

Schools, Speciesism, and Hidden Curricula: The Role of Critical Pedagogy for Humane Education Futures

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Abstract

This article discusses approaches to educational theory and practice, influenced by moral philosophy, critical pedagogy and ecofeminist social analysis, that build on an expanded moral sphere also including non-human species. The theoretical framework is reflected against 1) the humane education approach, contextualising the human-animal relation within a broader framework of social justice; and 2) empirical material from a pilot study, focusing on how this relation is dealt with within a Swedish primary school. A Causal Layered Analysis is proposed as a platform from which to explore educational futures encompassing the human-animal relation, and strategies for developing humane curricula are discussed.

Keywords: *animal objectification, anthropocentrism, critical pedagogy, hidden curricula, humane education, speciesism.*

Bringing the Human-animal Relation into Education Research

The education discipline as we know it today recognises the importance of issues related to class, race, gender, and groups of human minorities, as well as the importance of addressing problems of unequal power relations with regard to these categories. Such approaches are undeniably crucial for the role of education today, but from a critical perspective it can also be argued that they have effects of polarisation and exclu-

sion of yet another category from the education discourse - non-human animals.¹ Although education researchers and practitioners are often quick to recognise the relevance and interests of various subordinated groups in society, the problems related to the situation of other species than our own have been largely ignored. This article challenges the current order of anthropocentrism, human-centredness in education, and explores the rationales for an alternative approach to values educational research and practice that is more inclusive in character.

The anthropocentric tendency is not restricted to the education sciences. The entire divide between the natural and social sciences reflects a tradition according to which social science researchers usually leave the study of animals to the natural science domain. Humans and animals are thus normally studied within separate discourses, in separate terminology, and within separate value systems. Moreover, social scientists tend to uncritically adopt a view of animals that has been constructed by the natural sciences. This order has been criticised by the anthropologist and philosopher Barbara Noske (1997), who holds that it maintains a constructed subject-object relation between humans and other animals. The establishing of such a subject-object relation risks nurturing a reductionistic view of other species, and overlooking human-animal continuities which may spark an ethical challenge to our tendency to view animals in society as commodities, renewable natural resources, production units, or research 'models' for human diseases. We have a multitude of mental strategies for keeping intact the human-animal boundary we have constructed, and for legitimating our continuous utilisation of other species for our own benefit. In so doing, the value we assign to animals is instrumental rather than intrinsic: We relate to them in accordance with their usefulness for us, rather than as beings living for their own sake and with their own purposes.

The scientific order supporting an anthropocentric worldview is, however, being called into question: The interdisciplinary area of *anthrozoology*² has been established as the scientific study of human-animal relations. There are several research societies and centres devoted to the study of animals in society³, and journals such as *Anthrozoos* (ISAZ 2002) and *Society & Animals* (PsyETA 2003b) deal with theoretical and empirical perspectives on anthrozoological issues. One of the most recent contributions to the field may be the establishment of an *Animals and Society* section of the American Sociological Association (Alger 2003). These initiatives express a growing awareness of the relevance of human-animal studies to social science research. There are many reasons for edu-

cation science to integrate anthrozoological perspectives as well.⁴ The school is part of a societal order in which objectification of animals to a large extent is socially accepted. The routine exercising of violence toward animals for consumption, entertainment, experimental, and a multitude of other purposes, often takes place in institutionalised forms. When a school engages, for instance, in animal experimentation for educational purposes, or allows representatives of the animal industries to display their company names or logotypes in the school's premises, it does not only as an authority legitimate the acceptability of oppressive human-animal domination structures, but also serves to sustain and reproduce a worldview of animal objectification in which the socialisation of children and youth to uncritically embrace such a view as "normal", "natural" or "inevitable" plays an important part. There are several problematic implications that should be highlighted here. Regarding the situation of animals, ethical problems emerge when humans subject animals to suffering or other forms of harm. Another problem concerns the impact harmful treatment of animals has on the human being: An emotional desensitisation process may be part of the short- and long-term consequences for the harm-inflicting individual (Capaldo 2002, Solot & Arluke 1997).

