

“Getting to Solidarity: One Autistic Animal’s Activist Struggle To Resolve The Conflict between the Animal Rights Movements and the Autistic Pride Movements” Daniel Salomon

I am an animal rights activist and published environmental writer who happens to also be a neurodiverse man on the autism spectrum. In recent years, as a response to a very serious personal and professional crisis because of multiple discrimination situations based on my autism diagnosis, I have made it into a cause to respectfully, humbly, sympathetically and generously confront the various animal movements to rethink the relationship between the autistic pride and animal rights movements, from the perspectives of ethics, critical social theory, political activism and conflict resolution.

Because I am a graduate school educated scholar with extensive undergraduate and graduate level training in the liberal arts (the humanities and social sciences) I also do not easily fit into conventional neurodiverse responses to institutional animal cruelty. As a result, I have also had to develop a sympathetic critique of Temple Grandin.

In the process, I have helped to develop a social justice alternative to the typical animal abolitionist or animal welfare approaches to the relationship between neurodiverse humans and nonhuman animals in Animal/Disability Studies circles through collaborating with members of other disability communities through the Society for Disability Studies (SDS), a professional society which takes a more sociological, interdisciplinary, activist approach to disability than the conventional psychological, apolitical, educational response.

As one individual who is in solidarity with all animalkind, yet who happens to be on the autism spectrum, I will use my “real life” experiences with animals and involvement with the animal movements as a model, to show the types of compassionate relationships possible between one neurodiverse human and all animals.

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## **My Sympathetic Critique of Temple Grandin**

Some neurotypical (non-autistic, non-disabled) animal activist-scholars have unfortunately used logical fallacies to refute famous autistic animal welfare scientist, Temple Grandin, who is a Professor of Animal Science at University of Colorado-Fort Collins. Instead of challenging Grandin’s ideas and practices, they have used her diagnosis as an “easy out” to easily discredit her. Such a tactic has been personally and professionally marginalizing, stigmatizing and alienating to members in the radical animal movements who are on the autism spectrum. Not everyone in the autistic community shares Grandin’s welfarist views on animals. I am one such person.

Grandin basically contends that through significantly reducing fear and improved environments in captive farm animals, meat-eating and factory farming can continue, if they become more humane.

Grandin has accomplished this through using her autistic mammalian mind to empathize with the emotional needs of animals, combined with sound animal behavior science and taking a pragmatic, reformist approach. Grandin not only invented an operational “humane” slaughter system using the above criteria, Grandin even persuaded one-half of the slaughterhouses in the United States to use her system. She even has developed animal welfare audits which McDonald’s slaughterhouses uses and reveres.

Yet, some animal activist-scholars use both “ad homonym arguments” and “straw man arguments” to refute Grandin. Both are logical fallacies!

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An “ad homonym” argument goes after the person, not their ideas. An example is “her animal intelligence insights are wrong for she lacks empathy towards other human beings, for she has an autism diagnosis.”

A “straw man argument” zeros in on weak arguments and disregards strong arguments. A handful of scholar-activists have been trying to disregard Grandin’s disability social history and non-disabled, normative world and compare Grandin’s methods to Nazi executioners. They do not “account” for Grandin’s strong scientific, economic, practical and strategic basis for reforming, yet preserving meat-eating, even factory farming, for the sake of the animals themselves.

This type of debating is considered completely unprofessional in academia. I contend the only reason why animal activist-scholars have stooped to this level is that they see Grandin as an “easy scapegoat” because she is autistic. Grandin is a member of an oppressed minority group, being one of the only autistic celebrities in the world.

Such scholar-activists do not dare compare a powerful poultry tycoon like Frankin D. Perdue to a Nazi or try to assassinate his character for fear of his army of expensive, high-powered lawyers. Yet, Perdue is far richer and much more politically powerful and his agribusiness practices are far more institutionally cruel to animals than Grandin could ever possibly be. Trust me; I was an undergraduate student at Salisbury University in Perdue country for four years!

