

CHAPTER 1

Resurrecting the Voice

Animal Advocacy in History

A Robin Redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage.

—William Blake

During an unusual warm spell early last year, I shed some of the many layers of clothes required to survive a New England winter and ventured out for a stroll in a nearby town. I eventually migrated to the local bookshop in search of something to read during the inevitable return and last stand of the winter season. As row after row of magazines tempted me with discourses on everything from rock “grrrls” to literary criticism, a rather striking cover drew my eye toward the nature section. A chimpanzee with hand tucked under chin stared back at me as though contemplating some weighty issue of the world. The bold, multicolored headline next to the philosophical primate asked “Should Animals Have Legal Rights?” Since I had spent many of my self-absorbed graduate school years researching the historical issues and people surrounding this very question, I quickly flipped to the relevant pages behind the provocative cover.

The article satisfied the casual reader within me but disappointed the social historian. The author adeptly maneuvered through many of the current and hotly contested issues related to animal rights, including animal intelligence, the ability of various species to feel pain, the prevalent use of animals in medical experiments, and dissection in schools, among others. Furthermore, he persuasively argued that there had been a recent, discernible shift in public attitudes toward a greater concern for the rights of animals, citing public opinion polls, numerous legislative initiatives (mostly at the state level), and legal victories since 1990 to reform, regulate, or ban everything from steel traps to factory farms, cock-and dogfighting, greyhound racing, and puppy mills. All of this was fascinating. What disappointed me was the painfully brief foray into past debates over the ethical consideration for nonhumans (or lack thereof, according to the author) and what amounted to a cursory, one-sentence nod to the contributions of the post-Civil War antivivisection movement. Furthering my dismay, the article focused primarily on what the author characterized as a “new movement” to “afford some genuine legal rights for animals.”¹

But neither the movement for “genuine” legal recognition of nonhumans nor any one of the current issues detailed in that article is a new phenomenon. Granted, the author’s intent was not to study the past, but the article’s ahistorical perspective exemplifies a broader trend of omission that extends from popular conceptions to academia. When it comes to the animal advocacy movement, a historical amnesia effec-

tively erases the significant legacies today's animal activists and society as a whole have inherited from their mostly forgotten predecessors. As we stumble uncertainly into the twenty-first century, this intriguing social justice cause marks nearly 140 years of persistent and diverse activism. In April 1866, Henry Bergh, buttressed by the support of a prominent group of New York men and women, chartered the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). At the end of the society's first meeting, he proudly declared that the verdict had been rendered: "The blood-red hand of cruelty shall no longer torture dumb beasts with impunity."² His prediction was a bit overconfident, but his organization heralded the genesis of a definable, organized animal advocacy movement in the United States. Since then, the cause has grown steadily and attracted an enthusiastic following. By the turn of the twentieth century, nearly seven hundred organizations, most molded in the image of Bergh's ASPCA, combated cruelty across the country.³ Changes in post-World War II society provided fertile ground for greater growth, and by 1967, the number ballooned to one thousand groups, with a collective membership in the millions.⁴ After the 1975 publication of Peter Singer's seminal treatise, *Animal Liberation*, the movement experienced a veritable organizational explosion. Currently, over seven thousand organizations, representing well over ten million members, lobby, agitate, and educate on issues concerning the rights and treatment of nonhumans.⁵

Historically, this expansive movement has embraced people who have variously called themselves animal welfarists, protectionists, zoophilists, humanitarians, rightists, and, most recently, liberationists. The multitudes who have supported the cause over the years probably fall somewhere on the continuum between the two most common terms, welfarists and rightists, depending on the issue at hand. In general, welfarists oppose cruelty to animals but not the humane use of them for purposes such as food or clothing. This faction asserts human superiority and accepts the socially constructed hierarchies that rank all species but always place *Homo sapiens* at the top of the pyramid. Moreover, welfarists believe all animals that interact with humans deserve ethical consideration—but some more so than others. The family companion animal, they contend, unquestionably earns a higher place on the pyramid than a cow or pig. In contrast, rightists raise fundamental questions about those human-imposed hierarchies. This faction perceives scant difference

between the artificial boundaries we use to rationalize away rights for animals exploited for our purposes and those used to justify the subjugation and legal exclusion of other races or groups of people. Rightists believe that all sentient creatures, human and otherwise, are entitled inherently to certain legal and social rights, and they argue that in denying these rights, society commits a grave moral injustice. Liberation ideology emerged mostly after 1975 and thus falls beyond the scope of this study, but it simply presents the most radical, uncompromising articulation of animal rights by demanding an immediate end to the speciesism (a concept similar to racism and sexism but applied to animals) perpetuated by humans.