The situation also accommodates possibilities of transformation and change. Since the school is viewed in this article as an active agent in reproduction processes, rather than just passively reflecting established structures and worldviews, the school has a potential to critically re-assess its own mediation of normative value messages concerning the human-animal relation and to change its ways of dealing with these. How this may be accomplished in a manner sustainable for both humans and animals will be explored in the next sections. The discussion that follows is based on two presumptions of ontological character: 1) The human-animal relation is not predetermined; neither by force of a 'natural order' nor of a religious or other form of authority. It lies entirely within the control of human beings to change this relation. 2) This article does not embrace the

Cartesian view on animals as biological automata, but considers animals as individual, sentient beings whose situation matters to them.

A Place for Animal Ethics in the School Context

In order to justify the ethical boundary between humans and animals and our continuous utilisation of them for our own ends, we need to define which individuals are entitled to moral status, and on what grounds: We thus need to pinpoint what *morally relevant* differences exist between humans and animals. The differences we tend to come up with, such as rationality, self-awareness, linguistic ability or moral agency, are usually favourable to humans. However, they also bring about a problem of inconsistency: Whatever ability no animal seems to possess, not all human beings possess it either. Or to put it in another way: Abilities that are possessed by all human beings are usually possessed by at least some other species as well. We are then facing a situation where we *either* have to exclude some members of the human species from our sphere of moral concern, such as infants or severely mentally retarded people, or expand this sphere to include at least some animals, such as primates (Singer 1999). If we reject this argumentation and keep holding on to an absolute human-animal ethical boundary on the sole basis of an idea of human superiority, we display speciesist⁵ attitudes. Within moral philosophy, theories have been developed on non-speciesist grounds that ascribe moral status to animals. Two examples are utilitarianism and rights theories. These regard the traits of having *interests*⁶ (Singer 1999) and being a *subject of a life*⁷ (Regan 1999), respectively, as the relevant criteria for moral concern.

In education, value related messages may be mediated as explicit elements of curricula and in other formally acknowledged manners, or more implicitly, as part of the so-called 'hidden curriculum' of schools. In much the same manner as a hidden curriculum may convey racist or sexist prejudices, it may be found to

contain speciesist components (Martin 2001). Hidden curricula of speciesist character are not likely to problematise the philosophical issues that introduced this section, and thus enforce animal objectification on diffuse, arbitrary grounds. Some schools do, however, seem to initiate discussions on animal ethics, since this is a subject that seems to engage many young people today. In Sweden, such discussions have recently been encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture, which has produced discussion material on animal ethics aimed at upper secondary school students and teachers (Jordbruksdepartementet 2002). If, however, schools adhere to the subtle messages within the directions laid out by this material, the human-animal relation is likely to be dealt with in isolation; disconnected from many other issues that are ascribed primary concern in values education and shape our understanding of what this area is about. Moreover, the discussions on human-animal relations will probably be framed within a fundamentally anthropocentric and value hierarchical discourse according to which the human species is the yardstick against which all other species are measured and valued.

There are alternative approaches to conceptualising the human-animal relation in a way that locates it in a wider societal context, in which its links with and relevance to other values education issues, such as human rights, equality, and sustainable development, appear. Such approaches make animal ethics a part of a more holistic view of patterns of oppression and exclusion in society, and contribute with new perspectives to our collective understanding of values educational practice and research. The following section outlines a proposal for a theoretical basis of such an approach.

Expanding the Scope of Critical Pedagogy

To shed light on the human-animal relation in an educational context, schools must critically scrutinise their own hidden curricula with regard to these issues. Such an approach

implies formulating and analysing alternative worldviews to the normativity surrounding the situation of animals in our society. Although critical pedagogy does not explicitly recognise animals as part of its emancipation aims, critical pedagogy will form a general framework for my discussion, since it seems reasonable that a critical theory of education has as its core the inclusion, not exclusion, of oppressed categories. Further, a critical theory of education incorporating the human-animal relation will, as I see it, not differ in any vital manner from its basic ideas on which the aim of human emancipation is grounded; ideas characterised by a wish to make the educational system act against oppression and injustice (Masschelein 1998). An important component is to view educational activities as intimately linked to ethics and power relations. These are located within a wider political framework, which means that teachers must recognise how different discourses provide students with different ethical references which structure their relations with the rest of society. Recognition of hidden curricula, resistance against dominating and oppressive structures, as well as efforts to change the situation of subordinated groups in society through critical awareness and active citizenship education are all crucial elements of a critical theory of education, behind which the school has a potential to become a driving force (Giroux 1983, 1997).