Perdue in addition to raising and slaughtering chickens in fields of long whitewashed warehouses in cruel cages in mechanized factory farms which those of us in the animal movements are all familiar with by now, whenever there was a mass slaughter of chickens, I could smell the stench for miles around, even in the town where my university campus was.

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Before I became a vegetarian during my first semester of undergraduate school after taking a course in “Animals and Ethics,” when I was still eating factory farm meat in the school cafeteria, most likely supplied by Perdue and Tyson (another poultry producer), I got one of my most severe cases of the flue which I had in my entire life. I had to be sent to the emergency room, for I was vomiting so much, I was becoming dangerously dehydrated. Shortly later, I stopped eating meat, fish and seafood; I never got sick like this ever again. In fact, despite all my disability issues and other health related ailments, I hardly ever get “sick, sick” since I became a vegetarian. This gives new meaning to college students claiming college cafeterias serve “mystery meat!”

In fact, Frankin D. Perdue, when I was at Salisbury University at the turn of the twenty-first century, gave two-million dollars to the business school, as a result, the business school was aptly named the Frankin D. Perdue School of Business. Many of the buildings when I was there were named after contributors from various local factory farm tycoons. As a result, even the campus radical political activist community would dare not say anything negative about Frankin D. Perdue and would address any problem of the world, around the world, but the social issues right in the local community. This gives new meaning to the environmental slogan “think globally, act locally!”

In fact, when I took “Animals and Ethics,” I persuaded my professor to lead a fieldtrip to one of Perdue’s slaughterhouses, so all of the students could test whether or not all the claims made by the animal rights movements were true. When my professor called Perdue Industries, the lady who worked there told my professor that “this is not a good time of the year to come here for you will not get an accurate picture of what we do.” As a result, the fieldtrip never happened and what really goes on “down at the factory farm” will continue to remain “a mystery” to everyone

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in that classroom, including the professor. This may be as close as it gets to agribusiness admitting that “we do in fact have something to hide!”

Franklin D. Perdue is a non-disabled, non-autistic, neurotypical, privileged white male and member of the Corporate Class, the superrich, while Temple Grandin is a disabled, autistic, neurodiverse, self-made, woman in a man’s industry. Yet, none of this is relevant to a credible academic discussion.

Yet, I get where the radical complaint against Grandin is coming from. Mainly, she’s too animal welfare (cruelty like factory farming can continue as long as it is done humanely) versus animal abolition (cruelty needs to be eliminated). As a vegetarian and animal activist myself, my sympathies lie more with abolition than they do with welfare.

As a neurodiverse scholar with a strong liberal arts background, I have concerns about Grandin’s social conservatism and sociological naiveté which she seems to apply consistently to both animals and neurodiverse humanity alike. She takes an apolitical “blame the victim,” “life is not fair,” “these are the way things are” approach to animals, neurodiverse humans, even herself. Seeing society as this natural entity, which from a sociological perspective is anything but natural.

Grandin uses “machine” metaphors to describe animals and humans alike, even making comments like “this animal was ruined!” “This autistic was ruined!” Especially when describing our mistakes and misfortunes, implying that our lives are replaceable parts in a complicated machine.

The most disturbing flaw is not Grandin’s or the animal movements’ fault. The neurodiversity community has been hit particularly hard by the same “tokenism” which has impacted the

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disability community at-large. Temple Grandin is now “the token” for the autistic community.

In academia and popular culture, Grandin is allowed to speak uninterrupted, as the neurotypical appointed ambassador of the autistic community, on all matters of autistic self-understanding, including animals.

This is before the community at-large has had a chance to speak. As a result, the animal movements have gotten the impression, that every person on the autism spectrum has views about animals just like Grandin.

In reality, if the entire community had the opportunity to speak on behalf of animalkind, neurotypical animal groups would learn that some members go farther than Grandin’s welfare. For example, esteemed autistic pride activist Jim Sinclair is a vegan. Grandin is not the only autistic animal show in town.

