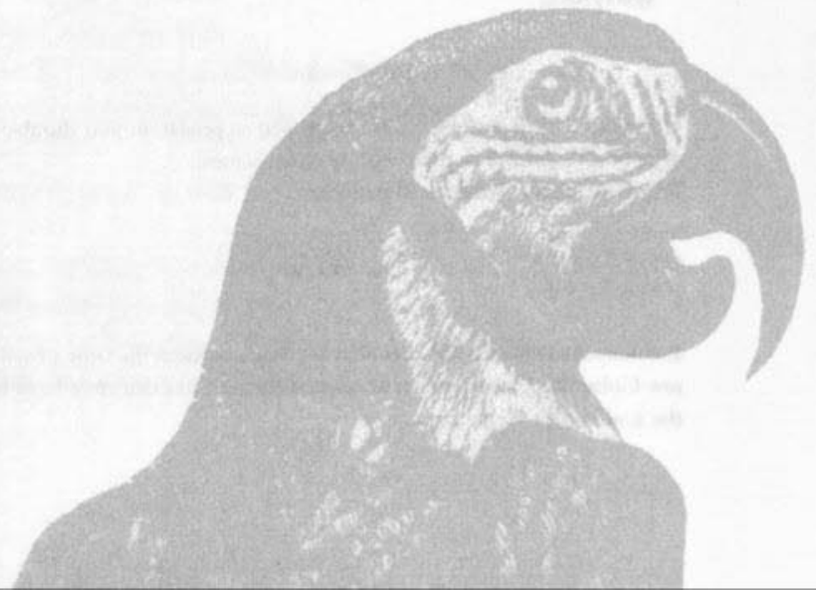
ANIMALS AND SOCIETY

An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies

Margo DeMello

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS NEW YORK



started an ethnographic research project on "Coop Loops and Cow Shares: De-industrial Domestications." I'm studying two related but different phenomena: the backyard chicken movement and the selling of "cow shares," a strategy to get around the ban on some states, including the one where I live, of sales of unpasteurized milk. I'm considering both trends in relation to the context of de-industrialization.

Growing up, animals helped me to make sense of my confusing human family. In my research and teaching in human-animal studies, I continue to search for points of connection—with human and nonhuman animals, among scholars in the humanities and natural sciences, and among farmers, hunters, vegans, and conservationists. I encourage my students to value diverse perspectives, human and animal, and to recognize that no one has all the answers to the many urgent social, environmental, and political problems that we face. Collaboration across subfields and disciplines is necessary, as is negotiation and compromise.

6

Display, Performance, and Sport

A circus tiger mauled and killed his trainer.
"I wonder what set him off," said the commentator.
I don't know. How would you feel if separated from your family,
You were shipped to different cities in a cage no less,
Bound of life, with pain/pleasure techniques,
And complete humility for performance under duress,
A whip no less.
If you were a tiger would you do it?
Would you break away,
Think of escape and if desperate,
Kill and avow your infinite humiliation and guaranteed
Death?
Do you do it, now, as a human?
If not, then I understand why you were not sure
What set the tiger off, Mr. Commentator.
—SERJ TANKIAN, "CIRCUS TIGER" (2002)

Why Do We Watch Animals?

Americans love watching animals. We love watching them eat, play, interact with each other, and even sleep. We also love touching them and being as close as possible to them. If we are not watching our own animals, we are birding, whale watching, photographing wildlife, scuba diving, snorkeling, or watching Animal Planet and Webcam footage from zoos and animal sanctuaries.

One reason modern Americans are so captivated by animals today is the disappearance of animals from our lives. In our post-industrial world, companion animals remain the only form of physical connection that Americans

have with animals. Since animal agriculture now takes place behind the closed doors of huge factories and most Americans live either in cities or suburbs, interacting with non-companion animals has effectively become a thing of the past for the great majority of us. Thus, the proliferation of animals in films and on television allows many of us to view animals that we would never generally get the chance to see. But long before television and film, Westerners had devised ways of seeing and connecting with wild animals through zoos and circuses that brought wild animals into domestic enclosures for urban dwellers to see.

Having a fascination and a desire to watch animals—especially wild ones—is not enough to explain the other ways people use and have used animals as entertainment, such as circuses, marine mammal parks, dog or horse racing, animal fighting, and rodeos. What is it that draws so many people to entertainment venues in which animals are not just present but are forced to perform sometimes dangerous stunts for our pleasure? What is the pleasure in seeing large wild animals such elephants, chimpanzees, and tigers dressed up like children and performing tricks?

Whether it is through the billions of tourist dollars spent at zoos and wildlife parks per year, the proliferation of the modern ecotourism and wildlife safari industry, whale watching, birding, or the enormous popularity of Animal Planet television shows such as *Animal Cops* and *Meerkat Manor*, it becomes obvious that the public craves seeing animals. Whether we observe animals from the comfort of our couches during *The Dog Whisperer* or whether we travel thousands of miles to Australia, Africa, or Antarctica to watch koalas, lions, or penguins, it is clear that this trend will continue. One question that we could ask is: Is all this attention good or bad for the animals? Certainly documentaries that focus on the plight of wild animals and their loss of habitat seem good for animals—educating the public on the ways in which animals are imperiled and what we can do about it seems to only have positive consequences. Likewise, shows that focus on animal rescuers, animal trainers who use animal-friendly methods, and many of the other ways that we can watch animals on television and in film seem to be beneficial.

On the other hand, many of the other ways in which humans can see and even interact with dolphins, elephants, bulls, horses, or other wild and domesticated animals do not necessarily provide those animals with any benefits. Circuses, rodeos, and marine mammal parks not only force animals to perform in ways that are unnatural for them, they also keep many of their animals confined in conditions that are sometimes very intensive and do not seem to benefit the "stars" of the shows at all.

In this chapter, we will look at a variety of venues where humans can watch animals and observe their living conditions, the possible benefit or harm to the animals, and the motivation of the people who derive pleasure from watching them. We focus on wild as well as domesticated animals, as both are used for entertainment in a number of ways. Typically, the wilder and more exotic the animals, the more pleasure most of us get from simply watching them or observing their performances or tricks in circuses and marine parks. In some ways, watching a very wild or exotic animal act like a human is even more interesting than watching a domesticated animal—already much like us—do humanlike tricks. But domestic animals of their proximity to many of us typically must perform—whether racing, fighting, or participating in a rodeo—since watching a domesticated horse, rooster, or cow in a zoo would not fit most people's idea of entertainment.

Ultimately animals, whether domesticated or wild, are heavily featured in human entertainment because of our pleasure in watching them and because animals, as sociologist Adrian Franklin points out (1999), are both like us and different from us; they can be interpreted by us in a variety of ways, to represent difference and otherness and to represent sameness and family.

