decision making... Sometimes the experiments are cumbersome and "inefficient" from a purely strategic point of view; an insistence on consensus, for instance, can prevent any action. But from a cultural perspective, these efforts may have important results, opening up our imaginations of what the future can hold (Jasper, 1997:65).

Jasper here describes equality-based operational choices as factors typical of a post-citizenship movement. They reflect an important effort to create a certain kind of culture that challenges the social norm. Jasper claims that the animal rights movement is a post-citizenship movement yet it is unclear whether he intends the term to include all groups, welfarist, pragmatist and fundamentalist. In their previous book, Jasper and Nelkin describe the organisation of one animal 'rights' group as being anything but equality based (1992:46). They then go on to generalise the group's "impatience and indifference to democratic process" to the whole animal rights movement.

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<sup>51</sup> My own observations have shown that with the exception of some new members (those who have joined in the past year) the vast majority of GARA are vegan or are becoming vegan.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight, the organisational principles employed by GARAs are not typical of all groups in the animal protection movement. GARAs place more emphasis on the 'equality' part of Jasper's statement than do other animal protection, and animal rights, groups. Here we see that equality and egalitarian principles are part of a general liberation ideology unique within the animal protection movement to GARAs.

Thus animal rights organisers package appeals in left-liberal terms: large corporations abuse animals in their reckless search for profits; consumer culture encourages testing on rabbits in order to invent "one more shade of mascara"; agribusiness deploys ruthless technologies that intensify the suffering of farm animals. Animal rights arguments are framed in ways that appeal to those whose worldviews picture capitalist corporations and markets as sinister, and whose ideologies recommend government regulation (Jasper, 1997:167).

Animal liberation arguments frequently oppose capitalist corporations, sinister markets, and blame governments for failing to provide animals with adequate legislative protection. However, opposition to these forces by GARAs is not based solely on the perceived injustice they cause to animals. A general liberation ideology employs the same worldviews on the basis of human oppression and environmental degradation.

Generalised trust in the political system, furthermore, affects political behaviour, usually dampening protest because of an assumption that the government will fix things. (For those who do protest, system trust may encourage use of legal rather than illegal channels). Its opposite would seem to be a mistrust of experts, bureaucracy, and their instrumental attitudes, a stance that has spread in recent decades (Jasper, 1997:112).

Groups within the animal protection movement occupy different positions relating to the degree of system trust they express in their tactical choices. Whether a group chooses legal or illegal actions, marks an important difference in ideology. The latter position in the above extract is part of a general liberation ideology expressed in tactical choices, organisational structures and lifestyle of GARAs.

Jasper's broad definition of a post-citizenship movement does appear to accommodate the varied positions of different groups in the animal protection movement, or at least the animal rights movement. I argue that applying the post-citizenship theory to the animal protection movement, while useful on some occasions, can limit analysis of specific groups by homogenising branches and playing down important differences in operation and ideology. I propose instead the Six-Axis model described in Chapter Two as a way to distinguish between groups that exhibit commitment to a dual-ideology of animal liberation and general liberation.

Similar to Jasper's analysis of citizenship and post-citizenship movements, is the distinction Morris and Braine make between three social movements types: liberation movements; equality-based special issue movements; and social responsibility movements. They claim that by relating the goal of the movement to its 'pre-existing group base' one can distinguish between historically subordinate groups that develop oppositional consciousness as a way to fight domination, and other social movements whose members are not as deeply entrenched in systems of domination.

According to Morris and Braine, liberation movements are almost entirely made up of people from historically oppressed groups "whose daily existence is negatively impacted" by the systems of domination they aim to overthrow. Membership in the subordinate group is often externally imposed through social indicators such as gender, class, race, and ethnicity and usually results in physical segregation (2001:34). The long-standing nature of oppression and segregation leads to development of conflicting cultures of subordination and oppositional consciousness that movement leaders draw upon to create identity and stimulate mobilization.

In contrast, equality-based special issue movements "address specific issues that exclusively or disproportionately affect a particular oppressed group" (Morris & Braine, 2001:35). While these movements often rely upon the ideologies of resistance developed by liberation movements, their goals are smaller and more specific than the complete revolution of large-scale systems of human domination. Some examples of equality-based

special issue movements are the pro-choice and environmental racism movements which may attract members of women's liberation and Black liberation movements respectively because they fuel activism with ideologies developed by these broader movements (2001:35). Equality-based special issue movements face the task of aligning the "grievances and cultural interpretations of the movements with those of liberation movements" in order to rally members and create a sense of shared identity.

Social responsibility movements are different both in their goals and the social histories of their membership. They challenge conditions in society that the group sees as undesirable for the general population and seek to effect change in the ways corporations, individuals and governments act. Humanity is the beneficiary of social responsibility movements. According to Morris and Braine, the crucial difference seen in social responsibility movements is that the membership chooses to identify with the movement's cause and individuals are not penalised in society generally through economic, social or political oppression (Morris & Braine, 2001:36). Members are therefore not united by a common history prior to participation in the group and there is no culture of subordination from which a collective identity can be formed. Movement leaders must construct injustice frames and collective action identities in order to establish a common ground for group cohesion and resistance. Peace movements, anti-nuclear movements and Mothers Against Drunk Driving are cited as examples of social responsibility movements (2001:36).

Locating the animal protection movement within Morris and Braine's framework is not an easy task. Simply stated, animal protectionists do not come from a historically subordinate group, although the beings that they represent do. From the perspective of animal rights philosophy, animals are valuable in their own right and therefore a movement for their protection is not just a social responsibility movement concerned with issues of humanity, it has an anti-subordination element similar to that of the liberation movements. Could it then be classified as an equality-based special issue movement? If for the purpose of this discussion we agree to classify animals as GARAs do, a population that experiences oppression and discrimination, then clearly the movement could be seen as one with liberation ideals and goals. The difficulty in ending analysis here is the scope of change



sought by the grassroots animal rights movement. They approach animal issues from economic, cultural and political angles seeking not reform but revolution of human domination of non-human animals, in both the ways that we treat animals and how we think about them. In short, they propose abolition of the culturally constructed dichotomy that allows humans to distance themselves from other sentient beings. When activists align themselves with non-human animals they align themselves with the underdog (no pun intended) and thus create sympathy for victims of all forms of oppression whether it be based on class, race, species, gender, ethnicity, religion or any other category.

Clearly the animal protection movement generally, and the grassroots animal rights movement specifically, present examples to fit all three of Morris and Braine's categories but can be explained fully by none. Like Jasper's post-citizenship theory, Morris and Braine's analysis shows up as inadequate and too simplistic when we try to apply it to GARAs in New Zealand. I propose that the Six-Axis model, detailed in Tables 1 and 2, is a useful tool that, when applied to the animal protection movement in New Zealand, finds GARAs to be unique in their radical position and dual-ideology.

### **ONE STRUGGLE, ONE FIGHT! HUMAN FREEDOM, ANIMAL RIGHTS!**

"[T]hroughout recorded history, men and women have found that animals were "good to think with," a rich source of symbols that humans could use to impose order on the world" (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992:6). While I do argue that the grassroots arm of the animal protection movement shows simultaneously a deep concern with animal and non-animal oppression, it should be stressed that the purpose of this essay is in no way to suggest that the individuals who sacrifice time, energy and money to the animal rights cause are simply fighting for animals because they see them to be valuable *symbols* of the greater evils in modern society. GARAs do believe that animals are valuable in their own right, just as humans are, and need no other reason or personal pay-off to justify their involvement in the fight for animal freedom. They are all too aware of the derogatory accusation made frequently by members of society that dismiss GARAs as 'spoilt, white, rich kids with a chip on their shoulder and no real problems of their own to protest'. The



danger of an analysis, such as the one in this paper, that links animal rights activism to a general liberation ideology, is that the reader may see it to be supportive of such a stance. Again, it should be made clear that this is not the case. GARAs *do* genuinely care about animals and many individuals have told me that even if they had to operate in the most hierarchical group, if it was helping animals they would put other issues aside.

GARAs use animal rights issues as a site for expressing complete disagreement with animal use *as well as* dissatisfaction with other models of oppression that reveal themselves in power hierarchies, consumption-production distance and dichotomising cultural practices. So, yes GARAs do fit into the category of a post-citizenship movement. However the argument for this thesis is that GARAs' actions and ideology go beyond the boundaries of a single-issue or equality based movement and show commitment to general liberation for all animals from structures of control and power that cause oppression. Namely, they are anti-domination and fight against domination wherever it presents itself in economic, cultural and political forms.

The phrase that is the title of this paper, and this section, comes from a chant frequently heard at demonstrations and protests held by GARA groups across New Zealand. So far in this paper I have set the scene by introducing GARAs and the animal protection movement, and by reviewing existing literature. I have argued that researchers and writers do not give enough attention to differences between animal protection, and more specifically animal 'rights', groups – a shortcoming that leads them to overlook important differences in philosophy and practices that make groups unique. While I do acknowledge that animal protection is a post-citizenship movement, I have found the focus of this theory is too broad to isolate elements that differentiate GARAs. In response I have proposed the Six-Axis model, detailed in Tables 1 and 2, as a more useful tool.

The remainder of this paper is devoted to illustrating the argument set out thus far and exploring the six axes that differentiate GARAs from other branches of the animal protection movement. Ethnographic material and interview extracts are included in the hope that they will bring the pages to life with GARAs' own words and lived experiences.

## **PART TWO: THE ETHNOGRAPHY**

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If part one was the place to raise the argument, part two will be the place to provide evidence of it. In the following chapters this thesis changes gear and draws on ethnographic material to illustrate the points raised in Part One. Chapter Six discusses the difference between welfare and rights philosophy, paying particular attention to the objectives and approaches of different groups. I argue that the combination of radical positions on *all* of the animal protection continua represents an ideology of animal liberation that can be contrasted with animal welfare and animal rights. I will then go on to investigate how animal liberation ideology is compatible with general liberation ideology, particularly in the form of human rights. Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine are also primarily ethnographic and concentrate on the three axes of a general liberation ideology: lifestyle, organisation and tactics. In each of these chapters I attempt to show how GARAs are different from other groups in the animal protection movement and how these differences are expressions of worldviews that are concerned with human oppression and domination. Together, these worldviews form a general liberation ideology.

## Like a Bird in a Cage

Like a bird in a cage  
Got nowhere to fly,  
Nothing to do  
Just sit here and cry.

Like a prisoner in his cell  
Just sits there and waits,  
Hoping that someone  
Will open the gates

Nothing to do.  
Not a thing.  
Feeling so sad  
And got no song to sing.

Looking outside  
It's a bright sunny day.  
The door has been opened  
So I can fly away.

Tui Boyle, 11 years (1999), "Like a Bird in a Cage"  
*In 100 New Zealand Poems for Children*



Image 6: Hens in Battery Cages

## 6 - PHILOSOPHY: HUMANS, ANIMALS & LIBERATION

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All branches of the animal protection movement seem to agree that animals do have rights. However, the fundamental question that differentiates the philosophies of welfarists and rightsists is whether they believe animals have the right to be protected *by* their owner, or to be protected *from* being owned.

The first section of this chapter discusses animal rights philosophy and explores the main ways in which it is distinguishable from animal welfare. The second section looks at the experiences GARAs have with animals that lead them to develop an animal rights philosophy. The third section further differentiates GARAs from other animal protectionists by exploring the other two animal ideology axes outlined in Tables 1 and 2: objectives and approach. Here I propose that the term animal liberation ideology be used to refer to those animal protection groups that take a radical position in all three axes. Finally in section four, I investigate whether animal liberation and general liberation ideologies are compatible.

### ANIMAL RIGHTS & ANIMAL WELFARE

Close ties between humans and animals go back millennia (Noske, 1989:1) and it is therefore not surprising that concern with animal treatment is not a new phenomenon. Philosophers have been contemplating the moral status of animals since Aristotle, Descartes, Bentham and Salt, and in 1714, when questions about animals' ability to experience sensation and feelings was beginning to arise, doubts about the ethics of castrating domestic animals were being voiced (Guither, 1998:1). Since the nineteenth century, organised efforts to improve treatment of animals have been conducted in the US and England with the establishment of such groups as RSPCA in London in 1824 and the

American Humane Association in 1877. These early humane and protection societies set the foundations for later animal welfare organisations that continue to receive widespread support in the twenty-first century.

In the 1970s, philosopher Peter Singer published what is widely considered to be the most influential animal rights book, *Animal Liberation* (1975). His text challenged taken-for-granted beliefs about human moral superiority and brought into question the assumption that a 'moral base class' consisted of humans alone. He attacked human reasoning for excluding animals, particularly mammals, from moral consideration and argued persuasively that if what entitles a human to moral standing is posed too high in order to exclude all non-human animals (e.g. power of rational thought or language), many humans (e.g. babies, the mentally disabled) would also be excluded (Singer, 1993:23). Singer proposed that any attempt to differentiate between humans and animals on the grounds of rationality, self-consciousness or language was nothing more than speciesism<sup>52</sup> and a moral base class should instead be developed depending on sentience<sup>53</sup> (Guither, 1998:14). While some argue that the interests of animals cannot be known, most philosophers agree that animals do feel pain and it is therefore not in their interests to be farmed for wool, killed for food, hunted for fur or made the subjects of vivisection (1998:14).

Considering the possible flaws in Singer's ethic<sup>54</sup>, Regan suggested instead an animal *liberation* ethic dependent on rights (Callicott, 1993:7). For Regan, all subjects of life have inherent value that is not dependent on their use value for humans (Guither, 1998:6). From this perspective, individual animals, human and non-human, are entitled to equal consideration of interests; a moral principle that in the animal rights view should guide how humans treat animals.

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<sup>52</sup> Speciesism is a term originating from Ryder and made popular by Singer that suggests we consider our treatment of animals as a form of prejudice with parallels in racism and sexism.

<sup>53</sup> Ability to feel physical sensations, such as pleasure and pain, and emotions, such as comfort and stress.

<sup>54</sup> For example, if animals can be raised without suffering and killed "humanely" should they then be farmed for food?

The 1960s and 1970s saw a revitalization of the animal protection movement in the US and Europe and a boom in the emergence of new groups (Ryder, 2000:163). These organisations were marked by a shift in ideology away from a welfare perspective and towards a philosophical imperative that “animals, like humans, possess certain fundamental and inalienable rights, and therefore should be treated as moral equals” (Guither, 1998:4). Groups that held this philosophical position soon came to be known as ‘animal rights organisations’, to differentiate them from existing welfare groups; thus the philosophically radical branch of the animal protection movement was born.

In short, the animal welfare philosophy is against cruelty and is morally concerned with humane handling and treatment of animals but maintains that regarding animals as resources for human use is acceptable (1998:14). In contrast, animal rights philosophy postulates that as sentient beings of inherent worth, animals should be granted moral consideration equal to that of humans and that animals should not be used for human benefit under any circumstances.

## **EXPERIENCE & ANIMAL RIGHTS PHILOSOPHY**

A large body of literature on animal rights ethics and philosophy exists in circulation both within the academic realm and in popular culture. However, during the time of my research I seldom heard GARAs discuss this literature and many individuals appeared to be poorly read in the theories put forward by well known animal rights philosophers and ethicists such as Singer, Regan and Francione<sup>55</sup>. While nearly all participants followed a vegan diet and were involved with GARA groups primarily for ethical reasons, it soon became clear that GARAs’ positions on animal rights were based on their personal experiences with animals rather than academic arguments. When GARAs talk about animals they express worldviews that explore many of the same ethical questions and issues that are put forward by animal rights philosophers.

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<sup>55</sup> There are notable exceptions as some activists have read many animal rights books. However it remains true that activists very seldom debate, discuss or refer to literature by leading philosophers.

GARAs construct a philosophy in opposition to that of dominant society. Consider the positions available to animals in New Zealand: food, property, pets, financial investments, entertainment, or pests. With the exception of bats, New Zealand has no native land-based mammals and the only introduced mammals that do exist free from human ownership, such as possums, rabbits, wild goats and deer, are classified as pests that humans have authority to hunt for food or sport. Listening to GARAs speak about animals, and their experiences with them, it becomes clear that they do not accept dominant views and that they are instead bearers of an animal rights philosophy. Take for example the following stories recounted by interviewees:

My mum used to keep chickens running around out the back garden, stuff like that and rescued four pigs on the roadside the other day. They said they wouldn't normally have done that but because of me being around over the last few years, and making them more aware of things, they actually picked them up. Their mother had obviously been shot by a pig hunter and these four little piglets were running around on the side of the road. So they'd picked them up, they'd taken them home and they are caring for them at home now. (Andy)

My first cat. She was amazing, just so much more than what you'd expect from just a normal cat that I'd dealt with before that. She had like personality, everything. That was a major turning point. I was like, "wow, not just a dumb cat who thinks of food and warm laps," this is a cat who if I was upset about something would sit with me until I wasn't, stuff like that. That was a big turning point. That was before everything else. Wow, there's so much more than people are told, what people know. (Andy)

I've grown up with animals being respected and free. I love going home and just sitting in the garden, just watching the chickens cruise around. (Rachel)

I had this dog you see that had lived with me for seventeen years, and when he died, it was ages until I got another one. But eventually I did, and I remember when my uncle died I was really upset, we were really close, and this puppy kept coming and nudging at me. At the time it was like "oh, get out of the way" but he knew, he was trying to comfort me. He died after about nine months, fell off the bed and broke his leg. I took him to the vet and he died on the operating table, bled to death. I'll never have another dog, not after that. (James)

The reader may be thinking that the stories described above are not at all unique to GARAs, nor is it uncommon for people to have close and meaningful relationships with their pets without becoming animal rights activists. I would agree. The difference comes in



the ability of GARAs to extend the identification and closeness they feel with one animal to the entire species of which that animal is a part and then across the species boundary to all living and breathing creatures. In other words, GARAs do not simply attribute sentience and inherent value to animals with whom they have firsthand experience of closeness, they extend these attributes to all animals regardless of whether they are culturally constructed as attractive and desirable, such as dogs and cats, or repulsive and unfavoured, such as chickens and pigs.

