**Syllabus English 3 Reedley College**

English 3- Critical Reading, Writing, and Thinking   56110              SP 2019

Deborah Lapp 6-8:50 PM Soc. 39

Office hours: Monday 11AM-12 noon, and 12-5 by appointment; that is, I will generally be around all afternoon between my morning class and my evening class. This is the time I have slated to prep and read and talk to students, but it’s a long stretch, so I may go take a walk, so email first. Email to set it up by 11AM, so I’ll be sure to be there for you. I can conduct these sessions via email as well. I hope you take advantage of my long Mondays!

Please check your email frequently; here’s mine: deborah.lapp@reedleycollege.edu

**Important Dates:**

**Every Monday (except holidays): Lapp’s office hours in CCI-212**

**Jan. 21: holiday MLK**

**\*Jan. 29, 7PM Forum Hall: Nikiko Masumoto, storyteller, farmer, activist (req)**

**Feb. 18: holiday, Presidents’**

**\*Mar. 7, 7PM RC cafeteria: Meg Wolitzer, author (required)**

**Mar. 8: Last day to drop a class**

**\*Apr. 4th, 7PM Forum Hall: Helena Maria Viramontes and Manuel Munoz (req)**

**Apr. 15-18: Spring Recess**

**May 21 (Tuesday): final 9-10:50AM**

**\*if there is absolutely no way to attend the required on-campus events, you will prepare an extra written assignment and presentation to the class instead.**

ISMS: Exploring the Root of Preference

“Don’t need no ism schism”

 --CwV , comment on *Daily KOS*

"All lies and jest; still, a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest"

 --Paul Simon, "The Boxer," 1974

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3LFML_pxlY>

**Definitions of -ism**

**1:**a distinctive doctrine, cause, or theory

**2:**an oppressive and especially discriminatory attitude or belief; an extreme preference or chauvinism

“we all have got to come to grips with our *isms*”

* —Joycelyn Elders

**Recent rogue examples of -ism from the Web:**

* Rather, after some staff turnover and soul-searching, television, podcast, sketch, stand-up and social media satirists became a powerful point of contrast to the both-sides-*ism*that has plagued mainstream political media.

—[Dan Jakes,](https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-deckchairs-or-make-the-titanic-great-again-greenhouse-theater-center/Content?oid=50231646" \t "_blank)*[Chicago Reader](https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-deckchairs-or-make-the-titanic-great-again-greenhouse-theater-center/Content?oid=50231646" \t "_blank)*[, "The Deckchairs can't make American political comedy great again," 15 June 2018](https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-deckchairs-or-make-the-titanic-great-again-greenhouse-theater-center/Content?oid=50231646" \t "_blank)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kb6sytN-ahY>

<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2016/5/7/1524244/--ISM-the-cartoon-the-predicted-Donald-Trump-s-America-in-1948>

 (read comments)

**Course Outline:**

English 3 is a class in which we get to explore thinking--*critically*. I personally think every class ought to include critical thinking, but, since businesses, government, and education all request and require Critical Thinking for college transfer, I am so pleased to get to be the one to guide you as you learn to think more critically!

**Required:**

Wolitzer, Meg. *The Wife* (*The Female Persuasion*, the 1book1college read is recommended, but I think you may have read it last semester).

A notebook—this is for YOU, but successful students usually keep a notebook .

Regular (daily M-F) access to the Internet, Canvas, and SCCCD email.

Munoz, Manuel. *Faith Healer of Olive Avenue.*

The goal of this course is to sharpen your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills beyond the level achieved in English 1A, so you can thrive in academia and beyond. In this course I expect you to behave like a **scholar** and engage in the ideas of others as you develop and articulate your own ideas. To refer back to Paul Simon’s “The Boxer,” we must hear, listen, and regard the positions and ideas of others. Scholars before you have set their ideas down in writing, and it’s important to explore those ideas and reference them responsibly in your own writing. As a scholar yourself, you will set down **your** ideas in writing and share them with your classmates.

In English 1A, you learned the type of academic writing you’ll need in college and university. Having passed English 1A, you must have developed endurance and comprehension in academic reading, and I expect that, by virtue of passing English 1A, you have mastered documentation and citation, standard English grammar, mechanics and sentence structure, and have developed a college-level vocabulary. All of us need practice writing and reading difficult material, but **if you are insecure about any of these areas (if you received a C in English 1A, I’m talking to you), you MUST sign up for the Reading Writing Center or avail yourself of the free tutoring Reedley College offers**. I will gladly help you in my office; it’s amazing how much students learn with one-on-one help. I want you to be not just comfortable reading and writing, but **proud** of your ability and your work. You have important ideas, and this course will help you develop and express those ideas. Just accept that you have some things to learn, make learning those things a priority, and you will learn them.

**This is very important: A 3-unit class is typically 3 hours in class with 6 hours of homework (a total of 9 hours per week). It will take you somewhat longer if you are a slow reader. Budget your schedule accordingly.**

**Here’s what we’ll do in this class:**

**Summarize: (read closely and succinctly to explain the argument and method of any work)**

**Analyze: (assess HOW EFFECTIVE an argument is, considering the purpose and the audience, identifying  logical fallacies and “moves” the author makes that work or don’t work)**

**Argue: (compose a cogent argument with CLAIM, WARRANTS, and SUPPORT, avoiding logical fallacies and employing “moves” that do work)**

**Mediate: (to SYNTHESIZE all the above in a ROGERIAN argument, considering the NEEDS and CONCERNS of all parties, and offering a COMPROMISE solution).**

**Assignments and Grading:** Reading and discussing, writing, and presentation are all graded components of this class. All essays will be typed, double-spaced and scholarly in appearance—no folders, please, or fancy fonts. Present yourself and your work to me as the scholar I expect you to be. The form of documentation we use, called MLA style, is explained on the Purdue OWL website and the RWC tutors know all about this. I expect out- of-class essays already printed out at the **beginning** of the hour they are due, and presentations ready the day you have scheduled them.

**Here’s a good deal for you**: If you have produced drafts and participated in workshop and conference, but have still received D on any essay (except the final research paper), you may prepare a written proposal within the week outlining a revision plan. I am happy to help you with this plan, and usually it makes sense to work on this in my office. If I accept your proposal (which I will, if it is earnest), you will have one week to revise your paper. You’ll hand in all old drafts, my comment sheet or composition profile, and your approved proposal with the revision stapled on top. This involves more work for you, but the reward is a new evaluation and a new grade.

Get organized because **I won’t be accepting any late papers**, and a zero can have a devastating effect on your grade. Of course, if you are in dire and desperate straits, talk to me.

Plagiarism is presenting anyone else’s work as your own; it’s wrong; it’s against the law; and it will result in at least a zero on the assignment. We have Turnitin.com on this campus, and I am psychic. **If you are desperate, talk to me.**

There should be about 7 grades then, which are added up and divided by the number of essays grades, so you can determine your grade at any time. If you ever have any questions or worries, talk to me.

Outside of face-to-face conversation in office hours, the best way to “talk” to me is by email (do remember that you are communicating with your English professor, not your homie, do proofread your emails, and know that I usually check my email in the morning or during office hours; I don’t live online). You can refer to the website for info. One-on-one conversations with me usually net good results for students.

**Attendance and Participation**

I have noticed over the years a direct correlation between low grades and poor attendance. I may drop any student who has missed four classes. Classes in the first 3 weeks count double, and 2 “L’s” (late or leave-early) equal one absence. I am (possibly excessively) bothered by tardies, so just remember that parking is a pain, plan ahead, and be on time. I allow cellphones for class use, but English class is not the place to check email or Facebook. If you must leave to go to the restroom, you’ll leave your phone on my table.

