

THE KILLING FIELDS OF SOUTH AFRICA: ECO-WARS, SPECIES APARTHEID, AND TOTAL LIBERATION

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Martin Luther King

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." Nelson Mandela

"A new society cannot be created by reproducing the repugnant past, however refined or enticingly repackaged." Nelson Mandela

"Animals are those unfortunate slaves and victims of the most brutal part of mankind." John Stuart Mill

South Africa is known to the world not only for its magnificent wildlife and parks, but also for the trafficking in endangered species, the huge gaming and hunting industries, and the brutal killing of elephants for ivory and body parts. Virtually lawless in its regulation of the animal trade, South Africa has the highest species extinction rate of any area on the planet, for big game is big business.

The richest "resource" in South Africa's possession is the magnificent wildlife that roams the plains, but rather than protect its biodiversity and invest in eco-tourism, South Africa has chosen to auction it to the highest bidder. Eco-tourism is far more sustainable and lucrative than safari adventure hunts, but the gaming, hunting, and ivory industries are powerful influences on government. Another economic factor threatening wildlife is poverty; in a land where elephants are worth over \$10,000 a head, poachers have strong motivations to kill, as do communities in need of schools and infrastructure.

The elephant has emerged at the center of political debates and culture wars in South Africa, as the nation seems poised to return to the much-reviled practice of "culling," a hideous euphemism for mass murder of entire elephant herds. In 1930, Africa was home to 5-10 million elephants. Beginning in the 1960s, however, poachers and armies waged a vicious war of extermination against elephants, reducing their numbers to 1.3 million by 1979. Between 1970 and 1989, another million elephants were slaughtered for their ivory tusks. In 1989, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) passed a global ban on ivory. This helped to reduce elephant poaching, but illegal poaching and ivory trading still flourish. Today, only 600,000 elephants survive in the South African wild.

Due to intense international pressure and threat of a tourism boycott, South Africa declared a moratorium on culling in 1995. And yet, using the rationale that elephants are overpopulating areas such as Kruger National Park and damaging habitat necessary for many other species to survive, and that immediate and effective "management" measures are needed, the government is now poised to resume culling, (possibly before the end of 2006). This is very unlikely. Clearly in favor of culling, the government deferred their decision the last two years in order to solicit "expert" opinion from leading park officials, ecologists, biologists, and conservationists (and one token animal welfare advocate). Thirteen in number, group members were overwhelmingly biased in favor of culling. They reached a consensus decision and sent their recommendations to the government in late

August 2006. While the report paid lip service to the complexity of elephant intelligence and social life, it nonetheless gave greater priority to ecological considerations, and thereby gave the government the legitimacy it sought to begin killing thousands of "problem" elephants.

Culling advocates – including government officials, national park officials, ecologists, "conservationists," and many villagers -- argue that elephants have had deleterious effects on habitat and biodiversity in some National Park areas, and increased elephant populations will bring even greater destructive effects. Farmers and villagers are complaining that elephants are breaking reserve fences, destroying their crops, occupying their drinking places, competing with their livestock for food, and endangering their physical safety. The consensus among these parties is that biodiversity, ecological balance, and human interests can, do, and must trump the lives and interests of elephants, and that the only solution to the problem of unwanted populations is the "final solution" – the massacre of thousands of elephants. The pro-culling camp admits killing elephants is not pleasant, but is necessary, and they further argue that the profits of elephant meat and body parts helps communities and even elephants themselves by helping with the high costs of maintaining national parks.

Opponents of culling include animal activists and advocacy groups in South Africa and around the world, ecologists who challenge the claim that elephants are damaging park environments, and a majority of Western tourists with emotional attachment to elephants and who? wield the threat of a travel boycott should culling resume. In addition to the moral argument that elephants have the right not to be killed, however expedient or useful to human interests, culling critics have argued that there is no evidence that elephants threaten habitats or biodiversity, and emphasize that numerous alternatives to shooting down elephant herds exist, ranging from contraceptives to creating corridors between parks to allow more even population distribution. Against hunters and villagers alike, they argue that elephants are worth much more alive than dead, and that elephants and humans alike win by developing the potential of eco-tourism, an industry that culling would cripple by alienating Westerners enamored with the symbol of Africa. The ethically and scientifically correct policies are not being adopted, critics argue, because governments and "conservationists" alike are allied with gaming, hunting, and ivory industries, and they favor a "quick fix" over a real solution.

Despite the abolition of apartheid, the freeing of Nelson Mandela, and attempts toward democratization, nothing has changed in the South Africa's national park policies and the general conception of animals and the environment. Whereas *social apartheid* belongs to the past, *species apartheid* is alive and well in the humanist and speciesist mentalities that prevail in the trafficking and slaughter of wild animals.

This essay will explore this general argument, and examine the impact of species apartheid on humans and animals alike. I first analyze the influence of the hunting, gaming, and ivory industries, and the profit motive driving their illicit production and trade. I then compare the regimes of *social apartheid* (White domination of Blacks) to the larger system of *species apartheid* (human domination of animals), and argue that the formal abolition of institutionalized racist rule did nothing to end the injustice of species apartheid. I then show how euphemisms such as "culling" and "sustainable use" are transparent covers for violence and exploitation, and stem from *neo-Malthusian* and *eco-fascist* attitudes which frame elephant. More bluntly, I

argue that South African "conservation" policies are akin to Nazism in their vilification of the animal Other, their scapegoating of elephants as causes rather than effects of environmental problems, their bureaucratic language and technical administration of mass death, and their pursuit of the "final solution" to the alleged problem of elephant overpopulation.

I argue for a paradigm shift in the framing of policies and attitudes toward animals. This new paradigm is rooted in critical social theory grasps the deep interrelationship between social and environmental problems, and roots the solution to both in rebuilding societies along decentralized and democratic lines. But this approach jettisons the speciesist baggage of humanist, leftist, and so-called "radical" or "progressive" theories, in order to link critical social theory to animal rights and deep ecology. Consequently, I argue that elephants have *inviolable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*; human beings therefore have strong duties to respect these rights, and to never exploit elephants or any other animals as means to their ends. People must abandon long entrenched, factually and morally wrong ways of viewing animals through an objectifying and instrumentalizing lens, through the aggressor standpoint so deeply engrained in the human psyche. They must learn, rather, to view elephants for what they really are – not "assets," "beasts," and "harvestable resources," but rather complex persons with intrinsic value. Working from a holistic standpoint and vision of "total liberation," I argue that human, animal, and earth liberation movements are inseparably linked, such that none can be free until all are free.

Big Game, Big Business

"We just want the elephant to be an economic commodity that can sustain itself because of the return it generates. Ivory is a product that should be treated like any other product." Stephen Kasere, Zimbabwe "Campfire" Conservation Association

"If monetary value is attached to something it will be exploited until it's gone. That's what happens when you convert living beings to cash. That conversion, from living forests to lumber, schools of cod to fish sticks, and onward to numbers on a ledger, is the central process of our economic system." Derrick Jensen

"One day we will realize that elephants cannot be reduced to the value of their teeth. Elephants are and will always be synonymous with the greatness of Africa. The future of African elephants will depend on tolerance with people and greater commitment to devoting land for elephants." Dr. Paula Kahumbu

"There will be no justice as long as man will stand with a knife or with a gun and destroy those who are weaker than he is." Isaac Bashevis Singer

Every year, tens of thousands of animals are killed with impunity in South Africa. For a handsome fee, tourists may shoot just about any species they want. Most notoriously, species such as lions are killed in "canned hunts," where wealthy foreigners pay tens of thousands of dollars to shoot an animal —typically from within the safety and comfort of a vehicle --- that is domesticated, semi-drugged, and trapped within fenced enclosures. The outcome is guaranteed, and the mighty warriors go home with a trophy to mount on the wall or place on the floor. Whereas wildlife sanctuaries are banned in eight of South Africa's nine provinces, all provinces fully sanction captive-breeding and hunting ranches. Gaming is big business in South

Africa. According to a 2002 report, South Africa is home to over 5000 game ranches and more than 4000 mixed game and livestock ranches. For lions alone, South Africa has roughly 50 captive-breeding ranches. The thrill to kill a lion on a canned hunt costs anywhere from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Perversely, species are all the more valued – economically, not ecologically – to the degree that they are endangered.

In the vast and burgeoning international trade in wild animals and plants – as advertised and mass marketed to a global clientele through web sites and magazines -- South Africa is the biggest wildlife trader on the continent. Like the lawless days of the Old West in the US, the South African government and conservation organizations promote and operate in an anarchistic environment, flouting what national and international laws exist to regulate the trafficking in animals and endangered species. Governments, conservation organizations, tourist offices, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and all provinces enable and support the gaming, hunting, and ivory industries that kill tens of thousands of animals each year for “sport” and profit.