Clear distinctions exist between the most pragmatic welfarist and the most radical rightist, of course, but from 1870 on, activists of all stripes have embraced a diversity of terms—and often used them interchangeably—in describing their own views and activities. Few scholars familiar with Henry Bergh would characterize him as a champion of animal rights. However, he frequently employed that more provocative term in his propaganda, and under the auspices of his organization, he initiated what was probably the first court case for animals' substantive legal rights just a few years after the ASPCA's founding.⁶ A few decades later, prominent activist Caroline Earle White commented that “now, nearly all agree that the lower animals have certain rights, as inalienable as those of man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”⁷ Although White's understanding of rights would align more closely with what modern advocates assert, she, too, frequently blurred the distinction between terms. More recently, Helen Jones played an integral role in founding several prominent animal welfare organizations, including the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in 1954, but she nonetheless characterized her lifelong activism as unwaveringly rightist.⁸ Terms and identities became even more muddled with the publication of *Animal Liberation*. Responding to both the book and an increasing public receptiveness to the arguments contained within it, the movement shifted slightly toward the more radical end of the ideological continuum. Some ideological differences have certainly hardened between factions, but currently, even the most conservative animal welfare groups have appropriated elements of the language and more popular campaigns of the rightist factions. In the present study, I frequently employ the term *animal advocacy* to encompass this continuum of identities and the com-

monalities of ethical concern for animals, yet I also recognize the complex and evolving differences and make clear distinctions where it is important to do so. Although the various branches of the movement are often united by a common outrage, significant tensions and divisions between them have, at times, undermined the unity and success of their cause.

Despite animal advocacy's complex nature, long history, and impressive numbers, surprisingly few scholars, especially historians, have studied either the movement itself or the broader issues surrounding our historical and often contradictory relationship with animals. Several works have carved significant inroads into the European experience, but far fewer explore developments in the United States. Those that do broach the subject typically emphasize intellectual history or recent sociological aspects of the American movement. Rare older studies tend to simply recount the creation of organizations and document legislative initiatives without providing any context or analysis. Limited in scope and depth, much of the existing scholarship incorrectly concludes that early organizations suffered from a narrow agenda that attacked only a few highly publicized issues, such as beasts of burden or humane education. Most concede there was a more vigorous and expansive movement after 1945, but only a few endeavor to explain the forces driving the postwar activism. Nearly all downplay the American movement's overall success and broader historical significance.⁹

Limitations aside, these studies certainly add to our general understanding of animal advocacy. Yet there is a clear need for research that resurrects the movement's influence and locates it within a social and environmental history framework as well as in the context of larger social changes. In particular, the relatively new field of environmental history offers a useful way to understand this important chapter in the national narrative. Environmental historians offer fresh insights into diverse issues and events by studying the interaction between natural environments, cultural values, and socioeconomic factors over time. Certainly, the relationship between humans and animals represents one aspect of the environment that is particularly relevant to the study of social change. Wild and domestic animals—whether used as food (approximately six to nine billion animals are slaughtered each year in the United States alone), clothing, scientific subjects, entertainment, or companions—are an integral part of our aesthetic, emotional, and consumer lives.¹⁰

Given the complex nature of this relationship, situating animal advocacy within a broader environmental and social history paradigm will perhaps best reveal the heretofore ignored dynamics and impact of this movement as it evolved in American society.