**If you must miss a class, be sure to communicate with me**. You are responsible for what happened in your absence. I am strict but fair—it’s tough love (you’ll thank me later).

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e., Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible.

English 3 Syllabus by Weeks (subject to change and elaboration; articles to be chosen reflecting current events and class discussions)

underlined items are graded for 20% each**(200 pts).**

Week 1 (1/14): Intro, begin journals, summary vs. analysis; intro *The Wife*

 Homework: Ideas and attitudes survey; buy *The Wife*

Week 2 (holiday Monday): In preparation for Meg Wolitzer’s visit, begin *The Wife*

 Homework: pp. 1-25 in *The Wife*

Week 3: (1/28): (short Monday class) summary, TUES 1/29 MEET 7PM FORUM HALL Nikiko Masumoto;

 Homework: Response to Masumoto’s presentation, pp. 25-50 in *The Wife*

Week 4 (2/4):

 Homework: Summary of “Animal Liberation” due; intro analysis, pp. 51-100 in *The Wife*

Week 5 (2/11): draft analysis

 Homework:, pp. 101-150 in *The Wife*

Week 6 (Holiday Monday)

 Homework: pp. 151-219 in *The Wife*

Week 7 (2/25): “Animal Liberation” analysis due

 Homework: pp. 1-40 *Faith Healer of Olive Ave*

Week 8 (3/7): (instead of Mon. class) paper on *The Wife* due 3/7 THURSDAY MEET AT 7PM IN RC CAFETERIA

 Homework: pp. 41-90 *Faith Healer of Olive Ave*

Week 9 (3/11): Toulmin Argument draft from issue in *Faith Healer*

 Homework: pp. 91-140 *Faith Healer of Olive Ave*

Week 10 (3/18): Toulmin Argument due

 Homework: pp. 141-170 *Faith Healer of Olive Ave*

Week 11 (3/25): Hope for the ISM-schism: Rogerian Argument

 Homework: pp. 171-239 *Faith Healer of Olive Ave*

Week 12 (4/4): (short Mon. class) THURSDAY MEET 7PM FORUM HALL

Week 13 (4/8): Response to Munoz ’s presentation;

Week 14 (4/15): \_\_Problem-Solution Paper \_due

Week 15 (4/29 & 5/1):

 Homework:

**Week 16 (5/6 & 8):**

**Week 17 (5/13 & 15): prepare for final:**

**Final: Wed. May 22 10AM-noon**

Critical response questions about Plato’s Cave

rac·ism

ˈrāˌsizəm

noun

prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

"a program to combat racism"

synonyms: racial discrimination, racialism, racial prejudice, xenophobia, chauvinism, bigotry, casteism

"Aborigines are the main victims of racism in Australia"

the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

noun: racism

"theories of racism"

<http://theconversation.com/racism-citizenship-and-schooling-why-we-still-have-some-way-to-go-99373>

sex·ism

ˈsekˌsizəm

noun

prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex. [I’ve recently heard men complaining of sexist treatment]

synonyms: sexual discrimination, chauvinism, gender prejudice, gender bias

"your hiring practices have generated numerous complaints about sexism"

<https://www.campusreform.org/?ID=11095>

(read comments and insert)

ageism

age·ism

ˈājˌizəm/![data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAA4AAAAOCAQAAAC1QeVaAAAAi0lEQVQokWNgQAYyQFzGsIJBnwED8DNcBpK+DM8YfjMUokqxMRxg+A9m8TJsBLLSEFKMDCuBAv/hCncxfGWQhUn2gaVAktkMXkBSHmh0OwNU8D9csoHhO4MikN7BcAGb5H+GYiDdCTQYq2QubkkkY/E6CLtXdiJ7BTMQMnAHXxFm6IICvhwY8AYQL](data:None;base64...)

*noun*

1. prejudice or discrimination on the basis of a person's age.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2014/01/31/the-ugly-truth-about-age-discrimination/#58ce62e144e7>

(especially the cartoons)

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinebeaton/2016/11/11/too-young-to-lead-when-youth-works-against-you/#77b242993c2a>

speciesism

spe·cies·ism

ˈspēSHēˌzizəm,spēsē-

noun

the assumption of human superiority leading to the exploitation of animals.

<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/05/27/peter-singer-on-speciesism-and-racism/>

## Animal Liberation

[**Peter Singer**](https://www.nybooks.com/contributors/peter-singer/)

[APRIL 5, 1973 ISSUE](https://www.nybooks.com/issues/1973/04/05/)

#### Animals, Men and Morals

edited by Stanley Godlovitch, edited by Roslind Godlovitch, edited by John Harris

Taplinger, 240 pp., $6.50

### I

We are familiar with Black Liberation, Gay Liberation, and a variety of other movements. With Women’s Liberation some thought we had come to the end of the road. Discrimination on the basis of sex, it has been said, is the last form of discrimination that is universally accepted and practiced without pretense, even in those liberal circles which have long prided themselves on their freedom from racial discrimination. But one should always be wary of talking of “the last remaining form of discrimination.” If we have learned anything from the liberation movements, we should have learned how difficult it is to be aware of the ways in which we discriminate until they are forcefully pointed out to us. A liberation movement demands an expansion of our moral horizons, so that practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable are now seen as intolerable.

*Animals, Men and Morals* is a manifesto for an Animal Liberation movement. The contributors to the book may not all see the issue this way. They are a varied group. Philosophers, ranging from professors to graduate students, make up the largest contingent. There are five of them, including the three editors, and there is also an extract from the unjustly neglected German philosopher with an English name, Leonard Nelson, who died in 1927. There are essays by two novelist/critics, Brigid Brophy and Maureen Duffy, and another by Muriel the Lady Dowding, widow of Dowding of Battle of Britain fame and the founder of “Beauty without Cruelty,” a movement that campaigns against the use of animals for furs and cosmetics. The other pieces are by a psychologist, a botanist, a sociologist, and Ruth Harrison, who is probably best described as a professional campaigner for animal welfare.

Whether or not these people, as individuals, would all agree that they are launching a liberation movement for animals, the book as a whole amounts to no less. It is a demand for a complete change in our attitudes to nonhumans. It is a demand that we cease to regard the exploitation of other species as natural and inevitable, and that, instead, we see it as a continuing moral outrage. Patrick Corbett, Professor of Philosophy at Sussex University, captures the spirit of the book in his closing words:

…we require now to extend the great principles of liberty, equality and fraternity over the lives of animals. Let animal slavery join human slavery in the graveyard of the past.

The reader is likely to be skeptical. “Animal Liberation” sounds more like a parody of liberation movements than a serious objective. The reader may think: We support the claims of blacks and women for equality because blacks and women really are equal to whites and males—equal in intelligence and in abilities, capacity for leadership, rationality, and so on. Humans and nonhumans obviously are not equal in these respects. Since justice demands only that we treat equals equally, unequal treatment of humans and nonhumans cannot be an injustice.