Zoos

People have kept animals in captivity for thousands of years, long before the concept of "zoo" ever existed—as creatures of worship, as part of gladiatorial contests in the Roman Empire, for activities such as bearbaiting and bullfighting in medieval Europe, and more. Wealthy elites in ancient Egypt, Greece, China, and Rome, and later in medieval and Renaissance Europe, also kept exotic animals. The keeping of these animals—such as giraffes, monkeys, elephants, and lions—in these early collections demonstrated either the wealth of the individuals or the wealth of the empire as well as a mastery of nature through the ability to contain "ferocious" animals. The animals themselves were often gifts from the leaders of other kingdoms or states. By the late seventeenth century, private **menageries**, as they were called, were status symbols for wealthy Europeans and commoners were not able to view them.

Ancient and early European exotic animal collections were not meant for public observation; the idea of zoos for the public to visit and see wild animals and the idea of zoos as anything more than oddities or amusements really did not develop until the eighteenth century. One way that commoners were able to see these animals was in the form of traveling entertainers who, in the

mid-nineteenth century, also offered minstrel acts such as juggling, singing, poetry recitals, and human oddities shows. The purpose of these shows was spectacle—animals lived in small cages (when they were not held by chains) alongside human oddities and native peoples captured from colonial lands.

The first **zoological garden**, the Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes, opened in Paris in 1794. Zoological gardens were different from private menageries and traveling shows. Here, animals were available for viewing as people walked and looked about (rather than just standing in one spot and observing them in cages). In addition, where menageries were disordered groupings of random animals, zoos were ordered collections often organized by continent or taxonomic label. Like modern zoos today, these early zoos competed for the best and most exotic animals and displays. And like the ancient collections, they were a place to put all the animals African and Asian rulers sent as gifts.

The early French zoos were the first to propose the idea that zoos could advance the study of natural history, and they slowly began to emphasize education. This new development corresponded with the rise of scientific ideas about animal nature that, not coincidentally, supported practices of animal confinement. At this time, the idea that menageries could further scientific knowledge became popular and spread throughout Europe.

Nineteenth-century zoos were still focused on the upper classes, charging entry fees that the poor could not afford. Instead, the poor satisfied themselves with animal attractions such as animal fighting, bearbaiting, and racing, all of which Northern European countries later prohibited—not because of concerns about cruelty to animals but as a way to control the poor. Even though the zoos of this time period promoted an educational message, they were still largely about entertainment; a chimpanzee tea party was the main attraction at the London Zoo from the 1920s to the 1970s, while the Bronx Zoo held tea parties for the orangutans.

The history of American zoos is somewhat different. The first American zoos were the Central Park Zoo in New York, founded in 1860, and the Philadelphia Zoo, opened in 1874. These zoos, as well as other early American zoos, developed during the time when the first public parks were being devised and constructed and indeed many of the early zoos were built in parks. Attendance was free to the public as a way of drawing in the middle class and the poor and providing them with an educational, uplifting experience. Whether American or European, by the nineteenth century all the major cities had to have a public zoo.

What animals can be placed in a zoo? The zoo maintains the primary distinction between "wild" and "domestic" animal, and only wild animals can

be placed in a zoo. Furthermore, the conventional wisdom says that it is not a zoo if it does not have an elephant. For hundreds of years, zoos procured their animals by paying hunters or traders to catch live animals in the wild. During the growth of zoos in the nineteenth century, thanks to the stress of not just capture but transport across Africa or India to Europe, anywhere from one- to two-thirds of the animals died en route. The collectors—themselves big-game hunters—wrote extensively about their excursions. Many left "kill diaries" in which they boasted in excruciating detail of their kills and of the baby animals that mourned at the sides of their dead mothers until they were snatched away, put into cages, or tied or chained up, and transported to Europe. Because most social animals such as gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants, and hippos guard their young, collectors had to kill the adults (sometimes the females, but often the entire herd) when capturing their babies.

After the end of the colonial era, animals for zoos continued to be captured in the wild. It was not until 1973 with the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna and the passage of the Endangered Species Act that wild imports began to decline in the United States. However, then as now, unscrupulous dealers can fake certificates of entry to say that the animals are captive bred, and customs officials are not trained in the identification of exotic animals. In addition, until the modern period, zoos used to take in animals from the public—either "donations" from well-meaning individuals or else no-longer-wanted exotic pets. In other cases, community groups would often fundraise in order to buy zoos a special animal that they felt would complete the zoo's collection. Even today, it is often a matter of civic pride that a local zoo is able to have a prestigious animal such as an elephant or, the most prestigious of all, a panda.

Zoos ship animals around the country many times throughout their lives. They manage populations in a way that is cost effective, keeps the right balance of animals for the zoo's mission, brings in visitors, and provides for breeding opportunities. This means that zoos will buy, sell, and borrow animals, sometimes temporarily and sometimes permanently, and remove animals from familiar environments and animals. So what do zoos do when they have "surplus" animals? In the best cases, zoos find sanctuaries or other places where animals will be "retired." Sometimes zoos euthanize animals. And sometimes zoos sell animals through dealers and brokers to a variety of locations, including roadside zoos, private homes, exotic meat farms, research laboratories, the entertainment industry, and canned hunting operations. Thankfully, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, the major U.S.

zoo accrediting agency, now prohibits member zoos from selling surplus animals to canned hunting operations or any other non-accredited facilities. Unfortunately, this means that with fewer places to use to dispose of surplus animals, many zoos resort to killing them.

Early European zoos, like the traveling displays, showed their animals in small, barred cages. Some zoos, however, created elaborate displays such as Bristol Zoo's Monkey Temple, an open-air "Indian temple" that humans had supposedly abandoned and the jungle had taken over. Monkey Temple was an early attempt to confine animals—in this case, rhesus macaques—in a "naturalistic" enclosure without bars or wires, where visitors could enjoy the animals behaving in a way that they thought was "natural." The design was also based on a motif common to zoos in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that echoed not only the jungle environments from which the animals supposedly came but also the exotic cultures with which the animals were associated. (The connection among exotic cultures and peoples and exotic animals was made explicitly clear when Carl Hagenbeck, an animal dealer and collector who supplied European zoos in addition to having famous clients such as P. T. Barnum, imported two young Cameroonian boys to keep a captured baby gorilla company at his zoo in Austria in 1910—the implication being that African boys and African apes were closely connected. In 1906, the Bronx Zoo exhibited an African pygmy man named Ota Benga with the chimpanzees until the city's African American community lodged a protest.)