My hope is that this book will begin the process of new discoveries and revised interpretations, but I emphasize that my research represents only small beginnings. Much of this study, for example, explores organizations located in the eastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States, where the majority of animal advocacy activities occurred. Although midwestern and western humane groups are mentioned occasionally, I do acknowledge a great need for future research in these areas. I do not claim to be comprehensive or complete. Rather, this work is a first step into a vast territory, and I hope others will venture into it to further broaden our understanding of this fascinating topic. Those scholars should recognize, however, that the research limitations are frustrating and pervasive. The records of many organizations are scattered and unorganized at best; at worst, they were long ago tossed into the trash bin. Those small grassroots organizations that preserved records of past activities could ill afford the time or money to create anything resembling an archive. Consequently, I spent many a research day in the broom closet or storage room (but always made comfortable by welcoming, apologetic staffers), sifting through dusty boxes that contained a mishmash of artifacts in no particular chronological order. Photographs from 1910 mingled with cruelty reports from 1870, fund-raising invitations from 1920 stuck to journals from 1942, and personal correspondence from 1954 lay atop newspaper clippings from 1973. The larger, national organizations were often more organized, but few had even a rudimentary archive at the time I conducted my research. Fortunately, the situation is changing. A growing number of activists and organizations (such as the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [MSPCA]) recognize the historical significance of their work and have started the process of systematically preserving materials. In no way is my digression into the tribulations of research an attempt to rationalize any shortcomings of this book; rather, it is intended to further illustrate the untapped potential this movement offers for historical research on a topic that deserves greater attention. No longer should we scholars ignore a movement that not only unearthed and chopped at the roots of entrenched notions of human superiority but also actually succeeded in changing

people's views—sometimes subtly, sometimes dramatically—about those very notions.

Broom closet days behind me, I offer the following study of the U.S. animal advocacy movement from 1865 to 1975, the year when Peter Singer's book signaled a shift in the cause toward liberation ideology. Rejecting many of the accepted interpretations, I contend that this cause has been far more successful historically and has had a far greater impact on society than previously suggested. Admittedly, there were periods during the movement's history—like that of any social movement—when victories were fewer and battles tougher. Those opposed to animal experimentation (known as antivivisectionists), for example, won few legal concessions to restrict or end the practice between World War I and World War II, but the impetus and the determination behind the cause never faltered. More so, antivivisectionists handed researchers legal defeats on many related issues, such as the forced seizure of pound animals for research and dissection in schools. Whatever the issue, persistence and commitment were evident during the movement's entire history, and such dedication reaped dividends. Although variously ridiculed and applauded by society, the “voice of the voiceless” nonetheless succeeded in making certain aspects of its agenda more palatable to growing numbers of Americans. Evolving within and responding to the larger context of a shift from an industrial to a postindustrial society, the movement shaped and fostered a growing public compassion that, in turn, facilitated concrete legal recognition and victories. In many ways, the time was ripe for this broader ethical consideration of the nonhuman world. The message of humanitarians resonated strongly with people's concerns about broader forces such as unchecked capitalism and consumption, urban-industrial problems, the destruction of nature, and the ethical and moral state of American society. Activists forged their diverse agenda from a critique of these forces and offered a viable solution—striking a better balance between our destructive behaviors and our humane compassion for other species. Through cumulative and persistent efforts, this stubborn little movement has altered both beliefs and actions regarding such varied issues as trapping, sport hunting, dog- and cockfights, wearing fur, strays, scientific experiments, slaughter, and more. Few Americans today perceive either the companionship or the consumption of animals in the same manner that earlier generations did, but because of the lack of any historical narrative, even fewer understand the roots of such changes.

Historical neglect obscures much more than the movement's successes. Today's animal activists have inherited many legacies—both rich and troubling—from their predecessors. I call them the connecting threads of the movement. Without an awareness of them, our understanding of current events can reflect only incomplete shadows of the past, as demonstrated in the magazine article I found in the bookstore. By shedding light on these shadowy connections, however, we can begin to see the bonds that tie Henry Bergh to the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Broadly, the links between animal advocacy organizations past and present include continuity in membership demographics; a diverse agenda and consistent strategies; disruptive, long-standing internal divisions; and similar opponents with familiar arguments. Who joined this movement? What did they fight for, and how did they fight? What were the internal disputes, and who were the external enemies? By rediscovering these connecting threads, we reconstruct the historical cornerstones of today's movement.