As Critical Animal Studies scholars, it’s legitimate to challenge Grandin like you would any other academic, on the grounds of her ideas, e.g., her tacky machine metaphors, her sociological nativity and disagreeing with her animal welfare. As Critical Disability Studies scholars, we need to recover the full spectrum of views about animals in the neurodiversity communities, provide radical alternatives to Grandin and help other neurodiverse voices emerge in academia and popular culture.

### **The Animals and I:**

Now I am going to explore the relationships that are possible between animals of all kinds and myself, as a neurodiverse human.

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First, because as an autistic human, I rely more on my mammalian mind than neurotypicals (non-autistic humans) where I have special insights into the possibility of the existence of animal intelligence like Temple Grandin.

Also, like Asperger (Aspie) primatologist, Dawn-Prince Hughes, I “personify inanimate objects.” Prince-Hughes used her autistic propensity, to identify the individual personalities of gorillas, subsequently studying gorillas as “non-human persons.” I have used mine in a Critical Animal Studies context in ecological holism versus ecological individualism debates like “hunting for population control” to argue that the individual nervous system of animals is where pain and suffering occurs and subsequently individual animals are “the subject of a life,” meaning the lives of individual animals do in fact matter when describing the Earth at-large and stewarding entire ecosystems. Animal death is morally significant also in ecological contexts.

Also, similarities in my mannerisms, ritualized communication, keen senses and ability to compensate using other members of my brain, I have developed interspecies communications abilities with both domesticate and wild animals, especially birds, like domestic parakeets and wild geese.

Second, as oppression survivors, surviving being treated as “other” and inferior,” some of us are able to profoundly empathize with the plight of animals who also have been “poorly treated” by normal society, recognizing in animal suffering the patterns of our own abuse. Grandin who was bullied and isolated growing-up was able to recognize fear in animals, identified “reducing fear” and attentiveness to an animal’s “physical environment” as something animals need.

Prince-Hughes who was also bullied growing-up had her conversion to the animal cause when she saw a captive troop of gorillas being teased and taunted at a city zoo. She stood in solidarity

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with the gorillas the rest of the afternoon and went on to become a primatologist and ape advocate.

Jim Sinclair, who is no stranger to all-around creepy professional relationships, definitely saw a contradiction between Grandin claiming to love animals and calling for their deaths at the same time, publically criticized Grandin’s “human slaughter systems,” comparing them to modern-day death penalty practices.

Knowing personally what it’s like to be targeted and scapegoated for being different, I got my start, witnessing how wildlife managers were welcoming sports hunters into my suburban home, to target and eradicate overpopulated yet native White Tailed Deer and Canada Geese with guns and crossbows, using propaganda to intimate the animal movements.

As a result, I became outspoken against such hunts, testifying at local public meetings.

Becoming an ethical vegetarian in college and giving-up a promising career in biology, partially because animal experimentation was against my conscience, in the process.

The other reason for giving up a promising career in biology was because the particular “shape and form” of my disability also made certain types of abstract reasoning and fast-paced classes difficult like mathematics. As a result, I was not able to complete my required chemistry courses and could not major in biology. I was able to Minor in Biology and earn however, a Naturalist Certificate. Also, because I am hyper-sensitive to my surroundings, being an interdisciplinarian comes the most natural for me, meaning I am not good at compartmentalization and hyper-specialization, meaning I could not “tune out” extraneous intellectual stimulation, nor did I even want to. To do so, would be life-draining and absolutely would impact my motivations and my morale.



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Also, I could not do what Grandin does, because in my 2005 neuropsychological report, I scored in the mildly impaired range on “performance” (I have a motor planning disability) meaning all her career tracking of autists who have an interest in animals into “performance-based” animal welfare, animal training and other “hard” science fields would not have worked for me anyway, even if I wanted to.

I however scored in the “above average” on “abstraction,” the highest on the “memory” sub-category. This means careers in Critical Animal Studies and allied animal activism fields which rely more on “abstraction” and “memory” skill sets like research and writing are actually better “fits” for me than all the “performance” based skill-sets required to do what Grandin does, like architectural design and industrial engineering.