It was not until the early twentieth century that the new style of animal enclosure was fully developed using concrete moats, sunken fences, and other design aspects to confine animals but also allow the public to have an unimpeded view of them. Hagenback was the innovator behind this new style of zoo enclosure when he introduced it in Hamburg's Tierpark in 1907. Hagenbeck created sophisticated panoramas, which utilized concrete rocks and other substitutes for natural materials that were designed to make it appear as if the animals were living in the wild. These new, easy-to-replicate, "naturalistic" designs soon became the standard zoo enclosure style. (Large numbers of premature animal deaths had plagued early European zoos due to the stresses of the animals' capture and transport as well as the inappropriate conditions.) But the ultimate focus of these changes was not to improve the animals' lives. The new enclosures were created to make the public enjoy visiting zoos more, since zoos now had to compete with more modern forms of entertainment and needed to do something to attract more customers. In fact, eliminating the bars often made the animals' lives even worse; the bars were at least a feature of their enclosure that they could climb. Many

of the newer enclosures that featured moats or sunken pits without bars left the animals in a barren environment where there was absolutely nothing for them to interact with.

Even today, the modern approach to zoo enclosure design known as **landscape immersion** replicates the animals' environments as closely as possible by using concrete forms to simulate rocks and other natural objects and to connect visitors with the habitat. The goal is to make visitors happier—indeed, studies show that visitors do not like seeing animals behind bars because it reduces their own viewing pleasure. As anthropologists Bob Mullan and Garry Marvin (1987) point out, by improving living conditions or by providing them "with a better stage and with more complex scenery and props to make the illusion more satisfactory" (159), visitors will feel satisfied with the treatment of the animals and thus feel that the captivity of animals in zoos is morally acceptable. A recent study (Melvin, McCormick, and Gibbs 2004) demonstrated that zoogoers view naturalistic enclosures as providing the best welfare for the animals.

Starting in the 1970s, a growing debate about animal protection meant that people started to question the ethics of exhibiting wild animals in what many regarded as restrictive, cruel enclosures. At the same time, Congress expanded the **Animal Welfare Act** to include standards of care for animals in exhibits. More recently, a 1995 poll by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research showed that 69 percent of Americans are concerned about the treatment of animals at zoos, aquariums, and wild animal parks.

Many zoos now use **environmental enrichment** to reduce boredom, stress, and a condition known as **zoochosis**—psychosis caused by captivity—and to increase species-specific behaviors. For some zoos, this means environmental complexity (such as trees, structures, jungle gyms, etc.) that can increase the ability of the animals to exercise; occupational or feeding enrichment in which the animals have to work for their food; physical and sensory enrichment, which involves the addition of new objects for the animals to investigate, smell, touch, or play with; and social housing. But sometimes this only means giving a gorilla a tire or a ball, or putting a group of unrelated animals together into an enclosure rather than keeping animals with their kin groups during their lifetimes. (The latter is particularly difficult to do when zoos need to manage their populations by selling off animals.) Studies have shown that environmental enrichment has documented positive effects on zoo animals' psychological well being. In recent years, a number of American zoos have closed their elephant exhibits, sending their elephants to live out the rest of their lives at one of a handful of elephant sanctuaries in the United States. This is viewed as a positive development by animal welfare

advocates, who decry the small spaces that zoo elephants live in that shorten their lifetime in captivity—17 years for Asian elephants and 19 for African elephants, compared to 42 years for wild Asian elephants and 56 years for wild African elephants (Clubb et al. 2008).

Among the reasons people visit zoos are to escape from urban and suburban environments and to be able to view and even interact with wild animals, something that has long been missing from the urban or suburban lifestyle. That is why even reputable zoos complement their educational message with exhibits and events that allow the public to ride, touch, feed, or get very close to animals. Visitors also like to see animals move. They become bored when animals are sleeping, even when they are nocturnal and should not be awake in the daytime. This leads to zoo patrons yelling at animals or pounding or tapping on enclosure windows. And even when zoo visitors do not react negatively to the animals, studies have shown that their presence is associated with behavioral changes in zoo animals—especially primates—that are indicative of stress.

The message that zoos promote most today is conservation. Some zoos use the term "arks" to emphasize their role in conserving species whose habitats were destroyed or that are on the brink of extinction thanks to overhunting or other problems. In addition, many zoos play a part in breeding rare and endangered species—this is known as ***ex situ* conservation**, as opposed to ***in situ* conservation**, which refers to conservation programs in the wild. Others, such as the San Diego Zoo, create research programs that focus on creating sustainable populations, conserving wildlife habitats, improving animal health, and even collecting endangered species' DNA. Some zoos have released zoo-raised endangered animals into the wild. All of these are worthy causes.

But it is difficult to imagine that zoos, with a hundred-year history of wildlife destruction in order to acquire animals that would then live for only a couple of years in captivity, should be society's institution responsible for preserving thousands of species. Even habitat conservation and reintroduction programs can do only so much when thousand acres of rain forest are being paved over or burned every day. Habitats continue to disappear to make room for development, cattle grazing, cropland, and more. Sport hunters continue to kill rare and endangered animals for trophies. And as humans continue to threaten habitats and entire species, it makes little sense to invest much hope in **captive breeding programs** and the like when the root problems of species extinction continue to flourish. Perhaps most important to note, the majority of animals in zoos are not even endangered.

Most zoos are not good models for captive breeding and species conservation. Those that have captive breeding programs often use them to create more zoo animals; they play no role in ensuring that wild animals can survive in their native habitats. Sadly, people around the world are confronting the very real problems of habitat loss and species extinction on a scale unparalleled in human history. If this trend continues, a few remaining individuals in captivity will be but a pathetic reminder of what once existed.

Ecotourism and the creation of wildlife preserves could be two ways to preserve habitats and to allow animals to live unmolested in their natural environments. By allowing limited ecotourism, visitors (although sadly only those who can afford it) could visit these places and their expenditures could help fund efforts. It is worth noting that ecotourism can be hard on the environment, given how many more resources Westerners are accustomed to consuming. In addition, some preliminary research is beginning to emerge on whether or not animals can be harmed by ecotourism. For example, one recent study (Matheson et al 2006) found increased levels of aggression in Tibetan macaques that interact frequently with tourists; scholars think that the feeding of the animals may be the cause of the aggression.

Marine Mammal Parks

Marine mammal parks and swim-with-dolphin programs differ from most zoos in that they make animals perform for the public rather than promoting their observation in enclosures. Similar to the zoo industry, marine mammal park advocates state that keeping marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, seals, and sea lions captive provides education to the public, allows scientists to gain information about the animals, and aids world conservation efforts. Unlike zoos, marine mammal parks are relatively recent inventions: The first park, Marine Studios, opened in 1938 in St. Augustine, Florida.