This is a tempting reply, but a dangerous one. It commits the nonracist and non-sexist to a dogmatic belief that blacks and women really are just as intelligent, able, etc., as whites and males—and no more. Quite possibly this happens to be the case. Certainly attempts to prove that racial or sexual differences in these respects have a genetic origin have not been conclusive. But do we really want to stake our demand for equality on the assumption that there are no genetic differences of this kind between the different races or sexes? Surely the appropriate response to those who claim to have found evidence for such genetic differences is not to stick to the belief that there are no differences, whatever the evidence to the contrary; rather one should be clear that the claim to equality does not depend on IQ. Moral equality is distinct from factual equality. Otherwise it would be nonsense to talk of the equality of human beings, since humans, as individuals, obviously differ in intelligence and almost any ability one cares to name. If possessing greater intelligence does not entitle one human to exploit another, why should it entitle humans to exploit nonhumans?

Jeremy Bentham expressed the essential basis of equality in his famous formula: “Each to count for one and none for more than one.” In other words, the interests of every being that has interests are to be taken into account and treated equally with the like interests of any other being. Other moral philosophers, before and after Bentham, have made the same point in different ways. Our concern for others must not depend on whether they possess certain characteristics, though just what that concern involves may, of course, vary according to such characteristics.

Bentham, incidentally, was well aware that the logic of the demand for racial equality did not stop at the equality of humans. He wrote:

The day *may* come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?[1](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1973/04/05/animal-liberation/#fn-1)

Surely Bentham was right. If a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration, and, indeed, to count it equally with the like suffering (if rough comparisons can be made) of any other being.

So the only question is: do animals other than man suffer? Most people agree unhesitatingly that animals like cats and dogs can and do suffer, and this seems also to be assumed by those laws that prohibit wanton cruelty to such animals. Personally, I have no doubt at all about this and find it hard to take seriously the doubts that a few people apparently do have. The editors and contributors of *Animals, Men and Morals*seem to feel the same way, for although the question is raised more than once, doubts are quickly dismissed each time. Nevertheless, because this is such a fundamental point, it is worth asking what grounds we have for attributing suffering to other animals.

It is best to begin by asking what grounds any individual human has for supposing that other humans feel pain. Since pain is a state of consciousness, a “mental event,” it can never be directly observed. No observations, whether behavioral signs such as writhing or screaming or physiological or neurological recordings, are observations of pain itself. Pain is something one feels, and one can only infer that others are feeling it from various external indications. The fact that only philosophers are ever skeptical about whether other humans feel pain shows that we regard such inference as justifiable in the case of humans.

Is there any reason why the same inference should be unjustifiable for other animals? Nearly all the external signs which lead us to infer pain in other humans can be seen in other species, especially “higher” animals such as mammals and birds. Behavioral signs—writhing, yelping, or other forms of calling, attempts to avoid the source of pain, and many others—are present. We know, too, that these animals are biologically similar in the relevant respects, having nervous systems like ours which can be observed to function as ours do.

So the grounds for inferring that these animals can feel pain are nearly as good as the grounds for inferring other humans do. Only nearly, for there is one behavioral sign that humans have but nonhumans, with the exception of one or two specially raised chimpanzees, do not have. This, of course, is a developed language. As the quotation from Bentham indicates, this has long been regarded as an important distinction between man and other animals. Other animals may communicate with each other, but not in the way we do. Following Chomsky, many people now mark this distinction by saying that only humans communicate in a form that is governed by rules of syntax. (For the purposes of this argument, linguists allow those chimpanzees who have learned a syntactic sign language to rank as honorary humans.) Nevertheless, as Bentham pointed out, this distinction is not relevant to the question of how animals ought to be treated, unless it can be linked to the issue of whether animals suffer.

This link may be attempted in two ways. First, there is a hazy line of philosophical thought, stemming perhaps from some doctrines associated with Wittgenstein, which maintains that we cannot meaningfully attribute states of consciousness to beings without language. I have not seen this argument made explicit in print, though I have come across it in conversation. This position seems to me very implausible, and I doubt that it would be held at all if it were not thought to be a consequence of a broader view of the significance of language. It may be that the use of a public, rule-governed language is a precondition of conceptual thought. It may even be, although personally I doubt it, that we cannot meaningfully speak of a creature having an intention unless that creature can use a language. But states like pain, surely, are more primitive than either of these, and seem to have nothing to do with language.

Indeed, as Jane Goodall points out in her study of chimpanzees, when it comes to the expression of feelings and emotions, humans tend to fall back on non-linguistic modes of communication which are often found among apes, such as a cheering pat on the back, an exuberant embrace, a clasp of hands, and so on.[2](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1973/04/05/animal-liberation/#fn-2) Michael Peters makes a similar point in his contribution to *Animals, Men and Morals* when he notes that the basic signals we use to convey pain, fear, sexual arousal, and so on are not specific to our species. So there seems to be no reason at all to believe that a creature without language cannot suffer.

The second, and more easily appreciated way of linking language and the existence of pain is to say that the best evidence that we can have that another creature is in pain is when he tells us that he is. This is a distinct line of argument, for it is not being denied that a non-language-user conceivably could suffer, but only that we could know that he is suffering. Still, this line of argument seems to me to fail, and for reasons similar to those just given. “I am in pain” is not the best possible evidence that the speaker is in pain (he might be lying) and it is certainly not the only possible evidence. Behavioral signs and knowledge of the animal’s biological similarity to ourselves together provide adequate evidence that animals do suffer. After all, we would not accept linguistic evidence if it contradicted the rest of the evidence. If a man was severely burned, and behaved as if he were in pain, writhing, groaning, being very careful not to let his burned skin touch anything, and so on, but later said he had not been in pain at all, we would be more likely to conclude that he was lying or suffering from amnesia than that he had not been in pain.

Even if there were stronger grounds for refusing to attribute pain to those who do not have a language, the consequences of this refusal might lead us to examine these grounds unusually critically. Human infants, as well as some adults, are unable to use language. Are we to deny that a year-old infant can suffer? If not, how can language be crucial? Of course, most parents can understand the responses of even very young infants better than they understand the responses of other animals, and sometimes infant responses can be understood in the light of later development.

This, however, is just a fact about the relative knowledge we have of our own species and other species, and most of this knowledge is simply derived from closer contact. Those who have studied the behavior of other animals soon learn to understand their responses at least as well as we understand those of an infant. (I am not just referring to Jane Goodall’s and other well-known studies of apes. Consider, for example, the degree of understanding achieved by Tinbergen from watching herring gulls.)[3](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1973/04/05/animal-liberation/#fn-3) Just as we can understand infant human behavior in the light of adult human behavior, so we can understand the behavior of other species in the light of our own behavior (and sometimes we can understand our own behavior better in the light of the behavior of other species).

The grounds we have for believing that other mammals and birds suffer are, then, closely analogous to the grounds we have for believing that other humans suffer. It remains to consider how far down the evolutionary scale this analogy holds. Obviously it becomes poorer when we get further away from man. To be more precise would require a detailed examination of all that we know about other forms of life. With fish, reptiles, and other vertebrates the analogy still seems strong, with molluscs like oysters it is much weaker. Insects are more difficult, and it may be that in our present state of knowledge we must be agnostic about whether they are capable of suffering.

If there is no moral justification for ignoring suffering when it occurs, and it does occur in other species, what are we to say of our attitudes toward these other species? Richard Ryder, one of the contributors to *Animals, Men and Morals*, uses the term “speciesism” to describe the belief that we are entitled to treat members of other species in a way in which it would be wrong to treat members of our own species. The term is not euphonious, but it neatly makes the analogy with racism. The non-racist would do well to bear the analogy in mind when he is inclined to defend human behavior toward nonhumans. “Shouldn’t we worry about improving the lot of our own species before we concern ourselves with other species?” he may ask. If we substitute “race” for “species” we shall see that the question is better not asked. “Is a vegetarian diet nutritionally adequate?” resembles the slave-owner’s claim that he and the whole economy of the South would be ruined without slave labor. There is even a parallel with skeptical doubts about whether animals suffer, for some defenders of slavery professed to doubt whether blacks really suffer in the way that whites do.