When I began my research, the ancestors of today's movement were indeed shadowy figures. Who were those committed to such a difficult and controversial cause? Partly a result of the middle- and upper-class backgrounds of its founders, the early movement recruited members and leaders from a very circumscribed demographic. Records for pre-World War II organizations indicate that predominantly white, male, urban elites led groups, while a middle- and upper-class constituency dominated by women supplied the rank and file. Certainly, all contributions were welcomed regardless of someone's socioeconomic standing, but the relatively high cost of membership dues effectively excluded any organizational voice from the lower classes. Interestingly, some studies point to the movement's early elitism as evidence of activists' underlying status anxieties and their consequent desire to control the lower classes. Skeptical scholars suggest that animal defenders fretted more about the actions of the so-called dangerous classes than about animal sentience. Yet other social control theorists argue that status anxieties led participants to subordinate human suffering to a misguided concern with animals.¹¹

However, when applied to animal advocates, such theories fail to account for the diversity of motivations and activism. Humanitarians responded to larger social forces in the industrial and postindustrial world based on their impact on the human-animal relationship, not class anxieties. Bergh and many of his peers railed not against working-class anar-

chy but against the inordinate financial and political power of those industries most notorious in their exploitation of both society and animals. Capitalists might have desired greater control of the working class, but humanitarians urged greater control of the capitalists. Moreover, throughout the movement's history, activists aggressively condemned cruelties inflicted by the wealthy and the poor alike. (Campaigns against pigeon shoots, foxhunting, and medical experiments, for instance, all targeted the upper classes.) Lastly, many of those dedicated to animal issues were also actively involved with more than one human reform initiative, including abolition, woman's rights, urban reform, worker reform, and civil rights. Such a wide spectrum of social justice interests effectively smashes the image of the myopic, misanthropic animal lover. In short, social control proponents ignore the complexity and depth of the ideology and motivations behind animal advocates. Like many reform movements, this cause attracted middle- and upper-class men and women not so much because they had misguided obsessions or an overwhelming desire to socially control poor people but rather because they had the time and disposable income to support the diverse reforms they believed would uplift all humanity and protect nonhuman species.

Women in particular subscribed to the movement's ideology, and demographically, they provided the backbone of animal advocacy. During the early decades, traditional gender expectations usually undermined women's attempts to assume leadership positions, and some women, such as Caroline Earle White, expended a great deal of time, personal finances, and energy to form groups they would never lead.¹² An active Philadelphia clubwoman, White helped create and launch the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PSPCA) in 1867, but her male cofounders denied her any leadership role and relegated her to a subordinate women's auxiliary branch. An outspoken advocate of woman's rights, White never completely acquiesced to the organizational rule of men, and in 1883, she founded and presided over one of the most radical early groups, the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS).¹³ But White was the exception. Before 1945, most women asserted their voice through their impressive financial support and extensive volunteerism as members, not leaders. They were both the financiers and the foot soldiers of animal advocacy, and they often justified their actions in gendered terms. Drawing connections between animal cruelty and human domestic abuse, early female activists convincingly reasoned

that protecting animals was crucial for the preservation of future families and future generations of children.¹⁴ In addition, like many female reformers, they claimed that their domestic knowledge and maternal instincts best suited them to minister to the needs of these violated innocents. The predominance of female members in both child welfare and animal advocacy societies during the early twentieth century not only shaped the ideology of the movement but also ensured its very survival.

Unlike their earlier counterparts, women of the post-1945 movement increasingly attained leadership roles, often taking the helm of groups they founded. Concentrated in smaller grassroots organizations, this feminization of animal advocacy's leadership originated in part from brewing tensions between society's perceptions of women's roles and socioeconomic realities. Even as the consensus society of the cold war era stressed women's responsibilities as wives and mothers, rising numbers of those family caretakers ventured into the job market to supplement the family consumer income. Likewise, acceptable notions of women serving in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) quickly led to mothers volunteering in charities, political organizations, and animal groups.¹⁵ Larger trends toward greater equality for women certainly facilitated more opportunities for leadership and public activism than during the previous century, but this change sometimes collided with the lingering domestic rationale behind much of women's volunteerism. Environmentalist and author Rachel Carson, for example, frequently couched her arguments in appropriately gendered language, vividly describing how environmental abuses threatened home and family. Her work dramatically impacted Americans' views of nature, yet her efforts to maneuver between her very public environmental activism and more traditional expectations of proper female behavior often put her in the crosshairs of conservative critics. Carson's most vitriolic detractors used gender stereotypes to simultaneously question her femininity and discredit her as a hysterical, overly sensitive female.¹⁶ A decade after her death, a more radical wave of feminism would upend the old rationales, but Carson's experience was not unique. Despite such attacks, however, women continued to represent the spiritual, financial, and physical vanguard of the struggle after 1945.