Marine mammal parks, like zoos and other venues in which people can view wildlife, believe that entertaining the public with wild animals and educating them about wild animals' lives make the public care more for those animals. And, if the public cares, perhaps they will also support conservation efforts. By including lectures and exhibits on the lives of marine mammals and their natural habitats, as well as the importance of marine conservation, the parks mix educational messages with the fun of watching these playful animals. Dolphins, like pandas or other especially cute animals, are often effective at conveying this message because of their perceived friendliness, playfulness, and even the way that their jawline looks like a human smile.

Although zoos and marine parks encourage visitors to form an emotional connection to animals by making them behave in humanlike ways, they also attempt to turn the public's fuzzy connection to these animals into an interest in conservation and an obligation to ensure that these animals survive in the wild. A 1995 poll by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research reported that 90 percent of respondents believe that public display facilities provide a valuable means of educating the public. However, no studies have measured the influence of these "educational programs" on people's behavior, especially as it relates to conservation.

Marine mammal parks also focus on learning about the animals themselves, employing scientists of all types to study the behavior, biology, and anatomy of the animals in the hopes of using that knowledge to extend the animals' lives in the wild. Of course, that knowledge may not be totally applicable to wild animals since the subjects are captive animals that often exhibit **stereotypic behaviors** associated with captivity. Like many zoos' captive breeding programs, this is more of a stopgap measure given the massive human threats to dolphins, whales, and other animals from legal and illegal hunting, pollution, habitat loss, and more.

Finally, like zoos, marine mammal parks that have captive breeding programs promote their efforts to ensure the continuation of endangered species. Certainly the captive breeding of dolphins, for instance, has reduced the need to remove dolphins from the wild for use in marine mammal parks, but so far no captive-born dolphins have been released to help wild populations sustain themselves. Less than 10 percent of zoos and marine parks are involved in conservation programs.

Animal advocates worry about the animals living in marine mammal parks, and especially worry about the small tanks in which these animals live. In the wild, many species of marine mammals travel as many as one hundred miles per day and live in large, complicated social groups that fish or hunt for their own food and dive to extremely deep depths. None of these conditions can be met in a concrete pool, no matter how expansive. As a result of the stresses and boredom of confinement, marine mammals can exhibit stereotypic behaviors such as aggressiveness, repetitive motions, obsessive chewing, and more. Their health suffers, too. They can suffer and die from reactions to chemicals such as chlorine in the water, poor water quality, bacterial infections, pneumonia, cardiac arrest, lesions, eye problems, ulcers, abscesses, and more.

Though some marine mammals can live longer in captivity now that conditions have improved, many do not; like zoo animals, many die of avoidable causes including poisoning, consuming foreign objects, transit stress,

BOX 6.1

FAMOUS ANIMALS: KEIKO

Keiko was an orca that garnered international fame thanks to his role in the film *Free Willy*. He was captured in 1979 in Iceland and spent years in three different marine mammal parks in Iceland, Canada, and Mexico. In 1993, he was featured in *Free Willy*, in which a young boy befriends a whale kept at a marine mammal park and later helps Willy to escape and rejoin his family in the ocean.

After the release of the film, many people began clamoring for Keiko himself to gain his freedom. The Free Willy Keiko Foundation was established in 1995 in order to raise funds to buy Keiko and to transport him from Mexico to the Oregon Coast Aquarium where he would be nursed back to health and ultimately released. He was transported by air to Oregon where he lived for a year and gained back thousands of pounds. In 1998, he was finally flown to Iceland where he underwent training to once again live in the wild. Unfortunately, Keiko was lost during one of his training sessions. He ended up in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Norway where he was found to be suffering from hunger and was attempting to interact with humans. He died in 2003 from pneumonia and since his death scientists have concluded that releasing an animal that lived so long in captivity was probably not a good idea.

and capture shock. Also like zoo animals, most marine mammals in captivity were wild caught. Catching marine mammals involves killing many other animals. Prior to 1989, the National Marine Fishery Service, which approves permits for wild capture in the United States, approved the vast majority of all permits. Other nations—most notably Japan—continue to catch dolphins during bloody hunts for scientific research as well as for display in local marine parks.

The Public Reaction to Zoos and Marine Mammal Parks

Surveys taken on behalf of zoos show that the vast majority of zoogoers want zoos to play a role in saving wild animals and believe that zoos perform this function. In addition, the vast majority of them think children will learn more about wild animals than in school or on TV, and will develop concern

BOX 6.2

ANIMALS IN THE NEWS

In February 2010, marine mammals kept in captivity once again made the news when animal trainer Dawn Brancheau was killed by Tilikum, a performing whale kept at SeaWorld in Orlando. As expected, the animal welfare community and a surprising number of supporters from outside of this community recommend ceasing the practice of keeping marine mammals as entertainment even though representatives of marine mammal parks and zoos advocate keeping captive wild animals. They argue that presentations such as the Shamu show at SeaWorld are less about entertainment and more about education and conservation.

For much of the public, it is difficult to see the harm in keeping wild animals captive, when entertainment venues such as circuses, marine mammal parks, and even zoos hide their morally unpleasant dealings behind a façade of glitzy performances or even conservational rhetoric. What is wrong with visiting the zoo, or the circus, or a marine mammal park?

In my adopted state of New Mexico, residents were recently horrified to hear that Kashka, a "beloved" sixteen-year old giraffe kept at the Rio Grande Zoo, was dumped in a zoo dumpster and carted off to the landfill after being euthanized in 2010. What was the outrage about? Were people horrified at the callous treatment of an animal that brought profits to the local zoo and pleasure to local residents?

It turns out that dumping dead zoo animals in the landfill is standard procedure after an animal has died. However, Kashka's body should have been driven directly to the landfill rather than placed into the dumpster for pickup with the rest of the zoo trash. At the time of this writing, a worker was under investigation for this breach in protocol.

Apparently no one cared about the fact that Kashka, a 2,200-pound animal that in Africa would roam with her family over a range that extends up to 100 square miles, and could run as fast as 35 miles per hour, was kept in an enclosure at the zoo that was a tiny fraction of her natural habitat. Kashka should have been living in Africa with her kin, traveling and mating and socializing with her fellow giraffes, foraging for food, and even dying in the wild. Why was she removed from that life and forced to live in a tiny space, to give birth to babies that will eventually be sold to other zoos, all to entertain and "educate" the public? And although she certainly should not have been dumped in a dumpster after her death, the reality is that that sad ending was only the final sad coda to a sad life.

for wild animals by visiting zoos. Other research, however, demonstrates that this is not the case. Research has shown that the average visitor spends thirty seconds to two minutes per enclosure—for example, forty-four seconds is the average time spent in front of a reptile enclosure at the National Zoo in Washington, DC (Mullan and Marvin 1999). Most visitors do not read the labels attached to these enclosures, which indicates that there is very little educational information being conveyed. Social ecologist Stephen Kellert's research (1979, 1997) has indicated that zoogoers remain poorly educated about animals and their plight. In fact, according to Kellert's research, after visiting the zoo the major message for many is that humans are superior to other animals.

