Liberatory Learning:

An Attentive, Problem-Posing Praxis for Multi-Species Dialogue

by

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Content Warnings

Below is a list of content warnings to flag potentially triggering content so that readers can make informed choices about what they engage with. I have offered specific page numbers for more explicit content, in addition to outlining several overarching themes that may be triggering for readers.

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General Content Warnings: Speciesism, Anthropocentrism, and Ableism

Abstract

In this paper, I explore how a praxis of attentiveness in combination with Freirean "problem-posing" education might enable other animals to be teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own liberation in the challenging context of Western, formal education where other animals as complex and subjective beings are typically excluded. I see this embodied, liberatory praxis as necessary in a context where the AIC systematically transforms other animals into commodities. I also see this praxis as an alternative to liberatory frameworks that center human actors while denying the active participation of other animals in their own liberation. I draw from ethics-based-epistemology, critical animal studies, and critical disability studies as my primary lenses of analysis. I also thread themes of playfulness and difference throughout. Through a mix of reflective vignettes, traditionally academic prose, and fictional musings, I explore how an attentive praxis enables nonverbal dialogue between different beings, opening up opportunities for limited understanding. I also explore Paulo Freire's problem-posing model of education, arguing that its anthropocentrism, speciesism, and ableism exclude other animals from liberatory dialogue. I address this concern by connecting a praxis of attentiveness with problem-posing education in order to simultaneously politicize embodied attentiveness while also making liberatory dialogue inclusive of other animals.

Dedications

This paper is dedicated to all of the feathered, furred, finned, scaled, winged, exo-skeletoned, mucus-lined, and wonderfully diverse other animals who have been a presence in my life (even if just for a fleeting moment). This paper is also dedicated to those other animals I will never meet but with whom my life is inextricably entwined. Above all, this paper is dedicated to Daisy and Murphy, who have taught and continue to teach me so much, leaving indelible marks on my soul.

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There are so many to whom I owe my gratitude. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Leesa Fawcett, whose deep respect and appreciation for the more-than-human world and whose expertise, feedback, and patience have shaped my writing in meaningful ways. I would like to acknowledge my sister, Alex Bunten-Walberg, whose friendship, constructive criticism, and writerly sensibilities have offered me immeasurable guidance. I am thankful for my friend, Katherine Chung, whose thorough feedback and key role in forming a supportive writing community were integral to my writing experience. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Murphy who challenges me daily to listen and be attentive to her unique perspective. She has taught me to engage in my proposed praxis and has opened my world up to so much marvelous difference.

Foreword

This Major Research Paper (MRP) arose out of my desire for more respectful, compassionate, and ethical relations among humans and other animals. As a vegan, a former volunteer at the Toronto Wildlife Center, an activist with Feminists for Animal Liberation, a companion to a feisty feline, and a member of a vast and ever-changing network of multi-species entanglements, I seek to ethically transform my personal relationships with other animals in addition to challenging their systemic oppression. Traci Warkentin's embodied praxis of attentiveness has been fundamental in my efforts address this concern. Through a praxis of attentiveness, I have been able to explore how ethical interspecies engagements might be rooted in embodiment. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy has also been crucial in providing me with a liberatory framework to politicize ethical, embodied attentiveness.

In addition to the deeply personal and ethical underpinnings of my MRP, it is also part of my ongoing development as a writer and academic. The process of writing this MRP has been formative in my continuing growth as a writer, allowing me to experiment with mingling playful reflection and traditionally academic prose. I look forward to further experimentation and risk-taking with my ever-evolving writing style.

In terms of content, this MRP has allowed me to engage with my area of concentration which focuses on challenging the Animal Industrial Complex (AIC) through education. The AIC – which systematically turns other animals into commodities for human consumption – is perpetuated in part by Western formal education which excludes other animals as subjective beings and includes them in reductive, objectifying, and instrumentalist ways. Ultimately, I explore how an attentive, problem-posing praxis can enable other animals to be teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own

liberation within formal Western educational contexts, challenging the underlying systems of domination that give rise to the AIC.

I utilize the critical animal studies (CAS) component as outlined in my Plan of Study (POS) as a primary lens of analysis. A CAS lens allows me to ground my pursuit of making formal education liberatory for other animals in intersectionality, engaged critical theory, and total liberation. CAS has ecofeminist roots, and as such, a CAS lens also allows me to imbue my work with ecofeminism's emphasis on the wider context of androcentric and anthropocentric world-views while simultaneously highlighting the value of the more-than-human world.