Most importantly, because of my anxiety/depression, anger/conflict management and trauma/sensory issues, I cannot psychiatrically stomach what Grandin witnesses in an unsafe, unsympathetic, unsupportive environment which I do not fit into, without being destabilized. Nor, could I remain silent indefinitely to all the atrocities which she witnesses day in and day out. Nor, could I work in such an environment with integrity.

There is another reason why the abolition movement is a better fit for me than the welfare movement. Ultimately, the abolition movement is a more democratic, more academic, more sympathetic, less rigid, less authoritarian, less hierarchical, less dualistic and even at times ironically, less extreme, saner environment. The worst which has happened to me in the abolition movement is not fitting into particular groups or ending-up in bitter falling-outs. I have never been coerced into doing or saying things against my conscience nor have I been professionally blackmailed or intimidated into silence unlike in some “mainstream” animal groups. Most of the

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time, despite bitter disagreements, there is an underlying sense of respect, missing in some of the “mainstream” groups.

Third, we, the neurodiverse, bring gifts to the animal rights cause. Grandin’s gifts to the cause are unrestricted documentation of factory farm practices and malpractices across the country, reducing the most egregiously cruel practices towards animals in big farming through putting “absolute limits” on what these corporations can/cannot do to their own animals, reducing out-and-out scandals, an economic argument for morally considering animals and credible scientific evidence for emotions and intelligence in mammals and birds.

Prince-Hughes’s gifts are standing in solidarity with animalkind, credible scientific evidence for personality and culture in gorillas, coupled with a passion for great ape issues.

Sinclair brings the gifts of an Aspie who is a successful vegan, an Aspie critique of Grandin and a devastating critique of the key argument in-favor of animal experimentation: “animal experimentation ensures safe treatments for incurable conditions.” Sinclair implies that in the treatment of autism, animal experimentation instead projects animal cruelty onto autistic humanity, resulting in “treating us as animals,” applying Skinner-like Behavioralism on rats and mice to us, which is used to “violently socialize” us into normalcy.

The gifts I offer are consciously and systematically linking the oppression situations of animals and neurodiverse humanity which I situate into a liberal studies context to include all animals (birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates), as well as ecology, environmental justice and ecospirituality.

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### **How Can Animals and Neurodiverse Humans Both Get The Social Justice We Deserve Through Engaging Conflict Resolution?**

I am going to offer an alternative based on my hard-won experiences which addresses the conventional animal welfare/abolition responses to disability-animal relationships which is not helping anyone anywhere. My alternative also addresses the disability/animal dualism which is a false choice. I insistently believe it is a false choice, when making ethical decisions, to choose between animal rights and disability rights.

Such thinking has its historical and academic origins in Western philosophy. Such Western philosophies are immune to reality.

The Western logic behind choosing to save one life over another is called causeries. Where one is giving a hypothetical situation like: “You get into an auto accident. You have a child and a dog in a car. You can only save one life. Whom do you save?” According to this logic, you always save the child, for the child is more rational than a dog. This is the logic behind speciesism (favoring humans over animals).

This is also the logic behind Princeton animal ethicist Peter Singer’s controversial “Argument from Marginal Cases (AMC)” where he argues that some animals are more rational than some humans---such as peoples in comas, infants under a year old and humans with developmental disabilities. When having to choose between saving a highly intelligent dog and saving an intellectual impaired child with a developmental disability, it would not be speciesist to save the dog over the child, for “reason” not “species membership” is the criterion for moral consideration.

Social Justice does not necessitate that rational capacity be a perquisite for receiving moral consideration or acting morally. Social justice is giving everyone what they need and some of

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what they want to survive and flourish, regardless of their functioning abilities. Everyone then is expected to contribute to society as they are able and take only their fair share, so everyone gets social justice through costs and benefits being distributed equitably.