Not all experiences GARAs have with animals are pleasant. Jane expressed that she felt disturbed by things she had witnessed inside factory farms, but went on to say that she nonetheless valued these experiences:

I think it's really important for activists to see how animals are kept, so you really know what you are fighting against. I don't necessarily mean by sneaking into a shed in the middle of a protest, I would prefer it if farmers let the public see how animals are kept so people didn't have to sneak in. (Jane)

GARAs recognise that it is not necessary for an activist to have firsthand experience of suffering animals in order to be passionate and effective campaigners, however, it remains common for groups to show video footage, pictures and documentaries about the conditions in New Zealand factory farms and foreign vivisection laboratories to potential and existing members. For some members these video screenings were an important catalyst for subsequent involvement. James explains that he was introduced to the animal rights movement by a video screening that confirmed his gut feeling that vivisection was not right:

[S]o I went up there and watched some videos basically, I watched the HLS videos with the guy beating the shit out of that dog...decided that I didn't like it... and the more, I suppose it comes back to the whole 'knowledge is power' thing. The more knowledge that I had the more... screwed up I thought the whole thing was. And I can remember watching one video about the ALF and afterwards I grabbed [the person I had come with] to one side and I said "hey I'm in, where do I sign up" you know, "I want to join the ALF" and that was just total naivety, I mean I'd only been involved, well I hadn't even been involved in the movement, I'd only been hanging around with them for two or three days. But [I] knew deep down that what was

happening was really screwed up... so I was totally opposed to vivisection just from just an ethical and a cruelty point of view, the scientific thing, once it was explained to me, made total sense as well. (James)

Just as positive experiences with animals can reinforce for GARAs the idea that animals are sentient beings of inherent worth, firsthand and mediated encounters with animals that are distressed and in pain reinforce the belief that animals can experience emotions such as frustration, stress, boredom and depression. GARAs believe that no matter what the benefits, animals do not deserve to be exploited as objects of human use any more than humans do.

GARAs express in conversation and through their actions, that the natural embodiment of this extension of barriers is the adoption of a vegan diet and lifestyle. Consider the case of meat eating and categories of meat. Many meat-eating New Zealanders I have spoken to express outrage and disgust at the Korean practice of eating dog meat. People do not like to make the link between their beloved puppy Rover, with whom they share a close relationship, and the food on their plate. To a limited extent, most individuals can extend the identification they have with some animals to other animals within the same species. Yet when asked to go beyond the barrier of the species, people find identification becomes increasingly more difficult as animals of different species exhibit less humanlike qualities, are further removed from the immediate surroundings of the individual, or are socially constructed as less attractive.

It is no coincidence that veganism is more widespread among GARAs than any other group in the animal protection movement. Veganism is a way that GARAs can consciously bring their animal rights philosophy into action. When GARAs decide to follow a vegan diet and lifestyle, it is an external symbol of the internal shift in thinking away from the dominant ideology and towards a philosophy that views animals as worthy in their own right. GARAs are open to an extension of the close relationship between themselves and Rover, not only to Rover's friends but also to sheep, cows, chickens, pigs and all other sentient creatures. The extension of moral boundaries represents a breakdown of the culturally ingrained discrimination that is speciesism.

So far, I have stated that the term ‘animal rights’ refers to a radical philosophical position concerning animals and that for GARAs the natural response to an animal rights philosophy is the adoption of a vegan diet and lifestyle. But not all ‘animal rights’ groups show the same commitment to veganism that is seen in GARA groups.

The term ‘animal rights’ is problematic when used by, and in relation to, the animal protection movement. It is widely used by activists, theorists and critics to refer to a range of groups that have varied philosophical positions and objectives. In popular media, academic literature and by activists themselves, the term is also used to differentiate radical branches of the animal protection movement from their welfare-focused, conservative contemporaries. For a group to say it is an animal *rights* group lacks sufficient specificity, and raises the question of whether the animal *rights* philosophy is synonymous with only one strategy and objective. Take the following story as an example:

A few weeks before this paper was completed, a discussion began within New Zealand GARAs about how the term ‘animal rights’ should be used. The debate arose when the animal rights organisation PETA<sup>56</sup>, tried to rally support for an international campaign against a chain of fast-food restaurants that primarily serve chicken. PETA’s main argument was that the meat served at this particular restaurant came from chickens that had suffered painful deaths and they called for a change to more humane slaughter processes. Many GARAs subsequently voiced the opinion that they did not want to support a campaign that did not demand complete abolition of animal use and that took a small-step approach, which they associated with welfarist philosophy.

In this example, PETA is not radical across all three animal ideology axes. While PETA claim to be an ‘animal rights’ organisation (PETA, 2003), in their objectives and approach a much more conservative line is pushed. As we will see in the following section, this contrasts with GARA groups that take a radical position on all three animal-axes.

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<sup>56</sup> PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is an American group that claims on its website to be an animal *rights* organisation (PETA,2003),

## **ANIMAL LIBERATION IDEOLOGY: PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES & APPROACH**

Generally speaking, welfare and rights are located at opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum within the animal protection movement. SPCA is widely regarded to be closest to the conservative-welfare end and GARAs nearer the radical-rights position. Differences in philosophy within the animal protection movement are tolerated by GARAs in so far as it is recognised that welfarists do genuinely care for animals even though they may not grant them value equal to humans'. However, different objectives and approaches can be more difficult for them to accept. As Geoff points out in the following extract, the changes sought by larger 'welfare' organizations do not go far enough for GARA groups and can even be seen to impede the progress of the movement:

[T]he difference between say AWA and SPCA would be SPCA would say... "Yes - ban battery farming but these barn laid eggs are fine". And we [AWA] would say "At the very least ban battery farming"...When it comes down to it, it is better for chickens as long as consumers...humans know that barn laid eggs are in a way not that much better... 'cause it's the little winnable things that aren't always the best. Like with the... Swiss, they banned antibiotics in chicken feed and stuff, and everyone was like, "hooray, we banned them, yay," and everyone started eating more chicken... (Geoff)

Welfarists frequently promote the objective of reform of existing practices in order to reduce pain and suffering in animals. From this perspective animals are considered sentient beings that can experience pain, but use of animals for human benefit or consumption is not considered unacceptable so long as unnecessary pain is avoided. In their approach, welfarists focus on small-step changes and emphasise campaigns such as more humane slaughter techniques, enriched battery cages<sup>57</sup>, and reduction in the numbers of live animals used in research.

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<sup>57</sup> The term 'enriched cage' refers to a battery cage that is slightly larger than those in current use and which has additions such as a perch and scratch sheet for hens to work down their claws.

At the opposite extreme is an objective to abolish all animal use for human benefit. From this perspective, animals are not only sentient beings, they are also beings of inherent worth, entitled to a life free from human use and oppression. A no-compromise approach is seen in calls for an end to animal slaughter, complete banning of the battery cage, and the prohibition of animal use in research.

The difference between the objectives of abolition or reform points to one of the main differences between animal protection groups: what they consider to be the cause of animal cruelty. Conservative groups, like welfarists, focus on mistreatment of animals by maladjusted humans, and their goals and values are, for the most part, compatible or reconcilable with systems of industrial capitalist society. In contrast, radical groups ground cruelty in systemic institutional mistreatment<sup>58</sup> (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992:6). They see oppression of non-human animals as rooted in political, economic and cultural institutions of contemporary western societies that create a social hierarchy where humans occupy the highest and most powerful position in the species ladder, and place white males the top of the human species.

It frequently becomes apparent that not all animal 'rights' groups support an abolition objective and a no-compromise approach<sup>59</sup>. For this reason, 'animal rights' becomes confusing when it is used as a blanket term to refer to *all* non-welfarist animal protection groups. I use the term 'animal liberation' to refer to the ideology of those groups who take a radical stance in *all* three axes, philosophy, objectives and approach. In New Zealand, GARAs occupy the most radical position in all three axes and are the embodiment of the animal liberation ideology<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Note that for GARA, even though animal cruelty is institutionally ingrained individuals are not free from culpability.

<sup>59</sup> While in theory they may be abolitionist, animal rights groups frequently support reformist changes and campaigns, for example see the PETA story in the previous section.

<sup>60</sup> While GARA groups do occasionally support small-step campaigns, they will not initiate them and usually use the campaign as a platform for advancing a more radical position. For example, when AWA members were getting SPCA anti-battery cage submission cards signed, they used the opportunity to speak to members of the public about stopping eating eggs altogether and becoming vegan.

Considering the criticisms of GARAs presented at the end of Chapter Four, the natural line of enquiry to follow is whether an animal liberation ideology is compatible with concern for humans' wellbeing. The following section explores this question in more detail.

## **ANIMALS & GENERAL LIBERATION IDEOLOGY**

The primary concern of GARAs is the mistreatment and suffering of non-human animals at the hands of humans. However, in contrast to the opinions of critics quoted in Chapter Four, being sympathetic to animal issues does not mean GARAs have no compassion left for humans. GARAs are also advocates of a general liberation ideology that expresses concern with issues that affect the autonomy and power of individual humans. Animal use does not exist in isolation. It is supported by social, economic and political systems that benefit groups of humans in a variety of ways<sup>61</sup>. GARAs see that in many cases the same systems that support animal oppression also support human oppression as well. In this way, human and animal issues are linked by GARAs and, as we will see in Chapter Seven, in some instances the link is more explicit than in others.

The general liberation worldviews most overtly expressed by GARAs are: capitalism, which is synonymous with big business, is profit driven and immoral; oppression is bad and comes from inequalities of power inherent in social, political and economic hierarchies; individuals are as much responsible for the problems in the world as are culturally ingrained institutions; and, government and bureaucracy cannot be trusted. Capitalist practices and values, government control and inefficiency and individuals' irresponsible attitudes are protested by GARAs on the grounds that they are causes of animal suffering. However, according to GARAs, humans are potential victims of these systems as well.

One participant explained that he saw animal and human rights as interdependent. According to his perspective, animal rights is concerned with breaking down the false

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<sup>61</sup> For examples consider the financial benefits to farmers of allowing animal use, and the social practices that depend upon activities, such as deer hunting, horse racing etc.



dichotomy that exists between humans and non-humans. He expressed a belief that if GARAs and others accept that the human-animal dichotomy is false and that humans do not have the right to dominion, they may also accept that other dichotomies are false: dichotomies based deep in our cultural understandings of ourselves and our societies including those between black and white, man and woman, elite and layman, upper class and working class.

GARAs invoke rights language as a way to raise awareness about animal issues. In doing so, they draw on the understandings people already have about human rights movements, such as civil rights, women's rights and workers' rights. Here we see that GARAs assert an allegiance with past and contemporary liberation movements (e.g. gay liberation and indigenous rights) as they struggle to expand the moral boundary in dominant ideology to include non-human animals.

Why do I give a shit about a chicken? Because I've given one thing, or an animal, a chance. A chance of experiencing life and that's what I want to do personally. I want to get out there and experience life. I want to get out there and do shit. I want to travel. I want to meet people. I want to experience people, and to me that one word is really big; experience. I want to get out there and experience people and social climates and social behaviours and the whole social thing but I want to experience places as well. I want to be able to let that one chicken experience what a chicken should experience - the possibility of being able to get out and see the sun or you know scratch in dirt or whatever (James)

James expressed why he cared about a chicken enough to consider endangering his own safety to liberate just one or two animals. His words clearly articulate his perception that he, and presumably all other humans, has the right to experience life. The value James puts on this entitlement is the basis for his taking action to achieve liberation for other beings. James' comment is not so much that he cares about the individual chicken, it is that he cares about the position chickens (and other oppressed beings) are put into by social, economic and political structures. In other words, when he takes action for animals, James shows he rejects the socially constructed domination of animals, and some humans, by specific humans and human institutions.



James stresses the parallel that he sees between his own right to freely experience life and that which he believes should be available to other animals: he wants the same rights to 'experience' for himself and the chicken. This is not to say that GARAs think animals should have *all* the same rights as humans, they believe instead that all animals, human and non-human, should have access to all experiences natural to their species: chickens should be able to stretch their wings and scratch at dirt; humans should receive equal treatment regardless of race, creed, sexuality etc.

While it may be satisfying to free one chicken from the cage that holds it, GARAs recognise that real liberation will occur only when the chicken is freed from the culturally constructed domination persistent in dominant ideology. The philosophical and practical approach of animal liberation depends upon a revolution of systems in industrial capitalist society<sup>62</sup>. From this position, GARAs' actions can be seen as simultaneous expressions of a dual-ideology. Take for example a protest against an intensive factory farm: while the central focus is animal-use, and is therefore an expression of animal liberation ideology, the protest also makes a more general anti-capitalist statement about the introduction of factory-like conditions in the farmyard.

The following three chapters explore the three axes of a general ideology (refer to Tables 1 and 2) as they are experienced by GARAs: lifestyle, organisation and tactics. On each of these axes, I present examples of GARAs' differentiation from other animal protection groups and I discuss the relationships between specific choices GARAs make and the worldviews that inform a general liberation ideology.

Chapter Seven focuses on GARAs' lifestyle and presents individuals' choices as a form of 'conscious' living. I explore primarily the worldview expressed by GARAs that finds capitalism, which is synonymous with big business, to be immoral. I discuss the relationship between animals and capitalist values and practices and find that GARAs oppose capitalism through conscious living for reasons of both animal and human

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<sup>62</sup> For example, welfarists believe "humane" farming can be achieved with industrial society's values, while animal liberationists believe it cannot. They promote instead a vegan diet and an end to farming altogether.

liberation. Chapter Eight concentrates on the organisational ideals GARAs promote and relate them to worldviews which see oppression as resulting from inequalities of power inherent in social, political and economic hierarchies. Chapter Nine investigates the tactics preferred by GARAs. Here I explore GARAs' distrust of government and bureaucracy, and their view that finds individuals to be culpable for their actions even when those actions are culturally ingrained as acceptable.

... Invasive experiments such as permanent cannulation of the digestive tract are often unacceptable in companion animals... Model animals are used for ethical or practical reasons because direct measurements on the animal species of interest may be difficult to obtain. The rat is a convenient animal model that is often used for determination of protein quality in human diets... [T]he rats were asphyxiated in carbon dioxide gas and the ileal contents, 20 cm anterior to the ileocecal junction were removed, freeze-dried and analyzed for amino acids and chromium...