In South Africa, as everywhere, the park system and State (responsible for promoting trade, growth, and profit) operate in a global capitalist marketplace where the name of the game is growth and profit. To compete and advance as real players, they commandeer what they regard as their best assets in the form of wildlife and natural environments, and so readily dole them out to industries and private interests. The illegal wildlife trade [includes hunting??]no is estimated [by Interpol] to fetch \$6-20 billion a year. The interests of animals, the environment, communities, and future generations never enter into their economic calculus. The goal of the new SANP management policy is increased trading of animals on the world market – with complete indifference as to whether they end up in a city zoo, a roadside zoo, a laboratory, slaughterhouse, or in the private possession of an affluent anthropocentrist seeking to boost his social status and flagging masculinity. In the words of the Park Minister (a term that implies some kind of ethical stewardship of animals and nature), “I see no reason why we shouldn’t be able to make an income out of these [parks].” There isn’t a Minister of Parks. Currently David Mabunda is head of the SANParks while our Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) is Martinus Van Schalkwyk to whom Mabunda reports. Martinus was the leader of the New Nationalist Party (a reimagining of the apartheid Nationalist Party – he was instrumental in killing it off and got rewarded by the ANC government with this post)

If a park makes an income off animals and land it truly cares for, and puts the money back into sound care and management, that is difficult to object to given budget constraints and realities of capitalist economies. But that is hardly the conceptual or practical approach of the SANP staff. The outlook and goal, rather -- in an institution entirely prostituted to animal exploitation industries, and bound to corrupt a conspiratorial alliance with the South African government, conservation organizations, and “scientific” experts for the goals of trade and profit -- is to profit off animals regarded merely as commodities, as temporary and dispensable resources, who, once mature, will be sold without compunction to the highest bidder, where after it meets its tragic fate of terror, torture, and death at the hands of the cruelest species on the planet.

The average Western eco-tourist would be astonished to realize what a deception African wildlife management is -- to learn that “conservation” organizations are

fronts for animal exploiters, that the animals in national parks are not protected but stored there as resources for future use in hunting or zoos. They would be appalled to learn that “sustainable use” masks genocidal policies that drive species toward the brink of extinction for a fast buck. They would be stunned to realize that the South Africa National Park system has a long history of supplying animals such as rhinoceros, elephants, and lions to private landowners and hunting operators. Perhaps most of all, they would be outraged to learn that millions of their tax dollars subsidize elephant killing through Congressional funding of South African hunting lobbies. The official return of culling could well be counter-productive for South Africa if the moral indignation of Western tourists were awakened and exercised in the form of a travel boycott.

Species Apartheid

“This hell made mockery of all blather about humanism.” Isaac Bashevis Singer

“The way we treat animals has all the hallmarks of apartheid – prejudice, callous disregard for suffering, and a misguided sense of supremacy ... group areas and segregation helped to keep the suffering of black people hidden from view. So too with the animals.” Mantsadi Molotlegi, South African animal rights activist

“A new society cannot be created by reproducing the repugnant past, however refined or enticingly repackaged.” Nelson Mandela

South Africa inherited and maintained an ugly legacy of violence and domination from European colonialists, a system of exploitation, racism, and discrimination that in the mid-twentieth century Dutch Afrikaners termed “apartheid” (which literally means “separate state”). The term was coined in 1948, when the Afrikaner National Party adopted it as a slogan, and the term thereafter referred to an institutionalized system of racial segregation, maintained by violence and terror. The official system of apartheid lasted from 1948 to 1994. Its most famous victim, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned on Robben Island for 27 years.

Apartheid was a brutal system of class and racial domination, whereby a minority of wealthy and powerful white elites exploited and ruled over the black majority. Apartheid was a *conceptual and ideological system*, whereby white elites positioned themselves as superior in relation to the black masses they branded as inferior, and an *institutional system*, which exploited their labor power, stripped them of basic rights, and strictly segregated the races. Whites declared Blacks non-citizens, and confined them to different beaches, hospitals, schools, churches, theatres, restrooms, trains, buses, and other public areas. The sexes too were kept apart, as interracial sex and marriage was illegal.

Reviled throughout the world, pressured economically, and attacked at every point by the Black resistance movement, the apartheid system was finally dismantled in 1994. Nelson Mandela was finally freed in February 1990, South Africa’s first democratic elections were held on April 27, 1994, and Mandela, the leader of the African National Congress (ANC), became the country’s first Black State President. From May 1994 to June 1999, Mandela presided over the transition from apartheid and minority rule to a fledgling democracy, a system that unfortunately remains plagued by great poverty, inequality, and discontent.

Despite the dramatic changes ending *social apartheid*, nothing changed in the underlying structure of *species apartheid*. Just as social apartheid is anchored in White hatred of Blacks, so species apartheid stems from human contempt for nonhuman species, such as is expressed in vicious language and violent action, as represented in the iconic images of joyful hunters power-posing with their “kill.” Just as *racism* arbitrarily defines one group of humans as superior to another, out of sheer prejudice and ignorance, so *speciesism* position human animals as superior to nonhuman animals, declaring themselves the end to which all other life forms are mere means. Whereas the racist mindset roots its hierarchy in skin color, the speciesist mindset demeans and objectifies animals by dichotomizing the evolutionary continuum into human and nonhuman life. As racism stems from a hateful *white supremacism*, so speciesism draws from a violent *human supremacism*, namely, the arrogant belief that humans have a natural or God-given right to use animals for any purpose they devise.

Just as with social apartheid, the conceptual segregation of species apartheid informs an institutional segregation, whereby animals are removed from social purview and confined to cramped pens and cages, where their oppression is hidden. As much as possible, South African Whites tried to keep Black oppression hidden by relegating them to homelands and their own public spaces outside of the view of Whites. While some animals like elephants roam in public parks and are spectacles for eco-tourism, the real forms of exploitation occur hidden away in laboratories, factory farms, slaughterhouses, and private hunting enclosures. Culling too – they would move the trucks with dead elephant bodies to the abattoir at night so that tourists wouldn’t see. Like racism, speciesism deploys a “might is right” philosophy that sees the ability of the powerful to rule over the powerless as its purpose and justification for doing so.

Like social apartheid, species apartheid is rooted in enslavement of beings exploited for profit, it thrives on a slave economy. Victims of severe oppression, both animals and Black Africans were -- and continue to be – slaves subject to economic exploitation. Whereas speciesism and racism are pernicious ideologies that underlie animal and Black oppression, their subjugation was also informed and determined by capitalist logic and market networks that grow fat from the bodies of slave labor. Speaking of the complex causes of apartheid, an ANC article states that, “Afrikaner nationalism was [not only about] evicting African blacks simply because of their race; much of it was [about a desire to appropriate land, resources and labour power... it must never be forgotten that Apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa, like everywhere else, has an aim far more important than discrimination itself: *the aim is economic exploitation*. The root and fruit of apartheid and racial discrimination is profit.” As the White South African minority enjoyed the highest standard of living in Africa, on par with many western nations, the Black majority were marginalized and impoverished in every area such as income, housing, and schools.

As with Blacks toiling in the fields and mines of capitalist, animals are exploited and literally “labor” in factory farms to grow fat, produce milk and eggs, and research animals are forced to produce diseases such as cancer and quantitative data. As bad as Black people had it, species apartheid arguably is an even *worse* system than social apartheid. This is because a significantly greater number of animals are killed than humans, the methods of exploitation often are far more brutal, and there is far less outcry over this form of violence and killing. Although blacks were repressed and

killed, they were not bred, farmed, confined, and exploited for hunters to shoot down in a demented concept of "sport." They were not captured and sent to laboratories for experimentation, cut into pieces and consumed for meat, nor dismembered and sold for jewelry and paperweights. Although Black victims of apartheid were tortured, imprisoned, and killed by the thousands, over 40 billion animals die each year at the hands of human oppressors in various systems of exploitation, from slaughterhouses and fur farms to hunting fields and laboratories.

Thus, in the time span since 1994, with the tripartite alliance of the African National Congress, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the South African Communist Party, a democratization process has begun to improve life for human beings, but *absolutely nothing has been done to ameliorate the slaughter and suffering of animals*. This is not surprising given the human supremacist ideologies – AKA, "humanism" -- informing Left politics of all stripes. In contemporary, post-apartheid South Africa, one finds the same pseudo "park" and "conservation" policies, the same cronyism and corruption, the same confusion of legal codes and lack of regulation, the same systematic violation of treaties such as CITIES, and the same speciesist mentality that underpins animal exploitation with no regard for the suffering it brings to billions of animals who die simply because they are not human and are exploitable resources for research, food, and sport.