I do not want to give the impression, however, that the case for Animal Liberation is based on the analogy with racism and no more. On the contrary, *Animals, Men and Morals* describes the various ways in which humans exploit nonhumans, and several contributors consider the defenses that have been offered, including the defense of meat-eating mentioned in the last paragraph. Sometimes the rebuttals are scornfully dismissive, rather than carefully designed to convince the detached critic. This may be a fault, but it is a fault that is inevitable, given the kind of book this is. The issue is not one on which one can remain detached. As the editors state in their Introduction:

Once the full force of moral assessment has been made explicit there can be no rational excuse left for killing animals, be they killed for food, science, or sheer personal indulgence. We have not assembled this book to provide the reader with yet another manual on how to make brutalities less brutal. Compromise, in the traditional sense of the term, is simple unthinking weakness when one considers the actual reasons for our crude relationships with the other animals.

The point is that on this issue there are few critics who are genuinely detached. People who eat pieces of slaughtered nonhumans every day find it hard to believe that they are doing wrong; and they also find it hard to imagine what else they could eat. So for those who do not place nonhumans beyond the pale of morality, there comes a stage when further argument seems pointless, a stage at which one can only accuse one’s opponent of hypocrisy and reach for the sort of sociological account of our practices and the way we defend them that is attempted by David Wood in his contribution to this book. On the other hand, to those unconvinced by the arguments, and unable to accept that they are merely rationalizing their dietary preferences and their fear of being thought peculiar, such sociological explanations can only seem insultingly arrogant.

### II

The logic of speciesism is most apparent in the practice of experimenting on nonhumans in order to benefit humans. This is because the issue is rarely obscured by allegations that nonhumans are so different from humans that we cannot know anything about whether they suffer. The defender of vivisection cannot use this argument because he needs to stress the similarities between man and other animals in order to justify the usefulness to the former of experiments on the latter. The researcher who makes rats choose between starvation and electric shocks to see if they develop ulcers (they do) does so because he knows that the rat has a nervous system very similar to man’s, and presumably feels an electric shock in a similar way.

Richard Ryder’s restrained account of experiments on animals made me angrier with my fellow men than anything else in this book. Ryder, a clinical psychologist by profession, himself experimented on animals before he came to hold the view he puts forward in his essay. Experimenting on animals is now a large industry, both academic and commercial. In 1969, more than 5 million experiments were performed in Britain, the vast majority without anesthetic (though how many of these involved pain is not known). There are no accurate US figures, since there is no federal law on the subject, and in many cases no state law either. Estimates vary from 20 million to 200 million. Ryder suggests that 80 million may be the best guess. We tend to think that this is all for vital medical research, but of course it is not. Huge numbers of animals are used in university departments from Forestry to Psychology, and even more are used for commercial purposes, to test whether cosmetics can cause skin damage, or shampoos eye damage, or to test food additives or laxatives or sleeping pills or anything else.

A standard test for foodstuffs is the “LD50.” The object of this test is to find the dosage level at which 50 percent of the test animals will die. This means that nearly all of them will become very sick before finally succumbing or surviving. When the substance is a harmless one, it may be necessary to force huge doses down the animals, until in some cases sheer volume or concentration causes death.

Ryder gives a selection of experiments, taken from recent scientific journals. I will quote two, not for the sake of indulging in gory details, but in order to give an idea of what normal researchers think they may legitimately do to other species. The point is not that the individual researchers are cruel men, but that they are behaving in a way that is allowed by our speciesist attitudes. As Ryder points out, even if only 1 percent of the experiments involve severe pain, that is 50,000 experiments in Britain each year, or nearly 150 every day (and about fifteen times as many in the United States, if Ryder’s guess is right). Here then are two experiments:

O. S. Ray and R. J. Barrett of Pittsburg gave electric shocks to the feet of 1,042 mice. They then caused convulsions by giving more intense shocks through cup-shaped electrodes applied to the animals’ eyes or through pressure spring clips attached to their ears. Unfortunately some of the mice who “successfully completed Day One training were found sick or dead prior to testing on Day Two.” [*Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*, 1969, Vol. 67, pp. 110-116]

At the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill, London, W. Feldberg and S. L. Sherwood injected chemicals into the brains of cats—“with a number of widely different substances, recurrent patterns of reaction were obtained. Retching, vomiting, defaecation, increased salivation and greatly accelerated respiration leading to panting were common features.”…

The injection into the brain of a large dose of Tubocuraine caused the cat to jump “from the table to the floor and then straight into its cage, where it started calling more and more noisily whilst moving about restlessly and jerkily…finally the cat fell with legs and neck flexed, jerking in rapid clonic movements, the condition being that of a major [epileptic] convulsion…within a few seconds the cat got up, ran for a few yards at high speed and fell in another fit. The whole process was repeated several times within the next ten minutes, during which the cat lost faeces and foamed at the mouth.”

This animal finally died thirty-five minutes after the brain injection. [*Journal of Physiology*, 1954, Vol. 123, pp. 148-167]

There is nothing secret about these experiments. One has only to open any recent volume of a learned journal, such as the *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*, to find full descriptions of experiments of this sort, together with the results obtained—results that are frequently trivial and obvious. The experiments are often supported by public funds.

It is a significant indication of the level of acceptability of these practices that, although these experiments are taking place at this moment on university campuses throughout the country, there has, so far as I know, not been the slightest protest from the student movement. Students have been rightly concerned that their universities should not discriminate on grounds of race or sex, and that they should not serve the purposes of the military or big business. Speciesism continues undisturbed, and many students participate in it. There may be a few qualms at first, but since everyone regards it as normal, and it may even be a required part of a course, the student soon becomes hardened and, dismissing his earlier feelings as “mere sentiment,” comes to regard animals as statistics rather than sentient beings with interests that warrant consideration.

Argument about vivisection has often missed the point because it has been put in absolutist terms: would the abolitionist be prepared to let thousands die if they could be saved by experimenting on a single animal? The way to reply to this purely hypothetical question is to pose another: Would the experimenter be prepared to experiment on a human orphan under six months old, if it were the only way to save many lives? (I say “orphan” to avoid the complication of parental feelings, although in doing so I am being overfair to the experimenter, since the nonhuman subjects of experiments are not orphans.) A negative answer to this question indicates that the experimenter’s readiness to use nonhumans is simple discrimination, for adult apes, cats, mice, and other mammals are more conscious of what is happening to them, more self-directing, and, so far as we can tell, just as sensitive to pain as a human infant. There is no characteristic that human infants possess that adult mammals do not have to the same or a higher degree.

(It might be possible to hold that what makes it wrong to experiment on a human infant is that the infant will in time develop into more than the nonhuman, but one would then, to be consistent, have to oppose abortion, and perhaps contraception, too, for the fetus and the egg and sperm have the same potential as the infant. Moreover, one would still have no reason for experimenting on a nonhuman rather than a human with brain damage severe enough to make it impossible for him to rise above infant level.)

The experimenter, then, shows a bias for his own species whenever he carries out an experiment on a nonhuman for a purpose that he would not think justified him in using a human being at an equal or lower level of sentience, awareness, ability to be self-directing, etc. No one familiar with the kind of results yielded by these experiments can have the slightest doubt that if this bias were eliminated the number of experiments performed would be zero or very close to it.