Wouter H. Hendriks and Marieke Emmens (1998:2801-2)

*Apparent Ileal Nitrogen and Amino Acid Digestibility of a Moist Cat Food*

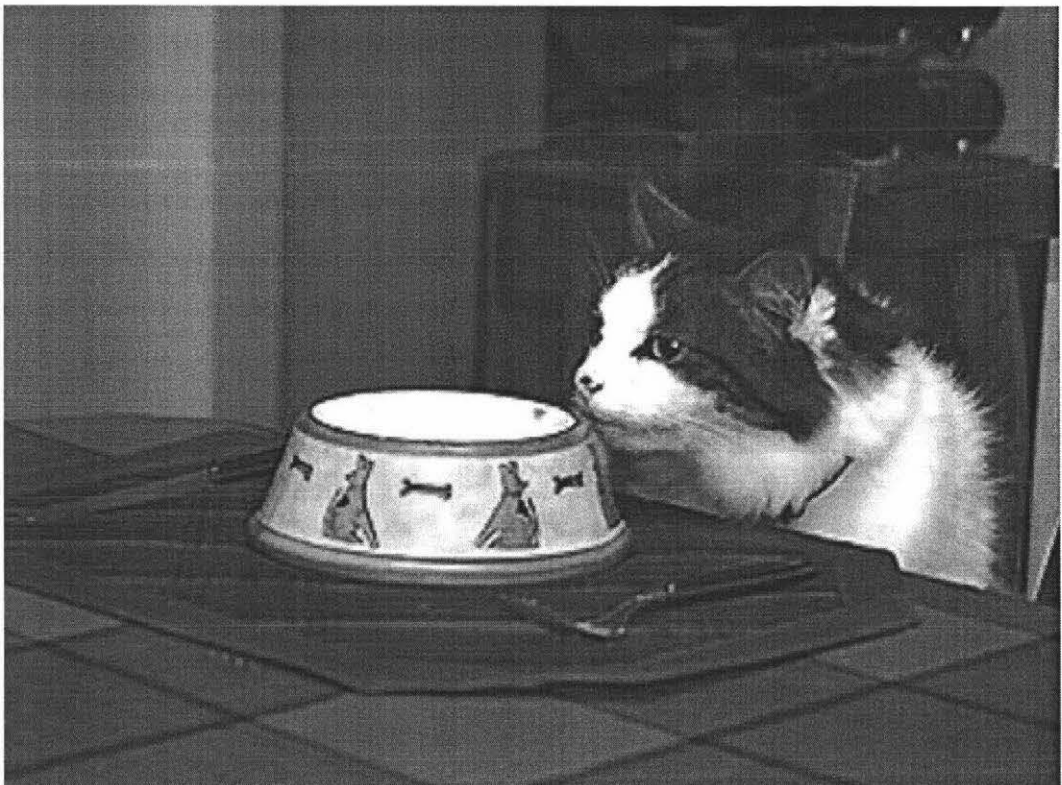


Image 7: Raju

## 7 - LIFESTYLE: CONSCIOUS LIVING

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One of the things I really believe is that how I chose to live my life actually makes a difference. I think that belief is really important when you're an activist and are putting energy into lots of seemingly small things, like being vegan. Every time I think, "oh I wonder if this has got animal products in it – oh, it should be fine", I think "well no". Because everything I do makes a difference and I should try and make as much difference as I can in my lifestyle. A lot of people will say, stuff like "Oh god it's not going to make any difference if you do this, you're only one person" and it's just not a way that I could live my life (Jane)

One of the first things I noticed when I became involved with GARAs was that individuals are hyperaware of ways in which their own actions impact on the world around them and that the primary way they showed awareness was through a vegan diet and lifestyle. I also noticed that veganism is more widespread among GARA groups than any other branch of the animal protection movement. This fact alone seemed an adequate reason for investigating the phenomenon further.

As was discussed in Chapter Six, veganism is to GARAs the natural response to an animal rights philosophy that is developed primarily through experiences with animals. According to Jamison, Wenk and Parker, "veganism provides an elaborate superstructure with which activists support their lives" (2000: para 3 in section 'Code'). In other words, veganism is the way that GARAs bring their ethics into action.

GARAs regularly discuss recipes, vegan-friendly shops and cafes, and the difficulties they encounter when interacting with non-vegan relatives, friends and society in general. They also often talk about their experiences of becoming vegan when they are asked about how they got involved with animal rights, and social events organised by GARAs frequently revolve around vegan food. Veganism is not, however, only about what an individual eats: it is a style of living that requires conscious consideration of all daily practices including what food one eats, the clothes one wears, the products one buys,

sources of entertainment and in which industry employment is found. GARAs become conscious of how they live and allow no part of their life to go without scrutiny in the search for ways individuals can reduce their own participation in animal-use industries. The message most avidly promoted is that veganism is the moral alternative to a life that causes animal suffering. In veganism we see the most explicit expression of an animal liberation ideology: GARAs set the example of animal rights philosophy through their own daily actions and attempt to abolish animal use and consumption from their lifestyles.

However, the more I observed GARAs' lifestyles, the more I became aware of a second level of conscious living that, while still mindful of animal-use, was concerned with participation in other practices that GARAs find immoral. I saw that GARAs also keep in mind environmental, humanitarian and business ethics issues when they chose how to spend their time and money.

Conscious living is therefore exercised by GARAs as an expression of both animal liberation and general liberation ideologies. Animal liberation ideology is seen in the practice of veganism as both diet and lifestyle, and general liberation ideology is seen in almost every part of life, including group organisation, tactical decisions, consumer practices and even employment choices.

In Chapter Three I proposed that one of the worldviews that informs a general liberation ideology is a belief that capitalism, which is synonymous with big business, is profit-driven and immoral; this worldview is anti-capitalistic. In Chapter Six I added that one of the fundamental beliefs that differentiate radical groups, like AWA, is that animal cruelty is rooted in systemic institutional mistreatment, and the objective of abolition is therefore not compatible with current systems, particularly the values and practices of capitalism.

This chapter explores in more depth the relationship between the treatment of animals in modern society and capitalist values and practices. I argue that GARAs oppose capitalism and find it immoral on the grounds of an animal liberation ideology. However, I

go on to assert that GARAs also oppose capitalism for environmental, humanitarian and ethical reasons that go beyond animal suffering and show concern for more general liberation ideas. Conscious living is *not* only about how one spends his/her money, however in this chapter I restrict discussion of the lifestyle-axis to an exploration of GARAs' consumer practices. Here we see that conscious living for GARAs is not only about a commitment to pro-animal liberation ideas, it also represents an anti-capitalist worldview that informs a general liberation ideology.

## **RIGHTS IN NATURE & THE HUMAN DOMAIN**

I was standing on the bank of a small pond in Western Springs and throwing stale bread to the birds when it all began. Ducks and geese were fighting for feed as the sparrows settled for smaller crumbs on the land. In the distance two swans were dancing together across the water. It was a sunny afternoon and the park was busy with adults and children, cyclists and dogs. It felt as though summer had arrived. A family of ducklings suddenly came splashing out from the long grasses on the far bank and the tiny little birds scattered in all directions. They looked playful as they darted backwards and forwards like balls of fluff on the surface. My eyes scanned the scene, there were nine ducklings in total and a very busy looking grown duck that I assumed was their mother. I joked with my companion that the regular quiet quacking coming from the mother duck was her continuous counting to make sure they were all there. I kept feeding the geese and the sparrows.

Later, the bread had almost run out and I was deep in conversation with my companion. The geese had long since lost interest in our disinterested feeding style and gone to look for greener pastures. Just as we were deciding to get rid of the last remaining crust and go home ourselves, the family of ducklings came back into sight nearer to us this time. I reached into the bag and threw forward a few crumbs, always testing how close they will come, how much the animals trust their human visitors. The nine ducklings were back and they rushed forward into the murky waters nearest to where we were sitting. They pushed and shoved their brothers and sisters, frantically chasing the sinking morsel. All of a sudden the mother duck pounced on a tiny duckling in the middle of the group and began to flap her wings and quack frantically. The duckling had disappeared and in a flash the eight that remained were heading back to the grasses on the far bank, no longer playful and independent but grouped together and swimming as one. My eyes darted back to the mother duck and her obvious distress. She was dashing backwards and forwards across the water looking downwards and occasionally throwing her head beneath the surface. I followed her gaze and for a moment the duckling was visible then she disappeared again and a long, sleek, black body slithered past. It suddenly became clear; an eel had taken the duckling.



Responding to the distress of the mother duck, we dashed towards the pond edge and my friend reached down, grabbing the eel. Flopping onto the bank for just a moment before sliding back to the water, the eel released her catch and we laid the little duckling on the grass. She twitched and gasped, eyes wide open and beak ajar. There was no hope. One of her legs was missing and there was a huge open wound, purple and smooth against her wet, yellow feathers. We stroked her gently, as she struggled to breathe and move and I wished we had left her to her fate. Then, as shock set in, she became calm and in the sun on the bank, we watched her die<sup>63</sup>.

By now, you, the reader, may be wondering how this story is relevant. Since the beginning of life on earth, some animals have been predators and others have been prey. In nature, no animal has the right to ultimate survival or painless death; they are simply part of a pecking order that sees the strongest, fastest, largest animals dominate over their smaller, weaker, slower neighbours. So why then, do some humans believe that animals should have rights, and what should those rights be?

The concept of 'rights' is clearly a human construct designed to deal with the way humans treat animals when animals are incorporated into the human domain, and occasionally to regulate human behaviour in the animal domain. Although there is a sizable debate as to whether humans are naturally meat eaters and hunters or simply omnivorous scavengers, for many millennia they have been part of the food chain as both predator and prey. In recent times, however, the way in which humans have participated in this process has changed dramatically from a style of hunting visible among many animals in nature to various forms of farming that are unprecedented in the animal kingdom. The world, once dominated by laws of nature, has become a place in which even the farthest corners of the earth are considered human domains and almost everything - people, animals and the environment - is subject to human law. When GARAs fight for animal liberation they seek to regulate the 'unnatural' ways humans interact with animals, particularly in the human domain.

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<sup>63</sup> This was my own experience.



Consider the main animal liberation campaigns that have been headlined in New Zealand in recent years: anti-vivisection; anti-broiler; anti-fur<sup>64</sup>; anti-battery cage; and, anti-sow crate. In all these campaigns, the issue being protested has resulted from incorporation of animals into the human domain. While I would certainly not go so far as to suggest that any GARA would actually support activities such as hunting, fishing or free range farming, these issues are definitely not as regularly targeted and I propose this is because the kind of domination is different and considered less urgent. When an animal is hunted, the human is entering into the animal domain and although humans undoubtedly have superior weapons and tools, to a certain extent the laws of nature reign. Hunted animals have a chance to experience a natural life free from human interference until the moment of death when the hunter could be any other predator.

In contrast, animals that are factory farmed for food and fur, or bred for vivisection, are so thoroughly controlled by humans with a vested financial interest that they are unable to experience any aspects of their natural environment or social relations. These animals are in fact alive only because they have economic value and their worth is entirely determined by what value they have to their owner. Here we see capitalist practices and values being incorporated into the human-animal relationship. The following section explores in more detail the role of capitalism in constructing animals and illustrates GARAs' reasoning for finding big business to be immoral.

## **CAPITALISM & CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF ANIMALS**

In the past four decades, the principles of mass production usually associated with capitalism have been introduced to the farmyard (Mullin, 1999:61) and GARAs I have spoken to claim that never before in human history have animals been exploited on the scale that we see today. They associate animal use with the values and demands of capitalist and consumer ideologies and call for a major upheaval of taken for granted cultural, economic and political institutions and ideas that enable, and in many cases rely

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<sup>64</sup> Anti-fur campaigns have focused particularly on imported, factory-farmed fur although at the time of writing this thesis possum fur was becoming a target.

on, animal use. Activists are accused of being anti-science when they protest vivisection, anti-progress when they oppose factory-like conditions in farming, and working against the interests of the consumer when they sticker products in supermarkets<sup>65</sup>.

The question that naturally arises from such claims is; what is the relationship between animal liberation ideology and capitalism, and does one necessarily oppose the other? The simplified answer is that the vast majority of animals-use practices that GARAs protest about are a direct result of capitalist practices and attitudes that have transformed animals in our minds and traditions from unique independent entities with whom we share the earth, to passive, anonymous objects of economic potential. A more sophisticated analysis links domination of animals to other forms of domination experienced by humans as a result of increasing capitalist practices, such as sweatshop labour, economic exploitation and consumer alienation from processes of production.

Jasper and Nelkin point out that most societies have two opposing views of animals that can be categorised as the familial and the instrumental (1992:12). In the familial view, animals are accepted as pets, companions, and in some cases even family members. They are given names, kept in the house and are subjects of human emotional attachment. They are anthropomorphised both in the private sphere, through personal identification with particular animals, and in the public sphere by cartoons, stories and other forms of popular literature that attribute human emotions, sensibilities and personalities to animal characters. In the instrumental view, animals are seen as resources to be exploited for human pleasure and benefit. Animals are stripped of inherent meaning and culturally constructed as objects that can be worked, 'harvested' and consumed without any moral breach. Capitalism maintains an instrumental view of animals, human and non-human.

In the 1950s and 1960s there was a period of transition in Western countries from rural to urban living during which citizens lost contact with food animals and maintained contact only with pets (Libby, 1998:53). At the same time as this shift was occurring

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<sup>65</sup> See Appendix C for example. The newspaper article quotes a supermarket service administration manager as saying that "All it [a product-stickering action] is doing is putting the prices up".

scientific and technological advances were enabling farms to be transformed into push-button factories where large-scale production could be achieved with minimum human-animal contact. Driven by market values of maximum profit and efficiency, farms became sites for the expression of capitalist ideology. Regarding animals, this can be summed up as a culmination of the Judeo-Christian attitude that animals do not have souls and humans have the “absolute moral right to subjugate ... and use them to satisfy human needs” (Libby, 1998:58), combined with the French philosopher Rene Descartes’ next step, which was to declare animals machines without any mental experiences (Kortlandt, 1993:137). Singer illustrates the existence of this attitude in the battery farming industry by quoting Haley who describes the hen as “an egg-producing machine” (1975:108).

What we see today then is a combination of capitalist values and technological advancements that have transformed farming and animal status. However, most New Zealanders still have a living memory of less mechanical farm life through their own farm related experiences. This memory reinforces a mythology surrounding food-animals that exists in popular culture and that retains an image of “bucolic scenes of cows and their calves grazing in the pasture” (Singer, 1975:73). As the following extract points out, the reality of widespread intensive farming practices is a far cry from the bucolic farm.

The stench is indescribable; it penetrates every pore of my body even before I step around the corner of the shed and inside the old, run down shack they call a farm. It is broad daylight and before my eyes can adjust I am overwhelmed by the noise. The sounds of screaming, screeching animals, the thumping of bodies against bars and the scratching of teeth gnawing at metal drill into my head, printed forever on my memory. I can see clearly now the rows upon rows of cages in front of me, each one incarcerating yet another full-grown sow. She tosses her body backwards and forwards, side to side in an attempt to escape the bars that hold her. Is this 'normal', have I disturbed them? I wonder quietly as I take in the sight before me.

*I am eleven years old and I am on a school trip. My whole class has been taken by bus to be billeted at the homes of children from a school in Ohaupo. The idea is to give us city kids a chance to experience rural living and stay on a real farm with real farmers. I am feeling confused, it isn't like any farm I've ever know. Where are the grassy paddocks and roaming sheep? And why are all the pigs in cages?*

There is urgency in the noises that come from the animals now. I feel nervousness and fear welling in my throat. Why am I so afraid? My mind tells me that it isn't

logical to fear these animals; they are so tightly bound, they cannot escape and yet I can see their strength and power. They are so much bigger than I am, I feel like a child again. The best way out for me is through the back door and I feel my heart beat quicken as I realise I have to walk down the length of the row. I step forward slowly. My back is to the wall and there are just centimetres between me and the wet snouts. Is this my fear I am feeling or is it much larger than that? Is it the combined fear and distress of hundreds of pigs that fills the room and my body?

*I am eight years old now and staying at my Uncle's farm. All the cousins are there and we are running around full of energy and making a nuisance to the grown ups. My Uncle has a job to do across the paddock and we are shooed away to watch him. The memory is fragmented, bits and pieces stand out. My Uncle kills a pig. One shot to the head and she is dead. He heaves her body into the outside bath and scrapes at her skin with a razor, removing the hairy black bristles that cover her pink flesh. There is an argument between my Aunt and Uncle, she has used the hot water doing washing and taking a shower, now they have to boil the kettle over and over again to fill the enormous tub. We are at the back of the home paddock now and a rope is slung over a beautiful climbing tree, grand and tall. I remember vividly the hooks going through the pig's legs, between the bone and the Achilles tendon. She is ready now to be hoisted into the air, swinging gracelessly, all dignity gone ready to be gutted and processed.*

I am at the back of the shed and I can see the door close by. As I reach for the makeshift handle, I see that the last sow in the row is sitting back on her haunches, quiet and reserved. Her belly is showing the swollen pregnant bulge that is the reason she is here. There is dried blood around her mouth. I lean forward and see her eyes. My throat tightens; her eyes are so huge and deep. As she looks at me I can see the in her eyes. She is so intelligent and so distressed, physically restrained and intellectually frustrated. She has been biting at the bars to tame the boredom that comes from spending hours day after day looking at the same wall, unable to turn around, walk forward or roll over. Her pregnant body yearns to nest and bathe in mud. She is not a dumb animal; she is a feeling being. I turn and walk out the door into the sunlight that she will never feel on her skin. As I cross the paddock and make my way back to the car I feel relieved to be away from the pain and suffering, the noise and the stench. My experience of the piggery is over, but hers goes on, as I drive home, as I write this and perhaps even as you read it, she is still there looking at the same wall, gnawing at the same bars and waiting to be free.

*Impressionable little kids saw that, it was evil. I can still smell that smell and hear that noise, even now. Anytime anyone mentions it I can still go back to that place. I think, "wow, I've been there and seen that, don't want to go back there." So yeah that's really vivid, you never get rid of that once you've actually seen it. If you've got the smallest ounce of compassion and you've been in that situation, you'll always remember that.<sup>66</sup>*

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<sup>66</sup> This is a fictionalised account of stories, experiences and observation collected during research. See Appendix A for more details of ethical issues.

A capitalist culture exists in western industrialised society that is dedicated to the idea of consumption as the source of all wellbeing. Noske (1989:40) convincingly argues that while animals have been domesticated to greater or lesser extents in different societies since the Neolithic revolution, it was not until the advent of capitalism that animals began to occupy object status in society, a position necessary for their continued exploitation. Once defined as objects, animals can be owned, and private ownership of animals and other forms of nature is the essence of a capitalist ideology that enables an economic system that exploits them (McLaughlin, 1993:23).