To be completely accurate, the killing and rates have *grown worse*, as exploiters accelerate their policy of *extermination* of nonhuman species such as elephants, chimpanzees, and tigers. This wholesale massacre of animals -- as aggressive, hateful, violent, and bloody as any genocidal rage humans unleash on each other in places such as Rwanda or Darfur -- is driving elephants, chimpanzees, gorillas, tigers, and other species to extinction, while upsetting destroying habitats and upsetting ecological balance. As elsewhere in the crumbling human empire, *animals in the African wild are under siege*, from chimpanzees stolen from the jungles to bleed and die in Mengelesque research laboratories to the last individuals of endangered species targeted by demented hunters. Paramilitary poachers spray bullets from semi-automatic weapons into terrified herds of elephants mowed down to their death. Such bands of Nazi brown shirts roam the African planes in search of animals to capture, kill, and massacre. In one particularly egregious case, rebels assisted by the South African Defense Force killed 60,000 elephants to finance their war in Angola. Moreover, in 2005, Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, ordered the slaughter of ten elephants to serve barbecued pachyderm at festivities marking the 25th anniversary of Zimbabwe's independence and Black rule.

The Pathology of Humanism

Where human beings fail to make the most profound changes – those involving their relationship to the vast living earth – governmental regime changes mean nothing to animals and completely miss the target of new relations to nature critical to resolving social and ecological crises. For whether a regime is Left or Right, Capitalist or Communist, White or Black, Afrikaner or ANC, *the same species apartheid mentality and policies prevail*. Animals are still exploited as slaves, they are still reduced to resources for human use, and they still suffer and die. This is partly true because conservation organizations are largely run by White Westerners and relics from the apartheid era, and the safari companies are multinational outfits. But speciesism is a prevailing mentality, and poverty has a way of fostering utilitarian views toward animals and nature.

Under the pseudo-progressive guise of progress, rights, democracy, and equality, Leftists, communists, democratic humanists, and Black nationalists murder animals no different from their White, racist, Western, capitalist, imperialist predecessors. Consider, for example, the work of the "Campfire Conservation Association" that lobbies US Congress for funds to kill elephants for community use and profit. In the most objectifying language possible, discourse that could as well come from any racist Afrikaner, Campfire member Stephen Kasere clarified his underlying philosophy,: "We just want the elephant to be an economic commodity that can sustain itself because of the return it generates. Ivory is a product that should be treated like any other product."

This is *reification* – the reduction of a living subject to the status of a thing – in its finest form, a hateful, discriminatory, ignorant outlook that fails to understand the difference between an elephant and an eggplant. Ivory, in fact, should not be treated like "any other product" as this "product" is a complex living being whose life has to be taken before it can be commodified.

To provide another example of the speciesist and objectifying speciesist views informing radical, humanist, and communitarian approaches, consider James Shikwati's article, "Conservation Effort: Protecting Africa's People and Wildlife." Shikwati describes the plight of Kenyan villagers who receive little to no benefits from wildlife tourism, as the profits are siphoned off by into private hands and Western banks, and proposes that if elephants belong to communities, poaching would be reduced as people are not likely to steal from themselves.

This is a sensible way to benefit both humans and animals, but he too frames elephants as nothing more than resources that exist not for their own good but to promote human good. In the same capitalist language of objectification and commodification we have already seen in conservationists, this "progressive" urges us to view a national park as a "village bank" where animals are the peoples' "assets." The crass commerce language of "resources" and "assets" is one thing when it refers to oil, gas, or corn crops, and is quite another when used to frame the lives of animals. Shikwati argues that "there is nothing immoral in having people own wildlife. It is immoral to have them trampled to death [be elephants] and their crops destroyed with no gain in sight."

In fact, there is something profoundly wrong and immoral about ownership of wildlife. It involves a reduction of animals to the status of property, thing, commodities, and slaves; it promotes or causes insensitivity to their pain, suffering, and true nature. It is both a philosophical and moral error. It is Lockean ownership and property rights over animals that gives exploiters of every kind the legal authority to torture and kill other species in any way they see fit, and that, conversely, makes animal liberation and economic sabotage serious crimes. The gaming, hunting, and ivory industries see animals in the same mechanistic terms Shikwati does; they make the same appeal to animals as their property over which they exercise life and death rights like a King over its subjects. The extent of Shikwati's moral objection to their assault on animals, biodiversity, and evolution itself is to demand a bigger piece of the pie to benefit more people.

The indefensibly alienated and exploitative mindset of Kasere and Shikwati can be instructively compared to Native Americans and other cultures who killed animals to

survive, but in a manner of spiritual identification, not mathematical objectification, a fashion grateful to and respectful of life.

While Shikwati rightly criticizes the Kenyan government for indifference to its people, he shows the same indifference to animals in his quest to democratize the killing of wildlife rather than to end killing altogether and organize alternative sources of community income. He understandably expresses loss over people killed by wildlife, but shows no sorrow for millions of animals shot down on the African plains. When Shikwati and others, such as the director of the WWF in Namibia, speak enthusiastically of the economic benefits of killing elephants for human communities, they ignore the inestimable value living elephants have to *their* families and communities.

Quite reasonably, Shikwati argues that “the poor populations of the world must make a living from their natural surroundings ... [o]therwise they will have little incentive to preserve these surroundings, including the wildlife that inhabits them.” Given that they kill wildlife to survive, and not for sport or profit, he bristles at animal rights critiques, denouncing them as arrogant and elitist. “Only people who do not make a living in the vicinity of the wildlife reserves have the luxury of questioning whether or not human beings have the right to control wild animals.”

Shikwati’s position precludes any and all criticism from outside the culture, as it provides *carte blanche* license for the poor to treat animals in any way that advances their interests. But there is no guarantee that villagers – anthropocentric as anyone else – would ultimately treat animals with any more respect than big government and “conservation” organizations. Decentralized human politics may mean nothing more for animals than many rather than few people ordering their death. Poaching and trafficking in endangered species may indeed be reduced where democratic communities manage and protect the precious “assets” in their “bank,” but problems such as corruption and overpopulation may not significantly change the situation, and so long as humans of any race, class, religion, or nation approach animals from a standpoint of objectification, animal and human interests alike are threatened. If animals have basic rights -- a question that dogmatic humanists dismiss or dodge but rarely seriously engage -- their right to life is inviolable and trumps all utilitarian considerations. Whether fascist or socialist, White or Black, Westerner or South African, rich or poor, human supremacist philosophies are near universal, and they are everywhere wrong.

At this point, inevitable, humanists dredge up the same old red herring, ad hominem, and genetic fallacies. To be perfectly clear: there is *nothing inherently racist or elitist* about White, privileged Westerners (such as myself) criticizing other cultures on moral grounds, as if non-Western cultures were morally perfect, beyond reproach, or not inconsistent in their condemnations of the West. US systems of factory farming, Japanese whaling and dolphin slaughter, Canadian seal hunts, and South African canned hunts and elephant culling are *all* morally reprehensible. The normative thrust of the animal rights assails animal exploitation of any kind, regardless of race, class, or nationality. It distinguishes between *animal exploitation* and *subsistence killing*, but genuine subsistence cultures (such as people wrongly identify the Intuits) are rare or non-existent, whereas gratuitous and unjustifiable violence against animals is ubiquitous. The animal rights standpoint urges all cultures to relate to animals in non-objectifying and non-violent ways, and it is a moral revolution that has moved beyond the West to take root in nations, cultures,

and races throughout the globe, whether in Bangkok or South Africa. Charges of racism and elitism are all the more erroneous and divisive when leveled against positions in clear solidarity with oppressed people and establish interconnections between struggles for human and animal liberation in ways that deepen and strengthen both.

Still today, in the "new" South Africa, a nation that struggled against hate, ignorance, and prejudice in order to form a more enlightened and perfect union, benighted mindsets prevail -- the land is objectified as a farm for delivering animal products, and animals themselves are reified as harvestable resources. The next logical and necessary step in consciousness and moral evolution is still to be taken -- the giant leap from anthropocentrism to biocentrism, from speciesism to animal rights. Thus, when Nelson Mandela rails against racism, saying "I detest racialism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black man or a white man," we must expand this objective standard of accountability to a moral diatribe against speciesism, thereby paraphrasing: "I detest speciesism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black man or a white man."

Pseudo-Conservation and the Linguistic Sanitization of Violence

"This hell made mockery of all blather about humanism." Isaac Bashevis Singer

"In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible." George Orwell

There is much talk in South Africa of the conflict between humans and elephants, one that always is resolved by violent methods and "might is right" ideology, one that elephants always lose. Conservationists, farmers, and villagers decry the "severe ecological damage" caused by elephant overpopulation in some areas, such that they are harming plant life, endangering biodiversity, and "gobbling up" crops with their voracious and indiscriminate appetites and burgeoning numbers. Rather than look deeply into the real causes of ecological imbalance, numerous parties advocate killing as the "solution" to the "elephant problem."