As my research progressed beyond my initial POS, my interest shifted away from my Humane Education (HE) component. While I still infuse my MRP with HE's emphasis on compassion and respect for all life (Selby 2010; Pederson 2004), I have chosen to instead favour other frameworks – particularly Jim Cheney and Anthony Weston's ethics-based-epistemology (1999) and a praxis of attentiveness as outlined by Traci Warkentin (2011). Like HE, ethics-based-epistemology and a praxis of attentiveness emphasize compassion and respect for all life. However, they also incorporate the additional elements of embodiment, playfulness, particularity, and applied ethics. They are also deeply compatible with politicized and liberatory pedagogical frameworks such as Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed (2016).

This MRP represents my ongoing development as an ally to other animals, a writer, and an academic. It will inform my ongoing activism, daily practices, and writing as well as my future PHD work.

I – Introduction

As I sit, trying to write something – anything – I find my mind meandering along trails of unproductive musings. And then, something lovely happens. My thoughts flutter and rest on a recent memory – one that energizes me and offers me a renewed sense of direction and purpose:

The air was beginning to cool while the summer sun sank amid a smear of orange and pink that made my heart ache with a pang of bitter-sweetness. As I sauntered down the grassy path to Maloca Garden, I noticed that there were snails lining the ground along my route. I crouched down to watch these beings whom I knew so very little about. I watched their expressive tentacles swivel and probe and I wondered what it must feel like to slide about the world in a long, mucus-lined body. Could they hear? Taste? Smell? See? How did they experience the vibrations of my approaching footsteps, the medley of nearby birdsong, or the melting of day into night? With whom were their closest relationships? What sorts of things were important to them?

Some of the snails shrank into their shells at my passing shadow while others continued to explore their surroundings, bodies outstretched and sampling the world around them. Several others seemed to be feeding on or mourning the remains of a deceased snail who lay crushed on the ground – or, perhaps, they were doing something else entirely beyond my understanding or imagination. Upon witnessing this, I suddenly realized that the snails whom I was watching were in danger of being accidently crushed under the footsteps of my fellow gardeners. Making an on-the-spot decision, I set out to relocate them from the hazardous footpath.

I stooped over with my nose to the ground, inching forward and moving snails from the path. My entire focus was on the ground immediately in front of me. When I finally paused for a moment to look up from my single-minded endeavour, I was faced with a family of skunks, not more than four meters away. All six of us froze upon this unexpected face(s)-to-face encounter. My heart raced in my chest and I was surprised to discover that my legs were clumsily backpedaling, widening the gap between us. The family, upon witnessing my retreat, quickly turned back the

way they had come and disappeared underneath a peeling, weather-worn garden shed. I wondered what they were thinking and feeling in their underground den. I wondered how they normally spent their evenings. What or who did they like to eat? Who did they regularly interact with? What knowledge of this place did they have? My mind bubbled with questions as I walked back home, leaving the skunks to inhabit the garden for the evening, undisturbed.

The above encounters left me exhilarated and full of wonder, curiosity, and countless ethical questions. The snails and skunks reminded me that the lives of all beings are deeply entangled, and that relationships and encounters between different beings can be full of meaningful exchanges, marvelous discoveries, profound insights, ethical and practical challenges, significant risks and vulnerabilities[1], and important opportunities for everyone involved. While I engaged the snails and skunks from my own particular, embodied perspective, it seems that these encounters were imbued with a depth of perspectives beyond merely my own.

Learning from Other Animals

> *The time appears ripe for a recognition of animals as complex, living beings, rather than as two-dimensional symbols, convenient metaphors, and passive objects of study. While the latter have been employed to generate an incredible amount of knowledge in the West, there is still so much to learn from the animals themselves.*
>
> *(Warkentin 2010, 102)*

Reflecting on this memory, I return to the questions and concerns which first encouraged me to write this paper. **I wonder how humans might compassionately, respectfully, and ethically attend to the diversity of other animals with whom our lives are so profoundly entangled. I also wonder what the role of listening to and learning from other animals**

[1] It is important to refrain from flattening out different experiences of risk and vulnerability as they are often of vastly different kind and degree for the beings involved in any given encounter. As someone with human privilege, my experience of risk is significantly different and less than that of, say, the snails whom I encountered.