### III

If it is vivisection that shows the logic of speciesism most clearly, it is the use of other species for food that is at the heart of our attitudes toward them. Most of *Animals, Men and Morals* is an attack on meat-eating—an attack which is based solely on concern for non-humans, without reference to arguments derived from considerations of ecology, macrobiotics, health, or religion.

The idea that nonhumans are utilities, means to our ends, pervades our thought. Even conservationists who are concerned about the slaughter of wild fowl but not about the vastly greater slaughter of chickens for our tables are thinking in this way—they are worried about what we would lose if there were less wildlife. Stanley Godlovitch, pursuing the Marxist idea that our thinking is formed by the activities we undertake in satisfying our needs, suggests that man’s first classification of his environment was into Edibles and Inedibles. Most animals came into the first category, and there they have remained.

Man may always have killed other species for food, but he has never exploited them so ruthlessly as he does today. Farming has succumbed to business methods, the objective being to get the highest possible ratio of output (meat, eggs, milk) to input (fodder, labor costs, etc.). Ruth Harrison’s essay “On Factory Farming” gives an account of some aspects of modern methods, and of the unsuccessful British campaign for effective controls, a campaign which was sparked off by her *Animal Machines*(Stuart: London, 1964).

Her article is in no way a substitute for her earlier book. This is a pity since, as she says, “Farm produce is still associated with mental pictures of animals browsing in the fields,…of hens having a last forage before going to roost….” Yet neither in her article nor elsewhere in *Animals, Men and Morals* is this false image replaced by a clear idea of the nature and extent of factory farming. We learn of this only indirectly, when we hear of the code of reform proposed by an advisory committee set up by the British government.

Among the proposals, which the government refused to implement on the grounds that they were too idealistic, were: “*Any animal should at least have room to turn around freely*.”

Factory farm animals need liberation in the most literal sense. Veal calves are kept in stalls five feet by two feet. They are usually slaughtered when about four months old, and have been too big to turn in their stalls for at least a month. Intensive beef herds, kept in stalls only proportionately larger for much longer periods, account for a growing percentage of beef production. Sows are often similarly confined when pregnant, which, because of artificial methods of increasing fertility, can be most of the time. Animals confined in this way do not waste food by exercising, nor do they develop unpalatable muscle.

“*A dry bedded area should be provided for all stock*.” Intensively kept animals usually have to stand and sleep on slatted floors without straw, because this makes cleaning easier.

“*Palatable roughage must be readily available to all calves after one week of age*.” In order to produce the pale veal housewives are said to prefer, calves are fed on an all-liquid diet until slaughter, even though they are long past the age at which they would normally eat grass. They develop a craving for roughage, evidenced by attempts to gnaw wood from their stalls. (For the same reason, their diet is deficient in iron.)

“*Battery cages for poultry should be large enough for a bird to be able to stretch one wing at a time*.” Under current British practice, a cage for four or five laying hens has a floor area of twenty inches by eighteen inches, scarcely larger than a double page of the *New York Review of Books*. In this space, on a sloping wire floor (sloping so the eggs roll down, wire so the dung drops through) the birds live for a year or eighteen months while artificial lighting and temperature conditions combine with drugs in their food to squeeze the maximum number of eggs out of them. Table birds are also sometimes kept in cages. More often they are reared in sheds, no less crowded. Under these conditions all the birds’ natural activities are frustrated, and they develop “vices” such as pecking each other to death. To prevent this, beaks are often cut off, and the sheds kept dark.

How many of those who support factory farming by buying its produce know anything about the way it is produced? How many have heard something about it, but are reluctant to check up for fear that it will make them uncomfortable? To non-speciesists, the typical consumer’s mixture of ignorance, reluctance to find out the truth, and vague belief that nothing really bad could be allowed seems analogous to the attitudes of “decent Germans” to the death camps.

There are, of course, some defenders of factory farming. Their arguments are considered, though again rather sketchily, by John Harris. Among the most common: “Since they have never known anything else, they don’t suffer.” This argument will not be put by anyone who knows anything about animal behavior, since he will know that not all behavior has to be learned. Chickens attempt to stretch wings, walk around, scratch, and even dust-bathe or build a nest, even though they have never lived under conditions that allowed these activities. Calves can suffer from maternal deprivation no matter at what age they were taken from their mothers. “We need these intensive methods to provide protein for a growing population.” As ecologists and famine relief organizations know, we can produce far more protein per acre if we grow the right vegetable crop, soy beans for instance, than if we use the land to grow crops to be converted into protein by animals who use nearly 90 percent of the protein themselves, even when unable to exercise.

There will be many readers of this book who will agree that factory farming involves an unjustifiable degree of exploitation of sentient creatures, and yet will want to say that there is nothing wrong with rearing animals for food, provided it is done “humanely.” These people are saying, in effect, that although we should not cause animals to suffer, there is nothing wrong with killing them.

There are two possible replies to this view. One is to attempt to show that this combination of attitudes is absurd. Roslind Godlovitch takes this course in her essay, which is an examination of some common attitudes to animals. She argues that from the combination of “animal suffering is to be avoided” and “there is nothing wrong with killing animals” it follows that all animal life ought to be exterminated (since all sentient creatures will suffer to some degree at some point in their lives). Euthanasia is a contentious issue only because we place some value on living. If we did not, the least amount of suffering would justify it. Accordingly, if we deny that we have a duty to exterminate all animal life, we must concede that we are placing some value on animal life.

This argument seems to me valid, although one could still reply that the value of animal life is to be derived from the pleasures that life can have for them, so that, provided their lives have a balance of pleasure over pain, we are justified in rearing them. But this would imply that we ought to produce animals and let them live as pleasantly as possible, without suffering.

At this point, one can make the second of the two possible replies to the view that rearing and killing animals for food is all right so long as it is done humanely. This second reply is that so long as we think that a nonhuman may be killed simply so that a human can satisfy his taste for meat, we are still thinking of nonhumans as means rather than as ends in themselves. The factory farm is nothing more than the application of technology to this concept. Even traditional methods involve castration, the separation of mothers and their young, the breaking up of herds, branding or ear-punching, and of course transportation to the abattoirs and the final moments of terror when the animal smells blood and senses danger. If we were to try rearing animals so that they lived and died without suffering, we should find that to do so on anything like the scale of today’s meat industry would be a sheer impossibility. Meat would become the prerogative of the rich.

I have been able to discuss only some of the contributions to this book, saying nothing about, for instance, the essays on killing for furs and for sport. Nor have I considered all the detailed questions that need to be asked once we start thinking about other species in the radically different way presented by this book. What, for instance, are we to do about genuine conflicts of interest like rats biting slum children? I am not sure of the answer, but the essential point is just that we *do* see this as a conflict of interests, that we recognize that rats have interests too. Then we may begin to think about other ways of resolving the conflict—perhaps by leaving out rat baits that sterilize the rats instead of killing them.

I have not discussed such problems because they are side issues compared with the exploitation of other species for food and for experimental purposes. On these central matters, I hope that I have said enough to show that this book, despite its flaws, is a challenge to every human to recognize his attitudes to nonhumans as a form of prejudice no less objectionable than racism or sexism. It is a challenge that demands not just a change of attitudes, but a change in our way of life, for it requires us to become vegetarians.

Can a purely moral demand of this kind succeed? The odds are certainly against it. The book holds out no inducements. It does not tell us that we will become healthier, or enjoy life more, if we cease exploiting animals. Animal Liberation will require greater altruism on the part of mankind than any other liberation movement, since animals are incapable of demanding it for themselves, or of protesting against their exploitation by votes, demonstrations, or bombs. Is man capable of such genuine altruism? Who knows? If this book does have a significant effect, however, it will be a vindication of all those who have believed that man has within himself the potential for more than cruelty and selfishness.