Rather than confront systematic violence against animals as a profound problem with huge implications for humans themselves, the brutality of species apartheid is linguistically sanitized in discourse such as "culling," "sustainable use," "sustainable off take," "humane use," "harvestable resource," "adaptive management," and "population management." So-called conservationists and "true environmentalists" refer to elephants as "renewable natural resources," as if they were things. Here is a typical gem from the mouths of "conservationists," reducing elephants to commodities: "The elephant is a natural resource with assignable ownership. Foreign hunters are willing to convert that from an asset to capital in exchange for a cultural experience compatible with the history and use of the elephant." Exchanging moral discourse of the language of the stock market, this view reduces the elephant to sheer commodity status, denying it any fundamental right to life, as it sanctifies the hunter as a property owner, agent on the exchange market, and sophisticated seeker of cultural experiences.

Conservationists define the "culling" of elephants as "the managed alteration of a game populations numbers or compositions, when at odds with its resources, health and welfare, or man's `interest.'" Obscene abstractions such as the "management of

elephant density" obscure the very concrete act of killing an elephant with a bullet to the head, slitting its throat and dismembering its body, breaking apart a family, causing terror and distress among elephant herds near and far (who can hear and sense the fear, panic, and slaughter). The reality behind these obfuscations is dark and stark – it is mass murder [and form of ethnic cleansing]

These Orwellian mystifications are reminiscent of other nefarious classics, such as the "humane treatment" of animals in the cages of laboratories, circuses, fur farms, breeders, factory farms, and slaughterhouses, or, best of all, "humane killing" – as if there is a "humane" way to strip a being from their natural kind and world, to confine them in cramped cages and stalls, to deprive them of all their life instincts, to drive them mad or morbidly depressed, and to violently kill them with a blade or knife.

Animals that don't bring profits or are seen as threats to industries such as agriculture are regarded as "problem species," a label that warrants annihilation by any means necessary – such as cattle, bobcats, the gray wolf, and numerous other animals in the US West are brutally killed with a variety of lethal methods by cattle ranchers to protect their "products" and "raw materials," all with the backing of the federal government to protect a mere 2% of the US beef supply.

Key to the worldview of cunning conservationists and planetary pirates running amuck on land and sea is the concept of "sustainable use." The phrase implies ecological sensibility, benign stewardship, and moral responsibility in awareness of the need to consume within ecological limits, and not take more "resources" than can be replaced. The profit-driven, crassly anthropocentric utilitarian model of "sustainable use" is a device to distract from actions that are entirely *unsustainable*. This is because the global, voracious *demand* for transforming beautiful, biologically important, often endangered animals into bloody carcasses increasingly outstrips the *supply*. According to Michele Pickover, "South Africa has highest estimated rate of extinctions for any area of the world, with 37 per cent of its mammal species threatened." The hunting and gaming industries follow not the credo of "sustainable use," but rather the imperative to exploit, kill, and plunder as much as possible, as quickly as feasible, and for maximum profit and gain. The exploitative and utilitarian outlook of "sustainable use" precludes any truly sustainable mode of human existence, one that requires a conceptual gestalt shift attentive to the beauty and inherent worth of other species.

The "scientific management" of parks obfuscates the economic and political interests that shape "conservation" policies. In the US, federal regulatory agencies such as the USDA and FDA allegedly protect the welfare of animals and citizens, but in fact promote the agendas of meat, dairy, and pharmaceutical industries. Similarly, South African "conservation" organizations supposedly act in the interests of animals, but in truth advance the lethal agenda of hunting and gaming industries. As one writer observes, the conservation system "was conceived during apartheid and reflected the authoritarian norms of that era. Today, conservation boards remain under the control of long-entrenched bureaucrats. Most are white, Afrikaans-speaking men. They come from the same tight-knit community as many of those involved in captive breeding and canned hunting. Many are hunters themselves." It is a perversion of the concept of "conservation" when it extends to taking not preserving life. Of course, conservation is part of a larger ecological vocabulary, one that values ecosystems over individual forms of life. Thus, hunting and fishing are perfectly acceptable

pastimes, "sports," or businesses, so long as one understands and respects ecological balance. The life of an individual elephant, lion, rhinoceros, or chimpanzee has no innate or important value, for when "harvested properly, animals are replaceable "resources."

Thus, in the regime of species apartheid, detached, abstract, vague, euphemistic, pseudo-scientific terminology masks violence and culpability, in an effort to justify the massacre of elephants whenever deemed necessary and expedient. Hunt operators, human rights champions, community activists, farmers, and villagers alike frame elephants in the objectifying terms of their market value and economic benefits.

A popular philosophy that smacks of human arrogance is the idea that "elephants can stay if they pay their own way." Thus suggests, first, that they have no right to exist in their homeland which they have been occupying for XX years, for humans have claimed eminent domain over the entire planet and all squatters will be thrown out of any area overtaken by expanding population, coveted for resources, or prized for development and profit. The value of elephant life, in other words, is entirely contingent on their ability to perform as laborers in a global commodity market at levels high enough to cover the costs of park maintenance. Otherwise, their lives are not worth the time and money necessary to preserve them, and what value they have in their tusks and flesh will be taken in a hail of bullets. This ingrate mentality ignores the fact that elephants have paid their way, and can continue to, many times over, if South Africa awakens to the fact – stated in the prevailing language of crude calculus --- that elephants are worth much more alive than dead.

Malthus, Resource Wars, and Eco-Fascism

"In their behavior toward creatures, all men were Nazis. The smugness with which man could do with other species as he pleased exemplified the most extreme racist theories, the principle that might is right." Isaac Bashevis Singer

"I personally am very pessimistic about the hope that humanity's disregard for animals will end soon. I'm sometimes afraid that we are approaching an epoch when the hunting of human beings may become a sport." Isaac Bashevis Singer

"The African elephant is a natural resource that lends itself to assignable ownership and that ownership, couples with benefits produced from hunting, provides an incentive for conservation." Dr. Bill Morrill, Conservationist, International Wildlife Management Consortium

Intoxicated with the promise of reason, science, and technology, preaching a new gospel of Progress, Enlightenment thinkers of the 18th century believed that the laws of history were inevitably leading to a universal community governed by reason, where all of humanity would be happy and free. A writer by the name of Thomas Malthus, however, saw a little problem with this utopian scenario, however, insofar as it labored under the fallacy of inexhaustible resources and ignored basic laws of ecology that govern all life. In his book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), Malthus analyzed a dynamic where human populations will grow at a geometric rate, whereas food supplies will increase only at an arithmetic rate. Eventually, humans will overshoot available resources and encounter conditions of scarcity. One way or the other, human populations will return to sustainable levels –

whether through conscious choices and planning, or through diseases, famine, plague, wars, and conflicts.

In the socio-ecological crisis of the 21st century, it is clear that the modernist vision has been refuted, whereas the basic principles of Malthus have been vindicated. Although Malthus used a static model of calculation and failed to account for factors such as technological innovation which greatly increased food supplies, the gains artificially obtained through chemicals and agribusiness have peaked, leaving depleted lands and soils. Throughout the world, human populations are facing unprecedented shortages of water, land, food, oil, and other resources. Increasing demand for decreasing resources leads to competition, conflict, and war. From Bush's invasion of Iraq for control of oil resources to battles over water in the Nile Basin to struggles over timber, gems and minerals in Borneo and Sierra Leone, the same Malthusian pattern is played out throughout the globe. One key reason for the violence in Darfur is lack of water and agricultural land. Conflicts throughout the Middle East over the last few decades have been over water distribution rights. Of course, The Bush administration invaded Iraq in large part to gain access to its oil, and currently is battling China for control of oil and gas flows in Central Asia.

As realized by many politicians, global warming and resource scarcity will emerge as key national security concerns. As sea levels rise, world populations grow, consumption rates soar, and hurricanes become increasingly ferocious, millions of people will become environmental refugees, water and energy become increasingly costly and scarce, and agricultural lands become deserts, violent conflicts over scarce resources will flare up throughout the world. Underdeveloped, poor, and unstable nations will be hit the hardest, and experience the most social and political chaos, but the wealthier nations will be drawn into the maelstrom with humanitarian and military operations. Hurricane Katrina, which wiped out the US Gulf Coast in 2005, was just a hint of the social and ecological crises to come, such as will result from global climate change.