might play in this endeavour. As the above quote from Traci Warkentin indicates, humans' lives intersect with countless other animals who experience meaningful, complex, and incredibly rich subjective worlds. The meaning and complexity of other animals' subjective worlds has been discussed by many philosophers, ethologists, animal studies scholars, and animal caretakers (Balcombe 2007; Bekoff 2007; Cheney and Weston 1999; Goodall 2010; Griffin 2001; Haraway 2003; 2008; Noske 1989) and is an assumption that I will ground this paper in. Following Warkentin, I believe that the value and richness of other animals' different subjective worlds demands that humans learn *from* their many varied perspectives and knowledges as opposed to merely learning *about* other animals in a manner that treats them as objects of study. I conceptualize 'learning from' not as a form of "[k]nowing [which] can take shape as a form of domination and control" (Weston and Cheney 1999, 124). Rather, I conceptualize 'learning from' as a way of "stepping in tune with [another] being" (Bringhurst qtd in Cheney and Weston 1999, 124). In this way, 'learning from' and 'learning with' are wholly compatible.

It is worth noting that I use the term "other animals" to refer to all animals other than humans[2]. This, I believe, challenges the human-animal binary by acknowledging that humans are also animals[3]. Like CAS scholar Lauren Corman, I hope to "attend to *all* [other] animals, even those too commonly considered 'unnatural,' domesticated, or somehow stripped of wildness, as beings worthy of consideration" (italics in original, 2011, 31). Thus, I will refrain from focusing on one particular category of other animal, opening up my exploration to include all other animals in an attempt to listen to and learn from them[4].

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[2] I choose to use the term, "other animals," as opposed to the commonly-used term "nonhuman animals" which negatively defines other animals in relation to a human referent.

[3] While challenging the human-animal binary, I am also mindful that many humans and groups of humans have historically and contemporarily been animalized and treated as sub-human within this binary.

[4] I recognize that there is a historical and contemporary reality in which humans *do* categorize other animals, and in which these categories have very real effects on human/animal relationships and the lived realities of different individuals across socially-constructed categories (e.g. "domestic," "wild," "invasive," "pet," "farm," "pest," etc.). Such a reality demands attention to the particularities and complexities of different lived realities. Thus, a next step beyond

Certainly, many humans already do appreciate the richness of other animals' lives and learn from their diverse perspectives and knowledges. Many Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples already relate to other animals as teachers and kin, listening to and learning from other animals in deeply relational and often daily practices (Atleo 2004; Battiste 2013; Cajete 1999; Robinson 2010). In addition, instances of humans sharing personal experiences with other animals and learning from them are plentiful, including Ramsey Affifi's interaction with a tern, Jane Goodall's ongoing relationship with chimpanzees in Gombe National Park, Teresa Lloro-Bidart's bond with a cat named Whiskey, or Val Plumwood's life-threatening encounter with a crocodile (Affifi 2011; Chernak McElroy 1997; Fawcett 2000; Goodall 2010; Haraway 2003; Lloro-Bidart 2015; Oliver 2009; Plumwood 1996). The opening vignette describing my experiences with the snails and skunks of Maloca Garden is another example of informal learning from other animals. Unfortunately, "[t]he institutionalization of education [in dominant Western society] enforces the cultural belief that education primarily or perhaps only occurs in recognized educational settings, such as school[s]" (Affifi 2011, 49). This belief ignores "[t]he various ways living beings teach and learn from those around them through living their lives," in what Affifi refers to as "lived curricula or, literally, a *curricula vitae*" (italics in original, 2011, 49). Thus, I ground this paper in a deference and respect for the role of lived experience in offering humans opportunities to encounter and learn from other animals.

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this paper is to focus on how my exploration might apply to different individuals who are categorized in particular ways. I am also mindful of concerns over generalizing other animals. Derrida, for example, is critical of those who do not

> think to distinguish animals one from another, and…[who] speak of "the animal" as of a single set that can be opposed to "us," "humans," subjects or *Da-seins* of an "I think," "I am," along the line of a single common trait and on the other side of a single, indivisible limit. Their examples are always as meager as possible and are always aimed at illustrating a general identity of the animal and not structural differences between different types of animals. (Derrida 2008, 90)

In an attempt to refrain from homogenizing other animals under a meaningless generalization, I emphasize what Matthew Calarco (2015) refers to as a difference approach in the field of critical animal studies. This approach highlights the radical singularity of individuals and sees value in difference. I elaborate upon this approach in this chapter.