Conflict resolution, individualizes social justice, through refusing to choose between lives, which conflict resolution contends is an unnecessary “win-lose” solution which perpetuates injustice and violence, when a “win-win” solution is possible through the right balancing: privileging needs and wants over ideology and coming up with solutions which gives everyone social justice. Both approaches take seriously, reality, as a legitimate moral category.

The implications for the animal and disability movements cannot be understated. Not only are all peoples with disabilities and all animals entitled to social justice, but even the Natural World is entitled to social justice, addressing disconnects with the environmental movements, which I have encountered in my involvement with various branches of the environmental movement.

For example, I have encountered the imperative to choose between respecting individual rights or consideration for the common good in my involvement with the Christian environmental movement, the deep ecology movement, the anti-sprawl movement and the anti-hunting movement which leaves very little room for animal rights, disability justice or wilderness preservation.

Also, I have encountered in the ecofeminist argument from “embodiment” which despite their call to respect the body and their systematic deconstruction of the mind-body dualism, seem to keep intact the Plutonic residue of an immaterial mind, which they use to favor the needs of the body over the needs of the mind, without engaging modern brain science to situate the mind as an embodied, material-based organ system in the body, in the process, excluding the embodied,

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neurological experiences of pain, suffering and fear in nonhuman animals and neurodiverse humans alike.

Justice is made possible through engaging conflict resolution like negotiation, reconciliation, mediation, arbitration, coalition building and nonviolent activism.

Some religious traditions even contend that some of their holy people have been able to engage in direct, unmediated interspecies conflict resolution with other animal species. Including my own, Christianity, where Christian saints such as Saint Francis of Assisi (the patron saint of animals and ecology) and many of his earlier followers like Saint Anthony of Padua, as well as many of the Celtic Christian saints and Desert Fathers of the early Christian church were able to engage in direct, unmediated interspecies conflict resolution with other animal species. The Hebrew Bible of the Jewish religion, makes similar claims, like the stories of “Noah’s Ark” (Genesis 5-10) “Balaam’s Ass” (Numbers 22: 22-40), “Elijah’s Ravens” (I Kings 17: 1-7), “The Peaceable Kingdom” (Isaiah 11) and “Jonah in the Whale” (Jonah 1-2).

Even many First Nations religions around the world also claim the power to engage in direct, unmediated interspecies conflict resolution with other species, while postmodern animal behavior science and ecopsychology has corroborated, even replicated some of the possibility of premodern humans engaging in direct, unmediated interspecies communications and conflict resolution where one “reasons with” versus “eradicates” a “nuisance” animal.

So social justice and conflict resolution has the power to not only resolve conflicts between different factions in the animal movements and between the animal movements and the various factions of human society, conflict resolution with social justice even has the power to resolve human-animal conflicts themselves.

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I have applied social justice with conflict resolution very successfully, professionally, in my relationships to the various animal and disability movements, especially in-regard to the conflict between the various neurodiversity movements and the various animal movements, which I ended-up in the middle of, being both neurodiverse human and having an intense passion for the animal libratory struggle because I am neurodiverse. This is how I came-up with my “linked oppressions” argument as an alternative to either Peter Singer’s “Argument from Marginal Cases (AMC)” or Pope John Paul II’s “dignity of man” argument and why I submitted my proposal to the Journal of Critical Animal Studies (JCAS), which was published in their 2010 issue.

Although my proposal was extremely well received by the animal movements and disability community at-large, I became estranged, isolated and alienated from the neurodiversity communities as a result. They insisted upon a carte blanche rejection of the entire animal cause “lock, stock and barrel,” while I was only asking scholar-activists like Singer and Tom Regan to reframe their arguments for animal liberation from being at the expense of human beings with disabilities to focusing on the inherent fallacies of speciesist thinking and practices endemic to Western civilization. This is because I too am in solidarity with animalkind and animal rights and animal liberation. I am on your side! I am on the side of animals everywhere!

I had my own personal relationships with real live animals which sustained me through this personal-professional crisis however.