The realization of Malthus' dystopian vision in no way validates his political views and policy suggestions. Malthus was an elitist, aggressive capitalist, and Social Darwinist who held workers, the poor, and the unfortunate in contempt. He argued against policies assisting the disenfranchised on the grounds aid would only increase their dependence on government. Malthus didn't see himself as cruel, only realistic; while some will suffer in the short run, in the long run happiness will increase among the masses by the abolition of welfare. In the early twentieth century United States, "neo-Malthusianism" emerged as an explicitly racist doctrine used to influence immigration legislation. In the late 1940s, neo-Malthusians argued against the use of pesticides and antibiotics to control malaria and infections in third world countries. In the 1960s, neo-Malthusian arguments reached an audience of millions with Paul Erlich's book, The Population Bomb (196X), which made dire and false predictions of imminent catastrophe and tended to scapegoat people of color in underdeveloped nations. In the 1980s and 1990s, Malthusian ideas influenced deep ecology and radical environmental groups such as Earth First!, leading some to argue against famine relief for starving masses in Ethiopia, as others even applauded AIDS as an ideal form of population control.

While positive in their recognition of ecology, the limits of nature, and dangers of human overpopulation, all Malthusian approaches suffer from two key problems. First, they present the forced option of *either* turning our backs on the needy to advance the

long-term good, *or* helping them and thereby exacerbating population growth. Malthusians don't recognize the viability of a *third possibility*, whereby we assist those suffering from poverty, famine, and other problems, as we also work to reduce population growth by addressing its root causes in social dynamics, such as involve imperialism, economic dependency, lack of education, and patriarchal control of women. Thus, a second major problem with Malthusianism is that it reduces population growth to a strictly biological issue, thereby abstracting it from its overall social context.

We must respond to human overpopulation problems with compassion and respect for the rights, dignity, and value of each human life, rather than with ecological reasoning abstracted from a social-political context. It is unthinkable to regard humans as mere problems, abstract masses devoid of individuality, a disturbance in ecosystems, or a drain on public resources to be removed by any means. That was the attitude of Nazi Germany, which saw Jews, workers, homosexuals, socialists, and others as genetic pollutants and social irritants to be eliminated with a final solution. We do not show indifference to starving masses in Ethiopia and elsewhere, on the assumption that aid would only increase their dependence on aid and boost population growth. There are alternative solutions, such as involve facilitating their economic independence and boosting their agricultural capacities. We send aid to starving people *even if* we think it might aggravate the problem because we recognize our responsibilities to help those suffering in the here and now, without dehumanizing appeals to ecological balances in the future. *And we certainly do not talk of culling human populations and making a profitable sport of it -- unless, that is, we are Nazis enamored with power and contemptuous of life, administering violence and death on a mass level, applying bureaucratic, Taylorized logic to dehumanized mass populations with icy cold detachment.*

So, when it comes to the overpopulation of elephants in some South African national parks, why do ecologists, government officials, park managers, hunters, and others advocate eco-fascist, final solution policies? Why do they urge the mass murder of beings renowned for their intelligence, sensitivity, and social complexity? If nations mobilize to send food to starving masses (perhaps allowing their populations to increase), why don't they go to the same lengths to address problems resulting from overpopulating animals? Why is the first and main solution to pick up a gun? Why aren't conservationists and park officials aggressively pursuing alternatives and taking extraordinary lengths to avoid violent responses? The clear answers lie in the speciesist devaluation of elephant lives, the elevation of human over nonhuman interests, and pressure from the powerful hunting lobbies and ivory trade.

Neo-Malthusian attitudes are clearly evident in the views of Dr. Hector Magome, David Mabunda Director of South African National Parks, in his recent [2005?] 2004 statement that he was "strongly leaning toward culling and we want the public to digest this hard fact." Similarly, Dr. Ian Whyte, elephant specialist at Kruger National Park, said, "No one likes killing elephants, but we have a responsibility to maintain biodiversity."

This is quintessential Malthusianism, where killing is dressed up as realism and utility rather than murder and wrong, and where ecology and ecosystems trump individuals and rights. Magome and Whyte posture as if they alone can penetrate through sentiment and illusion, that only they have the courage to advance the "realist" view

that in Kruger National Park it is necessary to kill *thousands* of elephants to protect biodiversity and forestall greater ecological problems in the future.

. The current final solution proposal in Kruger National Park is to kill 6,000 elephants. Of course, people don't just allow elephants to die, they hunt them, kill them, dismember them, eat them, use or store their ivory tusks, and exploit them for every possible resource they can strip from their bodies.

In fact, this attitude and policy is not only Malthusianism, *it is Nazism in pursuit of the final solution* to the "elephant problem." Consider the language used in a 2005 policy report, which states: "It is recommended that application of lethal means, specifically culling, be approved as part and parcel of a range of options for the management of elephant populations. The implementation of culling should be informed by the application of adaptive management principles, while also not excluding the application of and learning from other viable management options." With park bureaucrats negligent for not taking action long ago, and with their backs against the wall to take decisive action and declare open season on thousands of elephants, they reject the many nonviolent alternatives to killing elephants as "too costly and would take too much time to deal with an urgent problem."

Exactly how does this outlook differ from the methodical administration of death through the technological systems of Hitler's Germany? This is not "culling," it is a despicable type of genocide; it is an act akin to ethnic cleansing whereby one group systematically wipes out members of another group.

Scapegoating and Root Causes

"What gives man the right to kill an animal, often torture it, so that he can fill his belly with its flesh? We know now, as we have always known instinctively, that animals can suffer as much as human beings. Their emotions and their sensitivity are often stronger than those of a human being. Various philosophers and religious leaders tried to convince their disciples and followers that animals are nothing more than machines without a soul, without feelings. However, anyone who has ever lived with an animal be it a dog, a bird or even a mouse - knows that this theory is a brazen lie, invented to justify cruelty." Isaac Bashevis Singer

While there is much ado in government and conservation reports about elephant overpopulation in areas such as Kruger National Park, let's be clear that African elephants on the whole are an endangered species, and that any renewal of culling policies can revitalize the ivory trade and jeopardize their survival.

The elephant-human conflict is a microcosm of global problems and dynamics, of coming *resource wars* and *species struggles* over diminishing resources and a shrinking Earth in crisis. Malthus saw that resource shortages would bring humans into conflict with one another, but he didn't predict conflicts between animals and humans over scarce land and resources, creating situations where animals literally are fighting back. In Africa, India, and elsewhere, elephants, chimpanzees, and other species under attack are fighting back against human violence and encroachment. Like humans, they have complex minds and social structures, and a will to be free to live their lives in their natural environments as they see fit to choose. Elephants who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, brought on by killing of and separation from family members, grow up psychologically damaged and are more likely to

attack humans. In cases of "elephant aggression," one should not blame the victim, but rather examine the causes of the behavior. It is also quite possible some animals understand the threat humans pose to them, harbor anger towards them, and consciously strike out against them. Thus, in some ways, chimpanzees, elephants, and other animals are forming their own Animal Liberation Front, quite apart from radical human animal rights activists who go underground to attack animal exploiters. One can hardly expect them to win their freedom, however, without help from animal rights activists and an enlightened public.

Amidst complaints that elephants are trampling crops, damaging ecosystems, endangering and taking human lives, creating problems that should be solved by any means necessary, it is clear that elephants are being *scapegoated* for a problem they did not create and many critics say does not even exist. The Canadian sealing industry blames seals for depleting fish population, thereby providing an eco-fascist justification for the slaughter of over 300,000 baby seals every year [get details from Watson site]. But it is the fishermen, not the seals, who are depleting the fish. Similarly, African elephants are not responsible for ecological degradation and shrinking biodiversity -- human beings are. Elephants are blamed for damage wrought by humans in order to justify their slaughter, and thus are scapegoated like seals in Canada.

But *elephant predation is the inevitable result of human predation*, and people are blaming the victim. In reality, farmers, loggers, ranchers, hunters, and other commercial interests, buoyed by a growing human population, have destroyed and diminished natural habitats, such that roaming elephants inevitably come into contact and conflict with swelling human communities. As one analyst puts it, "In central Africa, large tracts of elephant habitat are threatened by slash-and-burn agriculture and by large commercial logging operations, while throughout Africa less than 20 per cent of elephant range is protected in parks and reserves. Many herds are now confined to isolated protected areas. As a result, when elephants try to follow traditional migration corridors through what was once forest or savannah, they are confronted with roads, fields, and villages. This inevitably leads to conflict with local people. Further conflict arises in instances when elephant populations grow and can no longer disperse naturally across their former range. This can lead to local overcrowding, as is the case in parts of southern Africa where there are more elephants than the environment can sustainably support. Elephants have found farmers' crops attractive as an alternative food source. The cost for a farmer in this instance is high: as elephants can eat up to 200kg of food every day, even a small herd can destroy a farm during one night's foraging. Additionally, livestock and property is sometimes lost. Human-elephant conflict can be fatal for both humans and elephants. Many wildlife authorities shoot animals that are harming humans and their property; local people also sometimes kill elephants in retaliation for attacks. In turn, elephants can also sometimes attack and maim people when their paths cross."