Multi-Species Learning In Formal Education

> *To address the relationship between humans and other living beings completely, we must recognize that even the classroom is a learning space co-constituted by a larger field of relations. Opening to the notion that we continuously teach and learn from an audience of other living beings alters the way we interact with, see, understand, and relate with them.*
>
> *(Affifi 2011, 48)*

While recognizing that many nations, peoples, communities, and individuals already engage in learning from other animals in a lived curricula, **I wonder if humans might also learn from other animals in contexts where they are typically excluded**: spaces that have undergone, as Anthony Weston calls it, the "relentless humanization of our sense experience" in which 'nature' is treated as an intruder that must be kept out of human self-enclosures (2012, 82). Western formal education is one such space that has undergone "relentless humanization" in which other animals as subjective beings are largely erased, ignored, and excluded (Weston 2012, 82). Elliott Eisner's work addresses the *null curriculum* of formal education and emphasizes that "ignorance is not simply a neutral void" and "what schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach" (1994, 97). Eisner explains that what schools do not teach has important effects on the options, alternatives, and perspectives that students have available to them and from which they can act, consider, examine, and view the world (1994, 97). When other animals as subjective beings are excluded from formal educational spaces, it ignores their rich and meaningful worlds, perpetuating simplistic views of other animals and rendering them more easily objectified, dismissed, and exploited. Thus, I argue that the pervasive absence of other animals and their subjectivities (both physically and within curricula) in formal education is not neutral and must be addressed.

Even when other animals *are* included in Western formal education, it is often in problematic ways. Other animals can be included in either the formal or *hidden curriculum*[5] of schools. While formal and hidden curricula have been discussed extensively within discourses on curricula, pedagogy, and social justice, "scrutiny of the relations that schools normalize with other living beings is only more recently being explored" (Affifi 2011, 48). Critical scholar Helena Pederson is among those who research the explicit and implicit lessons about other animals and human-animal relations that are expressed in school environments while locating her work within a wider social context in which other "animals as a group are systematically oppressed and exploited for economic purposes" (Pederson 2004; Pederson 2010, 1; 14). Among her extensive findings, Pederson uncovers the ways in which schools reinforce reductionist, objectifying, and instrumentalist views of other species (2004, 2). Such views of other species enable humans to disregard other animals' needs and desires and to treat other animals as commodities for human consumption. While Western formal education largely excludes other animals as subjective beings while simultaneously including them in problematic ways, the above quote from Ramsey Affifi reminds us that opportunities for multi-species learning are always available to us, even in classrooms. In accordance with Affifi, I contend that it is vitally important to attend to our multi-species

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[5] Many authors and theorists have discussed the concept of the hidden curriculum in depth, distinguishing it from the formal, explicit, officially recognized, or mandated curriculum (Eisner 1994; Snyder 1971; Portelli 1993, 343). While there are multiple definitions that authors utilize within discourses on curricula and pedagogy, John Portelli outlines the following four major meanings of the term *hidden curriculum*:

> (a) the hidden curriculum as the *unofficial expectations*, or implicit but expected messages;
> (b) the hidden curriculum as unintended learning outcomes or messages;
> (c) the hidden curriculum as implicit messages arising from the structure of schooling;
> (d) the hidden curriculum as created by the students. (italics in original 1993, 345)

I utilize all four aforementioned meanings of the term *hidden curriculum* as they, along with the concept of *null curriculum,* collectively account for the diverse range of ways that lessons are taught outside the scope of officially mandated curricula in formal educational settings.

entanglements and to embrace the fact that we can continually learn with and from other beings, even in challenging formal classroom settings.

Challenging the Animal-Industrial-Complex

So, how might humans compassionately, respectfully, and ethically attend to other animals and learn from them, even in the challenging context of Western, formal educational spaces? Responding to this question is made simultaneously more challenging and urgent in a context of systemic oppression. Extensive work has been done examining the ways in which other animals are impacted by, devalued under, and enmeshed with speciesism (Fitzgerald and Taylor 2014), sexism (Adams 1990; 2006; Gaard 2002; Rahbek Simonsen 2012), racism (Aph Ko and Syl Ko 2017), colonialism (Belcourt 2014; Robinson 2010), ableism (Taylor 2017), and beyond. These overlapping systems of domination give rise to the routine objectification, commodification, erasure, marginalization, captivity, control, exploitation, brutalization, and killing of other animals by humans. Given this context, I along with many others, believe that it is a matter of moral urgency that humans begin attending to other animals in a manner which challenges these oppressive circumstances rather than perpetuates them (Adams 1990; 2006; Best et al. 2007; Nocella 2007; Noske 1989; Rahbek Simonsen 2012; Robinson 2010; Taylor and Twine 2014; Taylor 2017; Twine 2012). Thus, I seek to not only open up ways of learning from other animals in Western, formal education, but I also seek to politicize this endeavour and to make it explicitly liberatory.