Objects become saleable goods through a process of commodification. "Things", material and physical objects, are first categorised as those which can be owned, then divorced from their history of production and origin, before being invested with meanings of cultural significance and prepared for consumption. Once commodified, "things" can be valued by market standards, used, bought, sold, owned and discarded, as consumers so desire. While it is generally accepted in contemporary western thought that "people" are not categorically things and therefore cannot be treated as commodities (Kopytoff, 1986:64), animals have somehow slipped through our moral filter and become victims of the commodification process.

Mythologies that obscure the real relationship between animals and humans, such as the idealised bucolic farm, are protected by illusory advertising, misleading packaging and normalising terminologies that reinforce ideas of human domination and deceive the potential consumer by abstracting the product from its origin and production. In order to make ownership and commodification of non-human animals morally acceptable, capitalist ideology drains non-human animals of their intrinsic meaning and worth (McLaughlin, 1993:24). By this process sentient, caring and nurturing beings become units of production with no emotional or social needs and whose only purpose is to produce or become saleable goods. What is left then is an empty vessel ready for meaning to be attached. The new meanings attributed to animals, whole or parted, reflect what is important in Western society. The real origins of eggs and chicken, for example, are well hidden behind a barrage



of advertising that fills them with culturally constructed meanings. Taking advantage of the physical distance that exists between consumers and battery-farming processes, producers use terms such as 'fresh' and 'barn laid' to evoke images of extensive farming, thus stripping the products – eggs – from their history: battery cages<sup>67</sup>.

The suffering is all around me. I hear the pain, see the terror and smell the distress. This experience is not my own and yet I feel it. There are no ulterior motives here, no hidden agendas, just raw, unfiltered suffering. My senses are stunned by the overpowering smell. It is foreign, chemical, and causes a burning inside me. My eyes water, my gut retches and as my body expels the retched air, my emotions open to the surroundings. I am not alone. All around me screeching and clattering reminds me that I am not alone. I feel the presence of the one being directly in front of me, the two others that share her cage, the hundreds that make up a row and the tens of thousands that suffer together in this dark and repulsive hell. I am in a battery farm.

My gaze is trained on the moving, scanning red light that darts backwards and forwards in front of me, revealing glimpses of metal, feathers, metal. The light stops, my eyes stop. I am looking at a cage. Opening the door all chaos breaks loose. Wings, claws, birds upon birds and screeching that rips through my mind. I wait. When calm returns and the movement dies down hands move forward and grasp the closest bird. She screams and flaps, struggles, calls out and claws at the cage around her. She won't let go, doesn't know where those hands might be taking her and so fights to stay close to the enemy she knows. Eventually her claws are pried from the wires that are the only home she has known. The hands win and she is pressed into the darkness of a bag.

Again I follow the light. Where is it taking me? Another cage, more feathers, more birds. Three birds inside. Hands reach out and lift the wire door. Are they my own? I cannot tell. It doesn't slide smoothly like it would on TV; it jars and catches, grating metal against metal. Hands reach in. The bird closest to the door doesn't flinch. She doesn't pull away. She is resigned to the fate of the hands that grab her. Silently she enters the bag.

I reach down in the darkness and feel a lump; a mound of fabric with something giving it shape from inside. Carefully I search for the top and lift the bag from the floor. My heart sinks. There is no weight, no depth, no substance to what I am holding. It is hard to believe this is not an empty bag. The distress that tears inside me at this moment isn't felt for the thousands of animals inside this single shed or the millions across the country. It is bound up in the plight of one animal, one life, one soul.

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<sup>67</sup> Other producers will go as far as to blatantly lie that factory-farmed eggs are free range. For example, in October 2001, a Masterton farmer was fined \$10,000 for misleading consumers and selling battery-hen eggs as free-range.

It is morning now, the birds are safe and I am far away from the hell that goes on for the tens of thousands left behind. The lasting effect of the ammonia is like a metaphor for what I feel inside: burnt, torn and helpless.

*It's the combination of the smell and the noise and the feeling in there as well as seeing them. Not just seeing photos and videos but actually seeing them in the flesh, it was really scary. And it was also really nerve racking because we weren't sure if we were going to get caught in there and didn't know what would happen so we were really stressed and adrenalised. Yeah, it was crazy...*<sup>68</sup>

When GARAs enter factory farms, watch video footage, read articles or share experiences, the carefully constructed image of meat as an object far removed from its origins and production methods is destroyed and reality fills its place. With video footage, photos and documentaries, GARAs seek to reconnect the finished product, egg, with its origin, the chicken, and processes of production, the battery cage. They break the ideological distance that is demanded if consumers are to believe in idyllic farms and cruelty-free farming. GARAs experience the animal instead as a sentient being that is not commodifiable. GARAs therefore attempt to undo the mystification that capitalist processes so carefully create by reversing the commodification process.

When GARAs connect with individual consumers and members of the public and urge them to consider the reality of animal exploitation, they take anti-capitalist actions beyond their own practice of conscious living. They expose the contrast between actual animal rearing practices and popular mythology and by doing so GARAs reveal the mystifying techniques of big business as immoral.

## **CONSCIOUS LIVING: VEGANISM & ANTI-CAPITALISM**

GARAs protest capitalism because it is "a major part of the system that really oppresses animals and treats them like machines [and] because capitalism is so much about getting profit without respect of anything else" (Rachel).

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<sup>68</sup> This is a fictionalised account of stories, experiences and observation collected during research. See Appendix A for more details of ethical issues.



Capitalist practices exploit animals when they strive for greater production and lesser costs; they exploit humans when they pay appalling wages and provide inhumane working conditions; they exploit the environment when they put profits above sustainability; and, they exploit consumers by subverting cultural meanings and making consumers players in the objectification process. Patterns of consumption show that, in practice at least, modern industrial peoples seem to have no moral issues with the way we treat animals (McLaughlin, 1993:17). GARAs in contrast use consumption practices as a way to actively resist this role of objectifier and investigate the processes behind products so that they can make informed purchases from an ethical position. This is a vegan lifestyle. But GARAs do not stop at investigating products from an animal treatment point of view. They also explore the human, environmental and business ethics that a company employs. Just as GARAs implore society's individuals to not ignore the facts about battery farming when they are at the supermarket choosing a tray of eggs, GARAs themselves do not push from their minds other ethical concerns based in a general liberation ideology.

In their roles as consumers, GARAs do not support companies associated with sweatshop labour conditions when they are choosing a new pair of running shoes; they avoid chemicals products that are damaging to the environment when they buy washing powder; and they oppose the monopoly of specific software companies when they reformat their hard drives. By practicing conscious living through ethical consumerism, GARAs bring a general liberation ideology into action.

As one GARA put it, being vegan is a way to avoid harming animals, but it is also about not buying into the capitalist systems that exploit them. The high rate of veganism in the GARAs' branch of the animal protection movement shows commitment to a radical 'rights' philosophy, and appreciation of the role of capitalist practices and values in animal use.

GARAs take a radical position in the lifestyle-axis that differentiates them from other animal protection groups. This is embodied in a style of conscious living that incorporates consideration of both animal liberation and general liberation ideologies. As I

stated earlier in this chapter, conscious living is not only about what an individual consumes, buys, or the company s/he keeps. Conscious living is an attitude towards life that encourages individuals to actively scrutinise the impacts of *all* their actions. While most GARAs are not full time activists, conscious living is a way that they can apply worldviews, such as animal rights philosophy and anti-capitalism, to all choices and actions in their lives. Consider the following choice made by Darren:

I chose psychology and decided to do psychology because I thought it would be a nice insight into human behaviour, I think that that paper was entitled 'human behaviour'.... [I found that] every experiment that has ever been done in psychology was originally done on an animal. I found myself walking out of a lot of the lectures feeling quite queasy about it all and that just struck up all sorts of stuff in my head. I was doing quite well in psychology too. But then in our labs, in our practical stuff they got us to do an experiment on rats, in little cages... Psychology is horrible, so I quit it. Went through lots of brain tearing, lots of questioning whether I was doing the right thing or whether I was dropping out. I don't like quitting; I'm not a quitter at all I wouldn't think... But when I'd done it [quit], it was great. It was like "yes, I've done something for the greatest reason that there is", which to me is I'm following my own conscience, which is everything.

In education, employment and consumerism as well as eating, giving and wearing, GARAs bring their ethics into action and exercise a form of conscious living. The following chapters explore conscious choices GARAs make relating to group organisation and tactics. Here we see consideration of other general liberation worldviews.

We need to return to a gentle approach to agriculture in which the human/animal interrelation is paramount. In this, the ‘giant’ approach of one partner (the human) exploiting the other is replaced by an equal partnership in which animal and human each learn from the other.

Christine Townend (1999:52), *Future Agriculture: Gentle or Giant*



Image 8: Rows of Battery Cages.

## 8 - ORGANISATION: EGALITARIANISM & EQUALITY

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Just as important as what a group does is how a group does it. Jasper and Polletta (2001) provide a compelling argument for the theory that strategic and organisational tactics chosen by a group are expressions of collective identity as well as tastes. In other words, a group's form is an important marker of how they see themselves in relation to the issues they protest *and* other issues in society.

Just as the ideological position promoted by GARAs regarding animal treatment is constructed in opposition to that which is evident in NZ society, the ideological basis for group organization is also a critique of the hierarchical structures of indirect power that are commonly in place. GARAs are very aware of the less overt forms of control that are taken for granted in New Zealand, and most western, societies: for example representative democracy and economic monopolies. As they fight for animal liberation, GARAs actively avoid replicating these and other hierarchies that they oppose.

By adopting principles of direct democracy, non-hierarchical structure and consensus-based decision making, GARAs extend the critique of human domination over animals to a critique of human domination over other humans. Unlike other groups in the animal protection movement, GARAs do not have leaders in the form of directors, boards, national councils or executive committees. Each group is autonomous and the emphasis is on equality of members within groups<sup>69</sup>. This chapter examines the organisational axis of the Six-Axis model and finds that choices GARAs make about how to organise themselves reflect a general liberation worldview which finds that oppression is bad and comes from inequalities of power inherent in social, political and economic hierarchies. The

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<sup>69</sup> See Appendix B for list of AWA principles

commitment GARAs show to egalitarianism differentiates them from other arms of the animal protection movement, both in an operational and a philosophical sense.

## IDEALS & REALITY

[P]eople who are affected by decisions should be part of the decision making process. I guess election time is quite a good time to be thinking about it. For example GE. Why can't we just have a vote, "what do people think?" and ask everyone and then that can be the decision instead of electing people to decide for you. I guess with as far as decisions go, I really like anarchist ideas but it just hasn't really worked like that and I don't really see how it can unless everyone involved in something has an anarchist leaning. As far as AWA goes, there are lots of different people involved and the people who identify as anarchist are trying to involve everyone but it just doesn't work because they are the ones thinking of everything and organising everything. I don't know how it can work in AWA's situation, maybe non-anarchist people have to be encouraged to be involved in different ways from how they are being encouraged at the moment. (Jane)

The principles of AWA and other grassroots groups are based on anarchist notions of shared power and reflect the ideologies of the lasting members. Lasting AWA members were responsible for developing the original principles and were instrumental in establishing the culture of the group that exists today. However, as Jane points out in the above extract, and many other interviewees noted, the reality is not always an embodiment of the ideology.

Based on anarchist ideas, there is a very admirable intention to include all members of AWA in decision-making processes. Members believe that people should be able to help decide about things that affect them. However, not all members of AWA identify as anarchist and many do not seem to be aware of what is required of each individual for the group to be able to operate without leaders and structured division of power. Darren, a newer member, describes how this can affect a meeting:

**D** AWA has got this very non-hierarchical... thing going. Non-hierarchical group, no leader, leaderless. Which I've seen in protests and meetings can cause a bit of [confusion]. People can be a bit unsure of what's happening and there can be lots of long silences. Generally not uncomfortable silences, but I think people being

people, being brought up in the societies and systems we've been brought up in, we need leadership of some sort, in anything... I mean Anna is great; she is the ideal person to do that... a couple of months ago she was doing that, but she was doing it very non-hierarchically. She wasn't like actively taking leadership or anything. Sort of... giving direction but from a very relaxed point of view. Without being the boss or trying to be a team leader or trying to run the show or tell people what to do...

P Almost actively trying not to do those things?

D Yeah and that's where you get a lot of silences and stuff, which is cool and is sweet, but to new people coming into it, it can make it seem almost sort of, I don't know what the word is, almost disorganised... yeah. Not saying it's a good thing, I'm not saying it's a bad thing.

The ideal of equal involvement in decision-making, assumes that all members want to be able to influence the direction of the group and does not take into account that for various reasons, some people simply prefer to follow. In many cases the reluctance to include oneself in full participation is due to time restraints, lack of confidence and individuals' personality types. Only a few people stated in interviews that they felt AWA was operating well and they were entirely happy with the group's organization. Most members regarded problems to be not in the ideology itself but in making the ideology a reality. A problem Matt considers to be common in grassroots activism:

A lot of it I think occurs because it is really hard to prevent, it's just because some people have more time, or more experience and also just 'cause they're more into it and have more energy, I guess that kind of comes into it as well... It's kind of a common problem in activism. (Matt)

Most interviewees said that they thought too much of the workload in AWA fell on one or two members. I observed that as the group left a gap, Anna filled it. She made time because she wanted to see things happen. However, whenever Anna filled a gap the group became more dependent on her to continue to do so. While many interviewees noted that they thought this self-perpetuating cycle is a common flaw in voluntary organizations, few people felt the situation in AWA was as serious as is expressed in the following quote:

I think AWA is going to collapse as soon as Anna burns out. [Some activists] have almost dropped out of being active... and other people are wanting to leave Dunedin

and aren't organisers anyways and then there's only really a couple of people who are... organising stuff but haven't been putting in that organising for whatever reasons, like because they're busy or just don't feel that space for being active. And I think, AWA is disastrously dependent on Anna... [because] she has the time and she has the energy so she's willing to do it... When there has been a void of something happening, for whatever reason, Anna will fill that space. And she does it 'cause she wants it to happen, and it just keeps going... (Marcus)

While in theory the principle of non-hierarchical organisation makes up the basis for AWA's structure, interviewees noted that in reality, an unacknowledged hierarchy has developed based on social power accumulated by individuals in four areas: experience; knowledge; involvement and visibility; and, personality. My own observations suggest that a fifth category, contacts, should be added to this list as individuals with many and diverse contacts tend to be better positioned to gain knowledge and thus influence a broader group of people. A large and growing gap between the ideological position of the group and the reality of how it is structured is the cause of much frustration for both new and lasting members.

The hierarchy that has developed results in unequal distribution of power seen in the influence members have over group direction, decisions and disputes. Although most interviewees wanted to see AWA reach a structure closer to its ideology, few people had definite ideas about how to achieve change. It is important to note that the hierarchy that exists is not an intentionally established structure created by power hungry individuals; it is instead a difference of skills and confidence that has developed over time.

The following sections focus on the five areas in which a power hierarchy has developed within AWA. While I do point out that the reality of group organisation is not yet an embodiment of its egalitarian ideal, special attention should be paid to the paragraphs that discuss ways AWA and individual members attempt to reduce inequalities of power. It is here that a worldview that values egalitarian political views and resists hierarchies that result in oppression is most apparent.



## *Experience*

Experience is influential in confidence and power for both those who have it and those who do not. While it is not officially acknowledged that experience is important to the amount of influence an individual has within the group, social power based on experience becomes evident in self-censoring by new and lasting members. It is generally assumed that members with more experience have learnt things about activism during their years of involvement that may be useful to the rest of the group. In AWA, members do not consciously regard some individuals' ideas as more important than others, however, when suggestions are made; the level of experience of the person making the suggestion is considered.

While animal rights activism in New Zealand has been happening for several decades, the current grassroots movement is mostly made up of young people (late-teens to early thirties), relatively new to activism and with just a few years experience. In Dunedin, the group that is now AWA has been operating for just over two years and had been SAFE for only one year before that. Most members joined AWA as their first introduction to activism and an animal liberation community. Yet there is still a large and growing gap in experience between the newest and oldest members that contributes to the inequalities of influence and power. When asked how he felt about initiating actions and verbalising his opinion, Marcus illustrated the importance of experience in feeling confident within the group. He pointed out that experience is widely used as a validating tool by those who possess it:

I think I feel less reluctant than what other people would just because I do have experience. I notice this a lot in activism and kind of just a little bit in NZAR<sup>70</sup>. When you're making a statement you back it up by how many years you've been active, how many years you've been vegan. I guess people drop little statements. "In my twenty-five years of doing activism" means a lot more than "in my six years of doing activism" means a lot more than "in my one year of doing activism". So people are like, "oh I've only been vegan for one year..." This happens a lot. (Marcus)

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<sup>70</sup> NZAR is a national animal rights email list.