One view of critical pedagogy shares with ecofeminism the idea of a common ideological basis for different expressions of dominance. In this sense, not only humans but the ecosystem as such, is part of a pattern of oppression (Giroux 1997). Ecofeminist philosophy, which has been claimed to have its origin in the Frankfurt School version of critical theory (Warren 2000), is based on the idea that there are important links between ideologies that discriminate on the basis of, for instance, sex, race, and class, and ideologies that sanction exploitation of nature (Sturgeon 1997). These ideologies express themselves within oppressive societal structures based on fundamental notions, values and attitudes that explain, sustain and legitimate relations of dominance and subordi-

nation in society. Oppressive structures comprise value hierarchical thinking and value dualistic categories (such as man/woman, human/animal, reason/emotion, culture/nature), power relationships, and privileges. An expression of this way of thinking is that the exploitation of nature has been legitimated by human beings' superior capacity to reason; something that has been regarded as a primarily male capacity (Warren 2000). Ecofeminism thus makes explicit the link between an androcentric (male-centred) and an anthropocentric (human-centred) worldview, and according to this analysis, the human-animal relation is part of a wider pattern of dominance, subjugation and exploitation in society. These connections have been explored further by a number of researchers. Congruities between speciesism and sexism have been examined by, for instance, Adams (1990); between speciesism and class subordination by Noske (1997); and between speciesism and racism by Spiegel (1996). Scholars such as Nibert (2002) and Patterson (2002) have also contributed to this research.

Kahn (2003) links environmental and critical education in his outline of recent movements and obstacles to the formation of a radical ecopedagogy. Ecopedagogy goes beyond conventional environmental education as it involves a wider awareness of how to be in the world. Related to this idea is the importance of acting collaboratively and non-anthropocentrically with a diversity of others, having an openness toward different knowledge systems, involving a critical understanding in our ethics, and constantly integrating our own life practices with our ethical responsibility to act on behalf of the world. Kahn suggests that animal liberation and environmental movements must join forces, and expand their reach to include the fight for social justice, in order to transform curricula into challenging anthropocentric and technocratic paradigms. An environmental education discourse must, however, avoid reinforcing the human/animal and culture/nature dichotomies; dichotomies I would describe as the idea that "the environment" and "nature" is something located outside of ourselves, where-

as other species are assumed to be part of it; and that "nature" is something "out there" for us to explore or discover, rather than a construct. Animal, environmental, and other issues of social justice should be embodied within education on equal terms and in an integrated fashion, since they are intimately interlinked.

Locating the human-animal relation within a wider conceptual framework of values education such as proposed above, by a critical pedagogical approach informed by an analysis of the similar fundamentals, dynamics and strategies uniting different manifestations of exploitation, increases our possibilities of revealing and challenging a speciesist hidden curriculum; not only recognising it just to substitute it for a new one. With these tools, a values education based on genuine inclusion and non-violence may be shaped; a values education that can be an empowering invitation for students to actively participate in changing society itself. As an example of a concrete approach to values education based on these ideas, the basic principles of humane education will be presented below.