Summary:

### [ARCHIVES](http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/browser) | 1978

# *Hers*

JAN. 26, 1978

IT IS NO news that many women are defecting from the ranks of civil libertarians on the issue of obscenity. The conviction of Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler magazine—before his metamorphosis into a born‐again Christian—was greeted with unabashed feminist approval. Harry Reems, the unknown actor who was convicted by a Memphis iury for conspiring to distribute the movie “Deep Throat,” has carried! on ohs legal battes with almost be support from women who ordinarily regard themgelves as supporters of the First. Amendment. Feminist. writers and scholars have even discussed the possibility of making common cause against pornography with adversaries of the women's movement—including opponents of the equal rights amendment and “right to life” forces.

All of this is deeply disturbing to a woman writer who believes, as I always have and still do, in an absolute interpretation of the First Amendment. Nothing in Larry Flynt's garbage convinces me that the .late Justice Hugo L. Black was wrong in his opinion that “the Federal Government is without any power whatsoever under the Cc:institution to put any type of burden on free speech and expression of ideas of any king (as distinguished from conduct).” Many women I like and respect tell me I am wrong; I cannot remember having become involved in so many heated discussions of a public issue since the end of the Vietnam War. A feminist writer described my views as those of a “First Amendment junkie.”

• • •

Many feminist arguments for controls on pornography carry the implicit conviction that porn books, magazines and movies pose a greater threat women than similarly repulsive exercises of free speech pose to other offended groups. This conviction has, of course, been shared by everyone—regardless of race, creed or sex—who has ever argued in, favor of abridging the First Amendment. It the argument used by some Jews who have withdrawn their support from the American Civil Liberties Union because it has defended the right of American Nazis to march through a community inhabited by survivors of Hitler's concentration camps.

If feminists want to argue that the protection of the Constitution should not be extended to any Particularly odious or threatening form of speech, they have a reasonable argument (although I don't agree with it). But it is ridiculous to suggest that the porn shops on 42d Street are more disgusting to Women than a march of neo‐Nazis is to survivors of the extermination camps.

The arguments over pornography also blur the vital distinction between expression of ideas and conduct. When I say I believe unreservedly in the First Amendment, someone always comes back me with the issue of “kiddie porn.” But kiddie porn is not a First Amendment issue. It is an issue of the abuse of power—the power adults have over children—and not of obscenity. Parents and promoters have no more right to use their children to make porn movies than they do to send. them to work in coal mines. The responsible adults should be prosecuted, just as adults who use children for backbreaking farm labor should be prosecuted.

Susan Brownmiller, in “Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape,” has described pornography as “the undiluted essence of anti‐female propaganda.” I, think this is a fair description of some types pornography, especially of the brutish subspecies that equates sex with death and portrays women primarily as objects of violence.

The equation of sex and violence, personified by some glossy rock record album covers as well by Hustler, has fed the illusion that censorship pornography can be conducted on a more rational basis than other types of censorship. Are all pictures of naked women obscene? Clearly not, says a friend. A Renoir nude is art, she says, and Hustler is trash. “Any reasonable person” knows that.

But what about something between art and trash—something, say, along the lines of Playboy or Penthouse magazines? I asked five women for their reactions to one picture in Penthouse and got responses that ranged from “lovely” and “sensuous” to “revolting” and “demeaning.” Feminists, like everyone else, seldom have rational reasons for their preferences in erotica. Like members of juries, they tend disagree when confronted with something that falls short of 100 percent vulgarity.

In any case, feminists will not be the arbiters of good taste if it becomes easier to harass, prosecute and convict people on obscenity charges. Most of the people who want to censor'girlie magazines are equally opposed to open discussion of issues that are of vital concern to women: rape, abortion, menstruation, contraception, lesbianism—in fact, the entire range of sexual experience from a woman's viewpoint.

Feminist writers and editors and film makers have limited financial resources: Confronted by a determined prosecutor, Hugh Hefner will fare better than Susan Brownmiller. Would the Memphis jurors who .convicted Harry Reems for his role in “Deep Throat” be inclined to take a more positive view of paintings of the female genitalia done by sensitive feminist artists? Ms. magazine has printed color reproductions of some of those art works; Ms. is already banned from a number of high school libraries because someone considers it threatening and/or obscene.

Feminists who want to censor what they regard as harmful pornography have essentially the same motivation as other would‐be censors: They want to use the power of the state to accomplish what they have been unable to achieve in the marketplace of ideas and images. The impulse to censor places no faith in the possibilities of demoeratic persuasion.

It isn't easy to persuade certain men that they have better uses for $1.95 each month than to spend it on a copy of Hustler? Well, then, give the men no choice in the matter.

I believe there is also a connection between the impulse toward censorship on the part of people who used to consider themselves civil libertarians and a more general desire to shift responsibility from individuals to institutions. When I saw the movie “Looking for Mr. Goodbar,” I was stunned by its series of visual images equating sex and violence, coupled with what seems to me the mindless message (a distortion of the fine Judith Rossner novel) that casual sex equals death. When I came out the movie, I was even more shocked to see parents standing in line with children between the ages of 10 and 14.

I simply don't know why a parent would take a child to see such a movie,'any more than I understand why people feel they can't turn off a television set their child is watching. Whenever I say that, my friends tell me I don't know how it is because I don't have children, True, but I do have parents. When I was a child, they did turn off the TV. They didn't expect the Federal Communications Commission to do their job for them.

I am a First Amendment junkie. You can't OD on the First Amendment, because free speech is its own best antidote.

PowerPoint on Summary

na·tion·al·ism

ˈnaSH(ə)nəˌlizəm

noun

patriotic feeling, principles, or efforts.

synonyms: patriotism, patriotic sentiment, flag-waving, xenophobia, chauvinism, jingoism

"their extreme nationalism was frightening"

an extreme form of this, especially marked by a feeling of superiority over other countries.

plural noun: nationalisms

advocacy of political independence for a particular country.

<https://www.thestreet.com/politics/what-is-nationalism-14642847>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-we-dont-call-it-nationalists-day/2017/04/16/2baa4a72-2145-11e7-a0a7-8b2a45e3dc84_story.html?utm_term=.18bcdf749b68>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/america-needs-more-patriotism/2018/07/03/aa16f54e-7f00-11e8-b0ef-fffcabeff946_story.html?utm_term=.464c66443c2d&wpisrc=nl_ideas&wpmm=1>

fem·i·nism

ˈfeməˌnizəm/

*noun*

the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *synonyms:* | the women's movement, the feminist movement, women's liberation, female emancipation, women's rights; *informal*women's lib"a longtime advocate of feminism" |

<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=feminism>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2017/03/08/what-is-feminism-and-why-do-so-many-women-and-men-hate-it/#5ddaa19c7e8e>

[Opinion](https://www.nytimes.com/pages/opinion/index.html)

**What Feminists Can Do for Boys**

**By Jessica Valenti (**Ms. Valenti is the author of six books on feminism).

* July 25, 2018

One of the many political ironies of our time is that feminism’s most powerful cultural moment has coincided with the rise of extreme misogyny. While women protest, run for office and embrace the movement for gender equality in record numbers, a generation of young, mostly white men are being radicalized into believing that their problems stem from women’s progress.