Historically, the movement may have lacked demographic diversity, but most organizations, whatever their original focus or mission, have always maintained a diverse agenda of issues and campaigns. Driven by

their radical ethics and their perceptions of pervasive cruelty, activists launched battles on multiple fronts: abused workhorses, seal hunts, inhumane slaughter, trapping, hunting, strays, performing animals, feathered hats and fur coats, wildlife extinction, and vivisection. Such a far-reaching and ambitious approach might have developed into a weakness for the movement, stretching resources too thin and sapping organizational strength. Instead, a broad agenda emerged as a strength that activists nurtured through successive generations. The diversity potentially offered something for everyone and thus appealed to a much wider audience despite the generally controversial nature of the cause. Wider socioeconomic changes simply dictated which issues garnered the most attention. As machines increasingly replaced workhorses, groups redirected the thrust of their activity toward the next relevant cause, such as strays, wild animals, the mistreatment of performing animals, or animal experimentation. As existing studies accurately suggest, the movement expanded and further diversified its agenda after World War II because larger postwar trends simultaneously intensified human exploitation of animals (cold war militarism, biomedicine, consumer product testing) while engendering greater respect for them (ecology, leisure time, and environmental recreation).

Success also shaped and reshaped goals and priorities. During the early years, those who spoke for animals had to shout to be heard above the cacophony of their many contemptuous opponents. But as the advocates, the voice of the voiceless, increasingly gained respect and acceptance, their message edged toward the mainstream, and they pursued goals that appealed to the interests of that more receptive public. Even so, most organizations complemented their headline campaigns with numerous and varied smaller campaigns. From the large MSPCA of the 1900s to the much smaller Friends of Animals (FoA) of the 1970s, the organizations consistently addressed multiple issues. Perhaps their tendency to headline certain campaigns has led scholars to erroneously assume they had a myopic agenda, but as this book clearly reveals, the extensive, ambitious agenda of today's animal rights groups is a direct and important legacy from past activists.

Although it is a great start, a popular smorgasbord agenda is not a guarantee of success. Audience appeal and interest can quickly dissipate without substantive victories. Effective strategies are crucial, and in this respect, the connections between past and present in animal advocacy

are less surprising and unique. Most social movements borrow and build on the successful tactics of their predecessors and contemporaries. Animal advocacy did just that, and since many humanitarians participated in several social movements, the activists did not have to look far for ideas. To achieve their wide-ranging goals, they borrowed and reworked the strategies of their abolitionist, feminist, environmental, and civil rights counterparts: (1) public protest and intervention, (2) prosecution, (3) legislation, (4) economic boycotts, (5) organizational networking, and (6) public education and awareness. Most groups combined more than one tactic to enhance the visibility and potential success of a campaign. Typically, they first worked to enact stronger laws to protect animals and then demanded enforcement through arrests and litigation. At the same time, a humane education blitz recruited supporters and chipped away at entrenched attitudes about the human-animal relationship. Keenly aware, however, of humans' reluctance to concede their superiority to other species, activists made sure that some of their initiatives coupled ethical concerns about animals with more self-centered human concerns. The early campaign to enact more-humane slaughter methods, for example, attached cruelty concerns to decidedly anthropocentric concerns about tainted meat and human health.

But victory depended on widespread publicity and media attention even more than on humane education and legal maneuvering. Sometimes, activists staged outrageous public spectacles or protests to attract media attention, whether positive or negative. Many people are familiar with stories of PETA activists throwing blood on fur coats, but few know of the traffic jams caused by Henry Bergh's headline-grabbing bravado during his urban workhorse protests in New York City. Most humanitarians eschewed such extreme tactics, which could evoke a public backlash, yet they nonetheless recognized the public relations value of using some sort of shock tactic. The dusty boxes I explored on my research trips invariably disclosed disturbing, if not horrific, images and lurid descriptions of animal abuse through the ages—an emaciated, dying workhorse; a burned and beaten kitten; a macabre experiment that grafted the head of a puppy to its mother. As abolitionists had done before them, animal advocates devoted significant organizational resources to countless publications, photographs, and lectures that emphasized the visual and often shocking aspects of cruelty. They knew that sympathetic media coverage of the gruesome and the dramatic sometimes reaped significant