Humane Education: A Holistic Approach to Values Education

Humane education (HE) is an innovative teaching and learning process that supports students in their development of empathy, responsibility, critical thinking, and active citizenship. HE can contribute greatly to the role that education must take in promoting compassion and respect for "the other", in the broadest sense of the word. HE integrates human beings' relation with animals, the environment, and other people, in order to challenge and prevent violence, exploitation, oppression, and negative stereotyping of other people as well as of animals. HE also explores interconnections between these issues at local as well as global levels (Selby 1995). Zoe Weil, one of the founders of the organisation International Institute for Humane Education, which in affiliation with Cambridge College has established a Master's programme in humane education, describes the fundamental ideas behind HE as follows,

Humane education has become a holistic and comprehensive movement that draws connections between human rights, animal protection and environmental preservation. It is a field of study and method of teaching that examines what is happening on our planet, from human slavery to animal exploitation; from globalization to ecological degradation; from media monopolies to cultural ideologies. It explores how we might live with compassion and respect for everyone: not just our friends, neighbors and classmates, but all people; not just our companion dogs and cats, but all animals; not just our school and home environment, but also the earth itself, our ultimate home. It invites students to envision creative solutions and to take individual action, so that their life choices can improve the world. (Weil 2002:19)

Four broad aims have been identified for HE: The development of a life-affirming ethic; consciousness of how humans, animals and nature are interconnected and mutually interdependent on each other; consciousness about different value systems and a critical discernment with regard to these; and engagement in democratic principles and processes in which active citizenship is central (Selby 1995). Empowering students to realise that their life style choices matter, and can contribute to improving the life of somebody else or the environment, is another important element in HE. In the classroom HE emphasises, for instance, dialogue; the experiences and perspectives each student brings into the learning process, curiosity, interaction, participation, and self-esteem. Letting students experience the content of their education is as important as textbook studies and other traditional learning methods. Examples of HE inspired learning activities can be to compare different consumption products and evaluate them on the basis of their impact on the environment, human beings and animals; or to analyse learning materials produced by the animal industry in comparison with materials from animal rights and animal welfare organisations. Other HE topics may include rainforest protection, consequences of genetic engineering, alternatives to animal experiments in education, and the impact of a plant-based diet versus a meat and dairy-based diet on animal, environment, development and health

issues, to name just a few examples. HE education in its many forms can be carried out as a subject in its own right, or be integrated into other subjects.

As I see it, one of the main assets of HE is its potential as a tool that allows us to conceptualise, and make explicit, speciesist hidden curricula in schools. Due to the normativity that issues of animal objectification are usually embedded in, most of us do not have our mindsets tuned into critically detecting the power structures and value systems that enforce them. At this point, speciesist issues differ in character from issues of sexism and racism, which we are now often attentive to with regard to the mediation of implicit value related messages in the school context. Special efforts may therefore be required from educators in order to raise and shed light on the complexities and problems involved when dealing with the human-animal relation in values education. Shifting the focus from dealing with this relation as a subjective moral position, to dealing with it as a part of a wider context of social justice - and as such, as a topic of our common responsibility - may not be easily accomplished for educators who themselves may have been socialised into a human-animal relation discourse in which animal objectification is normalised and naturalised; especially in a societal and educational structure that still works to uphold this discourse. Under such conditions, HE may fulfil a particularly important purpose to raise awareness about the problems involved. In the USA and in England, HE is carried out as formal as well as non-formal education up to university level. Non-formal education is carried out by a number of HE specialised NGOs that lecture and inform in schools at different levels; in the form of classroom teaching as well as teacher training activities. At present, 13 US federal states have legislated about HE programmes in school. In California, the establishment of a HE charter school is currently being planned (Antoncic 2003). South Africa will be the first country in the world to include HE in its revised national curriculum due to come into effect in 2004 (The Humane Education Trust 2003).

Humane education, in terms of a critical

pedagogy sensitive to anthropocentric bias, speciesist hidden curricula, and normalised discourses of human-animal domination and objectification, is an instrument relevant for theoretically approaching the human-animal relation in an educational context. Can these terms contribute also to our understanding of empirical perspectives from the school arena?

The School as a Research Site for Human-animal Domination Discourses. Findings of a Pilot Study

Between January - March 2003, I conducted a small-scale pilot study at a primary school just outside a Swedish urban area. Among the main purposes of the pilot study were to reflect the theoretical framework outlined above against an empirical material; to get some indications of how a school works with values related issues; what messages about the human-animal relation may be manifested, explicitly or implicitly, in the school context; and to get some feedback on how school staff may relate to issues of animal ethics when they are discussed within a values education framework. The empirical material is limited, and the purpose of presenting it here is solely to give a few examples of what may happen when the theoretical reflections above meet perspectives from a school.