Whether it’s [misogynist terrorism](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/opinion/when-misogynists-become-terrorists.html), the rash of young men feeling sexually entitled to women or the persistent stereotype of “real men” as powerful and violent, it’s never been clearer that American boys are in desperate need of intervention.

Though feminists have always recognized the anguish that boys face in a patriarchal system, we haven’t built the same structures of support for boys that we have for girls. If we want to stop young men from being taken in by sexism, that has to change.

One of feminism’s biggest successes was creating an alternative culture for girls and women seeking respite from mainstream constraints. Girls worried about unrealistic beauty standards, for example, can turn to the body positivity movement. Those of us who find traditional media’s treatment of women unappealing can read feminist blogs and magazines; female college students who have critical questions about how gender shapes their lives can take women’s studies classes.

From social media campaigns to after-school equality clubs, feminism has birthed dozens of online and real-life spaces where girls can find alternatives to the sexist status quo.

But boys and young men who are struggling have no equivalent culture. As [Sarah Rich recently wrote in](https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/06/imagining-a-better-boyhood/562232/%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)The Atlantic, “While society is chipping away at giving girls broader access to life’s possibilities, it isn’t presenting boys with a full continuum of how they can be in the world.”

This gap has made boys susceptible to misogynist hucksters peddling get-manly-quick platitudes and dangerous online extremist communities.

In the last year, for example, we’ve seen young Americans flock to the work of Jordan Peterson, a Canadian psychology professor and YouTube philosopher who’s made his name [refusing to call students by their preferred pronouns](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37875695%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) and suggesting that [men are in charge because they’re just better suited for it](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/18/style/jordan-peterson-12-rules-for-life.html).

Some of Mr. Peterson’s other claims include the idea that sexual harassment wouldn’t be such a problem [if women didn’t wear makeup to work](https://t.co/x0CyEPFWSF%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) and that “enforced monogamy” would stop young men from committing mass murder. (He is notably silent on [how women might fare](https://www.vox.com/conversations/2018/6/6/17409144/jordan-peterson-12-rules-for-life-feminism-philosophy%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)being partnered to someone with a propensity for horrific violence.)

Online misogynist communities offer similarly dangerous advice to young men distressed over sexual rejection. Instead of teaching them that their value has nothing to do with their sexual experience — or that they are simply not entitled to sexual attention no matter how badly they want it — “incel” forums tell boys that the real problem is women’s freedom. If women didn’t have a choice, they say, then any man could have sex with whomever he liked.

Boys and young men are not seeking these spaces out because they inherently hate women or think they are inferior. They seek them out because they are desperate for community and answers in a confusing time of their lives. Consider Jack Peterson, [a young man profiled by](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/unmaking-of-an-incel_us_5b11a9aee4b0d5e89e1fb519%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)HuffPost this year. He explained how he found incel forums and decided he must be one too because he was also lonely and hadn’t had sex yet. He was 17 years old.

Feminist ideas can help men — be it the rejection of expectations that men be strong and stoic or ending the silence around male victims of sexual violence. But boys also need the same kind of culture we created for girls.

There is an understandable feminist skepticism of claims that the culture is failing boys. White male leaders in government, corporations and institutions vastly outnumber women. Men have more cultural and economic power than women. And more often than not, assertions that young men are under siege are more about reinforcing traditional gender power dynamics than helping to see how those norms harm boys.

Feminism has long focused on issues of sexual assault, reproductive rights, harassment and more. But issues don’t hurt women, men do. Until we grapple with how to stop misogynists themselves — starting with ensuring boys don’t grow up to be one — women will never be free.

**So how can we gain a deeper understanding of where we personally stand on the issue of equality?**

Asking yourself these questions and answering them candidly will get you closer to recognizing what you truly, honestly believe:

1. Do you believe that women and men deserve equal rights and equal opportunities? If not, why not, specifically?

2. Do you oppose the idea that every human being on the planet deserves equal rights and equal access to all opportunities? If you oppose it, what are you concerned will happen if equality is achieved? What are the downsides, in your way of thinking?

3. Do you believe that only certain groups of people should be allowed to have access to certain opportunities and rights? If so, which groups should be favored and granted this access, and who should decide that?

4. Do you believe that it would be inherently fair to grant women access to only partial rights while men have full array of other rights and opportunities?

5. Think back on what has shaped all your beliefs about these issues. Where did they come from specifically? Childhood, early adulthood? Your personal experiences with men and women, or what you read and watch in the media? Who in your “tribe,” family or peers influences your beliefs today?

6. What makes you mad and agitated to read in the media, about men, women and equality?

7. Do you believe that a world that prevents certain people from accessing full rights and opportunities would lead to a fair, healthy, prosperous world for all?

8. In the end, do your beliefs actually feel *right* for you? Do they feel aligned with who you really are -- healthy, whole, integrity-filled, compassionate, and fair?

• Do your beliefs and behaviors support equality for all, or just for some?

• Could there be hidden biases that color how you experience people of different genders, race, color, religion, etc? Could your personal experiences be tainting how you’re looking at the whole world?

• If you believe in equality for women, but not in feminism, can you articulate why?

• If you believe in equality for all, are you able to take a brave stand for it, in a way that feels right to you, in your own life and in your own sphere of influence?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZypRbxVekM>

(do her “assignment” at about 9min)

What makes you who you are?

 your upbringing

 your ancestral history

 triumphs and tribulations

 relationships, good and bad

 passions

What’s easy for you? What talents come easily? What came easily as a child?

20 facts about you (sharing is not bragging)—ways to attract the people who need you.

What do you want to have done when you are 90? Ask the person you know who’s closest to 90 what he or she thinks.

# Does American ‘Tribalism’ End in a Compromise, or a Fight?

**By Laila Lalami**

* June 26, 2018

Early in June, the valedictorian at Bell County High School in southeastern Kentucky delivered a graduation speech filled with inspirational quotations that, he said with a twinkle in his eye, he’d found on Google. One line, in particular, drew wild applause from the crowd in this conservative part of the country: “ ‘Don’t just get involved. Fight for your seat at the table. Better yet, fight for a seat at the head of the table.’ — Donald J. Trump.” As people cheered, though, the valedictorian issued a correction: “Just kidding, that was Barack Obama.” Right away, the applause died down, and a boo could be heard. The identity of the messenger, it was painfully evident, mattered more than the content of the message.

When Americans hear about “tribalism,” they often imagine a faraway land where one ethnic or religious faction mercilessly persecutes another for generations. Only recently have many in this country begun to appraise the extent of the tribalism at home. Writing for The Times’s Op-Ed page in February, Amy Chua, the Yale law professor who once extolled the merits of “tiger moms,” [warned](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/20/opinion/destructive-political-tribalism.html) about the dangers of a “zero-sum tribalist contest.” Jonah Goldberg, the conservative columnist and pundit who once railed against “liberal fascism,” recently went on NPR’s “Morning Edition” to [sound the alarm](https://www.npr.org/2018/04/23/604854281/goldbergs-suicide-of-the-west-tackles-ills-of-identity-politics%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) on “a cheap form of tribalism,” telling the host Steve Inskeep that “people are retreating into their little cocoons.” And in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, Senator Orrin Hatch [lamented](https://www.hatch.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/5/identity-politics-threatens-the-american-experiment%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) that identity politics — “tribalism by another name” — could turn the nation into “a divided country of ideological ghettos.”