Although he expresses that he does not personally find AWA to be an intimidating environment, Marcus goes on to assert that newer, less experienced members could perceive it that way. This is a common concern articulated by lasting members. Marcus also appreciates that there are practical reasons why experienced GARAs have greater influence:

I think when people have come to meetings, random people, and they say something, so many times it's... stupid, they say things that are irrelevant, that have been talked over a million times, so a lot of that sort of experience is for a practical reason... I just, I haven't seen people come to AWA and give an idea and have it just go through, it needs to be accepted by the core of AWA. (Marcus)

Individuals perceive experience to be more or less important depending on their specific position within the group and the particular event in question. When Nathan was absent from a national protest attended by other AWA members he felt a sense of separation from the group that resulted from his own perception of how important the experience had been. Similarly, lasting member Jane noted the hierarchy that exists according to experience when she spoke about how it felt to be excluded from organizing at a national protest:

...It was like all the representatives from the different groups got together and organised everything and decided everything and everyone else was pushed into the new person group, which I didn't like. There wasn't a degree of involvement in the organising – you either were or you weren't involved. I wanted to be included and, for all the involvement that I'd had in previous actions and what I knew and the experience I'd had, it kind of felt like I did have something to offer and that they just weren't interested. (Jane)

Experience in other forms of activism, other animal protection groups, and even in general life, gives some members an edge over others. The experience of being involved with SAFE gave many founding members of AWA an opportunity to explore their own position with regard to philosophy and group organization. When they decided to split from SAFE and create their own group, members drew on their previous experience to create a group that did not replicate SAFE's organisational style. While setting an ideal of how a group should run may be relatively straight forward, achieving this ideal in daily operations

was found to be not such a simple task. As Matt points out, part of the difficulty comes in reducing the skill and experience gaps that exist between members.

It's kind of like acknowledging that those people have got those skills and stuff and that is really cool that they do that stuff. But [also] trying to broaden the group of people that have got those skills, so that way people both feel empowered that they can do those roles that other people have been doing if they want to and yeah so it just kind of broadens the base a bit more and people get that knowledge of being able to do those things themselves. (Matt)

Some GARAs have made efforts to increase the experience base either at specific actions or by organising skills workshops. Take for example the open-rescue during Easter 2001. All present, regardless of time in the movement or prior experience, were invited to enter the sheds at a poultry farm during a protest and see firsthand what conditions are like. At least forty protestors, most of who had never been inside a battery shed before, took up the opportunity.

A second example comes from an action carried out at a supermarket. Discretion was necessary if protestors were to be able to put stickers on several egg trays and distribute a number of leaflets before staff members were alerted. Before the action one member asked how many of the individuals present had been involved with a similar action before and only two of the ten people showed they had. The group then decided for two reasons to split up and visit two locations: firstly, to double effectiveness; and secondly, so that all present could take part rather than having to leave some people outside<sup>71</sup>. By the end of the evening, ten people could say that they had experience in a supermarket action.

The third example is seen in the skills workshops offered at national and local level. Individuals with experience in particular areas are invited to present a talk for other GARAs present. The most popular skills workshops are those that focus on exciting elements of direct action and protest. While these skills have obvious uses in GARA groups, it is clear that groups which find disparity between their ideals and the reality of group processes,

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<sup>71</sup> If they had gone with the original plan, only a few of the ten activists would have entered the supermarket to increase discretion.

AWA included, could benefit from workshops that focus more directly on practices which promote egalitarian political values. Seminars that teach members about consensus decision-making and ways to create a culture of participation within GARA groups could empower new members and be useful if AWA is to embody its non-hierarchical ideology.

## *Knowledge*

While a substantial amount of knowledge about GARAs' activities comes from long and active involvement, knowledge is not the same as experience in that even the newest members can learn about campaigns, issues and targets through reading and research. For example, even with years of experience behind him, Greg was reluctant to put forward ideas when he first arrived in New Zealand until he learnt about the situation of animal use specific to this country. Just like experience, knowledge is an empowering tool. Interviewees expressed that knowing the facts of a specific campaign or issue helped them to feel confident both in internal group activities, such as meetings and strategising, and when interfacing with the public, at stalls for example<sup>72</sup>.

AWA almost always relies on the same one or two individuals to carry out research into targets, to keep the group updated on specific campaigns, and for suggestions of future activity. While interviewees expressed that they thought this arrangement was not ideal, in AWA it works to a limited extent because GARAs operate with a principle of open access to knowledge. This principle departs from patterns of information secrecy that dominate mainstream capitalist culture, where unequal distribution of knowledge is a crucial part of maintaining power hierarchies. GARAs aspire to share knowledge, information, and their limited resources freely with members and other grassroots groups and they cooperate to assist each other in protest, organizational, personal and professional ways.

The reality of knowledge sharing is not as simple as the ideology. AWA faces very real concerns about security breach when they plan actions that have an element of civil

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<sup>72</sup> Note the comment made in Chapter Three by Jane. She was not comfortable handing out pamphlets when she did not know background information to the claims.

disobedience. Take for example the planning of Easter demos for 2002. Leading up to Easter, AWA had regular meetings during which demo times and targets were discussed and announced. Just a few weeks before Easter weekend a woman not known to any active AWA members began attending meetings. A rumour quickly circulated that the newcomer was an undercover cop and, although feeling guilty for their suspicions, members considered changing the already planned protests to different times – “just to be on the safe side”. The incident blew over and it wasn’t until several months later that the original suspicions were confirmed. The woman turned up on the police side of an AWA demonstration and arrested a protestor when he refused to hand over a piece of chalk<sup>73</sup>.

Despite concerns of security breach, GARAs maintain a principle that values knowledge sharing. The national animal rights email list<sup>74</sup> is an example of how GARAs endeavour to make knowledge available to interested parties within the movement. To get onto the list, individuals must be actively involved in animal rights in New Zealand, must be nominated by a list member, and the nomination must have at least one seconder. Information about demonstrations, targets, actions, media releases and numerous other relevant, and sometimes less than relevant, issues is shared freely among interested members. Anybody who is on the list can post information and respond to other posts and GARAs frequently use the email list to ask each other for information when they are beginning a campaign or researching a target. While the list does have a moderator, posts by members are not censored or controlled.

The focus on disseminating knowledge is extended beyond the boundaries of the group and to the larger community in the form of stalls, video screenings, leafleting, poster and stickering. GARAs strive to disseminate information about animal rearing and use practices that their targets would sooner have remain secret. In factory farming, fur production and vivisection, to name only a few industries, knowledge of animal related practices is withheld from animal protection groups, the consuming public and also market competitors. Similar statements can be made about government processes. GARAs value

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<sup>73</sup> The protestor was later released without charge. See Appendix D for related newspaper article.

<sup>74</sup> Mostly made up of grassroots animal rights activists.

free dissemination of information as a means to resist replication of the oppressive hierarchy of knowledge they see exercised by both the state and industry groups that they oppose and to promote equality and egalitarianism.

### *Personality*

[The hierarchy is based on] knowledge and experience and oh, I'll add personality there, yes it's based on personality too. Yeah definitely... some people just like being leaders and are comfortable with it, other people are shy... (Tim)

Almost all interviewees responded that personality was an important part of how much social power individuals had in the GARA community and how influential their opinions were in decision-making. This is not to say that some people claimed others thrived on power, it was more about the type of person who makes a good leader. On many occasions interviewees also saw their own personality type as the reason they were not more involved in a leadership role.

I'd be keen to help organise things but I'm just not capable to do it by myself... I'm just not good at that kind of thing, like doing stuff on time. (Amanda)

No interviewees proposed to create leaders out of all members, however, many recognised that creating an environment that empowers individuals is a crucial part of retaining new and established members. The simplest suggestion of how to do this was to lead by example; if you want people to feel they can talk then make a point of talking yourself:

I guess one of the things is talking because the more people talking the more people feel like it's ok to talk. I also say silly things (laughs). Just little stupid things that try to make things less structured, or less like one person's talking. Also, when people have come up with ideas I've tried to be supportive of them, like saying, "that's great I really think that you should do that and how can people get involved and help with that", and that kind of thing. That was more when I was really conscious that people were new or young and I didn't want their enthusiasm to be squashed. (Jane)



## ***Contacts***

Although no interviewees mentioned contacts as an influencing factor, observations of interactions between AWA members and in the national network showed that those GARAs with a broad network of contacts had a larger scope of influence. While AWA is an independent group, they do coordinate with other GARA, and non-GARA, groups in New Zealand. This means that within individual groups the people who are in the position of communicating group ideas and intentions to the national network have the power of representation, thus undermining the ideology of direct democracy.

An initiative by one GARA to set up regular national online meetings was an example of an effort to combat the problem of representation. The meetings were designed to facilitate coordination between grassroots groups, discussion of movement direction, and communication of campaign and action updates. While interviewees acknowledged that the initiative was limited<sup>75</sup>, the idea does indicate a commitment to broadening networks of communication. The few online meetings that went ahead tended to be long and arduous as attendees attempted to develop a style of facilitation that maintained order without being overly controlling. One notable aspect of the online meetings was involvement by some individuals who are not usually visible at protests and meetings or in email discussions. While meetings have since ceased there is no reason why they should not be restarted in the future.

In other cases networking is a matter of friendships and cliques that form between individuals. In Dunedin a strong and tight social community exists among members of AWA. A large portion of AWA organising is done informally in a social setting by an inner circle of members who are friends. While these members do not make decisions on behalf of the entire group, much of the initial planning and brainstorming takes place outside of a meeting format. Matt described this informal organizing in the following way:

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<sup>75</sup> Because the meetings are held in cyberspace, they discriminate against less computer literate GARA and those without access to an Internet-capable computer.



[I]t's 'cause there are people that are really close friends and stuff... just because naturally a lot of the organization and discussions and stuff happens so informally... if you're not friends with that you are actually excluded from a lot of what happens a lot of discussions and talks about what should happen and that kind of stuff... So I think it is kind of a bit of an issue in AR. I mean it can be quite intimidating for new people... (Matt)

It is natural that friendships will develop between people with similar interests and that friends will talk about their common interests independently of the group. Organising regular social activities, such as potluck dinners and vegan picnics, is one way that AWA members try to give newcomers an opportunity to become part of the social community of AWA and to lessen the exclusiveness of the inner clique.

### ***Involvement/Visibility***

Knowledge, contacts and experience are all increased the longer an individual spends in the movement and the more involved s/he is in terms of time and diversity of activities. It is a simple fact that not all people in AWA have equal amounts of time and energy to commit to organizing and participating in animal liberation activities. How highly prioritised activism is for the individual depends on the stage of life, changing demands from external forces<sup>76</sup>, how much the individual identifies with the group and its goals, and opinion about the usefulness of the particular action. Being based in a student city, AWA membership is dramatically affected by the university cycle of semesters, exams and holidays. It is commonly noted, "things are kind of quiet because it's university holidays" and, "people are really busy with exams right now". Members readily accept that university commitments will come before AWA for most individuals. However in some cases, members have arranged their lives to accommodate a large commitment of time to involvement in AWA.

Anna is one of these individuals. As a result of her high level of involvement, Anna has a high profile within the group and is quickly identified by new people to be the person who "makes things happen". For example, Anna organised almost all meetings that were

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<sup>76</sup> School, work and family commitments are a few examples of external forces.

held during the time of research and even on the few occasions that another member booked the meeting room Anna was primarily responsible for emailing the time and day to list members. Anna was without doubt the only member who could be relied upon to attend *every* meeting, to always come prepared and to type up the minutes and post them to the e-mail list. She was present at most stalls and all actions, and was the main media contact person for AWA. Her high rate of participation in all AWA activities was reflected in the visibility she had within the AWA active and inactive communities and resulted in her opinion always having great influence.

I met someone in a pub a couple of weeks ago and they were like "oh you're in [AWA]," and they happened to be on the AWA [e-mail] list and they were like "oh so you know Frank and Anna". They knew those [names], they've never met Frank and Anna but they knew the names just because of the emails. (Marcus)

Another example comes from my own experience carrying out research. At one stage I noticed that my own high level of involvement was earning me a position of power that I was not entitled to. People were asking *me* what had happened at meetings and presuming because I was always around I must know something about animal liberation issues. My opinion gained influence simply because I was highly visible, even though my knowledge and experience were limited.

Those members who could not increase their time commitment to AWA nominated several ways in which they incorporated an animal liberation ideology into other parts of their lives. The most common way was to follow a vegan lifestyle. Some members chose classes and projects at university that allowed them to incorporate animal liberation goals and learn more about specific issues, while others found new ways to spread the animal liberation message:

[I] think some of the best work I do is working in two vegetarian cafes and expounding the vegan/vegetarian, non-flesh, respect for animals sort of knowledge. Out at a demo good luck trying talking to people who walk past you. In a café, a hundred people are coming in; you talk to all of them. You realise pretty much straight off the ones that already are (vegan/vegetarian) or are tending, and the ones

that have potential and you can talk to them...That happens at least everyday.  
(Patrick)

## GOAL OF EGALITARIANISM

Peek, Bell and Dunham (1996) found that “an egalitarian gender ideology, among both genders, is associated with greater involvement in the animal rights cause.” (cited by Wolf, 2000:89). New Zealand GARAs show evidence of egalitarian views in a range of areas. Groups do not tolerate discrimination against humans any more than they tolerate discrimination against animals. This chapter has focused on how egalitarian political views are emphasised by GARAs.

GARAs take a radical position in the organisational axis that differentiates them from other animal protection groups. While other groups opt for vertical hierarchies, executive boards, and limited dissemination of knowledge and power, GARAs emphasise equality, non-hierarchy and free sharing of knowledge. This difference is not incidental; it is representative of GARAs’ egalitarian political values that find hierarchies oppressive. While the reality is not yet an embodiment of the non-hierarchical ideology, egalitarian organisation remains a goal towards which members strive. In this way grassroots groups show unique organisational form and philosophical values that are reflections of a general liberation ideology.

Just as the form of organisation a group chooses is an expression of group values, so is the choice of tactics. GARA groups extend a general liberation ideology of non-hierarchical organisation to the protest arena, primarily by employing a very loose structure of activities and leadership that enhances the possibility of spontaneity and encourages individual autonomy. While a few individuals are usually appointed as Police liaison, media spokesperson, and ‘pixies’<sup>77</sup>, it is generally expected that no single person is in control of the protest or has the authority to make a decision on behalf of the group.

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<sup>77</sup> Pixies generally move around a protest making sure that people joining the protest have something to do, that individuals feel comfortable and if there is a suggestion to make a change, such as moving to a different location, ensure everybody knows and agrees.

Chapter Nine turns its focus to tactical choices that GARAs make and explores the worldviews that inform them.

**Dissent without civil disobedience is consent**

(HD Thoreau)

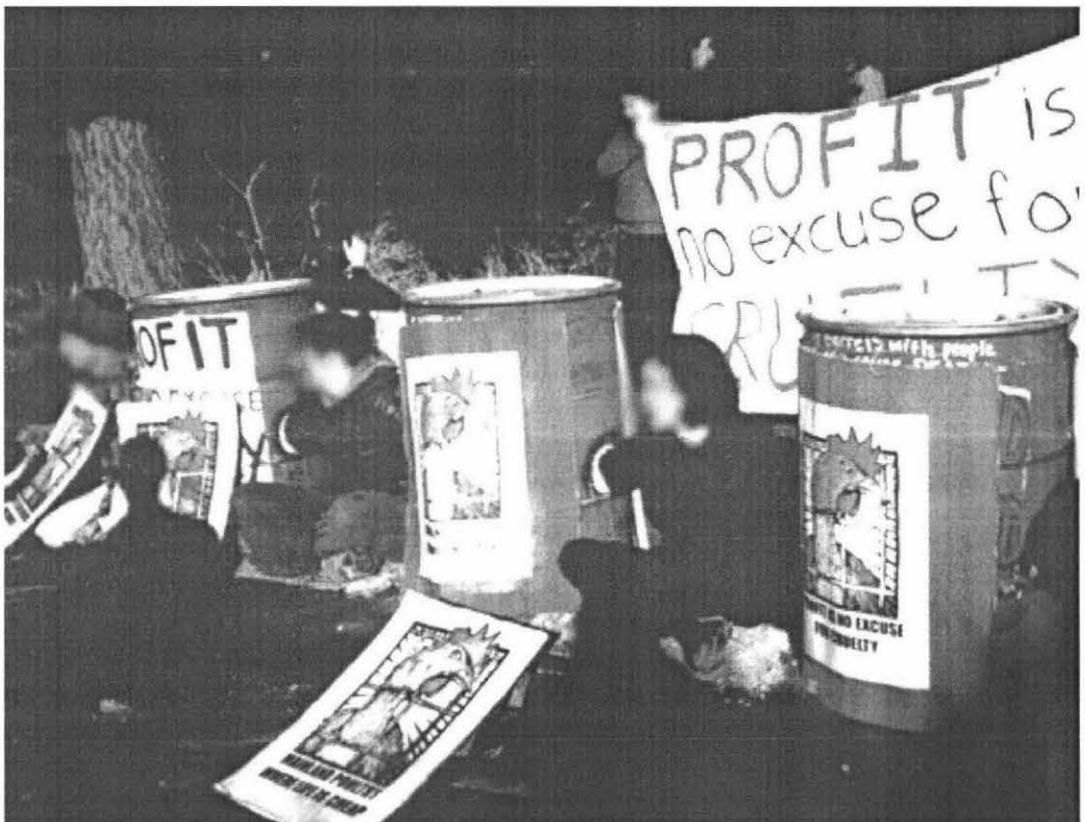


Image 9: AWA-Organised Blockade Outside Largest Mainland Poultry Farm

## 9 - TACTICS: CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE & DIRECT ACTION

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EDITED EXTRACT FROM FIELD JOURNAL  
Easter Sunday, April Fools Day, 2002.