The pilot study comprised three parts: A critical analysis of some national and local policy documents, including the national curriculum; analysis of sponsored textbook materials; and two semi-structured interviews (one with the school principal, and one with a social science teacher). The school was selected through a personal contact of mine who herself works as a teacher at this school. The interviews were structured around three main topics or themes: 1) How the school works with values related issues in general; 2) If, and how, the school deals with issues related to animal ethics; and 3) The school's co-operation with external actors such as sponsors. The interviews were tape-recorded and took about one hour each.

The interviews gave the impression that

the gap between the natural and social sciences is distinct when it comes to issues regarding animals. These are dealt with almost entirely within the natural science area, where animals are studied in terms of biological facts (and possibly in terms of their role in the ecosystem). Animals are seen primarily as species representatives, rather than as individual beings. (An exception is the pupils' own pets, who are discussed in terms of individuals.) Social science education, especially the EQ ["empathy quotient"] related sessions that had been introduced at this school as an approach to values education, is exclusively devoted to relations between humans. To the extent that the human-animal relation is raised as an ethical issue from a societal perspective, this seems to occur primarily on initiative from the pupils themselves. Such a discussion may be triggered when, for instance, media has been reporting about long-distance animal transports in the EU, which obviously may be perceived as upsetting. This way of treating issues of animal ethics contrasts sharply with other value related issues, such as human rights, tolerance for diversity, and gender equality, where both interviewees gave the impression of thinking that it is an absolute responsibility of the school to convey these values. This is an attitude in full accordance with the directions of the Swedish national curriculum, where the human-animal relation is completely absent, but the effect may be an ad hoc treatment of animal ethics in school: The issues may only be highlighted in case an extraordinarily engaged, and verbally active, pupil is present. From the point of view of the school, the signals will be that the issues have a very limited legitimacy, since they are not formally integrated in the regular values education scheme.

Ethical discussions concerning humans and animals respectively thus seem to be dealt with as completely disparate discourses in this school. This order is enforced by the national curriculum and the course syllabi (which the interviewees also referred to during the interviews), and appeared not to be subject to questioning or internal discussions within the school.

At this school, the pupils were also taken on study visits related to animals. The study visits appeared to be focused on local sites where animals are kept in small-scale systems, such as nearby farms and 4-H yards. Whether pupils are also taken to visits in, for instance, slaughterhouses, to experience the less idyllic aspects of the human use of animals, was not mentioned during the interviews.

Implicit messages concerning animals may also be manifested by the presence of external actors in school. In general, school sponsoring and similar forms of co-operation seem to actively engage many actors today, since children and youth, as future consumers, are obviously seen as important target groups for many companies and branch organisations. At this school, however, the interviewees expressed a view that sponsoring activities are very limited. This notwithstanding, the school had a textbook material produced by the Swedish dairy company Arla/Mjölkmframjandet (Mjölkmframjandet 1996).⁸ The booklet is a clear example of a sponsored material imbued with messages formulated to support the profit-making aims of the producing company: The efforts to encourage schoolchildren to consume more dairy products are not subtly expressed. The result is a product in which text and pictures all work toward serving this aim; constructing an euphemistic worldview in which all welfare problems and ethical problems surrounding the situation of the animals utilised in the agricultural industry are conveniently glossed over. The last pages of the booklet display recipes designed to appeal to the primary school age group. All recipes contain dairy products.