Thus, the blame game runs both ways, and the burden seems to fall on Homo sapiens. We can and should say that people steal from elephants and other species; that people endanger and in fact are immense lethal threats to elephant lives, families, and communities. Perhaps it is humans who should retreat and make room for elephants.

Thousands of elephants can be shot, but the real problems will remain. In the rush to demonize pachyderms, the social and historical context and root causes of species

conflicts and elephant overpopulation go unmentioned. An analysis of the myriad of problems plaguing Africa must begin with the destructive legacies of capitalism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. The unbroken dynamic of Western exploitation of Africa, from the 15th century to the present, had serious consequences in the form of ecological devastation, resource depletion, poverty, famine, political corruption of leaders, authoritarian government, violence, and genocide. Like Brazil, Latin America, and elsewhere, Africa is a classic case of *underdevelopment* – whereby an imperialist power willfully impoverishes an outpost or satellite nation, stealing its economic and natural resources, exploiting human labor power, and appropriating land is to grow food and cash crops for export rather than domestic consumption. Like a giant siphon or vacuum, corporations, imperialist nation states, and global financial and legal institutions have drained the resources, wealth, and health of Southern countries. Forces of underdevelopment transform nations that were independent, stable, and often relatively equal, peaceful, and prosperous, into a land afflicted with poverty, starvation, disease, gross inequality, violence, and a vastly diminished life span for its people.

Despite the decolonialization process that began in the 1960s, Western transnational corporations, legal structures such as the World Trade Organization, and institutions such as the IMF and World Bank maintained their stranglehold on Africa by providing loans attached with political strings and onerous debt obligations. Corrupt dictators serving Western interests ruled with an iron fist and lined their own pockets with the millions of dollars in loans and aid meant to alleviate the suffering of their people. Still draining resources from the poor to the rich, Western multinationals and banks force growth and profit imperatives onto Southern nations challenged to survive in a cutthroat global marketplace.

Thus, the exploitation of Africa by Western state and corporate powers has had a catastrophic impact of society and nature, proliferating suffering and spawning endless crises. Western domination remains as powerful as ever in post-apartheid South Africa, leaving the majority of people stranded in desperate conditions, and no matter what group governs, whether Left or Right, Black or White, they are subservient to foreign capital. As Leo Zeilig writes, "The ANC government ministers denounce the protesters as an 'enemy within,' but the real root of the discontent is neo-liberalism. No other country in Africa has embraced with such craven enthusiasm the agenda of privatisation and the free market. The resulting economic growth has meant considerable dividends for the rich and the middle class. The wealthy live behind their security gates -- shuttling between house and shopping malls. Nowadays, everything is done in the malls -- all social and consumer activity, including trips to the cinemas, restaurants and bars. This group, though predominately white, has been expanded by a new layer of black professionals ... The largely unchanging poverty of the poor and the working class is almost invisible in apartheid townships, and almost everywhere the interests of private business dominate government policy."

The devastation of the natural environment, the diminishment of wild spaces, the forces driving people to chop down trees and shoot down elephants, these dynamics are incomprehensible apart from the history of colonialism and underdevelopment. Of course, there are more immediate agents responsible for ecological disruption, such as implicate park managers. At Wangi Hwange National Park, for instance, park officials created waterholes for tourists flocking to the area, but they also became a year round habitat for elephants and other animals, which led to major changes in

vegetation and the balance of species in the area. At Kruger National Park, flawed policies such as water point provision *as well as culling* have upset natural mechanisms of population regulation, artificially inflating their numbers out of balance with the environment. Rather than a solution to elephant overpopulation, culling and slaughter have helped to cause it. "Removing elephants has an ecological impact too: Decimation of elephant populations by the ivory trade, especially the huge volumes trafficked in the 1800s, removed elephants over wide areas and had cascading impacts on vegetation and other species allowing tree species, such as marula and various acacias, to colonize and become established in a way that may have been unusual in ecological time."

According to many critics, further culling will only worsen the ecological problems such senseless slaughter tries to avoid. "Removing elephants has an ecological impact too:

Moreover, many critics question the root assumption and justification for culling, by emphasizing the lack of evidence for the claim elephants are damaging environments and biodiversity. As one critic writes, "Despite decades of draconian population management, there is little reliable evidence of the outcomes of elephant-habitat interactions, with respect to other species and to elephants themselves. However, amidst this uncertainty, there is no evidence to support a *reasonable* expectation of imminent, irreversible damage to biodiversity, despite SANParks' claims to the contrary. Examples often given within South Africa of elephants' catastrophic damage to ecosystems are, in fact, myths. Tsavo National Park in Kenya was not destroyed (despite misleading reports to the contrary) and remains dynamic, with diverse and productive plant and wildlife communities." In comparison go some other conservation areas, the report states, "Kruger Park is densely covered in bush ...none of the 1,922 plant species in the Kruger Park are endangered, nor are any of the plant communities under threat." It concludes that "there is little reason to fear that biodiversity is under imminent risk in Kruger NP ... and every reason to believe that imaginative elephant management approaches can result in population mechanisms that will promote heterogeneity within the Park and actually increase biodiversity in the longer term."

In searching for root causes of environmental destruction, human-animal conflicts, and elephant overpopulation in some areas, we must also point a critical figure at the destructive effects of thousands of unregulated game farming and ranching industries operating in South Africa. Universally, whether speaking of elephants or deer, one of the main justifications hunters offer for their bloodsport is that it promotes ecological balance by reducing excess population numbers. Numerous critics have pointed out, however, that hunting has the opposite effect. As Michele Pickover explains, hunters in South Africa disrupt ecological balance and cause natural selection in reverse, as "they produce favoured species at the expense of the less favoured, overstock to keep up with demand, exterminate large predators and severely cull small ones ... feed artificially, manipulate habitat as ordinary farmers do, introduce non-indigenous species and strains, and genetically manipulate wild animals." Game farming disrupts natural selection and genetics as it destroys habitat; the land possessed by private individuals is "alternated and manipulated intensively, and this in turn has detrimental effects on the diversity and abundance of many bird species, small mammals and reptiles that depend on bush and forest habitats. The biological and conservation value of privately owned commercial ranches are therefore very limited."

Thus, if governmental agencies and conservation organizations are truly interested in protecting habits and species, *it would seem more logical to target agriculture, commercial logging, game farming, park mismanagement, and hunting rather than elephants.* Culling elephants is a hideous case of blaming the victim. But logic matters little where politics prevails over "science" and special interest groups overwhelm the larger good of humans, animals, and the environment.

If the sole focus is on economics rather than ethics, on what benefits humans not animals, it is crucial to emphasize that *there is far more economic value and gain in eco-tourism than animal farming and sport hunting.* "Value can be added more effectively to wildlife existence values through tourism, and related employment and service industries supporting the PA and wildlife conservation, rather than treating the protected area as a farm for delivering animal products ... revenue generation from tourism is significantly greater than from 'cropping' of wildlife, and photo-tourism offers greater opportunities for investment and added value than consumptive utilization, which is limited by the "offtake-determined threshold of revenues."

In other words, communities will benefit in the long-term far more when Westerns come to shoot elephants with a camera rather than a gun. Given Western sentiments, "the potential risks to South Africa's tourism industry if elephant culling is resumed are enormous; in 2002 tourism earned South Africa R72.5 billion (US\$7.2billion) in revenue (7.1% of GDP) and generated 1.15 million jobs." Consequently, it is important that animal advocacy groups undertake education campaigns, whereby they demonstrate to people that the presence of elephants in their locale is an advantage not a liability.

In South Africa they think they can get away with having both. Eco-tourism is not the only or perfect solution to the problem of elephant culling. First, although profits from eco-tourism often have enriched only private owners and managers rather than local communities, that does not undermine the fact of a far greater economic potential of eco-tourism over canned hunting and the ivory trade. The promise of eco-tourism can only be realized with a general democratization process that overthrows corrupt politicians and places power directly in the hands of community members themselves, a process necessary for meaningful change of any kind (see below). Second, eco-tourism is itself potentially unsustainable and ecologically damaging, to the degree, ironically, it is a success and brings in large numbers of tourists. In vast areas such as the African savannah, however, unlike a relatively small national park such as Yellowstone in the US, eco-tourism could be managed to have a minimal or negligible negative impact on the environment. Third, some communities promoting eco-tourism also sanction "sustainable" killing of elephants, whereas the moral ideal certainly is to pursue non-violent forms of funding. Finally, animal rights advocates such as myself, who strive to awaken people to recognizing the intrinsic value of animals, have problems with viewing animals as resources, commodities, or means to human ends in any way, whether through canned hunts or eco-tourism. If, however, the predilection of South Africans (at least for now) is to view elephants as resources to alleviate their economic plight, then it is far better they instrumentalize elephants for their worth as living beings rather than dismembered parts. Still an objectification of elephants, eco-tourism nonetheless is far more sane and humane.