In a recent study of Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo ape house visitors, researchers discovered that people ignored signs, complained when apes were resting, and fabricated answers to children's questions (Janega 2007). In 2007, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association conducted a study which, according to the AZA, demonstrated that zoos promote conservation messages among zoogoers. Yet Lori Marino and her colleagues evaluated the study and, based on the flaws that they found as well as other research into zoogoers' attitudes, determined that "there is no compelling or even particularly suggestive evidence for the claim that zoos and aquariums promote attitude change, education, and interest in conservation in visitors" (Marino et al. 2010:137).

The concept of zoos is full of contradictions or, as human-animal studies scholar Jonathan Burt puts it, they "are often places out of joint" (2002:259). Zoos offer visitors a chance to escape the city and journey into "nature" yet there is nothing natural about keeping penguins, tigers, or elephants in a city zoo. The animals are often housed indoors, with climate control to keep the animals alive, whether in a small, barred enclosure or in a large naturalistic setting made of fiberglass and concrete rocks. And as philosopher Keekok Lee asks (2006), are the animals kept in zoos really wild animals, or just shadows of wild animals? Zoos today focus on conservation, yet this is a recent and somewhat profit-driven change. The history of Western zoos is tied to the destruction of wildlife around the world, and is still involved in the capture of wild animals and the deaths of surplus animals—all in the name of conservation. Zoos do focus on education, yet some animals have more educational value than others. Pandas and other animals that are easy to anthropomorphize, and have the round furry bodies and big round eyes that draw people to them, are the most highly sought after and receive the most visitors. People visit zoos because they love animals, yet even while they feel guilty about the conditions in which the animals live, self-interest

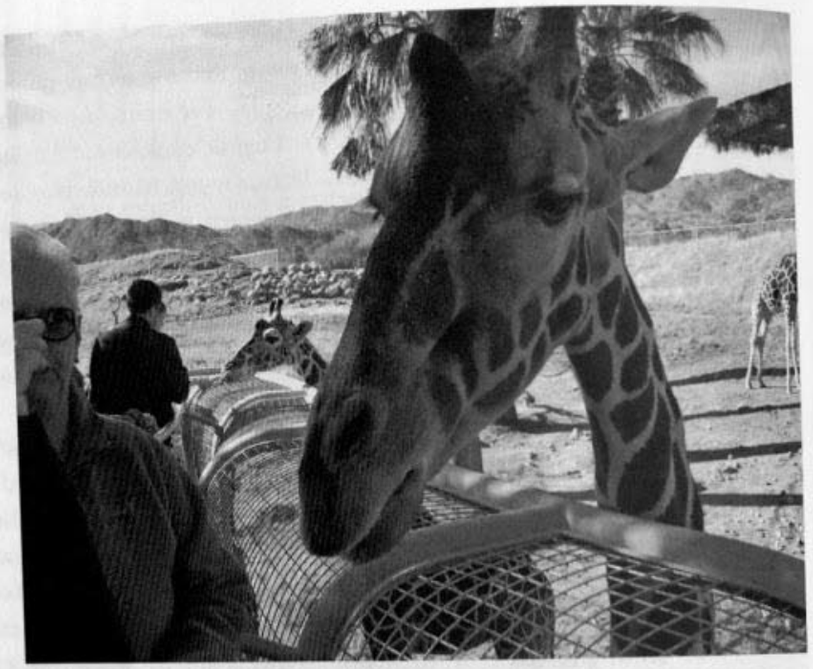


Figure 6.1. Among several in residence, these giraffes are being fed at the Living Desert Zoo and Botanical Gardens, Palm Springs, CA. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

(the desire to see or touch the animals) wins out, keeping zoos in perpetual business. As philosopher Ralph Acampora points out (2005), no matter how authentic the enclosure, the whole point of a zoo is to bring humans into at least viewing contact with animals—a situation that very rarely occurs in the wild—thereby rendering the animals' behavior unnatural.

It is strange that our love of animals and our ability to anthropomorphize at least some of them do not then allow us to empathize with them and end their captivity. Yet as Nigel Rothfels (2002) puts it, zoos still disappoint. People do not just want to *see* animals; they also want to *connect* with them, a condition that is impossible given the structural limitations of the zoo. So even though zoos are for people and not for animals, we are still left unsatisfied.

Circuses

Although circuses as we know them today are an American invention, they have their roots in two different historical phenomena: Roman public exhibitions and medieval European traveling shows.

Ancient Romans enjoyed attending a variety of public games and festivals, including horse and chariot races, gladiator competitions, and other human-animal events held in open-air arenas. Roman animal entertainment venues included the Circus Maximus and the Flavian Amphitheater (later known as the Colosseum); when the latter was dedicated in the first century CE, 9,000 animals—elephants, lions, tigers, and other exotic and dangerous creatures—were slaughtered over a period of 100 days. Greek naturalist and philosopher Pliny the Elder, writing of the suffering of elephants in the Colosseum, wrote:

> When the elephants in the exhibition given by Pompeius had lost all hopes of escaping, they implored the compassion of the multitude by attitudes which surpass all description, and with a kind of lamentation bewailed their unhappy fate. So greatly were the people affected by the scene, that, forgetting the general altogether, and the munificence which had been at such pains to do them honour, the whole assembly rose up in tears, and showered curses on Pompeius, of which he soon afterwards became the victim.
> BOSTOCK AND RILEY (1890:253–254)

But these attractions although popular did not migrate to other parts of Europe. Europeans instead enjoyed traveling acts featuring wild animals, performers, and human oddities. At the end of the eighteenth century, they moved to the United States in the form of **dime museums** and were run by the likes of P. T. Barnum. These early dime museums exhibited animals alongside people with disabilities, tattooed people, native people, and manufactured fakes such as the **Fijian mermaid**, a mummified creation made up of the parts of multiple animals, which was intended to resemble a mythological creature. By the 1840s, the dime museum part of the circus finally became the circus sideshow, and P. T. Barnum, founder of the American Museum, went on to found P. T. Barnum's Museum, Menagerie, and Circus.

Like zoo animals, circus animals were caught as babies by animal collectors and hunters. Jumbo, the famous Barnum circus elephant, was caught by a German hunter who killed Jumbo's mother and wrote, "She collapsed in the rear and gave me the opportunity to jump quickly sideways and bring to bear a deadly shot, after which she immediately died. Obeying the laws of nature, the young animal remained standing beside its mother. . . . Until my men arrived, I observed how the pitiful little baby continuously ran about its mother while hitting her with his trunk as if he wanted to wake her and make their escape" (Rothfels 2002:64).