public and political support and generated the momentum needed for change. Such momentum might then attract the support of prominent figures and further enhance the issue's visibility and credibility. Whether Mark Twain or Jack London of previous generations or Paul McCartney and Kirsten Dunst today, celebrities are powerful and inspirational motivators for the public's involvement in other tactics, such as petitions, marches, and economic boycotts. Star power, prosecution, legislation, education, and boycotts all contributed to a campaign's success, but the real key was using these strategies in conjunction with organizational networking. When groups came together, the combination of strategies and sheer numbers of activists worked like a battering ram to break down more than a few of society's worst abuses of nonhumans.

Early successes, however, also sparked the problematic internal disagreements that have persistently haunted the movement. In particular, as humane arguments slowly but successfully permeated American culture, some organizations modified their strategies and goals to more closely mirror the attitudes and expectations of the general public. Not wanting to alienate their swelling constituency, these groups increasingly pursued modest or even conservative reforms that promoted cooperation rather than confrontation with the perpetrators of animal abuse and exploitation. Dropping more aggressive strategies, moderates such as the American Humane Association (AHA) instead proffered subdued humane education programs and bestowed honorary awards on former enemies that promised self-regulation and voluntary reforms. According to this emerging view within the cause, slowly building a foundation of smaller, feasible gains within the halls of power would ultimately reap greater long-term benefits for both animals and the movement.¹⁷ More-militant factions, represented by groups such as the AAVS, rejected the new approach as naive and accused groups such as the AHA of undermining and betraying the principles and integrity of the struggle for animals. Moderates lashed back that radical groups' unrealistic demands threatened the very existence and future of the cause.¹⁸

Both sides expressed valid points, but these early divisions soon infected the movement's agenda, and they troubled national campaigns over the next century of activism. The expanded regulatory role of the federal government after World War II inspired the politically connected moderates to lobby hard for federal reforms for some of the most egregious practices in both meat production and laboratory research.

Radicals initially expressed interest in the campaign, but the ideological and strategic antagonisms between the two sides had so deepened that the factions reached an impasse over the reform bills' contents and language. The conservative branch ultimately prevailed, and through its own organizational networking, the Humane Slaughter Act (1958) and Laboratory Animal Welfare Act (1966, 1970) were both passed by Congress. Militants resented that the more conservative wing co-opted the cause and denounced the new laws as "sellouts" that betrayed animals by perpetuating cruelty.¹⁹ As the social context of the 1960s and 1970s slowly nudged the movement as a whole into more controversial terrain (such as antifur protests), radicals often aided the cause. However, during much of the postwar period, they remained outside the action, embittered and alienated. Their star would not rise again until after 1975.

As it struggled with internal divisions, the movement also experienced difficulty forging external alliances, particularly with nature advocates. Early on, animal activists included wildlife in their agenda, but when they criticized sporting clubs for their hunting activities, they antagonized a nascent but increasingly powerful conservation movement.²⁰ Conservationists viewed nature as a resource to be efficiently managed by humans, and they strongly rejected humanitarians' sentimental view of animals, wild or domestic.²¹ For their part, humanitarians disliked conservationists' apparent insensitivity to cruelty and also distrusted their endorsement or ambivalence about hunting and trapping. During rare moments, the two movements confronted related issues and recognized the formidable strength of their united voices. During the late nineteenth century, one of their most successful joint campaigns ended the wanton slaughter of exotic birds for use in women's feathered hats.

More often, however, they clashed, and their early disagreements were the historical antecedents to the post-1945 tensions that arose when the two movements cautiously united once again to stem the tide of wildlife destruction. As before, they rarely felt comfortable in each other's company, and the ideological schisms remained. Biocentric thinking supplanted traditional conservationism, but whereas modern environmentalists grounded their activism in ecological systems, humanitarians still focused primarily on animal suffering. Nonetheless, they forged a reluctant alliance that effectively used both ecological and cruelty arguments and culminated in the most significant legal recognition for wild

animals to that point—the Endangered Species Act (1969, 1973) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972). In the aftermath of these triumphs, both movements again acknowledged the enormous potential of their unity, but they stubbornly traveled separate roads of activism and ideology. In recent years, activists have talked again of tearing down the barriers, but beyond sporadic, fleeting unions, nature and animal advocates still founder in their attempts to construct an enduring bond that valorizes a passion for both the individual animal and natural systems.