In its first sense, tribalism refers to the organization of people along lines of common ancestry or joint identity for the purpose of exercising political power — as the indigenous people of many parts of the world, including the Americas, have long done. But over time, as new forms of governance appeared — city-states, kingdoms and especially empires, which controlled vast colonies with different races, cultures and languages — tribalism came to be seen as crude and antiquated, a political structure that could never hope to address the challenges of large states. And now, in the modern era, the word is used almost exclusively in its second, derogatory sense, to suggest an irrational loyalty to your people.

The impulse to belong to a clan is deeply human, however, and new tribes continue to form, organized not around ancestry but along fuzzier lines of ideology or demography. Modern tribes, like ancient ones, have idiosyncratic languages; one faction might speak of “illegal aliens,” “traditional families” and “the life of the unborn,” while the other talks of “undocumented workers,” “marriage equality” and “my body, my choice.” They rule over separate territories, listen to different oracles, uphold distinct values and dismiss contradictory information as unreliable propaganda or “fake news.”

Above all, tribe members protect one another from perceived attacks by outsiders. Last April, when the MSNBC host Joy Reid was found to have posted homophobic content on a now-defunct blog (and claimed, dubiously, to have been hacked), many liberals rallied to her side anyway, pointing out that the posts were more than 10 years old and urging others to accept her profuse apologies. Had such posts been attributed to a Fox News personality, however, it’s almost certain those same liberals would have offered no opportunity for forgiveness. The gift of absolution is given within a tribe, and rarely outside it.

Political tribes can organize along stark lines: the working class versus the 1 percent, baby boomers versus millennials, city dwellers versus rural people. But they can also be more nebulous, forming around subtleties of education, lifestyle or cultural taste. Some years ago, when Howard Dean was the front-runner for the Democratic nomination for the presidency, the conservative PAC Club for Growth ran a TV ad in Iowa featuring an elderly white couple being asked about Dean’s tax proposal. “What do I think?” the husband says. “I think Howard Dean should take his tax-hiking, government-expanding, latte-drinking, sushi-eating, Volvo-driving, New York Times-reading —” Then his wife interrupts: “body-piercing, Hollywood-loving, left-wing freak show back to Vermont, where it belongs.”

The question was at least putatively about Dean’s plan to repeal George W. Bush’s tax cuts, but instead of eliciting a coherent opinion on how much tax should reasonably be withheld, from whom and for what services, it provoked a rant against a particular group of people, who were characterized almost entirely through their lifestyle and consumer choices. There was no need to talk policy, because the policy was reframed as an embrace of one tribe and a rejection of the other.

**In principle, the** United States is a country where various tribes are supposed to work in coalition to form what the founders called “a more perfect union.” Americans also pride themselves on having a “melting pot” model of immigration, in which each new group is thrown into the mix, contributing to the overall sustenance of the nation. But the reality is that, for most of this country’s history, one tribe has held power, deciding who was allowed to settle the land and who could be dispossessed, who was free and who was enslaved, who had the right to vote and who did not. The hegemony of white landowners prompted few, if any, complaints about tribalism in the national conversation. It was only when other factions began to demand justice and recognition — the “seat at the table” that Trump, but not Obama, was applauded for encouraging people to seek — that the debate about which tribe holds power became explicit rather than implicit.

It is not a coincidence, then, that use of the word “tribalism” in print increased significantly during the civil rights struggles, anti-war protests and cultural clashes of the 1960s, reaching a peak in 1972, when Richard Nixon campaigned for and won a second term. That era was characterized by turmoil, both abroad and here in the United States, where tribes rebelled against one another in nearly every public arena, from draft offices to college campuses to lunch counters. After Nixon’s resignation and the end of the Vietnam War, complaints about tribalism declined steadily, only to rise again in the 1990s.

Why the 1990s? Over the course of his presidency, Bill Clinton moved the Democratic Party to the right: He deregulated banks, cut welfare programs, signed the Defense of Marriage Act into law, built a border wall between San Diego and Tijuana and expanded mass incarceration. These are not progressive ideas, which left Republicans with few concrete policies that could distinguish them from Democrats. Republicans did, however, have culture — and, eventually, character. When Clinton’s affair with Monica Lewinsky surfaced in 1998, conservatives attacked him as the symbol of a lost and immoral society, while liberals minimized his offenses and portrayed the young intern as a harlot. Twenty years later, the two tribes would switch sides, with liberals denouncing Donald Trump for sexual predation while conservatives, including white evangelicals, rallied around him.

**Political tribes often** display similar group behavior, but this doesn’t mean that the values they hold are equivalent. Tearing migrant children away from their parents, for instance, is not a morally neutral policy. In moments like these, complaints about tribalism can be politically expedient — a way of making even the most consequential debate seem like a mere spat between loyalists on either side. (Where was this passion for the fates of asylum seekers, some conservatives have asked, during the Obama administration?) By reducing every question to tribalist point-scoring, it becomes easier to escape the moral implications of taking an asylum-seeking child from his or her mother and incarcerating them hundreds of miles apart.

Some people think that dialogue and debate can help the United States defeat its current tribalism. If only we could calmly talk about our differences, the argument goes, we would reach some compromise. But not all disagreements are bridgeable. The Union and the Confederacy did not resolve their differences through dialogue; it was a civil war that put an end to slavery. Jim Crow laws were defeated through mass protests and civil disobedience. Schools were desegregated though a Supreme Court decision, which had to be implemented with the help of the National Guard. The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed as a political necessity during World War II. Some fights are not talked away; they are, in the end, either won or lost.

This is not to say that tribal impasses of the moment can’t be broken. But it is generally not a good idea to expect people on the receiving end of brutal policies — like families broken apart by police violence, immigration raids, travel bans or anti-L.G.B.T. discrimination — to hash out a compromise over sweet tea. “Maybe we pushed too far,” Barack Obama is quoted as saying in a new memoir by Benjamin Rhodes, one of his closest aides. “Maybe people just want to fall back into their tribe.” What the ever-compromising Obama doesn’t consider is that resolution sometimes requires pushing even further.

Laila Lalami is the author, most recently, of “The Moor’s Account.” She last wrote a First Words column about what it takes to “[assimilate](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/01/magazine/what-does-it-take-to-assimilate-in-america.html)” in America.

# 13 Questions for the Next Economy

## [Susan Briante](https://m.poets.org/node/46623%22%20%5Ct%20%22_top)

On the side of the road, white cardboard in the shape of a man, illegible script. A signpost with scrawl: Will pay cash for diabetes strips. A system under the system with its black box. Disability hearing? a billboard reads. Trouble with Social Security? Where does the riot begin? Spark of dry grass, Russian thistle in flames, or butterflies bobbing as if pulled by unseen strings through the alleyway. My mother’s riot would have been peace. A bicycle wheel chained to a concrete planter. What metaphor can I use to describe the children sleeping in cages in detention centers? Birds pushed fenceward by a breeze? A train of brake lights extending? Mesquite pods mill under our feet on a rainless sidewalk. What revolution will my daughter feed? A break-the-state twig-quick snap or a long divining as if for water? A cotton silence? A death? Who will read this in the next economy, the one that comes after the one that kills us? What lessons will we take from the side of the road? A wooden crucifix, a white bicycle, a pinwheel, a poem waiting to be redacted: Which would you cross out?

## About This Poem

“The current political moment registers as both a crisis and the continuation of longstanding, poisonous strains of racism and capitalism, so I wanted to write intergenerationally. I am very interested in poems that don’t try to smooth over crisis or find ‘meaning’ in violence. Is there a potential for transformation in staying within what’s uncomfortable? Thus, the questions that remain unanswered, the worry that is not soothed.”
—Susan Briante