Most circuses still contain a mix of human and animal acts, although circuses no longer showcase human oddities. Animal acts include old-fashioned equestrian events, wild animal acts, and a variety of trained elephant acts, which continue to remain the biggest crowd pleasers and the biggest money makers for modern circuses. Circus-goers can watch the trainer demonstrate his control over a dangerous wild animal through stunts by placing his head in a lion's mouth or by wrestling with a 350-pound tiger.

We know that, during the early days of the circus, trainers threatened, whipped, and beat animals in order to get them to perform. Animal rights activists claim that is still the case in many circuses today. Former circus employees and undercover videos shot by animal rights groups show that circus personnel may use food deprivation, intimidation, and various forms of physical and emotional punishment to train animals to perform tricks. Circuses claim that their training methods are based on a loving bond between animal and trainer, yet undercover video footage shows elephants being whipped and shoved with bull hooks—a fireplace poker-like tool used to control behavior—and electric prods. When not performing, elephants and other circus animals are caged or "picketed" (one front and one rear leg are chained to a cable) for most of their lives. Many respond to life in captivity by demonstrating stereotypic behaviors such as weaving and rocking, which are associated with captivity-related stress.

BOX 6.3

ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS: PERFORMING ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY

The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), founded in 1984 by former Hollywood animal trainer Pat Derby, is a captive wildlife sanctuary where abandoned, abused, or retired performing animals and victims of the exotic animal trade can live in peace and dignity. Derby trained the animals on the shows *Lassie*, *Flipper*, and *Gunsmoke*, as well as those appearing in a number of animal films and television commercials. She was dismayed to see many of the abusive techniques used to train animals in entertainment. After leaving the industry, she realized that the plight of these animals, especially after they were no longer needed in Hollywood, was dismal and decided to do something. PAWS not only takes in animals from the entertainment industry, it also works with public officials to create policy and legislation that protect animal actors from abuse.

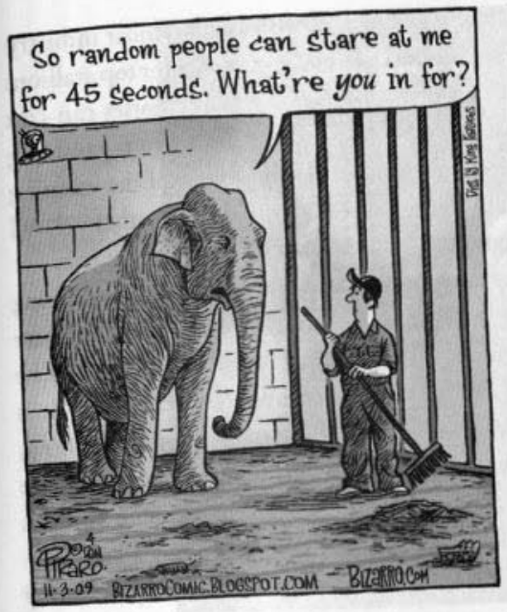


Figure 6.2. "What are you in for?" (Cartoon by Dan Piraro. Courtesy of http://www.bizarro.com.)

Unfortunately, this stress often results in attacks where elephants have lashed out at trainers or caregivers, sometimes killing them. In the United States alone, there have been twenty-eight deaths due to elephant attacks since 1983. These attacks virtually always result in the elephants being killed.

Historically, all of the animals found in circus shows were captured from the wild. Even though this is no longer the case for many animals today, there are still older elephants and other animals in modern circuses that were born in the wild to parents that were shot to death in order to catch their young. In 1995, Ringling Brothers opened the Center for Elephant Conservation, an elephant captive breeding program, in Florida. This center has so far bred twenty Asian elephants, all of whom are used to supply Ringling's two touring units with elephant performers, of whom there are currently sixty-one.

Animal Racing

Animal racing has been around for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks and Romans, for instance, famously held chariot races using horses. Greyhound racing, the oldest and most popular of dog races, has its origins in **coursing**, an ancient activity in which hunters used hounds to chase and bring down animals such as hares, rabbits, foxes, and deer. Betting has accompanied dog and horse racing for thousands of years, thus providing profit not only to those people involved in breeding, training, or racing the animals but also to the general public. People attend horse races around the country and dog races in fifteen states, for the thrill of the race as well as the hope of winning money.

Horse racing is most commonly practiced in the form of thoroughbred racing, where wealthy owners of finely bred horses hire trainers and jockeys to race them. Horse races are held in the United States on a variety of tracks and at a variety of distances, usually from 900 meters to a mile and a half per race.

Thoroughbred breeding and horse racing is a multibillion-dollar industry. Training a thoroughbred can cost $22,000 per year; stud fees for top stallions can start at $25,000 and go up to $500,000, and top racing horses can cost up to $10 million. Add to those amounts the money made from gambling bets, tourist expenditures, the "purse" awarded to the owner of the winning horse (which now exceeds $1 million for the top races), and other related income, and horse racing is big money.

Even though handlers devote exacting attention to ensure the well being of the top-ranked horses, the same cannot be said for those horses that are not so successful. Minimum living and training standards must certainly be met, but the practice of racing itself is rife with dangers to the horse: It is common for them to fall or fracture their bones while racing or training, which are often fatal conditions for horses. Sometimes, injured horses are drugged so that they will race despite an injury. Other common injuries are those to ligaments or muscles as well as joint sprains, and many race-horses are also susceptible to a disease called exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage.

What happens when a racing horse's career is over? A winning stallion such as Barbaro will usually be put up to stud when he is retired. The most successful horses can hope to live a life of leisure once retired, but being a success is certainly no golden ticket to a happy retirement. Thousands of horses, most of whom will never win a race, are bred each year. Most horses will see their careers end after just a season or two and will be sold at auction—sometimes to people who want them as pets, sometimes to businesses such as horseback-riding outfits, and sometimes to slaughter. Indeed, the winner of the 1986 Kentucky Derby, Ferdinand, was reportedly slaughtered in Japan for pet food. In 2007, the last of the American horse slaughterhouses were closed. (Prior to that time, more than 100,000 horses were slaughtered annually in the United States.) Currently, there is a movement afoot in the United States to reopen them. Until that happens, many horses are shipped to Mexico or Canada for slaughter.

Like horse racing, greyhound racing is associated with gambling and takes place at the same tracks on which horses are raced and where the infrastructure is in place for gambling. It is a less lucrative industry than horse racing, but it has the potential to bring in big dollars: Millions of fans bet $3.5 billion in 1992, the year the sport was at its peak. Since then, attendance has been down as a result of the sport's unsavory reputation and wide public concern about mistreatment of the dogs, but revenue still tops $1 billion a year.