It is worth clarifying that I use the word "liberation" to mean freedom from domination. In line with the tenets of critical animal studies as outlined by Best et al., I promote "a politics of total liberation[6] which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, [other] animal, and Earth

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[6] I would like to briefly acknowledge the criticisms of total liberation frameworks posed by the "neo-insurrectionist network known as Bash Back! [which] has contributed to the queering of the animal liberation discourse" (Loadenthal 2012, 81). Bash Back! criticizes total liberation frameworks for presenting the Earth and other animals as "inert victims"

liberation and freedom for all in one comprehensive, though diverse, struggle" (2007, 5). I see liberation as diverse, pluralistic, and subject to change, acknowledging that liberation will look like different things for different individuals and communities in different contexts. Liberation might include freedom from harm, freedom from captivity, and freedom from exploitation but it also might include thriving communities, meaningful relationships, consent, access to healthy habitats, or access to space. What liberation looks like will be specific to different individuals and communities.[7]

What exactly are the oppressive conditions from which other animals must urgently be liberated? Barbara Noske's concept of the Animal-Industrial-Complex (AIC) is particularly useful for understanding the oppressive conditions and circumstances that other animals live in, particularly in a Western, colonial context. Noske's original concept of the AIC, while not clearly defined, demonstrates the "extent [that] animal industries are embedded in a capitalistic fabric" (Noske 1989, 22). While Noske first introduced the concept of the AIC in 1989, other authors, particularly in the field of critical animal studies, have since taken it up and refined it. I employ Kim Stallwood's definition of the AIC as the "many traditions, institutions, and industries that transform [other] animals into products and services for human consumption" (Stallwood 2014, 298).

The AIC is vast in scope and includes many industries and practices that use other animals – as Twine shows us – for food, and in sports, experimentation, the companion animal sector, the zoo industry, the fashion industry, the entertainment sector, and beyond (2012, 20). Through these industries, other animals are transformed into products and services for human consumption at an

(91). Thus, those at Bash Back! talk of *solidarity* and not *liberation,* in an effort to "disrupt anthropocentric notions of human-liberator" while also "showing the non-passivity of the oppressed subject" (81, 92). While I maintain the language of total liberation, I too will attempt to dismantle anthropocentric notions of human-liberator, while showing other animals to be active in their own liberation alongside human allies.

[7] While total liberation is an ideal to strive towards, in reality, it can be complex and messy. What happens, for example, when the liberation of one being includes their flourishing at the expense of another being or community? How does one pursue total liberation while attending to a plurality of liberations, some of which are in direct conflict with each other? I don't offer any solutions to such ethical quandaries, but rather, I argue that these challenging situations must be addressed through attentive, problem-posing relationships which I will elaborate on in the next chapter.

unimaginable scale and with increasing intensity. To appreciate the immense scale of the AIC, one needs only to look at Western animal agriculture. In 2016 in the United States alone, 118.3 million pigs, 30.7 million cows, 512.7 thousand calves, and 2.3 million sheep and lambs were slaughtered (USDA a 2017, 6). In the same year, an estimated 8.9 billion chickens, 243.3 million turkeys, and 27.3 million ducks were also slaughtered in the United States (USDA b 2017, 5). To put these numbers into perspective, *there are more chickens slaughtered in a single year in the United States than there are currently humans on Earth.* These staggering numbers are mere fractions of global totals and only represent a subset of the vast array of species and individuals (terrestrial, aquatic, and beyond) who are killed and eaten worldwide, including snails like the ones whom I encountered at Maloca Garden.

While these statistics point to the scale and intensity of exploitation in animal agriculture, they do not convey the material conditions and lived realities of the individuals who are confined, exploited, and then killed for human consumption; other animals are often confined in cramped, filthy, and toxic conditions, often with little or no light or space to move (Taylor 2017, 31). Under such conditions, injury, illness, and psychological distress are widespread. In addition, abuse and violence are routine in industrial animal agriculture. For instance, dairy cows are forcibly impregnated, while chickens, turkeys, and ducks are painfully debeaked without anaesthetic (31). At John Morrell & Company, for example, pigs who can't walk to slaughter are beaten to death with lead pipes (32). These are not isolated incidents, but rather, they are examples of the widespread, large-scale, legal, normalized, and routine violence that occurs in industrial animal agriculture. In addition to being held captive in intolerable and abusive living conditions, the other animals within this system are "bred to physical extremes" (31). Chickens have been bred to grow at twice their normal rate, despite the fact that their joints and bones cannot bear the additional weight (31). Egg-laying hens are also bred to produce more than quadruple the yearly number of eggs that their