In the Swedish national curriculum and the other documents governing the activities of the school, the human-animal relation is not referred to. The documents encourage the development of critical thinking and active participation in society, but in effect, the message is that this aim has definite limitations: The societal order that permits and legitimates a systematic exploitation of animals is not to be seriously questioned or challenged. There are, however, elements of resistance among pupils, even among the youngest, indicating that not all of

them feel inclined to adjust themselves to this order. One of the interviewees recalled a discussion in a kindergarten group about animals. A little boy in the group raises the issue of what animals are eaten, and not eaten. A little girl in the group then reacts by putting her hands over her ears; repeating that she does not want to hear since she does not like the fact that animals are being killed. How the school handles such feelings among children is not explained by the pilot study, but the material available gives little support to the likelihood that this child can expect to have her feelings confirmed in a serious manner.

Another episode recalled in one of the interviews tells about a visit to a 4-H yard, when a group of pupils found that "their" rabbits that had been kept there had been killed. This act seemed to be acknowledged by the school as an ethical problem, and was brought up for discussion with the pupils, whereas the act of systematic slaughtering of animals in the food production industry does not appear to be dealt with in a similar manner, or evoke the idea on the part of the school that it might be an ethically problematic issue. What, then, is the actual difference between these two cases of killing? Slaughtering animals in the food production industry is a normalised and socially accepted procedure, facilitated by the institutionalised and hidden conditions under which the act is carried out, as well as by the power and economical interests of the industry behind it. It is also a continuous process, which may contribute to the desensitised view we have constructed of it as something "natural" or "inevitable". The rabbits, on the other hand, have in this case been ascribed a qualitatively different form of moral status since their role has been constructed as "pets" for human beings.

The interpretation I have made from the findings of this pilot study is that this school seems to express, and reproduce, a view on the human-animal relation that tells us to care about the interests of animals *as long as we do not need to modify our own purposes*. Our attitude to killing animals, for instance, seems to be completely dependent on which function the

animals fulfil *for us*, as dead bodies or as living beings. We thus seem to locate our relation toward animals within different discourses, following a logic of how they best serve our anthropocentric self-interests. A humane education approach would, on the other hand, examine the driving forces behind our contradictory attitudes toward animals, and discuss alternative perspectives.

The pilot study raises questions about relations of domination and power in different forms and at different levels: Who dictates what values are to be included in, and excluded from school activities, and whose interests are represented in teaching and in the policy documents? If schools prefer to focus on small-scale, local farms rather than slaughterhouses, and on pets rather than laboratory animals, why are certain practices hidden, and what actors have something to gain from this? What structures are upheld, and why? What is the level of awareness among school principals and teachers when it comes to recognising, and confronting, institutionalised exploitative practices?

This study gives a hint of how elements of a speciesist hidden curriculum may manifest themselves in a school. The absence of animal ethics in the documents, the ways in which the school separates humans and animals in values education, the choice of study visits, the messages embedded in textbook materials and other artefacts in schools, and the way of dealing with students' emotions, are all part of such a hidden curriculum. The study does not pretend to offer anything that even remotely resembles a coherent idea of all the complexities involved here. What I have attempted to show is that the approach of a critical education theory is a useful tool with which to approach the human-animal relation in educational research. This enterprise, however, confronts critical pedagogy with the challenge to scrutinise its own delimiting tendencies to exclude the species category from its emancipatory concerns, and to redefine its language and conceptual scope in order to embrace *all* oppressed categories and to see how these are interconnected. Otherwise critical pedagogy will face a situation in which it becomes guilty of implicitly

sustaining the same oppressive rationale as it seeks to abolish, and thus contradicting its own fundamental principles.

Looking Forward: A Causal Layered Analysis of Animal Ethics in Education

What can a Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) approach add to our understanding of the dynamics of the human-animal relationship as framed within a school context? CLA, a futures theory and research method seeking to create transformative spaces for the formation of alternative futures, sees the notion of reality as vertically constructed at four levels: the empirically-oriented "litany" level (isolated events, issues and trends), the systemic/social causes level, the discourse/worldview level, and the myth/metaphor level. Research based on CLA explores issues at each level and integrates these into a network of alternative logics, in which each level deepens the understanding of the others (Inayatullah 2004). Since CLA is particularly suitable for critical futures research, it is applied to the topic of this article.