Eco-tourism can help mitigate or dissolve the conflict between people and elephants, enable people to see them in more positive terms, and possibly help lay the groundwork for the emergence of an animal rights sensibility that respects elephants for their intrinsic value and place in the world, quite apart from any human purpose or function. The animal rights perspective rejects the oxymoronic “sustainable use” and “responsible hunting” policies promoted by speciesist conservationists and animal welfare groups such as the World Wildlife Fund it is not an animal welfare organization – it is a pro-utilisation conservation organisation. It champions basic rights of animals, including the right to live, socialize, and play without interference from human beings. A non-utilitarian logic, animal rights forbids any use of animals in any way that violates their rights and intrinsic value and exploits them for human benefit. This ethic is crucial to the moral evolution process humans so desperately need at this critical juncture in their history, and it opens the way to a profoundly richer and deeper human relation to the natural world.

I conclude that the argument for culling elephants fails on ethical, ecological, and economic grounds, and leaving no justification for it whatsoever. Culling is neither necessary, nor beneficial, except to the hunting, gaming, and ivory trade industries. The cruel and violent massacre of elephant herds is the short-term pseudo-solution to a problem that requires long term vision and radical institutional and conceptual modes of change.

Commonalities of Oppression and Total Liberation

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” Nelson Mandela

“South Africa has a history of resorting to violence as a means of solving problems. So when it comes to the issue of elephant management in national parks there is a lot of pressure on authorities by vested interest groups who want to see elephants killed for selfish purposes. We should resist this pressure and, in our treatment of wildlife, we should strive to embody the more humane values that underpin the new South Africa.” Michele Pickover, South African animal rights activist

“Whatever decision you take, don't forget us people who encounter elephants every day.” Michael Masukule, leader of a community adjacent to Kruger National Park

“As long as human beings will go on shedding the blood of animals, there will never be any peace. There is only one little step from killing animals to creating gas chambers a la Hitler and concentration camps a la Stalin . . . all such deeds are done in the name of 'social justice'. There will be no justice as long as man will stand with a knife or with a gun and destroy those who are weaker than he is. “Isaac Bashevis Singer

“I truly believe that animal welfare is human welfare. In protecting animals, we ensure our own survival.” Maneka Gandhi

Afflicted by violence, overpopulation, hunger, and shortages of water and land, South Africa mirrors the crises plaguing much of the world. Human beings are at war with one another in large part because they are at war with other species and the earth; the devastation societies inflict upon other species and nature rebound with equally devastating effects on human societies. The human-elephant conflict is just

one of many indicators of a world out of joint, of a planet plagued by such egregious problems that they can only be solved by revolutionary change, not tepid reforms; by systemic and holistic analysis, not XX; by long-term, not short-term vision.

In South Africa and elsewhere, the social-ecological crisis human beings face must be examined in a deep and searching way – an approach that identifies root causes not superficial effects; searches for long-term solutions not quick, pseudo-fixes; and promotes paradigm shifts in thinking rather than evoking the erroneous concepts and worldviews that spawn and perpetuate catastrophes. Trying to solve the “elephant overpopulation problem” with guns, violence, and terrorism exemplifies the alienated and destructive consciousness humankind desperately needs to supersede if future generations will have a life that is not, in Hobbes’ famous words, “short, brutish, and nasty” (Hobbes)

No attempt to understand and resolve the complex problems confronting South Africa will be adequate if detached from a systemic critique of capitalism and imperialism. A radical approach seeks to illuminate the intricate connections between social and environmental problems. As cogently demonstrated by Murray Bookchin, the founder of social ecology, ecological problems stem from social problems, and thereby require social solutions. One cannot change destructive environmental policies without changing the institutions and power systems that cause, benefit from, and sustain them. Corporate destruction of nature on a global scale is enabled by asymmetrical and hierarchical social relations, whereby corporate powers appropriate the political, legal, and military system and use it to bolster and defend their exploitation of nature.

Human, animal, and environmental exploitation are tightly interconnected, such that no one form of exploitation can be abolished without ending the others. It is well understood, for instance, that human population rates drop where people are more educated and women have more rights. Also, where people are not desperately poor, they have no economic need to cut down trees or poach animals. If elephant killing is profitable, we need to eliminate economic incentives to kill by addressing the root causes of poverty that make the profits from actions like poaching alluring to the poor. In a social milieu rife with poverty, joblessness, hunger, violence, and desperation, people do what they must to survive, and will scrutinize their surroundings in purely instrumental terms. They consequently will see elephants as threats, and far more useful dead than alive. If it’s between a person surviving and elephant’s life, the elephant will lose every time. The economic logic has to shift in favor of protecting and caring for elephants rather than killing them; conversely, states must level – and enforce – stiff fines and sentences against poachers, nullifying the profit motive for killing.

An effective struggle for animal rights, then, means tackling issues such as poverty, class, political corruption, and ultimately the inequalities created by transnational corporations and globalization. Any viable approach to save animals must also promote greater democracy such that decisions are not made by a corrupt few in positions of power, but by entire communities using democratic decision making procedures. Animal rights and environmental advocates who are misanthropic, single issue in vision, and anti-alliance formation, simply work against their own goals and objectives. So long as rulers control the social, political, and economic structures of a country, its animals and environment will suffer too. The protracted dictatorship of Mobutu Sese-Soko, for instance, provoked civil wars that since 1968 cost the lives

of 3.9 million people, as he pillaged the nation's natural resources for profit and funding his armies. These kinds of inseparable social/ecological problems are endemic to social hierarchies, and they cannot be eliminated except through democratization at every level.

Conversely, human rights advocates need to comprehend the myriad of social and ecological problems that stem from animal exploitation. These problems include well-documented relations between violence toward animals and violence toward humans in families where there is domestic abuse and society at large, where serial killers unleash the same violent furies against humans that they once inflicted on animals. In their quest to develop biological and chemical agents to assassinate their enemies, mad scientists in the service of the former apartheid state tested their prototypes on animals. Human beings would never have been put in such grave danger were animals not held in even more contempt and a strong anti-vivisection movement existed.

There are important parallels of speciesism to racism and sexism in the elevation of male rationality to the touchstone for judging moral worth. The same arguments European colonialists used to justify exploiting Africans – that they were less than human and inferior to white Europeans in ability to reason – are the very same justifications humans use to exploit, consume, and kill animals. There is undoubtedly a significant link between animal exploitation and human exploitation, in that speciesist arguments were adapted to underpin racism and are parallel as well to patriarchal ideology that women are emotional creatures incapable of advanced reasoning. Indeed, from the 1860s through the 1930s, numerous cities such as Paris, London, Hamburg, Barcelona, and New York, opened new exhibits -- ‘human zoos’ -- which displayed indigenous peoples (Africans, Samoans, and others) in cages, often semi-nude or nude, as living trophies of white European superiority over “primitive” dark cultures. With a mixture of fascination and revulsion, tens of millions of people gawked “savage” and “exotic” peoples, as well as entire “Negro villages,” in their first and lasting impression of the colonial Other. Human zoos, of course, would not have been possible without the prior existence of animal zoos, which themselves were built for colonialists to display wild animals in a similar spectacle of human supremacy and power over nature. Thus, institutions first used to exploit animals were adapted to exploit human beings, framing indigenous peoples as sub-human animals. With their large worldwide audience, zoos, in fact, were important institutions for the construction and dissemination of racist ideologies, eugenics, and Social Darwinism, thereby legitimating colonialism as just and right, as the path to Progress. Few people of any kind denounced human zoos. The sense of superiority was impossible without an Other marked as inferior. Anthropology and the social sciences were accomplices to this enterprise, as racist theories became increasingly influential. The systematic extermination of millions of Jews and others by the Nazis was inspired, informed, and justified by racist theories and “might is right” worldviews, such as zoos helped to construct and bring to a mass audience. Indeed, there is a deeper and more material connection between speciesism and racism, animal and human exploitation, in that the mass killing employed in concentration camps was modeled on techniques that originated in slaughterhouses.

Moreover, the confinement and filling of billions of animals in factory farm systems have a profound negative impact on the environment and thus on human life. To provide grazing land for cattle, animal agriculture industries destroy habitats and rainforests and habitats, and spread desertification. The release of carbon dioxide

from cut forests, use of fertilizers, and release of methane gas from billions of cattle are major causes of ozone deterioration and global warming. The global meat production system consumes enormous quantities of land and water, in world where both resources are scarce. Moreover, in the shift from food to feed production, most crops are grown for animal feed rather than human food, wasting precious food resources.