It was an early rise this morning as the group had decided at a meeting the night before to get up at 6.30 and split into two groups (about ten in each) that would visit [farm managers] house and the smaller farm. I was in the former. We walked in the rain down the street about 7.30am to find him driving out of his drive and towards the main farm (where we had protested yesterday). The group started to run past his car towards his house and began to make a lot of noise with chanting, a megaphone and drumming. A woman, presumably his wife, was outside with a large and sleek looking dog. She soon went inside and activists approached the front door. Seeing the dog I backed away and joined some others waiting at the front gate. I saw that the fence at the side of the gate had been broken and pieces were strewn across the drive. It surprised me to see that property had been damaged because it wasn't talked about beforehand. Somebody had brought along chicken wire to put across the gate as a symbolic protest. It looked pretty impressive, but no one seemed to have a camera. Somebody said, "I think he will get the picture". We took off when we heard that the police were on the way. It was starting to rain harder now and we quickly got into the cars that were parked a few hundred metres up the road. The plan was that the two groups would reunite at the small farm after our group had given [the farm manager] a 'wake-up call'. On the way we were told that the other group was surrounded by 'rednecks' and needed backup. A new sense of urgency came over the group and we rushed to reach them.

When we arrived at the small farm there were no 'rednecks' and just a few staff visible. I don't know where the initial rumour had started but it made me realise how distorted information can get when adrenalin is running high. One worker was walking around wearing white overalls and a white hair net; I thought he looked inappropriate being so clean in such a dirty place. Most people were inside the property and there were activists' cars parked all the way along the road. As I got out of the car and headed towards the driveway a protestor took me aside. He was standing just on the threshold between private and public property hitting a drum and looking uncomfortable. He told me that another protestor, one of the newer members of AWA, was feeling really uneasy and wasn't 'OK', he had taken her to a car to get her away from the action. I went looking for her and found her sitting well away from the farm. She was alone and had no way to communicate with the rest of the group. I asked her if she wanted to come closer and even while she was saying she was ok,

she looked frightened and overwhelmed by the situation. In the end she decided to come to a car that was closer and where another activist was always standing nearby. Pretty scary situation to be in – she didn't have her own car, she was in a strange town and she was obviously feeling vulnerable.

I went up the drive where most of the people were chanting, yelling and hitting drums in the yard. People were coming out with pieces of unassembled cages, throwing them into the ditch by the driveway. I thought that hooded up and wearing scarves the activists looked like an ominous bunch. There was a sudden burst of energy and a protestor drove away in a car - I presumed back to town. I found out later that one of the sheds had been opened and some people had gone in. They took photos and a hen was taken. The protest continued. Soon, [the farm manager] whose house we had been at earlier was standing in the yard being ranted at by a protestor with a megaphone. She used words like "bastard" and asked questions like "how do you sleep at night". Everybody began chanting a chorus of "shame on you". He stood solid against the noise.

Word soon spread that the police were on their way. There was a sense of urgency that came across the group. People knew they were trespassing so rushed towards their cars with no plan of where to go or what the group was doing. I got into a car and we drove away with the others. Round and round the small town, strange foreign streets and rain getting heavier, phone calls were going backwards and forwards between carloads of people all with different ideas of what to do. We spent about twenty minutes randomly driving around, stopping and talking out the window when we saw a car full of people we knew, radioing and phoning. Eventually the word came through from one of the vehicles that they were frustrated with driving around without purpose and had decided by consensus (of those in the car) to head back to the house. The other cars followed.

GARA groups are the most likely within the animal protection movement to employ direct action tactics in the fight for animal liberation. Direct actions are moral protests that target animal users directly and can include acts of civil disobedience. When I use the term 'civil disobedience' I refer to organised, non-violent actions, such as sit-ins, blockades, lock-downs<sup>78</sup> and disruptive protests, that often incorporate either an element of illegal activity (e.g. breach of the peace) or could potentially develop into an arrestable offence (e.g. trespass if activists do not cooperate when asked to leave). Home demonstrations are just one example of many direct action strategies used by GARAs across New Zealand during the time of research. Other actions included stickering, banner drops, open-rescues,

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<sup>78</sup> At a lock-down protest, activists will chain or lock themselves to a gate, property or other object.



and noisy protests. The majority of the offences for which GARAs are arrested are relatively minor and include trespass, obstruction, being unlawfully in a building and breach of the peace. Even though several GARAs have been found guilty of minor offences and fined or sentenced to community service, no GARA has ever served time in a New Zealand prison on a charge related to animal liberation activities. This is due to both the non-violent, morally informed intentions that are usually behind GARAs' law breaking, and the triviality of the crimes.

GARAs also regularly protest animal use through official channels more commonly associated with more conservative animal protection groups. These activities are most commonly aimed at educating the public and pressuring government. They include strategies such as information stalls, letter writing campaigns, vegan food giveaways and collecting signatures on petitions and submissions to government.

As a group AWA organises many and diverse protest actions, some of which incorporate elements of civil disobedience. For example, the Easter home-demos organised by AWA employed civil disobedience in two ways. Firstly, protestors were to create noise and breach the peace in a residential area early on a Sunday morning. Secondly, while there was an option to stay off the property, individuals planned to enter the property and therefore risk arrest for trespass. It should at this point be stressed that AWA do not organise actions that involve serious criminal offences, such as property damage, or promote them as preferred tactics.

GARAs' actions are also differentiated from public protests held by other animal protection groups by their flexible and fluid style. While SAFE does regularly have public demonstrations, these differ from GARA demonstrations in that they are more organised and structured, usually with somebody in charge. They very rarely result in arrests, and members are less likely to engage in spontaneous acts such as property damage or trespass. In the same way that GARAs do not promote hierarchical leadership in their groups, they emphasise autonomy during protests. Non-hierarchical organisation in a protest situation encourages spontaneity and fluidity and means that planned actions can change rapidly and

unpredictably. This chapter focuses primarily on the Easter 2002 home-demos, as an example of how this protest style can promote impulsive and disorderly behaviour. However it should be noted that the same emphasis on fluidity also allows protests to change in ways that are empowering for participants.

For example, the day before the home-demos described above, an AWA organised protest was held outside Mainland Poultry's main farm. The initial plan was to tie black crosses to the fence. However, when protestors realised they could lift the locked gates off their hinges the protest rapidly changed<sup>79</sup>. Within moments, most protestors present entered the property and explored the farm for at least twenty minutes. GARAs did have the option to stay off the farm, and several people choose to. Yet, as James pointed out, "when adrenalin is running high, it is easy to get carried away with the action and just go along with the crowd". Technically this action did not break the law because all protestors left when asked by the police. However it did change quickly from a peaceful demonstration to an act of civil disobedience. Another example comes from the open-rescue at Easter 2001 noted in Chapter Eight. GARAs noted that on both these occasions the action, although different from what was planned, was empowering because it increased individuals' experiences. These kinds of spontaneous actions are most frequently associated with GARA groups rather than other branches of the animal protection movement.

When protest does lead to arrest or property damage does occur, lasting members of AWA do not distance themselves from the action in the debates that inevitably ensue. In media reports and interviews, AWA will not publicly criticise other groups or the actions of individual activists. Instead they use the event as an opportunity to bring attention to issues of animal cruelty<sup>80</sup>.

This chapter focuses on tactics, the final axis in the Six-Axis model. I concentrate primarily on industry-targeted and civil disobedience actions organised by GARAs because these differentiate GARAs from other animal protection groups. Choices in tactics

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<sup>79</sup> See Appendix E for related newspaper article.

<sup>80</sup> For example, see the comments by an Animal Watch Aotearoa spokesperson in Appendix F.

represent more than a simple difference of tastes. GARAs adopt a radical position in the tactics axis and choose direct action strategies. In so doing, GARAs exhibit a general liberation ideology that is untrusting of government and bureaucracy and holds individuals as well as systems responsible for animal suffering. I propose that the tactics a group chooses and the way it carries them out are indicative of differentiation in philosophy and the practices of animal protection groups.

## **THE HOME-DEMO**

The extract that began this chapter describes a home-demo organised by AWA that was carried out on Easter weekend, 2002 and was attended by activists from as far away as Wellington<sup>81</sup>. The weekend's demos were focused on battery farming issues and were aimed specifically at Mainland Poultry, one of the largest egg producers in Australasia. At the time of the Easter protests, AWA members had been campaigning against Mainland Poultry for several years.

Although AWA and other GARA groups actively promote direct action tactics, it should be noted that individuals have varying opinions about the usefulness and ethical justness of these strategies. For example, some members believe home-demos to be an undesirable tactic not only because they perceive them to be little more than intimidation, but also because they anticipate potential risks to protestors' safety. The following reflections by some interviewees illustrate the diversity of opinions and experiences that GARAs have:

No, I couldn't take part on those ones, like protesting outside someone's house. It's affecting more than just the people that are a particular part of that family. Maybe the husband's involved, the wife is not involved and against it, but it's targeting the whole family as a whole and I'm not particularly comfortable with that aspect. Picking on specific [people] like that I, yeah, I draw the line there. But I think most people are ok with that. (Andy)

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<sup>81</sup> See Appendixes D, E, F and G for related newspaper articles.

Andy was not able to attend the Easter protests due to other commitments, but he was adamant that had he been in town he would not have taken part. Like Andy, Darren was particularly uncomfortable with the possible effect a home-demo could have on innocent parties, including protestors themselves:

[A]h the morning demo... I almost objected to it. I brought up the night before when we were all sitting around - "do they have children?" and "do the neighbours have children?" To me there are boundaries there. Like I've got boundaries myself. The demo at the poultry farm the previous day, when the fence fell off, I never crossed over, I stayed. I took one step over and a police car pulled up (laughs) and I took one step back and just watched the policemen run off into the [farm]. That's it; I've got boundaries that have been ingrained into me I think, where I have, not a respect for the law, but a fear of breaking the law...

And that morning demo we ran around the house making lots of noise, and I joined in... and Amy was freaking out. I was with Amy for quite a lot of that whole demo, stayed with her... and you know, she's freaking out and she's one of the protestors, imagine how any kids or anything inside [would feel] and neighbours' kids... And if people did that to me at my house, I'm not siding with him at all and what he's doing, I think what he is doing is atrocious. But did we know whether they had weapons? Yes, he apparently had a shotgun, apparently. We know he's licensed, got a firearms license or something...

Obviously, he's very aware of the possibility of having demonstrators at his farm. If it was *my* house and people came and did that for whatever reason, even if they had the wrong house and accidentally came to my house, and if I had a weapon, I would be out there brandishing it going, "get the fuck off my property". I'd be pissed, real pissed... People are so heated and excited and I know how badly it could go wrong. There's the possibility of it going really badly wrong. And I don't really want to involve myself in that. Ok if the guy's got a firearms licence, he's got a firearm, he's got a family at his house, we are making a shit load of noise, people were banging on the windows, banging on walls, wearing balaclavas, with sticks and bottles and drums and that. Obviously they were expecting something like that 'cause they'd just had demos the day before so ok, there's that safety margin. Luckily he was a reasonably cool headed, clear-headed person... (Darren)

When asked if she thought the home demo had been potentially dangerous, Rachel, a long-term member of AWA, told me why she thought it was not:

[L]ike [do I think] people were in physical danger? No, because I have been in situations like that out there before and know how [the farm manager] reacts to us- but I do think it might have been scary for people who hadn't. That's why I spent a lot

of time at that demo (and other demos) talking to people and generally making sure people knew the legal situation, what was happening, and that it was ok to be on the pavement if they didn't want to be on the farm. (Rachel)

Yet another perspective comes from an activist who attended the home-demo but was not involved with planning the Easter actions:

In terms of one thing about the [Easter demos] which I thought could have been different, was that there's different forms of direct action, and the demos in Dunedin ended up being kind of riot-like direct action without any discussion of what kind of demos there should be, what's effective and what everyone felt comfortable with. That kind of happened and people weren't really aware that that was the nature of what was gonna happen...(Matt)

GARAs devote many hours to planning protest actions but do not maintain a rigidly structured approach in performing them. This can result in protests becoming 'riot-like', individuals feeling as though actions are out of control, and new people finding themselves involved in situations that change quickly and become different from what they had expected. Despite these drawbacks, GARAs do not attempt to control protest in the way other animal protection groups do. Just as GARAs resist hierarchy in organisation, they maintain an ideal of equality and individual autonomy at protest actions. In this way GARAs are differentiated from other groups in the animal protection movement that are concerned with regulating their image and are more inclined to have leaders controlling protest direction and the messages put forward by protestors.

## **INDUSTRY & SOCIETY FOCUS**

The primary goal of most GARAs' protest actions is to attack elements of animal-use industries. Targets are found within farming, science, fashion and other industries that draw direct economic benefits from animal-use. Specific companies within these industries have obvious economic interests in continuing practices that GARAs oppose. Protests against researchers who practice vivisection are also industry attacks. Research projects involving vivisection are either industry or government funded. In the former, GARAs target the specific company that benefits and encourage a consumer boycott. In the latter,

GARAs bring to citizens' attention that their own tax dollars pay for animal research and it is their consent, or at least apathy, that makes this possible. GARAs target researchers individually, declaring them personally culpable for their involvement in animal suffering, as well as attacking the systemic institutionalised acceptance of an ideology in which animals are resources.

While other animal protection groups also attack specific industry targets, tactics tend to be more predictable, less confrontational and geared towards public education. In contrast, GARAs use tactics that cause economic disruption when attacking industry targets. When GARAs stage disruptive protests that disrupt shoppers, lock-down to fur store windows and block business access ways, they target animal-use beneficiaries directly and show they do not trust the effectiveness and reliability of government institutions and regulations responsible for protecting animals<sup>82</sup>. However, as long as people are willing to buy animal products, there will be businesses that sell them. With the exception of companies for which animal products/practices are not the main line of business<sup>83</sup>, the financial benefits of continuing current practices far outweigh the financial burden of organised GARAs' disruptions.

Many members of AWA find problematic the 'us-them' dichotomy that inevitably develops between 'protestor' and 'protested' at industry-targeted public demonstrations. Several interviewees expressed their personal discomfort at being involved with actions they found confrontational and even aggressive. However, the same people usually went on to note that they thought supporting public actions was very important. It is generally expected that grassroots groups will engage in protests regularly and that their grassroots status enables them to be more direct in their actions than other animal protection groups. As the following extracts point out, some interviewees find ways to be involved without directly participating in the confrontation:

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<sup>82</sup> These are government and industry protection bodies such as MAF and Animal Ethics Committees, and regulations such as the Animal Welfare Act, etc.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. Many clothing shops that do not specialise in leather or fur do sell a few items, such as fur trim shoes and gloves.



So at the moment, [I'm] not really wanting to do protests because for some reason I find them really awful, like really confrontational and I just have trouble yelling. I used to be really, really good at it (laughs), like I could yell at buildings with vivisection in them or whatever, and that was fine but I just find it really stressful and unpleasant now. That may change again, but at the moment if there is a protest then I'll try to contribute by doing something that I don't feel uncomfortable about. (Jane)

At a demo I'm not going to be the person with a sign that's screaming, I'll just sort of be on the sidelines listening and watching just to make sure that something doesn't go nasty... [Y]eah just sort of that stuff making sure that other people can carry on with what they want to do. (Patrick)

While the main objective of industry-based approaches is usually disruption, raising public awareness through media coverage and community attention is almost always a secondary goal<sup>84</sup>. When GARAs employ public protest as a tactic in animal liberation campaigns, they are engaging in a debate over cultural meanings. The questions that can arise from protest relate to what animals are, how humans should relate to animals, and whether animal use institutions ingrained in our culture are ethical. While members of the public often show support for AWA protests<sup>85</sup>, many interviewees also noted that a division often develops between 'protestors' and the 'general public', which they saw as potentially detrimental to the animal liberation cause. The division reinforces the gap between an animal rights worldview and that held by the dominant society. Other GARAs see the division as having the opposite but related effect of establishing a sense of community and togetherness among the protesters present.