bodies are meant to handle, leaving them prone to osteoporosis and broken bones (31). As a result, "nearly a quarter of all commercially reared birds are lame and experience excruciating chronic pain" (Masson qtd in Taylor 2017, 31). Similarly, dairy cows are bred to continuously produce more milk than their bodies can handle, frequently leaving them with weak limbs, broken bones, and uncomfortably large udders that are prone to painful and often deadly inflammation (32). Even those other animals who are supposedly raised 'humanely'[8] cannot escape being killed without their consent and in a brutal manner. A bolt to the head or asphyxiation by chemical gassing are common methods for killing the cows and pigs who humans consume (37). Often, individuals are not fully dead when their throats are slit, when they are hung upside down, or when they are boiled.

I highlight the realities of this particular subset of the AIC in order to emphasize the moral urgency of attending to other animals in a manner which challenges these vast, exploitative, and oppressive conditions. Formal educational spaces largely exclude other animals as subjective beings while simultaneously including them in reductionist, objectifying, and instrumentalist ways that ultimately perpetuate their (mis)treatment as commodities within the AIC. It is in this context that I seek to explore ways in which learning from other animals can be not only enriching, but also *liberatory,* particularly within the challenging context of formal education.

While the suffering of other animals is deeply woven into the AIC, I align my work with that of artist, writer, disability activist, and animal rights activist Sunaura Taylor (2017) who opens up richer understandings of other animals and disability beyond merely suffering. Thus, I will move away from a focus on other animals as aggregate numbers, statistics, and suffering beings, towards a

[8] It is important to clarify that I am critical of all systems and practices that turn other animals into products for human consumption, including so-called 'humane' ones. As Pederson and Stanescu point out, "the locavore and humane meat movement is not a different system, or a critique of the factory farm system; it is instead a function of the *same system"* (2014, 269). In line with Pederson and Stanescu, I maintain that humane meat is "offensive because fundamentally at [its] core, [it] still treat[s] animals as buyable and sellable commodities" and serves to "help render the staggering level of speciesist violence even more naturalized and therefore 'invisible'" (268, 269).

more nuanced and liberatory engagement with the full complexity of individuals and communities. This is a thread which I will keep alive and return to in the chapters that follow.

Centering the Leadership of Other Animals

> *[A]ctivists will help animals more if we treat them as active participants in their own liberation – as the expressive subjects animal advocates know them to be – remembering that resistance takes many forms, some of which may be hard to recognize from an able-bodied human perspective.*
>
> *(Taylor 2017, 66)*

So, how do humans engage with and learn from other animals in a manner that is not only compassionate, respectful, and ethical, but that also supports their liberation from multiple systems of domination? Furthermore, how might humans pursue the liberation of other animals in a manner that centers their subjectivities, knowledges, imaginings, and visions as opposed to treating them as passive recipients of human rescue? Taking a cue from other critical and social justice frameworks, I would like to emphasize that "those with the most to gain from social justice [must be the ones] direct[ing] what that justice will look like" while allies directly support their leadership (Stanley and Smith 2015, 31). This sentiment is echoed across critical and social justice frameworks from Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, "which must be forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed," (2016, 48) to disability rights activists' demands for "[n]othing about us without us" (Taylor 2017, 62). Thus, in the context of addressing the systemic oppression of other animals, they must be centered as leaders of their own liberation with human allies offering direct support. The leadership of other animals may take many forms, including embodied expressions of their preferences, which I will elaborate on in the next chapter. As the opening quote

from Sunaura Taylor indicates, it is vital that humans allow other animals to actively participate in their own liberation.

Listening to other animals as teachers and leaders of their own liberation can help to address the systems of domination that are impacting them in meaningful, consensual, respectful, and genuinely liberatory ways. While it is important to learn from other animals in multiple contexts, the challenge lies in learning from them in spaces where they have been typically excluded, such as in Western, formal education. In an attempt to respond to the aforementioned questions, concerns, and challenges, I turn to the work of scholar Traci Warkentin on an embodied ethic of paying attention to other animals (2010). I also turn to the work of critical theorist Paulo Freire, in which he outlines a critical, dialogical, and liberatory model of education called "problem-posing education" (2016). Thus, ***I will ultimately explore how a praxis of attentiveness in combination with Freirean "problem-posing" education might enable other animals to be teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own liberation in Western, formal educational contexts.***

From Ethics-Based-Epistemology to Critical Animal and Critical Disability Studies

My approach is an interdisciplinary one. I draw from multiple fields, disciplines, and frameworks in order to engage with my proposed attentive, problem-posing praxis that I hope can serve as one of many tools for enabling multi-species learning and liberation. This paper is guided by an ethics-based-epistemology as outlined by Jim Cheney and Anthony Weston. Cheney and Weston advocate for an ethics-based-epistemology in environmental philosophy, as opposed to a traditional epistemology-based-ethics[9]. In the philosophical tradition of epistemology-based-ethics,

[9] We can see epistemology-based-ethics exemplified in Peter Singer's outward extension of moral consideration from a stable human center (Singer 2010).