At the *litany* level, we have seen that a number of issues, or "weak signals", concerning animal ethics in education have recently emerged. In Sweden, one example is the Ministry of Agriculture's discussion materials on animal ethics. It appears as if this material has been produced as a superficial response from the authorities to a driving force at the *systemic* level; namely, a growing awareness among young people about animal ethics, that may have created a pressure on schools to address the issues. At the *worldview* level, there are different competing discourses: We may consider the debate concerning the role of the school as a value fostering actor in society rather than just an institution for transmitting knowledge, and, since democratic values are highly esteemed in this context, how the position of the student has changed accordingly, making student influence an impetus for change at schools. Another discourse is a liberal market oriented ideology that places responsibility on educational institu-

tions to educate primarily for the job market, and also to find their own sponsors; thereby restricting the space in which paradigmatic critique can take place in schools. The animal ethics discussion material may be the compromised outcome of these two competing discourses. At the level of *myth*, underlying metaphorical statements may be constructed, such as 1) 'The School as a Panacea': The school as a main socialisation instrument by which to achieve various desirable aims (notably aims of certain powerful actors in society, be they an elitist, patriarchal church, a government, or multinational corporations); and 2) "The Cartesian Heritage": If animal exploitation is abolished, human welfare will be jeopardised, since the advancement of humanity is, and will continue to be, built on this exploitation.

Another example of a *litany* level issue is the Humane Education charter school that is currently being established in California. At the *systemic* level, this school has been spearheaded by the animal welfare movement together with teachers. The level of *discourse* may in this case involve an increased awareness of "the violence link" according to which animal abuse has desensitising effects and may also lead to violence also toward humans; as well as an increased awareness of relations of power and oppression related to the idea of "the other", be they humans or animals. One possible *metaphor* here is "The Web of Life": All beings on Earth are mutually interconnected and interdependent on one another. However, for certain parties to whom the establishment of this school is controversial, there may be a fear that the human privileges that follow from the *discourse* of anthropocentric hegemony are threatened. The dominant *metaphors* in this case may be 1) "The Creation": Human beings' supreme role as masters of the world have been ascribed to us by some omnipotent, religious authority; 2) "The Food Chain": Since human beings are predators at the top of the ecosystem, it is natural (or even inevitable) for us to use other species for our own purposes; or, alternatively, 3) "The Zero-Sum Game of Ethics": Ascribing moral status to animals undermines the value of human beings proportionally.

From these sketches of CLA frameworks, different future scenarios may be constructed. Scenarios could range from shorter-term *empirical-systemic* levels, such as the widespread implementation of humane education in national curricula due to student pressure and alliances between new social movements and politics; to the longer-term levels of *worldview* and *myth/metaphor* where a "wild card" scenario could lead to the concept of speciesism completely losing relevance and being replaced by new, hitherto unimagined forms of "otherness", since technological development, unexpected global disasters and evolutionary forces may result in the existence of only one single species on Earth. A relevant *myth* here may be "Nature's Revenge": A fear that morally wrong behaviour will strike back at ourselves in the end.

Challenging Anthropocentric "Comfort Zones" in Education: Steps toward a Humane Future

This article has appealed to educational researchers and practitioners to critically scrutinise and challenge what is referred to as "dangerous memories" by Welch and McLaren (McLaren 1998), and as "comfort zones" by Langley (2003), with regard to the mediation of values toward animals taking place in our schools; in explicit manners as well as through hidden curricula. The expression "dangerous memories" denotes the way that the stories and struggles of the oppressed often are lodged in the social system's repressed unconscious, and "comfort zones" describes the implacable resistance that people who try to change the status quo in intellectual and social cultures often meet due to the power of tradition, a lack of vision, or simple unwillingness. As an attempt to promote actions addressing anthropocentric status quo in schools, the article has explored a few paths toward an expanded notion of critical values education, in which the human-animal relation is included and linked to wider patterns of domination and subordination in society. The theoretical discussion has been reflected against the humane education approach and

the findings of a pilot study.

