



Putting a Lid on Animal-Abuse Promotion

Responsible Policies for Animals' Enlighten the Luminaries campaign has proceeded for years noticed mainly by persons contacted in the campaign.

By David Cantor

The organized effort to reduce animal abuse has always been crippled by ever-surging waves from a bottomless sea of authors, experts, and spokespersons endlessly plying the human mind with false and harmful beliefs that promote animal abuse. Their discourse builds on anti-animal sentiment generated in prehistoric times, elaborated in antiquity, and prevalent today despite their inherent immorality and lack of intellectual basis. Their topics, framing, and vocabularies erase from human consciousness the enormity of animal abuse and its lethal impacts on human beings.

Luminaries who inform without challenging conventional wisdom don't intentionally set out to harm human beings and other animals. All are probably appalled at cruelty and horrible suffering. Their work just channels their humanist/speciesist training, ideology, and perception. They don't realize they function as spokespersons for all that offends the human conscience: the Animal-Abuse Revolution, the Biocaust, poverty, war, genocide, racism, misogyny, antisemitism, Islamophobia, tyranny, injustice – all the progeny of speciesism and animal-abuse culture.

Few would continue claiming or implying human beings are natural omnivores or predators; human beings are entitled to other animals and all of their land; human beings are innately violent and warlike; human beings get diseases "from nature"; humans are the only moral and spiritual beings; or any of their other chronic canards if they were duly skeptical of

their assumptions, as the intellectual endeavor requires. Their humanist/speciesist traditions are founded on delusions about human beings and other animals and on doctrine that animals don't matter in themselves, so that defamation and abuse of nonhumans needn't be avoided or corrected. The most prominent luminaries merely comport with tradition as they fuel the global animal-abuse conflagration.

Until they're told, they don't know how irresponsible their practices are.

What Can We Do About It?

One way RPA addresses the mega-problems of the Animal-Abuse Revolution and anti-animal doctrine is to directly contact *luminaries* – high-profile writers, intellectuals, scholars, teachers, officials, advocates, broadcasters – urging them to reconsider their false and harmful assertions that perpetuate animal-abuse policy, culture, and practice.

Below, I identify some of the many luminaries RPA has contacted in the Enlighten the Luminaries campaign, sending letters and literature related to the matter we address with each. The luminaries' credentials, achievements, and honors suggest the depth and scope of their influence and why it is crucial that they stop getting it wrong and start getting it right for all animals. After each brief luminary profile, I mention specific harmful statements or omissions, RPA's requests, and why the needed change to their practice is important.

► Timothy Snyder, Yale University professor of history; affiliated with the Holocaust Museum and the Institute

for Human Sciences; recipient of the Hannah Arendt Prize and other honors; author of many books including the masterful bestselling paperback *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* warning about the threat to democracy represented by Donald Trump and the shift toward authoritarianism. Addresses tyranny lucidly and authoritatively but only tyranny over human beings, when our species' tyranny over all other beings generates far more suffering and injustice.

RPA: Could he expand his and his students' and readers' definition of

“Luminaries who inform without challenging conventional wisdom don't intentionally set out to harm animals.”

tyranny to include our species' tyranny over all of Earth's other animals, which since prehistoric times has provided the template for humans' tyranny over each other, fueling the Biocaust, disease, war, and other mega-problems?

► David Quammen, award-winning science and nature writer, bestselling author of *Spillover: Animal Infections*

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“Baby Steps”: Dubious Advice for Reducing Animal Abuse

By David Cantor

“You have to walk before you can run.” “We have to take baby steps.” Common refrains of animal advocates confronted with the need of a new advocacy model because standard advocacy – tightening anticruelty laws, pushing plants-only eating, helping animals in need, decrying isolated atrocities – cannot reduce animal abuse or make policies necessary for a reduction to become possible. In some situations, radical change must occur before baby steps can produce substantive change rather than trap advocates in quicksand.

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An example is the ongoing American Revolution. Gaining independence to govern without royalty, a radical change, was necessary before the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, laws and court cases, abolishing chattel slavery, instituting women’s suffrage, and countless other baby steps could bring humanity closer to justice, freedom from tyranny, and equal treatment – though only humanity, and not all humans at the same pace. Today’s governing paradigm establishes personhood and equal treatment only for human beings. It neither acknowledges our species’ tyranny over other animals nor establishes policies or institutions capable of addressing our species’ abuse of Earth’s quadrillions of nonhuman animals.

The fifty states’ anticruelty stat-

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Persons cover art: Rebecca Lotka and David Cantor.

Defining animal abuse as everything human beings do to and with other animals and their natural homes and ecosystems, recognizing animal abuse as both the basis of civilization and the root cause of human misery, and acknowledging that standard animal advocacy cannot achieve a reduction in animal abuse, Responsible Policies for Animals (RPA) brings new and original methods to the endeavor.