"[e]thical action is a response to our knowledge of the world" (Cheney and Weston 1999, 116). In other words, in epistemology-based-ethics, knowledge *precedes* ethics and ethical action. This traditional approach assumes that the world is readily knowable and that humans can attain what they need to know in order to determine their ethical responsibilities; even having incomplete knowledge is enough to make ethical decisions (116). Also, this traditional approach treats ethics as "an inherently incremental and extensions business" in which change "take[s] place slowly, at the margins, and by extension from the (assumed) well-understood central models" (italics removed from original, 116). Finally, epistemology-based-ethics seek to "sort" the world ethically and to address the criteria for mattering ethically (117).

In comparison, Cheney and Weston offer an alternative to epistemology-based-ethics in the form of their ethics-based-epistemology, which draws from examples of Indigenous cultures in which the ethics-based nature of epistemology is exemplified. Cheney and Weston's alternative approach differs from the foundational assumptions of the traditional approach on every point. The first foundational assumption of Cheney and Weston's alternative approach is the assumption that "[e]thical action is first and foremost an attempt to open up possibilities [and] to enrich the world" as opposed to responding to what is already known (117). Put another way, ethics are *prior* to knowledge. Cheney and Weston elaborate on the first assumption in the following passage:

> On the usual view [i.e. epistemology-based-ethics], for example, we must first know what animals are capable of, then decide on that basis whether and how we are to consider them ethically. On the alternative view [i.e. ethics-based-epistemology], we will have no idea of what other animals are actually capable — we will not readily understand them — until we already have approached them ethically — that is, until we have offered them the space and time, the occasion, and the acknowledgment necessary to enter into relationship. Ethics must come first. (1999, 118)

Thus, Cheney and Weston's alternative approach has direct relevance in encounters with other animals; they must be approached ethically *before* humans can possibly come to understand anything about them. Ethics-based-epistemology also assumes that "the world is *not* readily knowable" and is

instead full of hidden possibilities (italics in original 1999, 118). In contrast to the traditional approach, it treats ethics as "pluralistic, dissonant, discontinuous – not incremental and extensionist" (italics removed from the original, 118). Finally, Cheney and Weston's ethics-based-epistemology has the "task of explor[ing] and enrich[ing] the world," calling forth the "[h]idden possibilities that surround us" at all times (119). This is in contrast to the traditional approach in which the task of ethics is to morally sort the world.

Cheney and Weston use the term "invitation" to refer to "experimental, open-ended and sometimes even personally risky" offers to enter into relationship and participate in sharing the world with others (1999, 126). Making an invitation involves "a risk, an attitude that may (*may*, for we cannot say for sure at the beginning) lead to more knowledge of someone or something, wholly wild possibilities" (italics in original, 118). It requires exposing oneself to having an invitation rejected and opening oneself up to learning from such rejection (118). It involves risking uncertainty and opening oneself up to "ethical discovery," including ethical discoveries that may be "unnerving and disruptive" (119). Cheney and Weston's ethics-based-epistemology requires, "courtesy, openness to surprise" and an attitude which takes others to be valuable, "even though we may not yet know how or why" (Birch qtd in Cheney and Weston 1999, 120). From this ethical invitational process, there is the opportunity for learning and the opening up of new possibilities.

Cheney and Weston's account of an ethics-based-epistemology radically shifts the traditional relationship between ethics and epistemology as well as the traditional objective of ethics. Such a shift in ethical and epistemological thinking has major implications regarding how humans may come to understand and learn from other animals through ethical engagement. For example, in the context of the AIC, an ethics-based-epistemology would not require evidence that other animals do not want to be held captive, harmed, killed, and eaten or proof that they are worthy of moral consideration. An ethics-based-epistemology would assume the value of other animals at the outset

and offer them space, time, and occasion (all things which are denied to them in animal agriculture) to enter into relationship so that we may try to "step in tune" with their rich, subjective songs (Bringhurst qtd in Cheney and Weston 1999, 124).