In order to outline some factors and forces behind the transformation of anthropocentrism and speciesism in schools toward a more humane education approach, and to create platforms for the formation of alternative future scenarios, a Causal Layered Analysis has been presented. An important part of a CLA framework is measures that may be taken in order to create a preferred future. What, then, can we do in order to transform traditional curricula into humane education discourses? Here I join Kahn (2003) in emphasising the urgent importance of forming alliances and shared strategies between the different agendas of the developing social movements. Since the academy, teacher training institutions, educational policy makers, and the students themselves are key actors in the process of transforming education, these groups must be involved in debates and boundary-crossing project initiatives, and in cooperation with them, innovative ideas, spaces for action and synergy effects may be generated. Compiling and spreading successful examples is another way of promoting changes at different levels. Furthermore, including the human-animal relation in futures research and in other research projects of global concern is essential.

At university level, Andrzejewski (2003) has provided a detailed outline of how speciesism linked to other oppressive discourses may be critically contextualised within the framework of a Social Responsibility degree programme. Selby (1995) also offers a rich and diverse amount of ideas, examples, strategies and advice for the practical integration of humane education activities at the classroom, school, curriculum, and teacher education levels. As a first step, the overlap and connections between humane education and the "ordinary" subjects taught in school may be explored, and the numerous pedagogical possibilities emerging from these insights can be applied by the individual teacher. What is to be done if the obstacles and resistance from the "comfort zones" inhabitants seem insurmountable? As Shor (1992) notes, the space required for critical teachers to carry out transformative education

and bring about curricular changes cannot be taken for granted in the traditional institutions where most teachers work. This space has to be discovered and broadened in alliance with others.

Realising that humane education is part of a broader framework of global and futures oriented education, may in itself trigger incentives for educators and policymakers to initiate changes within the system. Selby (1995) describes the connections as follows;

The EarthKind classroom is, by definition, futures-oriented. Humane educators seek to promote kindness, caring, compassion, respect for all living things, human and non-human, and a commitment to justice, as a means of creating a better tomorrow. They advocate an educational process predicated upon those values and having as a principal outcome the emergence of "practical visionaries", i.e. people with both a clear vision of a preferred future and the commitment, confidence and practical skills to go about realising that vision.

The EarthKind classroom provides a springboard for practising being a 'practical visionary'. Having identified their individually and collectively preferred futures, students can be encouraged to take steps to realise those futures through school-based social, political and environmental action projects /.../. This is what Alvin Toffler has called the process of "anticipatory democracy". (Selby 1995:290)

This article has argued why the stories about animals that are told in our schools, and the discourses within which they may be located, are matters of concern for the area of values education; by force of their own right, as well as of their potential to add new perspectives to our collective pedagogical understanding. All educators who believe that one of the most important challenges the school is facing today is to contribute to the formation of a non-violent and profoundly humane future society, should work toward the regular integration of the human-animal relation in programmes of values education, in teaching and learning materials and approaches in various subjects, in academic discussions, and in national curricula. In so doing, the anthropocentrically biased "comfort zones" in education may be challenged, and speciesist elements in the hidden

curricula of our schools may be brought to light and their ethical implications critically examined.

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Notes

1. The term "animal" refers approximately in this article to vertebrate animals with cognitive capacity, although this definition may be subject to discussion.
2. The term *ethozoology* is also used (Arluke 1993).
3. A few examples being ISAZ (International Society for Anthrozoology); PsyETA (Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals); Tufts University Center for Animals and Public Policy; Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society, University of Pennsylvania; and Department for Animals and Society, University of Utrecht.
4. For over 50 examples of Ph.D. dissertations in education science dealing with the human-animal relation, see PsyETA (2003a). For studies of animal dissection and vivisection in the classroom, see also Balcombe (2000); Pedersen (2002); Solot & Arluke (1997).
5. Speciesism, a term analogous with racism and sexism, refers to the arbitrary oppression or discrimination of other living beings on sole basis of their belonging to another species than our own (Ryder 1998).
6. Based on the capacity to experience suffering.
7. Based on a number of capacities such as having preferences, an emotional life, and an individual welfare in the sense of a capacity to care about one's own situation.
8. It is not clear to what extent, and in what

manner, the material was actually used at this school.

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