RPA demands that institutions, thought leaders, and the industry-government-university-media complex stop promoting animal abuse and speciesism and become anti-speciesist – for the sake of human beings, the other animals, and Earth. RPA uses its website, correspondence, literature, meetings, group presentations, *Persons*, and other means to advance its campaigns and to teach others RPA’s methods.

RPA members donate \$25 or more and receive *Persons*, e-Updates, and RPA’s unique bumper sticker and brochures. On request, RPA considers ill, indigent, or imprisoned persons for donation-free honorary membership. Learn more and donate tax-free at www.RPAforAll.org or by mail.



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utes, the federal Animal Welfare Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the horrendously named Humane Methods of Slaughter Act: All of these and other “animal protection” laws representing a great many baby steps regulate animal abuse; they don’t reduce it. Relying on them to protect nonhuman animals allows the vast scope of sanctioned animal abuse to continue growing along with the

human population and economy, as it has since the Animal-Abuse Revolution began in prehistoric times. My fellow animal advocates’ good work to remedy animal abuse under the existing paradigm – such as I did for thirteen years before founding RPA – is a nonstop treadmill: The existing “animal welfare” or “animal protection” paradigm is of, by, and for the animal-abuse system. Nonhuman

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and the Next Human Pandemic and many other books (including a fine one on our species' natural predators); regularly interviewed on COVID-19 and other infectious-disease outbreaks; frames as legitimate practice the animal abuse that causes diseases to spill over from other animals to human beings.

RPA: Perhaps he could explain to the public that, not only do diseases spill over to human beings from other animals but that all of our species' deliberate contact with other animals is unnatural, unnecessary, and harmful. We cannot reduce disease without eliminating such contact.

► Christopher Ryan, Ph.D., bestselling author of *Civilized to Death: The Price of Progress* debunking the narrative of perpetual progress and *Sex at Dawn* debunking the human-mono-gamy myth; featured in major news venues; contributor to *Psychology Today*; host of the podcast *Tangentially Speaking with Dr. Christopher Ryan*. Writes in *Civilized to Death* that human beings can choose to be vegetarian if they wish to but human beings are omnivores by nature, providing no zoological evidence, all of which indicates that human beings are natural herbivores. Reinforces generations-long public-relations campaigns pushing the meat delusion and therefore the vast web of human miseries arising from the delusion.

RPA: Would he reconsider his assertion and publicly correct it since it is belied by our bodies' lack of killing equipment and other indisputable aspects of biology, is debunked by innumerable sources, and is inherently harmful?

► Michael Mann, physicist and climatologist, Penn State University professor, director of Penn State's Earth System Science Center; member of the National Academy of Science; recipient of many prestigious awards; author of *The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet*, *The Madhouse Effect: How Climate Change Denial Is Threatening Our Planet*, *Destroying Our Politics*, and *Driving Us Crazy*, many other books, and numerous articles; news-industry go-to author-

ity on climate breakdown. Hews to euphemistic "climate change" and "global warming" and to the widely held assumption that fossil fuels are the main industries breaking down the climate, when many authorities agree that meat, dairy, fish, egg, and allied industries heat Earth faster.

RPA: Would he acknowledge publicly that the meat, dairy, fish, egg, and related industries are heating Earth faster than the fossil-fuel industries and that the climate-breakdown mega-problem cannot be solved as long as the main focus is fossil fuels? Would he join with RPA in urging his university to stop providing millions of dollars' worth of training, public relations, sales, experimentation, and other services to the meat, dairy, fish, and egg industries?

"The nonstop tsunami of anti-animal discourse must be reckoned with."

► William Schindler, anthropology professor at Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland; director of the Eastern Shore Food Lab in the College's Center for Environment and Society; recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award from the College's Alumni Association; leader in the field of experimental archaeology; known worldwide for his work; profiled in major news venues; worked on the National Geographic Channel show *The Great Human Race*; called "Professor Caveman" in the *Atlantic* magazine for teaching butchering, meat-eating, and other "survival skills" misrepresented as natural and healthful – even persuading vegetarian students to add meat to their diet – in his Experimental Archaeology and Primitive Technology course.

RPA: Given that an article and an award-winning biological anthropol-

ogy book RPA sent him, as well as countless other empirical sources debunk the meat delusion and the "man the hunter" myth, would he modify his teaching, writing, and off-campus speaking to accord with biological reality and the need to address enormous problems linked to the false and harmful beliefs he promotes?

► Karen Armstrong, Order of the British Empire, fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, author of *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* and many other books on religion; featured on eight C-SPAN videos; recipient of the TED Prize and many other honors; president of Charter for Compassion; guest on public radio's *On Being* (see below). Writes in *Fields of Blood* that human beings are violent and warlike by nature.