I think [protests] are wicked (uses wicked as slang for great). They're a big party. There [are] always good people to talk to, there's stuff to do, different things. Supposedly you are all united against one thing, you know the animal liberation thing, you've got this big demo to find yourself immersed in the "us and them" thing which brings a whole lot of feelings of togetherness. Like "us" against the pigs (police) or the state, or "us" against vivisection, so they're just a bunch of evil bastards. So yeah, that definitely creates a sense of community and togetherness (Patrick)

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<sup>84</sup> It is generally considered a good outcome to generate an article in the local paper, a mention on radio news and especially coverage on a primetime TV news slot. Even if the piece is not favourable, all coverage brings animal issues to viewers' attention, thus reaching elements of New Zealand society that have the most impact on economic targets: consuming citizens.

<sup>85</sup> For example passers-by regularly honk their horns or join in with protest activities.



Some activists in AWA try to promote other forms of less traditional protest in attempts to subvert the us-them dichotomy. These actions focus more on opening a dialogue between the observer (public) and the ideas that are being put forward without necessarily expressing a predetermined position. Take, for example, the protest at Easter 2002 that involved tying hundreds of black crosses to the fence outside a factory farm. Aside from the fact that it made a very dramatic visual display, the action drew attention to animal issues by focusing on symbols of solidarity with the animals inside rather than confrontation with farm owners. Similarly, during the same weekend of protests, about ten activists performed a theatrical 'die-in' outside the offices of an influential shareholder<sup>86</sup>. Protestors later told me that they had enjoyed this action because they were able to make members of the public curious and capture their attention. One interviewee noted that he thought that this action had made observers think more about the protestors' message than they may have if the group had just been noisy and aggressive.

Similarly, Geoff told me that protests that went beyond spectacle and into concrete action were those that he found most satisfying:

An actual animal rights version of that would be Easter 2001, where there was a demo and there was all like waving flags and... [people] doing a protest. And then suddenly people got chickens and rescued them. When it goes beyond [spectacle]... into actual physical real action it [is], sort of like, concrete... (Geoff)

Lifting the gate from its hinges and entering a farm was a way GARAs turned spectacle into concrete action. Organising a home-demo was another. Lasting members justified the tactic by saying that chickens are not able to go home from Mainland Poultry farms and be safe from mistreatment, so they saw no reason why farm managers should be able to go home from work and be safe from protest. A very complex battle over identities was operating in this situation. GARAs refused to allow the farm manager to disassociate his work and home identities, and they insisted that he own up to his role in the animal-use industry even in his personal life. From this perspective, while GARAs find

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<sup>86</sup> See Appendix G for related newspaper article and Image 3 for picture.

institutionalised systems of capitalism and culturally ingrained attitudes of speciesism are fundamentally to blame for large-scale animal exploitation, they also hold individuals who participate in this process personally accountable for their choices.

## **DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT**

There are several reasons why GARAs choose to focus more resources on targeting animal-use industries directly than on persisting with efforts to lobby government. The large proportion of the population involved, and the significant contribution they make to local and export economies, make wool, dairy and meat farming large and powerful industries that have considerable influence on New Zealand government. For these, and other reasons, change in government legislation is slow and difficult to achieve. Unless there is sufficient support for a cause expressed by a sizable proportion of the population, or an influential sector, government seldom initiates change in existing legislation. Although lobbying government is traditionally the domain of larger, more mainstream groups like SAFE and SPCA, GARAs have been known to target specific MPs and support SPCA-led national campaigns to collect signatures on submissions<sup>87</sup>.

The key ambiguity then, is that AWA is simultaneously pro and anti systems of political change. While as a group they are involved to a limited extent in campaigning government, as individuals most are sceptical, if not cynical, about the likelihood of achieving significant change in this way. Jasper points out that post-citizenship movements tend to be untrusting of government processes (1997:70). With good reason, AWA is no exception. Government approved processes, laws and organisations designed to protect animals are often perceived by GARAs to be ineffective. Consider the following story as an example:

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<sup>87</sup> The most recent examples come from the AWA campaign against National MP Katherine Rich carried out before the 2002 election, and anti-sow crate and anti-battery cage campaigns led by SPCA in the past two years.

Driving up the long rundown driveway that leads to the free-range pig farm, I am dubious about the stories I have been told of happy pigs roaming free with their piglets in tow. We get to the house and a dog is frantically circling on the driveway, distressed, barking and beside herself. I look towards her and see a border collie wired to a nearby fence. Her neck rests on the middle wire of a standard farm fence and a second wire is wrapped over top. I have a sinking feeling in my gut. Is this free range and is this what people think is a better option?

Negotiating the rundown access road from the house to the pigs' huts and feed tower we have to dodge deep puddles and move big rocks and wires from the road. A gate is off its hinges and we continue through. Finally we reach the paddock where the pigs once lived. Rusting huts and shelters litter the field and loose sheets of iron are scattered about. My companion points to the valley and tells me this is where they used to keep the piglets but they kept dying from the cold. I am shocked by the state of disrepair of every aspect of the farm. Could this much degeneration have happened in the two months since the farm was closed? As we leave, my companion tells me stories about pigs with broken backs being left alive to suffer and piglets feeding from dead sows. Apparently even MAF could not ignore this degree of neglect and the farm was closed. I ask what happened to the pigs and am told, "the owner has another farm not far away. Maybe he took them there."<sup>88</sup>

While MAF inspectors may have closed this free-range farm, they do not appear to have terminated the access the farmer has to animals and thus his potential for continued mistreatment. This is not an isolated incident; the following article describes a similar situation:

#### Farmer allowed bull's leg to fall off

Invercargill: A Winton farmer allowed an injured bull to walk around on a broken leg until it fell off, the Invercargill District Court was told yesterday.

Geoffrey William Harold Day (33) was fined \$600 after admitting keeping an injured animal in unnecessary pain.

The court was told police went to Day's farm on March 29 on other matters and found dead stock, recumbent animals and insufficient feed.

An Environment Southland compliance officer was at the property the same day investigating reports of stock being grazed on the waterways.

That officer noted a Friesian bull, in poor condition, hobbling on three legs. A vet destroyed the animal. Further investigation revealed Day was contacted by the SPCA on January 4 and advised to destroy the injured bull [that] had broken a leg. The leg later fell off. On January 20, Day told the SPCA the injured bull had been destroyed.

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<sup>88</sup> This is a fictionalised account of stories, experiences and observation collected during research. See Appendix A for more details of ethical issues.

Defence lawyer Phil McDonald said Day had sought veterinary advice and had splinted the animal's leg. He had been intending to destroy the animal after the leg fell off, but had been busy.

Judge Noel Walsh declined an application for name suppression. – NZPA<sup>89</sup>

Experiences and stories such as these encourage GARAs' distrust of government-endorsed institutions and highlight inadequacies in current systems. While GARAs are involved with government lobbying efforts, they hold little hope that change will be achieved in this way. GARAs primarily target industry directly and employ civil disobedience tactics because they have almost completely lost trust in government processes that are supposed to protect animals:

We believe we have a moral right to break the law and rescue animals until the Government finally catches up with public opinion and bans animal cruelty (Page citing an animal rights statement, 2002)

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

AWA commits a large amount of energy and resources to educating the public and challenging dominant ideology. Members recognise that businesses that rely on animals and political processes that support them would not be possible without a culture in New Zealand society that accepts animals as resources. In order to create an environment in which change is achievable, the animal protection movement faces the task of changing the dominant ideology.

Groups seek to open individuals' minds to the prospect of a different worldview relating to animals and also to tap into existing sympathies. Groups across the movement attempt this through stalls and public meetings, education campaigns and by generating media coverage. In this way AWA uses tactics similar to other animal protection groups. As Matt points out, GARAs recognise that the power to change current practices lies in society and relies on a mass mobilization:

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<sup>89</sup> Otago Daily Times Wednesday, 18 September, 2002

All real social change of any kind has always come from the mass mobilization and empowerment of people. So that's why rather than getting caught up in lifestyle things it is important to stay engaged in wider social struggles. (Matt)

While GARAs use tactics similar to other groups in education campaigns, they are different because they promote a more radical, animal liberation message. GARAs do not compromise the radical position of abolition by suggesting small-step changes. They instead ask the public to make changes to their practices and ideology that are more dramatic than those requested by other groups. GARAs can at times find society to be apathetic. While shocking pictures and media do provoke interest and impart information, the question many activists ask is whether information alone is enough to transform sympathy into changed consuming and political behaviour. When asked if he had faith in people to reject current practices if they are told the facts about factory farming, Andy showed an ambivalent position typical of GARAs:

[I]n general I'm pretty hopeful in that. I couldn't say one way or the other, but I think when people find out, especially in like the public responses you get [from] people when you're doing stalls and things like that, people do actually care. But sometimes it's a long way between caring and comfort zone. And it's really hard to get that down to a small gap, where people will actually act on it. But most people seem to [be] appalled. But then actually having to physically act on something, people don't seem to be willing to go that far quite frequently. (Andy)

Stalls are possibly the most regular AWA activity, with the exception perhaps of meetings, and they are valuable for several reasons. While the goals of a stall may include fundraising or collecting signatures for petitions and submissions, most interviewees agree that more benefit comes from the opportunity to interface one-on-one with the community and encourage people to open their minds to the possibility of a different point of view. In the following extract Andy expresses the difficulty he experiences when doing stalls, a position common among GARAs:

I find it a real challenge. Having to talk to people in the streets is, you know, I find that quite hard. But I like to do it regardless... because I think it needs doing. It's something that needs to happen and I'm willing to do it... there's not that many people that are willing to put time in on stalls so... You can get sort of an immediate feedback too, on what's going on sometimes by just people's reactions to what

you're doing. So I find that quite interesting. It can be demoralising on some days, but other days it's really good. (Andy)

Many interviewees felt it is important to talk to the community as a way to not only spread information but also to determine how effective AWA actions are. Marcus, in particular, expressed his feeling that AWA is relatively isolated from the wider community. Take for example the following excerpt in which he discusses his desire for more and reliable-feedback:

AWA needs to be more, needs to just think about, "Ok who exactly is our target?" and find out from them if actions are working... [T]he only feedback I get for AWA that's reliable is when I'm postering and someone says something. Other than that most of the feedback comes from alternative counter culture kids. Those are people who are everyone's (within the movement) friends. I don't think that we get enough to know what's effective, to know if we're doing more harm than good by stickering on the street lamps. We are obviously pissing someone off. I think it would be good to find some way to try to connect more with the community. (Marcus)

Postering, leafleting, stickering and stalls are the most common tools used by GARAs to educate the public and influence the dominant ideological position relating to animals. In contrast to the confrontational approach of industry-targeted actions, GARAs seek to open dialogue with members of society in an attempt to create change in dominant ideology.

## **THE HOME-DEMO REVISITED**

When AWA decided to organise a home-demo, the choice of action was important for three reasons. First, it indicated that AWA had lost trust in government process and virtually given up on official channels of protest previously employed in efforts to voice opposition to the expansion of the Mainland Poultry farm<sup>90</sup>. Second, by taking protest to the home of the perceived wrongdoers, AWA members expressed a belief that the individual

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<sup>90</sup> Although AWA members had used civil disobedience tactics against Mainland Poultry in the past, e.g. a human roadblock had stopped trucks from exiting the property for many hours, for several years AWA members have worked together with the local community to write submissions, attend hearings and generally protest through official channels against Mainland Poultry's expansion.



farm manager is as much responsible for his/her actions as are institutionalised systems that enable animal-use and mistreatment. Third, the home-demo represented a new intensity of direct action for AWA members, who had not organised a home-demo before. While home-demos are becoming increasingly common overseas and have been used by other New Zealand GARA groups, no other branches of the animal protection movement in New Zealand have used this strategy.

GARAs take a radical position in the tactical-axis that differentiates them from other animal protection groups. They are the groups most likely to target industry directly with direct action tactics and civil disobedience, and the style of protest they employ is fluid and changeable. Fluidity at protests can lead to situations that are both frightening and empowering for GARAs. As just one example of the direct action tactics GARAs use, the Easter home-demos were generally seen as disorderly and unpredictable, and an experience to be learnt from. GARAs are also similar to other animal protection groups in that they recognise the importance of effecting ideological change in the wider society. In this chapter we have seen that GARAs exhibit a worldview that holds individuals responsible for their specific role in causing animal suffering, and is distrusting of government processes.





Image 10: Anti-IUPS Protest, August 2001



Image 11: Protestors vs. Police Standoff at Anti-IUPS Protest, August 2001



Image 12: Anti-Battery Cage Protest, Easter 2002

## 10 - CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS & CONNECTIONS

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If we have learned anything from the liberation movements, we should have learned how difficult it is to be aware of the ways in which we discriminate until they are forcefully pointed out to us. A Liberation movement demands an expansion of our moral horizons, so that practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable are now seen as intolerable. (Singer, 1993:22)

When I think of the word “liberation”, feelings of excitement and anticipation are stirred up within me. Far from being a neutral or objective expression, ‘liberation’ is charged with political and social subtexts that enrich and distort its meaning. I have used the term in this thesis deliberately, as I wished to capture cultural associations that link the idea to its related concepts. ‘Liberation’ is connected to freedom and emancipation; ‘liberated’ to unconventionality and freethinking; and, ‘liberal’ to generous and open-minded. In this context to support liberation is to be anti-oppression and anti-domination; to be liberated is to be free from conventional systems, people and situations that oppress and dominate; and to be liberal is to have an open mind that encourages diverse thought.

I have refrained from calling GARAs a liberation movement because in social movement theory the term is used almost exclusively to refer to groups struggling to achieve basic citizenship rights as oppressed populations. I do not wish my comments to detract in any way from the very real suffering that is, and has been, experienced by populations of peoples whose basic citizenship rights have been violated. However, I take this opportunity to question whether the term liberation is too narrowly defined in social movement theory. As Jasper points out, post-citizenship, and particularly post-industrial, movements are less interested than citizenship movements in gaining a ‘piece of the economic pie’, they struggle instead over cultural meanings, autonomy and democracy, and show suspicion of, rather than respect for, formal organisations (1997:70). While past citizenship movements sought *inclusion in* institutions as a form of liberation, activists of

post-citizenship movements seek *liberation from* these same institutions as they find their policies and practices oppressive. Oppression and domination in post-industrial society can be experienced in a multitude of ways that largely centre on cultural meanings and should not be classified as violations of basic citizenship rights. Consequently, people who feel oppressed resist the value systems and power structures that post-industrial capitalism and democracy put forward. They struggle to create meanings in society that are different from those which dominate, thus seeking liberation in a post-citizenship form. Singer points out in the quote at the beginning of this chapter that discrimination is not always obvious. Perhaps what is required is a new theory of post-industrial liberation movements that recognises oppression experienced by peoples who have full citizenship rights and yet still feel oppressed; people who seek new forms of freedom.

The Six-Axis model that has been discussed in this paper has sought to illuminate a dual-ideology that operates within the belief system of GARAs. It incorporates ideas that are concerned with animal use and a related string of worldviews that consider post-industrial practices to be oppressive. I have called these animal liberation and general liberation ideologies. The discussion has focused on differentiating GARAs from other branches of the animal protection movement and has by necessity been confined to the situation in New Zealand.

In this paper I have attempted to dispel two opposing criticisms of GARAs that misread the objectives and ideology of individual activists and GARA groups. Firstly, critics who have ignored or overlooked the general liberation ideology expressed by GARAs have charged them with being overly sentimental, too concerned with animal issues to worry about human problems, and even sufferers of an animal-lovers psychosis. At the opposite extreme, critics who *have* recognised the concern GARAs show for other social issues have simplified the animal rights movement to a symbolic protest against other wrongs in society. This perspective implies that, far from being principally concerned with animal suffering, GARAs fight for animals because animals are appropriate symbols of human problems rather than subjective agents entitled, in their own right, to compassion.

The reality is that a combination of both positions allows GARAs room to express their egalitarian political and social views without ever compromising their commitment to animal liberation. Through their words, actions and compassion, GARAs show that dedication to reducing animal suffering is their primary motive. However, the choices GARAs make about how to achieve animal liberation are not incidental, they are based in worldviews that inform a general liberation ideology.

GARAs show a deep commitment to ending animal suffering that goes beyond personal pay-offs and ulterior motives. They genuinely care about the plight of individual animals as well as entire species and they are prepared to sacrifice time, energy and resources to fight for animal liberation. The experiences GARAs have with animals, firsthand and through mediated sources, reinforces an animal rights philosophy in which animals are sentient beings of inherent worth that are entitled to respect, freedom and safety. This philosophy is coupled with an objective of complete abolition of animal use and carried out through a no-compromise approach. In contrast to other groups in the animal protection movement, GARAs are radical in their stance on all three animal protection axes. These radical positions together represent an animal liberation ideology.

However, GARAs do not limit their concerns to non-human animals. They liken speciesism to other forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism and classism, and actively discourage oppression within GARA groups. In their encounters with other humans, GARAs express awareness of systems of inequality that are ingrained in economic, political and cultural institutions within New Zealand society and strive to avoid participation in them (as either exploiter or the exploited). GARAs consciously live anti-oppression worldviews through lifestyle choices, egalitarian organisational ideals and deliberately industry-targeted tactics. GARAs take a radical position on all three general axes. This radical position indicates a general liberation ideology.