In a world where millions of companion dogs are still euthanized every year for no other reason than there are too many of them, the breeding in

Figure 6.3. Revenues from greyhound racing have topped the billion-dollar mark. (Photograph courtesy of Jan Eduard, Wikimedia Commons.)

the greyhound industry is a cause for concern among animal welfare advocates. More than 1,500 breeding farms produce nearly 30,000 dogs every year for this sport. Breeding greyhounds live stacked in kennels either outdoors or in barns, with no exercise, no toys, no love, and no life outside of the cage. Even racing dogs live in small kennels during their life off the track; sometimes as many as a thousand dogs live at each track. There is so little regulation about the care of racing dogs that most racetracks have their own rules regarding dog welfare.

Because greyhounds are so much cheaper to breed and train than thoroughbreds, they are much more expendable. In addition to heart attacks, injuries such as broken legs and necks are rampant in the industry. Some dogs are drugged in order to perform, and kennel cough is common due to the close living conditions. Veterinary care is minimal for animals that are expected to live for at most only a couple of years.

Perhaps nothing is sadder in the greyhound industry than what happens to a dog when his or her career is over. Although the dogs' lifespan is more than twelve years, they stop racing after three to five years. Some dogs are returned to the breeding farms where they were born, spending the rest of

their lives in small kennels as breeders. Owners or track operators kill some dogs outright. In 2002 the bodies of 3,000 greyhounds were found at the home of a former Alabama racetrack security guard, who was paid ten dollars apiece to "retire" them. Just a few years later, in 2006, it was discovered that British trainers paid a man ten pounds apiece to dispose of all their old and surplus dogs. Over fifteen years, he electrocuted or shot over 10,000 dogs and used their bones in his garden.

Animal Fighting

Blood sports were popular in ancient Rome, Imperial Japan, and China, and in Southeast Asia; these included everything from cricket fighting in China and cockfighting in Southeast Asia to gladiator events in which animals were pitted against animals, people against people, and animals against people. Europe from the Middle Ages to the modern era saw a variety of blood sports, including dogfighting, bearbaiting, and bullfighting. Many of these practices were banned during the Victorian era in Europe, in some cases because of growing concerns about animal welfare, but in other cases because of concerns about the impact of such practices on their practitioners.

Dogfighting involves placing two viciously trained dogs in an enclosure where they fight either until one is too injured to continue and quits the fight due to extreme pain or severe exhaustion or until one dies. Some dogfighters use performance-enhancing drugs as well. At a dogfight, more than a hundred people may place bets up to $50,000. The underground dogfighting industry is huge, with millions of dollars involved in selling, breeding, training, fighting, and betting on the dogs. Some top dogs are worth tens of thousands of dollars.

Photos of dogs that have survived dogfights show pit bulls with faces so badly scarred they often cannot see. Injuries include ripped ears, ripped mouths and noses, crushed sinuses, tissue damage, and broken bones. Deaths are usually attributable to these injuries, massive blood loss, and sometimes exhaustion. Even though rules generally state that a fight ends when a dog gives up or refuses to engage the other dog, some fights can last hours and end only when one dog dies an agonizing death. Seriously injured survivors may die days later from blood loss or infection, or their owners may kill them if they do not wish to keep a dog that loses. Rhonda Evans, DeAnn Gauthier, and Craig J. Forsyth, in their study of white Southern dogfighters or dog men (2007), suggest that the dogs symbolize the men's masculinity; when the dog loses, he or she must be killed in order to restore the man's honor and virility. Though dogfighting is illegal in every state, it is growing in popularity. About 250,000 dogs—mostly pit bulls—are victims every year. It is estimated that at least 40,000 people across the country either own or breed pit bulls for fighting, and it is difficult for police to monitor criminal activity because dogfighters are so secretive.

Cockfighting involves placing two specially bred and trained "gamecocks" together in a pit and betting on the winner. Cockfighters, or "cockers," usually attach razor-sharp knives or ice pick-like gaffs to the birds' legs so they can injure and mutilate opponents. Birds often suffer from lacerations, eye injuries, punctured lungs, and broken bones. Like dogfights, cockfights often end in death, although some animals are forced to fight again and again. Hundreds of people can attend a fight, and violence can erupt even outside of the pit. High-stakes betting and weapons are commonplace at cockfights and, like dogfighting, the practice is connected to the illicit drug trade. Arguments at cockfights can result in human injuries, and fatal shootings are not uncommon. As with dogfighters, cockfighters identify with their birds and even feel strong attachments to them, mourning when the animals lose (and die) and feeling pride when they win.

Alternative Ways of Watching Animals

Americans crave animals in their lives. For many people, beloved companion animals do not completely fill that need. As the continued existence of zoos and circuses and the use of animals in rodeos, animal racing, and more demonstrate, many of us seek out wild (and domesticated) animals even when that means we will support industries that cause harm to those very same animals.

Other activities that allow people to see, and sometimes interact with, wild animals are gaining in popularity as well. Whale watching is one such activity, as is ecotourism. Both are driven by some of the same impulses that drive us to watch wild animals in zoos or marine mammal parks: what some scholars call the quest for wildness, often to fill in a gap that is missing in Western industrialized lives. Even in some of these venues, however, the quest for wildness that drives the tourists may be a fabrication: In order to allow visitors access to wild animals, the animals must be, in fact, contained in some way. Even when we visit animals in large wild animal

parks, there must be some form of containment for the animals; otherwise, we would not be able to see them. Women's studies scholar Chilla Bulbeck has studied ecotourism sites (2005) and has interviewed attendees; she has found that many visitors experience some guilt about visiting these sites knowing that the presence of humans is not good for the animals. Ultimately, though, self-interest (the desire to see or touch the animals) wins out, even for the more conservation-minded of the tourists. The irony is that the more wild the site, the less the animals' movements and behaviors are controlled but the more that the visitors' activities are constrained. The animals' freedom is increased (including their freedom to not be present), but for many visitors the pleasure is decreased. Research on the benefits of ecotourism indicates that there are a number of negative environmental costs, such as the high costs in water, food, and energy to the host countries because of Westerners' much higher consumption of resources than indigenous populations. Other costs include the displacement of indigenous peoples from tourism sites, death and injuries to tourists, and stress and behavior change for the animals. Still, many advocates argue that the benefits of ecotourism for the human tourist and for the animals and their environment outweigh the costs.