This last example of how exploiting animals affects human interests ought to be particularly poignant in the context of Africa as a whole, for it raises the specter of famine. One of the leading causes of world hunger, in fact, is animal agriculture and meat consumption, whereby most of the world's land, water, and crops are fed to animals, who are fattened and slaughtered for human consumption. Besides the toll this system takes on animals and the environment, and its impact on human health, it is an incredibly inefficient use of scarce land and water resources. As Jeremy Rifkin explains,

"People go hungry because much of arable land is used to grow feed grain for animals rather than people. In the US, 157 million tons of cereals, legumes and vegetable protein – all suitable for human consumption – is fed to livestock to produce just 28 million tons of animal protein in the form of meat.

In developing countries, using land to create an artificial food chain has resulted in misery for hundreds of millions of people. An acre of cereal produces five times more protein than an acre used for meat production; legumes such as beans, peas and lentils can produce 10 times more protein and, in the case of soya, 30 times more

Despite the rich diversity of foods found all over the world, one third of its population does not have enough to eat. Today, hunger is a massive problem in many parts of Africa, Asia and South America and the future is not looking good. The global population is set to rise from 6.1 billion (2002) to 9.3 billion by 2050 and Worldwatch reports forecast severe global food shortages leading to famine on an unprecedented scale.

This misery is partly a direct result of our desire to eat meat. Children in the developing world starve next to fields of food destined for export as animal feed, to support the meat-hungry cultures of the rich world. While millions die, one third of the world's grain production is fed to farmed animals in rich countries....

If animal farming were to stop and we were to use the land to grow grain to feed ourselves, we could feed every single person on this planet. Consuming crops directly - rather than feeding them to animals and then eating animals - is a far more efficient way to feed the world."

By squandering the vast bulk of land and water resources, resources that could produce far greater quantities of nutrient rich food in a plant-based agriculture, the global meat culture directly contributes to world hunger. Moreover, the global meat exacerbates inequality and poverty among the world's peoples, as resources from impoverished Southern nations flow to wealthy Northern nations.

The human consequences of the global shift from food to feed production were dramatically evident in 1984, when thousands of Ethiopians were dying of famine each day. The problem was not that Ethiopia had no viable land on which to grow crops and feed its people, but that it was using millions of acres of land to produce

linseed cake, cottonseed cake, and rapeseed meal for livestock feed to export to Europe. Rifkin notes the perverse irony of such an irrational and unsustainable system of food production: "Around six billion people share the planet, one quarter in the rich north and three quarters in the poor south. While people in rich countries diet because they eat too much, many in the developing world do not have enough food simply to ensure their bodies work properly and stay alive."

And yet, despite the overwhelming, irrefutable fact of the immense destructive power (to humans, animals, and the earth alike) of the global meat industries, institutions such as the World Hunger Organization, IMF, and World Bank promote the dangerous myth that factory farming of animals is the best way to feed a hungry world. In contexts such as this, one can recognize the larger significance of vegetarianism and veganism – not only as health and personal growth movements, but also as a *social justice movement*. This is so because they contribute positively to XX. Throughout the world, vegetarian and vegan organizations promote the message of peace, non-violence, equality, justice, human and animal rights, respect for life, and harmonization of society with itself and in relation to the natural world.

The great tragedy of famine is clearly not rooted in any "natural" causes such as scarcity, but rather the socio-economic causes of meat-based agriculture, the use of land to export cash crops to the Western world rather than feed domestic populations, the domination of transnational corporations and global banking institutions, and the corruption of national rulers. Similarly, African men, women, and children would not be dying from AIDS in such great numbers if western pharmaceutical corporations did not refuse to release generic patents so that developing countries like Africa could produce their own cheap treatment.

Given just a few example of the devastating effect of animal exploitation on the human world, to complain -- even in the setting of Africa burdened with so much suffering and death caused by AIDS, famine, poverty, violence, and genocide – that animal rights activists care more about animals than humans, are elitists, or have misplaced empathies and priorities is to miss the point entirely. Such a dismissive reaction represents a moral failure to respond to the enormity of animal suffering and an intellectual failure to understand the vast implications of the human attempt to subjugate, colonize, plunder the earth and all its species. Besides the speciesist assumption that animal suffering does not warrant a serious response, this objection proceeds from an atomistic outlook unable to see the connections between animal exploitation, environmental destruction, patriarchy, racism, violence, and world hunger. The human exploitation of animals causes profound social and environmental problems for the human world itself, such that we should stop treating animal rights as a trivial issue trivial to furthering human rights.

Truly, Africa is a continent overwhelmed with human suffering that in large part stems from European imperialism as well as the neo-imperialism of predatory multinational corporations. But the answer to human victimization does not lie in victimizing animals for short term benefits, while blind to long-term consequences of exploiting other species. It is crucial to grasp the economic and political roots of the problems afflicting Africa, from within a global context, while also understanding how different forms of oppression – such as racism, sexism, and speciesism – overlap, interrelate, and reinforce one another.

The Struggle for Universal Rights and Democracy

"Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all." Nelson Mandela

"The fate of wild animals lies in the hands of ordinary people." Michele Pickover

"As long as human beings will go on shedding the blood of animals, there will never be any peace. There is only one little step from killing animals to creating gas chambers a la Hitler and concentration camps a la Stalin . . . all such deeds are done in the name of 'social justice'. There will be no justice as long as man will stand with a knife or with a gun and destroy those who are weaker than he is. "Isaac Bashevis Singer

"One day we will realize that elephants cannot be reduced to the value of their teeth. Elephants are and will always be synonymous with the greatness of Africa. The future of African elephants will depend on tolerance with people and greater commitment to devoting land for elephants." Dr. Paula Kahumbu

"South Africa has a history of resorting to violence as a means of solving problems. So when it comes to the issue of elephant management in national parks there is a lot of pressure on authorities by vested interest groups who want to see elephants killed for selfish purposes. We should resist this pressure and, in our treatment of wildlife, we should strive to embody the more humane values that underpin the new South Africa". Michele Pickover

Human and animal liberation movements are inseparable, such that none can be free until all are free. Whereas people in South Africa and around the globe cannot develop peaceful, humane, and sustainable societies so long as they violently exploit animals (and thereby disrupt the environment in profound ways), so animals cannot be freed from slavery without profound social and psychological changes in human societies. The social changes do not? entail mere reforms such as "government accountability," but rather dismantling the system of transnational capitalism and its client states that profit from the exploitation of people, animals, and the earth. Throughout the globe, people need to build new societies based on decentralization, democratization, ecology, and values other than profit and domination.

Some groups have taken initiative in this area, albeit with speciesist values, objectifying language, and promotion of "sustainable" elephant hunting. In African countries such as Namibia, the World Wildlife Fund claims to be successfully teaching rural communities how to prosper through "sustainable natural resource management," which includes "sale of thatching grass and crafts, tourist concessions, and revenues from trophy hunting." Working with government and teachers to implement new curricula, the ultimate goal of their Environmental Education program is "to provide the knowledge to use natural resources with an eye to the future. Planting trees for fuel and timber, preventing water-borne and other diseases, countering soil erosion and pollution, and tapping into indigenous knowledge to maintain a healthy environment." Another group provided poachers with alternative livelihoods, by training them to become carpenters, and working with a sewing cooperative they launched in another village.

But there is no guarantee that villagers – anthropocentric as anyone else – would ultimately treat animals with any more respect than big government and "conservation" organizations. Decentralized human politics may mean nothing more

for animals than a matter of the policies of many people killing them rather than a few, the democratization of human supremacism. Poaching and trafficking in endangered species may indeed be reduced where democratic communities manage and protect the precious "assets" in their "bank," but problems such as corruption and overpopulation may not significantly change the situation. The question who gains most by the profits of killing animals is a utilitarian issue that is irrelevant if animals have rights. In this case, however, might makes right.

It is not enough to democratize power, if one does nothing but redistribute powers to exploit and kill. One must change the instrumentalist mindset itself, transform sensibilities that see animals as nothing but resources for human use, provoke profound changes in human identity, and promote respect for all life and the earth.

Vast social, political, and economic changes by themselves are inadequate, unless accompanied by equally profound psychological changes -- a *Copernican revolution* in human ethics and being, whereby people realize that they belong to the earth, and the earth does not belong to them. Consequently, people can learn to respect the earth and other species for their intrinsic value, not as a resource for their use and benefit, and take their rightful place as citizens within a vast biocommunity where they have rights as well as profound responsibilities toward the earth and all life. But, to turn the issue around again, such a profound psychological transformation is not enough to transform the global crisis if not coupled with radical social transformation.