What we see then is a dual-ideology operating in GARA groups that is simultaneously concerned with animal and general liberation. I have argued in this paper that far from being incidental, this combination of radical positioning on all six axes is

unique to GARAs and differentiates them from other branches of the animal protection movement.

This thesis has identified GARAs as a group unique within the animal protection movement not only because of their more radical animal rights ideas, objectives and approaches, but also because of their general liberation ideology. However the discussion could as easily have been about GARAs as a group whose animal liberation ideology makes it unique within a general liberation movement marked by anti-oppression, anti-hierarchy and anti-capitalist worldviews. These two related and yet distinct approaches also signify two directions in which this research could expand.

Continuing in the direction of an animal protection movement focus, several interesting studies await a keen researcher. As I noted in Chapter Four, in both demographic and attitudinal analysis I found that researchers tend to be very broad in their definitions of 'animal rights activists' and include individuals who would in this paper be classified as animal welfare activists or animal sympathisers who take no action. Demographic and attitudinal analysis of activists across the entire animal protection movement in New Zealand (or just those activists with a 'rights' philosophy) could be a fascinating area for further research. If New Zealand animal protectionists were found to be demographically distinct from their foreign contemporaries, this would introduce interesting questions about the state of the New Zealand movement and possible reasons for difference. Alternatively, if the demographics in New Zealand were found to be similar to those overseas, this would raise questions about why New Zealand GARAs are different, and if there are factions in foreign animal protection movements that are demographically more similar to them.

Applying the Six-Axis model to animal protection movements abroad could also be an interesting assignment. The objective would be to test whether the model revealed differentiation between groups and if it turned up similar commitment to a dual-ideology among different branches. I tentatively predict that GARAs are part of a global network of similarly radical groups that share a younger, less affluent demographic profile and who

incorporate a general liberation ideology into animal liberation activities. Unfortunately, at this stage, my prediction is based on little more than a gut feeling as the broad focus of existing studies limits how much I can draw from published findings.

Another option is to move in the direction of a broader analysis. Here a researcher could explore any correspondence between GARAs and other groups and movements that seek general liberation from systems of oppression in post-industrial society. GARAs could then be located within broader post-industrial movements such as anti-corporate globalisation and anti-capitalism. While GARAs do show commitment to a general liberation ideology, they do not compromise their animal liberation beliefs under any circumstances. I am confident that this is an area in which ideological divergence between GARAs and groups in other post-industrial movements would become apparent.

A final suggestion of further research would be to adapt the animal section of the Six-Axis model to fit more closely with the specific ideological focus of other contemporary social movements. It is reasonable to predict that most post-citizenship social movements incorporate groups that are varied in their degrees of radicalism. I suggest that it would be interesting to see whether groups that occupy a radical philosophical stance regarding the ideology specific to their particular social movement do in fact share GARAs' commitment to a general liberation ideology. It would be interesting to see if a similar dual-ideology format could be developed. Within the environmental movement in New Zealand, for example, there exists a broad range of groups, from the conservatives (such as the Green Party) who seek reforms within existing political systems, to more radical factions (such as the Environmental Liberation Front) who seek more dramatic change. On the surface it would appear that these latter groups follow a lifestyle and make organisational and tactical choices that could be likened to GARAs.

As we near the end of this discussion, I feel that it is important to return to GARAs to find the last words. I hope that if this paper has achieved nothing else, it has indicated to the reader the passion and commitment I saw in the lives and actions of this small group of people. As theorists we find it possible, even occasionally easy, to step back and analyse



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the actions of others, reading into them a depth of meaning that sometimes goes beyond the reasons given by participants. I have interpreted GARAs' actions to be based in a dual-ideology. However, as Jane points out, when it comes down to it, GARAs do much of what they do simply because they couldn't bear not to.

I just think it's so important that people are working to free animals from the awful situations a lot of them are stuck in at the moment. You just can't really give up. It's pretty hard to know what I know and not try to do something about it (Jane)



## APPENDIX A: DISCUSSION OF ETHICAL ISSUES

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### MASSEY UNIVERSITY HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Before beginning research for this thesis I submitted a proposal to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC). After careful consideration, and after seeking the opinion of a legal advisor, the MUHEC chose to approve the project. The main concerns put forward by the board related to the university's vicarious liability if I were to become involved with any illegal activity or if my safety was to be put at risk.

Before beginning the research, I had only partial knowledge about Animal Watch Aotearoa and its members' specific choices in actions. I knew that the group took a very hard line when it came to the philosophy of animal rights but I was unsure what kind of actions this translated into. I was aware that in the past AWA had organised a blockade outside a battery farm: during a protest, several protestors formed a human chain across an access way by locking their arms together through holes in oil drums filled with concrete. This indicated to me that the group preferred 'extreme' tactics. Although I had no other evidence to suggest that members were involved with rescues or property damage, I prepared myself for the possibility that AWA was routinely involved with illegal activity and submitted my proposal to the MUHEC accordingly.

When I arrived in Dunedin and spent more time with the group, I discovered that while AWA does prefer less conventional protest tactics, organised group activities are never more serious than acts of minor civil disobedience. Offences committed by members in a protest situation, while arrestable, are very unlikely to result in jail and usually consist of trespass, or breach of the peace. I soon learnt that the concerns I had voiced to the

MUHEC about becoming involved in, or a party to, illegal activities were overstated and unfounded.

At all AWA actions, a legal option relevant to the action is made available to attendees and only minor civil disobedience is planned. It is true that in a protest situation, it is possible that any individual could be arrested for breach of the peace, but unless the individual is being particularly aggressive or rowdy, arrest is unlikely. Also, protests organised by AWA are flexible actions that encourage autonomy of individual protestors. In protest situations, individuals do occasionally act spontaneously and cause property damage. As I have stated, these actions are not AWA-sanctioned actions, they are actions by individual protestors for which the group takes no responsibility.

"In their work, anthropologists' paramount responsibility is to their research participants. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. Anthropologists must do everything in their power to protect their physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honour their dignity and privacy." *NZASA Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct (as adopted in 1987 and amended in 1990).*

As an anthropologist, my primary responsibility is to my participants and I endeavoured to live up to the above principle of anthropological research throughout the period of fieldwork and during the process of writing, and will continue to do so after the project is complete. Before carrying out research, I could conceive of situations in which I might become aware of participants' intentions to carry out illegal activity. In such circumstances I was prepared to evaluate the situation and possible consequences for participants, myself, and members of the general public. I decided before entering the field if/when such a situation arose, I would turn to my supervisor and the MUHEC for advice. Fortunately, this was never necessary.

## INFORMED CONSENT

Throughout the period of research I endeavoured to be as open as possible with participants about the project and my interest as a researcher. I never knowingly deceived

or misled participants and made every effort to ensure that individuals were aware that I was carrying out research and felt that they were welcome to approach me with questions and concerns. I announced several times at meetings (particularly during the early stages and then when I noted several a new people were present) that I was conducting research and approached members individually to discuss this. I also sent an email to the AWA email list introducing myself and welcoming comments and questions. I did not however find it appropriate to obtain written consent from participants. The primary reason for this was my concern that participants would be reluctant to *sign* document confirming their animal rights involvement. I got around this problem by presuming that if potential participants did not trust me or were uneasy because they were not well enough informed, they would not answer my questions and would distance themselves until such time as they felt more comfortable. Fortunately the responses to my project were overwhelmingly supportive and participants showed their consent by allowing me access to their meetings, social gatherings and protests.

#### INTERVIEWEES AND PSEUDONYMS

I have maintained anonymity for participants in my field journal and in the final paper by using pseudonyms instead of individuals' real names. For the four individuals who are profiled, and in situations where interviewees' comments identify them, I have used more than one name to refer to one person's comments.

Twelve participants took part in tape-recorded one-on-one interviews lasting between one and three hours (the sound quality of one interview was too poor for transcription and the interview was followed up with an online interview). Before the interview began, participants were asked for verbal consent and I clarified that they agreed to be recorded. I transcribed all interviews personally and transcripts were returned to interviewees in electronic form to be checked, edited and clarified as they saw fit. Individuals who are quoted in the final paper were given an opportunity to review their quotes and, where relevant, context was given.

## USE OF CITY AND GROUP NAMES

After careful consideration and discussions with several participants, I eventually decided not to use pseudonyms for AWA and Dunedin. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, the GARA movement in New Zealand is very small and most activists know where I have been carrying out my study. Changing the group name would, therefore, not achieve anonymity within the movement. Secondly, as I stated previously, AWA is an aboveground group and they do not organise or endorse property damage or other illegal activities that go beyond minor acts of public civil disobedience. AWA does not have anything to hide from police or other interested parties and I was concerned that changing the name of the group and city might make them appear more criminal than they actually are.

## TREATMENT OF SENSITIVE MATERIAL

In the latter part of this thesis, a few vignettes are incorporated that are fictionalised accounts of experiences with hens and pigs that are suffering. These stories combine elements of my own experiences as an adult and as a child, stories told to me by activists from across New Zealand, conversations and informal interviews, and insights I have gleaned from readings. It should be noted that these stories are not specific to any individual, group, city or event.

## APPENDIX B: AWA PRINCIPLES

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### Animal Watch Aotearoa

- 1- Seeks to abolish the property status of animals; therefore will not support any animal industries.
- 2- Will not produce material or engage in actions that are racist, sexist or homophobic.
- 3- Will wherever possible make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken.
- 4- Organises in a non-hierarchical manner.
- 5- Will never publicly criticise other AR groups
- 6- Supports non-violent direct action
- 7- Supports the Animal Liberation Front and political prisoners

These principles were posted to the e-mail contact list during the time of my research. The accompanying message stated that this was the 'draft' list of principles and suggested that the group reassess them in the near future. To my knowledge this has not yet been done.  
(2002)

## APPENDIX C: 'STICKERING' ACTION

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### Protesters target pork

By Joanna Norris

Animal rights campaigners carried out a covert protest at a Dunedin supermarket last night.

The protesters stuck stickers (at left and right) on several pork products in Countdown in Cumberland St, calling for a halt to pig farming.

The protest was so quiet, supermarket staff did not notice until they were alerted by the ODT.

Service administration manager Dave Hellyer said the supermarket allowed protesters to talk to customers outside the store, but asked them not to operate inside.

He said the affected products would probably have to be returned to the manufacturer. "They will have to be written off. All it is doing is putting the prices up," he said.

He said it was only a "small element" of activists who carried out this kind of sabotage. No group claimed responsibility for the stickers.



*Otago Daily Times 1-October 2001*

### Youth detained during battery hen protest



**[Officer speaks to protestor as others] chalk up their opposition to Mainland Poultry during a protest outside the Otago Finance building in Dunedin yesterday.**

By Craig Page

Why did the chicken protester cross the road?

Because he was being led away to a police vehicle.

A youth (16) was apprehended by police yesterday in the latest Dunedin protest against battery hen farming, aimed at Mainland Poultry.

About 30 placard-carrying protesters from Animal Watch Aotearoa gathered in the Octagon about 2.30pm, before marching up

Stuart St to the offices of Mainland in the Otago Finance building.

Mainland Poultry management was taking no chances, with two security guards employed to ensure protesters kept off the company's property.

In a similar protest in April, the company claimed a window was kicked in.

Sergeant Tony Bridgman said a youth was apprehended by police after he refused to stop writing chalk slogans on the footpath outside the building.

He was later released without charge.

After about 45 minutes in Stuart St, protesters moved to Otago House, on the corner of Moray Pl and

Princes St, where offices are used by Mainland shareholder Howard Paterson.

The group then travelled to Dunedin central police station to voice their disapproval at one of their number being apprehended.

Group spokeswoman Clare Havell said in a statement Mainland Poultry was the biggest battery hen company in New Zealand with hundreds of thousands of hens. "They are the ultimate in animal cruelty and a huge promoter of intensive farming," she said.

*Otago Daily Times - 13-July 2002*



## APPENDIX E: LOCKED GATES BREACHED

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### Protest at Waikouaiti egg farm

By Blair Mayston

Animal rights activists invaded Mainland Poultry's Waikouaiti egg farm yesterday, protesting battery farming, a practice they describe as "brutal".

Animal Watch Aotearoa spokeswoman Claire Havell said protesters attached about 100 black crosses on the farm's fence and hung up anti-battery farming banners after meeting about 2pm.

They then managed to breach the farm's locked gates and walk through the battery farm set-up.

"It confirmed our belief that Mainland Poultry are animal abusers on a grand scale," she said.

Protesters left the farm after police warned them to do so, she said.

Yesterday was the first in a series of protests against battery farming that run until Tuesday.

"Battery hens are treated like machines. . . pumping out hundreds of eggs a year in conditions unfit for an animal," she said.

"Factory farming's unrelenting and brutal, and it must be stopped."

Mainland Poultry general manager of operations Jeff Winmall said when contacted, people were "totally within their rights" to protest.

"If they come in and start disrupting the farm, and break the law, I have a problem with that."

Mr Winmall said there was "no real trouble" and police handled the situation well.

He said Mainland was well above the minimum code of practice for egg farming, and had recently built a free range egg farm near Palmerston.

"If the market dictates that more people will buy free range eggs, we'll build more free range farms."

Mainland had improved its security in light of the possible protests, he said.

Senior Sergeant Allan Grindell said the protest ended about 4.15pm, and no arrests were made.

***Otago Daily Times- 1-April 2002***

## APPENDIX F: EASTER PROTESTS AT WAIKOUAITI

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### Protesters' actions disappoint police

By Craig Page

Police have accused animal activists of "overstepping the mark" in battery farm protests, after a fence was damaged in Waikouaiti and a shed at Mainland Poultry broken into yesterday.

"These people might have a legitimate complaint about battery farming. It doesn't give them the right to go around breaking the law and damaging private property," Senior Sergeant Gavin Briggs said.

Protesters linked with Animal Watch Aotearoa ripped at least six palings from a fence at the Waikouaiti home of Mainland Poultry general manager of operations Jeff Winmall yesterday morning.

They then moved on to Mainland Poultry and broke into a shed.

Snr Sgt Briggs said he was "extremely disappointed" at the actions of the protesters, predominately from out of town.

A Christchurch man was arrested and charged with being unlawfully in a building. Police were alerted about 8am after approximately 20 protesters gathered at Mr Winmall's home. They shouted chants and some protesters pulled palings off a boundary fence.

Six officers were on hand for yesterday's protest which finished about 11am.

Snr Sgt Briggs said it was hard to sympathise with the activists when they went out of their way to deliberately break the law.

"They talk about battery farmers being animal abusers on a grand scale. These people were abusing property on a grand scale."

It was the second day of protesting for the activists, who on Sunday placed black crosses and banners on the farm fences. They also breached the poultry farm's locked gates.

Animal Watch Aotearoa spokeswoman Clare Hawell said when contacted yesterday she knew nothing about the damaged fence and "it did not really bother her".

"What's more important, mistreated animals or a broken fence?"

She also disputed that a shed was broken into, saying no locks were forced. The organisation would defend the charges against the man who was arrested.

In a statement, activists claim to have found "extremely de-feathered hens", four to a cage at Mainland. They also "liberated" one battery hen.

"We believe we have a moral right to break the law and rescue animals until the Government finally catches up with public opinion and bans animal cruelty," the statement said.

The protest would resume in the Octagon at 10.30am today before moving to "another venue".

*Otago Daily Times- 2-April 2002*

## APPENDIX G: PROPERTY DAMAGE AT PROTEST

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### Animal rights protesters target offices

By Craig Page

**A cause to die for . . . animal protesters play dead outside the Dunedin offices of Mainland Poultry shareholder Howard Paterson yesterday morning, as Andrew Richard (with loud hailer) promotes their plight.**

Animal activists again left their mark yesterday, breaking a window at Dunedin's Mainland Poultry's head office and entering a building occupied by company shareholder Howard Paterson.

The actions follow earlier concerns by police that members of Animal Watch Aotearoa had "overstepped the mark" in their protests by damaging property in Waikouaiti.

Mainland Poultry general manager Hamish Sutherland said a ground floor window at the company's offices, on the corner of Stuart St and Smith St, was kicked in yesterday afternoon.

Leaflets from Animal Watch Aotearoa, which is protesting against battery farming by Mainland, were shoved through the window. "We're happy for them to make their point but we draw the line at wilful vandalism," Mr Sutherland said.

He was particularly concerned other tenants in the building had also had to put up with the noise and abuse dealt out by the protesters.

More than 40 protesters also gathered outside Otago House, on the corner of Moray Pl and Princes St, yesterday afternoon where offices are used by Mainland shareholder Howard Paterson.

Some entered the building, but soon left when police, a prisoner wagon and dog handlers arrived. By contrast with the afternoon protests, those in the morning, while noisy, passed without incident. About 25 placard carrying protesters gathered in the Octagon from about 10am.

From there, they headed the short distance to Mr Paterson's offices in Otago House where they used loud hailer to shout slogans and bang on drums. There were no arrests made as a result of the incidents.

***Otago Daily Times, 3-April 2002***

(See Image 3 for accompanying photo)

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