I also saw clearly that the rational argument for animal liberation or rights was so strong; it could stand on its own without the “Argument for Marginal Cases (AMC). This includes all of Singer’s and Regan’s other robust arguments which includes the deconstruction of speciesism as an internal inconsistency in Western philosophy, the capacity to suffer as a reason for moral

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consideration, insisting on the existence and rights of individuals and expanding individualism beyond the human species. Putting animal intelligence research in conversation with academic philosophy, questioning treating individuals as “means to an end” instead of “ends in themselves” and extensive investigation of institutionally cruel practices towards animals like factory farming, animal experimentation and sports hunting. Making rights and liberation language applied to animals a tenable position ethically and politically and making animal ethics a legitimate field of inquiry and credible position in the academy.

Many members of the neurodiversity community lack first-hand experiences with real life animals like I have and rely on on-line propaganda and other polemics to get all their information about animal issues and the animal movements.

In light of the gravity of my situation, so sympathetic allies in the present and future do not get isolated, marginalized and alienated from necessary social and professional supports to live with human dignity and sustain our commitments, I recommend three things:

- Sanction compassionate and responsible human-animal relationships.
- Create more education-based, non-judgmental, on-line campaigns, which provide credible information about animal issues and the animal movements, with opportunities to dialogue and ask questions, to counter propaganda, misunderstandings and all around confusion and disinformation targeted to the various disability and neurodiversity communities.
- Mentor and be in solidarity with respectful, sympathetic members of the various neurodiversity communities both socially and professionally.

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Similarly, interspecies communications with members of different animal species have sustained me, at the personal, private level, through childhood, youth and young adulthood as a neurodiverse human in a hostile, unsympathetic neurotypical society, when I did not have the loving, life-giving support and companionship of members of my own species. Animals and the Earth provided me safety, solitude, belonging and an alternative, “pattern of living” which made me who I am today as an environmentalist, animal activist and vegetarian. The Natural World is the closest I have to a childhood, best friend. The Natural World has never judged me, has unconditionally accepted me just the way I am and is always available to bless me with beauty and wonder. I also closely identify with the personalities of animals as “other selves” which are like me.

I also have the ability to receive direct, unmediated guidance from Animals and the Natural World on what they actually need and how they want to be treated. I talk extensively about these stories and experiences in my books. As a result, I am also a militant proponent of the existence of the animal intelligence argument and consider the investigation of the possibility of animal intelligences of all kinds, one of the most important and promising areas of inquiry in the animal behavior science field in the twenty first century.

Animal intelligence, in my opinion, is a research program which has the potential to shake Western assumptions about the uniqueness of human beings to the core, creating a scientific foundation for specific moral duties to nonhuman animals, in the process. Scientific arguments are especially important when animal activists are trying to make “in-roads” with government agencies.



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Yet, my animal-based Nature mysticism and my deep, intense personal affinity with and connection to animalkind also made me vulnerable to animal-related childhood spiritual abuse, especially in Boy Scouts. When I was in Boy Scouts, the other youth would tease me for my interest in birdwatching.

One time, one of my scoutmasters took me on a fishing trip for a merit badge. I began to feel guilty for murdering the fish, as he let the fish slowly suffocate to death on a piping hot summer pavement. His response, “sin a little!”

Growing-up, I was pressured by adult authority figures to “become normal” at all costs --no matter its toll on my self-esteem, my physical health, my happiness and my integrity. They only wanted me to be pleasing to privileged non-disabled, neurotypicals.

As a result, I became isolated and alienated from the various animal movements, as a result.

Three things the animal rights movements can do to reduce isolation and increase solidarity toward promising disabled, neurodiverse animal scholars and activists is to:

- Provide mentoring starting in childhood to promising disabled and neurodiverse children in childhood, who have a strong interest in animals, animal issues, vegetarianism and veganism. Caregivers and other professionals really started to change their attitude toward me once I started to attract interest, affirmation, support and even pre-professional, college bound opportunities from individuals and groups in the various environmental and animal movements.
- Provide animal rights youth groups for middle and high school students to band together and help each other through resistance from parents to become a vegetarian or vegan, moral dilemmas about dissection, questions and concerns

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about career options, grief and despair about world events involving animals, becoming a lightning rod for their views on animals, how these views conflict and intersect with their emerging sexuality and religious commitments and any other relevant issue the group wants to talk about to be determined and defined by the group.