Whale watching is another activity that brings people in contact with "wildness" but which has, perhaps, less of an impact on the animals being watched. Every year, millions of people sign up for organized whale-watching trips through commercial ventures and many thousands more go out in kayaks or small boats to watch, and sometimes interact with, whales as well as dolphins and porpoises. In these encounters, people report having an authentic, or even spiritual, feeling, and many return with an interest in conserving the habitats of the creatures that they just saw. And although there can be negative repercussions to the animals from whale-watching excursions (such as from the intrusion of motorized vessels into a whale pod's migratory pattern), dolphins and whales can adapt to such changes. In addition, in many cases, the animals actually appear to be watching the humans as well. Often times, especially in the case of dolphins, the animals will spontaneously perform for, or approach, the viewing people. One interesting side note is that in countries such as Japan, which have thriving whale-hunting (and dolphin-hunting) industries, the opportunity to go on whale-watching trips may play a role in changing the attitudes of many Japanese about the killing of whales and dolphins.

Another way that we can see animals is through television and film. Today, there is a huge variety of documentary programs and films available that

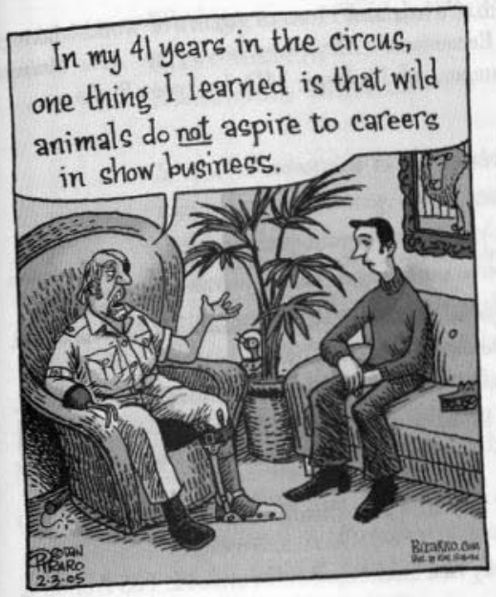


Figure 6.4. "Show Business." (Cartoon by Dan Piraro. Courtesy of http://www.bizarro.com.)

show wild animals in their own habitats—such as the poignant and remarkable *March of the Penguins*—as well as the incredibly realistic computer-generated animation and animatronics that allow us to view all manner of animals without interfering in an animal's life.

In 2009 alone, animal films such as *Marley and Me, Hotel for Dogs, Bolt,* and *Space Buddies* grabbed moviegoers' attention with animal-friendly messages. At the same time, the number of Americans who enjoy watching wildlife in animals' natural habitats reached more than seventy million, demonstrating a growing willingness to connect with animals on their own turf, and on their own terms. We will discuss the use of animals in film more in chapter 16.

Suggested Additional Readings

Acampora, Ralph. 2005. "Zoos and Eyes: Contesting Captivity and Seeking Successor Practices." *Society & Animals*, 13: 69–88.

Acampora, Ralph, ed. 2010. *Metamorphoses of the Zoo: Animal Encounter after Noah.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Berger, John. 1977. "Why Zoos Disappoint." *New Society* 40: 122–123.

Berger, John. 1980. *About Looking.* New York: Pantheon.

Bulbeck, Chilla. 2005. *Facing the Wild: Ecotourism, Conservation, and Animal Encounters.* London: Earthscan.

Hanson, Elizabeth. 2002. *Animal Attractions: Nature on Display in American Zoos.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lawrence, Elizabeth. 1985. *Hoofbeats and Society: Studies of Human-Horse Interactions.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Lee, Keekok. 2006. *Zoos: A Philosophical Tour.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Malamud, Randy. 1998. *Reading Zoos: Representations of Animals and Captivity.* New York: New York University Press.

Mullan, B. and G. Marvin. 1997. *Zoo Culture: The Book about Watching People Watch Animals.* 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Rothfels, Nigel. 2002. *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Warkentin, T. and L. Fawcett. 2010. "Whale and Human Agency in World-Making: Decolonizing Whale-Human Encounters." *Metamorphoses of the Zoo: Animal Encounter after Noah*. Ralph Acampora, ed. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Suggested Films

The Cove. DVD. Directed by Louie Psihoyos. Boulder, CO: Oceanic Preservation Society, 2009.

A Life Sentence: The Sad and Dangerous Realities of Exotic Animals in Entertainment. VHS. Sacramento, CA: Animal Protection Institute, 2006.

Lolita: Slave to Entertainment. DVD. Directed by Timothy Michael Gorski. Blackwood, NJ: Rattle the Cage Productions, 1993.

March of the Penguins. DVD. Directed by Luc Jacquet. Los Angeles: Warner Independent Films, 2005.

The Urban Elephant. DVD. Directed by Nigel Cole/Allison Argo. New York: Thirteen/WNET New York, 2000.

A Whale of a Business. VHS. Directed by Neil Docherty. Melbourne, FL: PBS Frontline, 1997.

Wildlife for Sale: Dead or Alive. VHS. Directed by Italo Costa. Oley, PA: Bullfrog Films, 1998.

Working from Within: An Ethnographer in Human-Animal Worlds

GARRY MARVIN
Roehampton University

In 1996, I returned to the academic world after ten years working in television documentary making, and I quickly needed to work out where my discipline, social anthropology, had moved on to since I was last teaching and researching. However, what engaged my attention and interest were not so much new theoretical perspectives in social anthropology but rather the emergence and development of a multidisciplinary field in which humans and their relations with other animals were being brought from the margins of academic interest to the fore. I had previously written about human-animal relations, but was this human-animal studies?

This field was being shaped and developed, in the main, by scholars from the humanities in disciplines such as history, literary studies, philosophy, performance studies, the visual arts, and gender studies. What might anthropological studies of human-animal relations contribute to this new field?

The significance of animals in human cultures—in hunting, pastoralism, and agriculture, as beasts of burden and transport, and in cosmological systems and religious practices—had been recognized in much anthropological work from the beginnings of the discipline, but was there something specific in modern anthropological studies of humans and animals that could respond to issues at the heart of human-animal studies? Attending conferences with, and reading the publications of scholars who were writing in this field, I felt that what anthropology had to offer was not so much a particular or specific subject matter but rather the nature of the studies generated out of a particular kind of research process.

Scholars in the humanities are immersed in and engaged with philosophical and other theoretical arguments, documents, historical texts, literary texts, and works of art. The materials of their research are complex in and of themselves but are necessarily at least one remove from the human-animal relations to which they refer. A key research method of social anthropology is a different form of immersion and engagement—that of participant observation—being with the subjects of their research, sharing in their everyday lives for an extended period of time. What I work with is the immediacy, the presentness, the rawness of the relationships between people and animals, and such a research approach engages with a different complexity—that of the contingent nature of such relationships as they emerge, happen, and end.

An important aspect, perhaps an issue pervading this field, is a concern with the acceptability or unacceptability of the uses and treatment of animals by humans. This was immediately troubling for me because my research, firstly