RPA: Would she reconsider her widely assumed but unsupported view of human nature and work to correct humanity's misunderstanding of itself so that eventually we can relate to each other and the rest of the living world based on our true peaceable, respectful, sympathetic nature as established by science? Such fallacious characterizations of *Homo complexus* do not come from ethology, the science of animal behavior, but from illogical notions that civilization reflects human nature – in reality, civilization undermines human nature. They function as self-fulfilling prophecies, rationalizing, legitimizing, and perpetuating violence and war, including the Animal-Abuse Revolution and the Biocaust. The leading authority on training human beings to kill in war writes that human beings have no innate wish to kill each other and most are repulsed by violence. It is very difficult to train people to kill. It is only in the nature psychopaths to enjoy killing.

► Krista Tippett, host of public radio's *On Being* (formerly *Speaking of Faith*) whose guests include authorities on religion, spirituality, philosophy, literature, and morality; author of *Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living* and other books; recipient of a National Humanities Medal, the George Foster Peabody

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Award, and three Webby Awards. *Limits On Being* to humanist/speciesist perspectives though *being* applies to all life; attributes only to human beings morality, spirituality, sociality, empathy, and other traits also possessed by a great many other animals.

RPA: Would *On Being* present luminaries versed in nonhuman experience and behavior, discussing other animals in the same terms as human beings, debunking human supremacism? It is not possible to reduce animal abuse or its impacts on human beings as long as our institutions and media erase nonhuman personhood and equality and thus their entitlement to equal rights and equal treatment. Treating other animals as nonpersons defames them implicitly, fueling the ever-growing Animal-Abuse Revolution.

Where Does All That Talk Get the Animals?

I believe we are slowly achieving a chilling effect on animal-abuse promotion at the margins, though we rarely receive replies and some that we receive take the form of defensive bullying to make RPA go away. Certified luminaries rarely agree that anything they say is wrong, misleading, or harmful to others, though frequently it is. Acknowledging that

could appear to admit ignorance, bias, incompetence, conflict of interest, or malfeasance and could diminish one's stature.

We can't prove victories in the Enlighten the Luminaries campaign. I have not recently heard the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation tagline "all lives have equal value" on public radio as I regularly did four-plus years ago. But I can't prove that is because RPA sent the Foundation's CEO a letter in 2017 requesting the insertion of "human" before "lives" since the Foundation does not teach that a spider, fish, or bonobo has the same inherent value as a human being. Did Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!* recently start referring to *climate breakdown* in place of the standard euphemisms "climate change" and "global warming" because RPA promoted that usage in a letter to her? Possibly, but hard to prove.

Into the Future

If civilization's industry-government-university-media complex serves, funds, promotes, and glorifies animal abuse, animal abuse informs every aspect of human life, and the vast majority of human beings cannot imagine things any other way, what avails it for me to submit an op-ed article or letter-to-the-editor opposing

some particularly egregious atrocity at the margins of a system based on and dependent upon animal abuse? I've done these things countless times in three decades of full-time animal advocacy, and it is good work. But good work doesn't put nine billion human beings and their governing bodies and economies on a new trajectory that can reduce animal abuse or the human misery it causes.

We cannot today correct the people who wrote religious scriptures, or ancient philosophers, or scholars, kings, tsarinas, pharaohs, scientists, literati, elected officials, or military heroes of the past. Or "animal welfare" proponents of the eighteenth century who established such extremely low standards for our species' treatment of other animals that still only cruelty is unlawful, the minuscule portion of abuse done for the purpose of causing pain and suffering. But we can communicate with people who manage the public mind today.

The nonstop status quo-reinforcing tsunami of human supremacism and entitlement, defamation of other animals, animal-abuse erasure, and other anti-animal discourse must be reckoned with. The more people do their part, the more effective we will be, and the sooner a reduction of animal abuse can be achieved. ★

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animals experience no genuine welfare or protection.

Baby-steps rhetoric sounds sensible, and it often applies within the established humans-only paradigm. But that paradigm does not entertain any proposal that undermines our species' claims on other animals and the natural world. More dogfighting takes place today than when it became unlawful in all fifty states, not because there are more cruel people now than before, but because it remains lawful to breed dogs into slavery with every aspect of their lives determined by human beings.

We'll know the paradigm shift needed to reduce animal abuse is occurring when our luminaries and

our institutions recognize and teach that the status quo is a long, horrible error and when they stop promoting animal abuse as described in the cover article above. Absent that, victories

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for nonhuman animals can aid small numbers of animals, but the numbers of those abused and the methods of abuse will continue to grow.

RPA's campaigns are designed to move civilization toward the paradigm that, once established, can enable baby steps to reduce animal abuse. As for humans, so for the other animals. RPA is just an architect. The animals and their future descendants desperately need builders. Maybe you will wish to be one. Learn about RPA's unique campaigns - 10,000 Years Is Enough, Elephant in the Newsroom, Campaign K-12, Enlighten the Luminaries, This Land Is Their Land - in *Persons* and at www.RPAforAll.org. ★