- Provide college-level and graduate-level support groups and career counseling services to animal rights conscious students. College and Graduate students need safe, confidential, non-judgmental social support and solidarity when dealing with militantly anti-animal rights professors in biology departments, their rights and responsibilities when objecting to dissection and vivisection, inadequate options for vegetarians and vegans in school cafeterias and to be armed with information, arguments and concrete, realistic strategies for challenging and/or disarming anthropocentric and speciesist professors. Students, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, also need career counseling services to help them through uninterested, unsympathetic, insular departments and programs, knowledge of academic programs, organizations and careers in Critical Animal Studies and allied fields and personalized, individualized career assistance for their particular situations.

In other words, I am calling the animal movements to take care of their intellectuals and activists, to sustain commitment and involvement. Absolutely, all these opportunities, absolutely must be open to the various disability and neurodiversity communities and must be inclusive, accessible and “reasonably accommodating” to all individual humans with disabilities and individual

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members of the neurodiversity community, following Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines as a model and framework.

**Conclusion:** We now have a reasonable understanding of the disability-animal linked oppression situation, although more research and thoughtful voices are always welcome. The next step is to move beyond mere dialogue and truces and start collaborating with one another to have a united front against all the human-created social institutions implicated in institutional animal cruelty, disability oppression and the global climate crisis.

We can all start as our first campaign together: a united disability justice-neurodiversity-animal rights-animal welfare-environmentalist front against the pharmaceutical-industrial complex which benefits no-one except multinational corporations and the corporate class. Big Pharma benefits neither animalkind nor the planet, neither does it even benefit the very people they purport to help, but instead only perpetuates institutional animal cruelty, worldwide biodiversity loss and human-human injustice.

For the later reasons, the disability communities at-large are “ripe” for a scathing incitement of vivisection because throughout the Disability Studies communities around the world, modern biomedicine is being systemically deconstructed as “quack medicine” which is more about “social control” than it is about “personal healing.” I have even been told by professionals in the past that “peoples with developmental disabilities are often used as the guinea pigs for drug testing.”

Many environmental historians have identified the medical response to the Bubonic Plaque in the late-Middle Ages as the “historical roots of the ecological crisis.” This type of a response “set in motion” both the modern-day scientific and technology revolution and subsequent War on

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Nature. This was followed by worldwide Western European colonization including the creating of the mental institution, followed by the industrial revolution, mechanization and corporate capitalism. This led to planetary-level ecological destruction including closing wilderness frontiers, urban sprawl, air/water/chemical/waste/noise/light pollution, ozone depletion, human overpopulation, the nuclear threat, the sixth extinction and yes-climate change.

This is coupled with the modern-day practice of vivisection being implicated in declining amphibian and primate numbers in the wild and modern conventional drugs also being linked to the genetic pollution of our waterways and drinking water supply. This is because “drugs” experimented on animals disrupts the genes in biological organisms which can lead to physical abnormalities and reproductive failure in already declining fisheries.

So vivisection is not just an animal rights issue or even a disability issue, vivisection is also a planetary issue. Vivisection negatively impacts the entire Earth community, not just nonhuman animals and certain groups of humans.

A second collective campaign could be a united front against the fossil fuel industries on climate change. The latest strategy in the climate justice movement by well-respected leaders like Bill McKibben is turning their attention away from personal consumption to encouraging academic and religious institutions to divest from financially investing in fossil fuel companies via the stock market and instead invest in socially responsible companies. The “fly in the ointment” is that many of these socially responsible mutual fund packages also include biomedical companies as “socially responsible” for any company which is all about “saving lives” and “finding cures” has to be “socially responsible” is the logic.