Undoubtedly, infighting and strained alliances inhibited development of the unified front needed to combat the power and responses of numerous oppositional forces. Over the years, animal advocacy's diverse agenda has spawned many enemies, including railroads, meatpackers, carriage and omnibus companies, circuses, hunters, trappers, the fashion industry, zoos, factory farms, biomedical interests, multinational corporations, the casual carnivore, local municipalities, state governments, and even the federal government. But in the first years of the movement, few of those targeted took the threat seriously. In fact, most dismissed animal advocates with a derisive chuckle and predicted the rapid demise of such a strange fringe element. In their view, no intelligent person would support the preposterous notion that, ethically, animals deserved rights. However, as animal defenders racked up successful prosecutions and public opinion shifted toward the humane cause, the early flippancy quickly faded, and opponents coalesced into their own groups. Adversaries of the movement sometimes worked together, and sometimes they did not, but all constructed and reconstructed persuasive criticisms. In particular, the biomedical interests and corporations were most effective in distilling their scorn into manifestations of what I dub the animal rights "bogeyman"—a devious monster that threatened the very welfare of human society. Depending on the social context and the interest being attacked, the bogeyman assumed various and often interrelated guises. As bogeyman 1, 2, or 3, the animal advocate was depicted as antiprogress, antiscience, or unpatriotic, respectively—someone who would sacrifice inventions, product safety, or even national security for the sake of a suffering rabbit. As bogeyman 4, the advocate was portrayed as antihuman—a misanthrope who would rather save a dog than a sick child. All of these allegations were repeatedly tied to bogeyman 5, the animal advocate as a fanatic and probably mentally unstable individual. Early provivisectionists found this particular manifestation

so appealing that several late nineteenth-century physicians concocted a diagnosable form of mental illness to explain such bizarre behavior. Sadly, they pronounced, these misguided souls suffered from “zoophil-psychosis.” With so many women in the movement, the doctors further concluded that the weaker sex was particularly susceptible to the malady. Coming from men who were increasingly viewed as sociocultural role models, such charges undermined antivivisection’s credibility.²² Later critics dropped the archaic terminology, but they retained the idea and still manipulated gender politics. Think about the charges leveled against Rachel Carson as a hysterical female: they echoed the old zoophil-psychosis diagnosis. In short, critics continued to finesse the essential bogeyman archetypes because they worked—and worked more than once. Positing such threats and charges effectively manipulated the entrenched belief systems that subjugated other species to humans and women to men.

For all its limitations and problems, the early animal advocacy movement laid the foundation for the more radical activism of the post-1975 period. Certainly, many of its accomplishments only modestly improved exploitive practices and abuses and left large elements of cruelty very much intact. Still, over generations, society did change its attitudes and behavior toward animals in important ways, and the boundaries of ethics for nonhumans expanded outward. The American animal advocacy movement planted a firm foot in society. And by 1975, humanitarians had constructed an impressive framework of legal and cultural precedents on which the next generation of radicals would build animal liberation.

And so, my thoughts circle back to the chimp on the magazine cover—and the question that was posed there. Does that primate possess certain rights long denied by humans? Does the dog in the laboratory, the hawk flying high overhead, or the cow facing slaughter? This book does not answer such questions: the debate on the issue of animal rights will surely persist and evolve. But by studying the advocacy movement and resurrecting its place in our broader history, we surely enrich our understanding of that moral and philosophical discussion. Equally important, we humans gain meaningful insight into who we are in terms of our beliefs and the impact of our actions on the natural world. The victims that animal advocates represent possess no socioeconomic power, no political clout, no voice to express their torment, and no means to participate

in their own movement. They also do not possess the capacity to assert their historical significance to our society. And they are significant. Whether or not we believe they have rights, animals are central to our lives, past and present. Our collective historical neglect, born of our own power and arrogance, effectively obscures a remarkable and fundamental chapter in our nation's narrative. The pages that follow begin the process of reclaiming the story.