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When in reality, biomedical companies engage in cruel animal experimentations, pillage the Earth and stigmatize peoples who are different, myself included! While, factory farming has also been linked as a carbon pollutant implicated in the global climate crisis, where we as vegetarians and vegans receive a rare acknowledgement from the planetary movements, where religious and secular environmentalists alike are calling for a reduction in meat consumption.

In other words, a united front on climate change could also expand divestment to not only include fossil fuel companies (also adding to the demand list, a global ban on all offshore fossil fuel drilling and the transport of fossil fuels by ships to prevent oil spills which cruelly slaughter wild animals, as well as requiring comprehensive government-approved crisis management plans for all land-based drilling and mining operations by nations around the world) but also factory farm and biomedical companies which experiment on animals, as well as “stepping-up” calls to reduce meat consumption as part of a sustainable, carbon reducing lifestyle.

A united front would also include special research and provisions for the various disability and neurodiversity communities who are also vulnerable and at-risk to becoming victims of environmental injustices like those in the Geographic South. This is a possibility, because according to ADA--- violence, neglect and oppression of humans with disabilities increases during hard economic times, such as the increasing possibility of having to live in a world with diminishing natural resources.

A united front means not only special provisions for the economic poor in the Geographic South, but also special provisions for the various disability and neurodiversity communities around the world. This includes, including disability and neurodiverse bodies and voices in climate justice campaigns and making sustainable lifestyles and actions accessible to the various disability

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communities. As well as special provisions for animals living in captivity in depressed economies to be protected from animal cruelty, rescue strategies for domestic animals impacted by impending environmental disasters and the conservation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of wild animals like polar bears and penguins directly impacted by sea-level rise and other climate “disruptions.”

Finally, this united campaign can be capped with a united front against all-non subsistence level hunting like sports hunting and hunting for population control. A recent study has found hunting for population control to be an ineffective tool for wildlife management for addressing overpopulated wild animal problems. There is definitely a positive correlation among gun cultures, bullying of children and youth and spree shootings in white America like all the terrible tragedies from Connecticut to Colorado and many other rural and suburban places across the country where hunting and civilian gun stockpiling are venerated. As anti-gun activists like Michael Moore have brought cogent attention too, such incidents seldom happen in the multicultural inner city, in liberal-progressive communities or in cultures where gun toting is considered deviant behavior, relegated to criminals and gangs. While hunting may not be the most serious of all institutional animal cruelties, it is one of the most gratuitous, extravagant, unnecessary and un-called for of all the institutional animal cruelties. It is not a sport, but an unfair fight! There is nothing objectively scientific about it either!

Unlike fur-wearing, unfortunately and tragically, hunting actually has a future, mainly because of all the “greenwashing” by the various environmental movements where environmentalists have revitalized sports hunting as both a legitimate management tool to mitigate wildlife overpopulation and invasive species problems, having systematically painted hunters as these conservationists which they are not and statistically as more white men are no longer associating

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hunting with manhood (the real reason for the decline of sport hunting) have turned their attention to women, minorities, troubled youth even peoples with disabilities to take the place of white men to carry on this “proud tradition” aka self-perpetuate an archaic, unbelievable, cruel and inhumane, tasteless, tacky practice.

Ask any abused child, whether a place where you have to live which is physically unsafe is much of a home? Most abused children would answer-“absolutely not!” Then it is both anthropocentric and speciesist to call a wild game preserve which is all about managing an ecosystem to pamper hunters, a habitat and home for wildlife. Not forgetting the “nagging question” of environmental history. Many of the great white European-induced extinctions of the nineteenth and twentieth century’s were the result of overhunting, overpopulated species, exclusively for vain, consumeristic luxuries and to satisfy base human impulses for privileged peoples like what happened to the Dodo Birds, the Passenger Pigeons and the Carolina Parakeets, just to name a few. It is my opinion and fervent belief that the world would be better off if sports hunting and hunting for population control were “finished off.”

As I have demonstrated, all of this is possible and more, when we as the disability rights and animals rights communities are able to “Get to Solidarity!”

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