In addition to grounding my exploration in an ethics-based-epistemology, my primary lens of analysis will be that of critical animal studies (CAS). The field of CAS is relatively new, with its institutional history tracing back to 2001 (Taylor and Twine 2014, 1). According to the Institute for Critical Animal Studies, CAS is "an intersectional transformative holistic theory-to-activist activist-scholarly" field that is "rooted in animal liberation" (2015, para. 14, 1).

Intersectionality is a fundamental tool of analysis for CAS, examining many interlocking forms of oppression that are deeply entangled. CAS is a highly politicized and activist-oriented field committed to "engaged theory" that is "intended to support social change directly or indirectly" (Gary qtd in Taylor and Twine 2014, 6). This field "takes a normative stance against animal exploitation and…an anthropocentric status-quo in human-animal relations" (Taylor and Twine 2014, 2; 6). The field of CAS also endeavours to achieve solidarity across social movements and to achieve liberation for all (Institute for Critical Animal Studies 2015, para. 1). This means that animal liberation as well as the liberation of any individual, group, or community must be pursued with self-reflexivity so as to not perpetuate oppressive theories and practices (Taylor and Twine 2014, 5). For example, CAS scholars who are committed to intersectionality and total liberation must not advocate for veganism through body shaming campaigns, by appropriating other groups' experiences of oppression and trauma, or by employing ableist language. Finally, CAS is radically anti-capitalist, anti-hierarchical, and concerned with opening up constructive critical dialogue (Best et al. 2007, 5). This dialogical aspect of CAS is deeply in line with Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy which I will elaborate on in the subsequent chapter.

CAS has ecofeminist roots, and thus its ecofeminist underpinnings will also inform my exploration of an attentive, problem-posing praxis (Taylor and Twine 2014, 6). CAS's ecofeminist roots trace back to the works of scholars including, but certainly not limited to, Carol Adams (1990), Chris Cuomo (1998), Josephine Donovan (1990), and Val Plumwood (1993; 1996). Both CAS and feminism(s) are concerned with understanding the ways in which different systems of power and oppression intersect as well as exposing and dismantling "routinised and naturalised forms of practice based on oppression and abuses of power" (Taylor and Twine 2014, 4). CAS and feminism(s) both also critically engage with socially constructed binaries and harmful dualisms such as "human" and "animal." In fact, before the field of CAS officially emerged, critical attention to humans' exploitation of and violence towards other animals emerged alongside second wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s (Taylor and Twine 2014, 4). Ecofeminist pedagogy expresses the idea that there is a "common ideological basis for different expressions of dominance" involving not only humans but also ecosystems (Pederson 2004, 4). Ecofeminist pedagogy also explicitly makes the link between androcentric and anthropocentric worldviews, allowing for human relationships to other animals to be examined in the context of wider systems of oppression (Pederson 2004, 4). An emphasis on ecofeminist pedagogy locates my analyses in a wider context of androcentric and anthropocentric world-views while emphasizing the value of the more-than-human world.

In addition to ethics-based-epistemology and CAS, I will also be utilizing a critical disability studies (CDS) framework to explore my proposed praxis. The field of CDS is an emerging one, which has grown over the last decade out of disability studies (Meekosha and Shuttleworth 2017, 177). Broadly, CDS applies critical theory to "critiques of the status quo in the study of disability[10]"

[10] As Sunaura Taylor notes, definitions of disability are constantly changing and "have also intersected with the shifting meanings of race, gender, sexuality, and class in mutually reinforcing ways" (2017, 8). While discussing disability, I acknowledge the reality that the category of disability is a social construct which is difficult to define and which is subject to change (8). Taking a cue from Taylor, I also acknowledge that "disability is both a lived reality and an ideological framework" (9).

and the analyses of how ableism[11] impacts different bodies (176). CDS moves away from binary understandings of disability and recognizes that while the struggle for social justice and diversity continues, "it is not simply social, economic, and political, but also psychological, cultural, discursive, and carnal" (178). CDS applies critical theory to disability studies and, like other critical frameworks such as critical race studies, it emphasizes historical context, interdisciplinarity, and the elimination of oppression (178).

I use the work of artist, writer, and activist, Sunaura Taylor, in which she considers the intersections of the categories of species and disability, exploring what it means to say that another animal is disabled. While Taylor acknowledges that "the meanings of the word 'disability' are uniquely human, created and contextualized by human cultures over centuries," she chooses to use it when discussing differences among other animals in order to consider how "disability as lived experience and as ideology" impacts them (Taylor 2017, 25). As Taylor reminds her readers:

> To call an animal a crip is no doubt a human projection, but it is also a way of identifying nonhuman animals as subjects who have been oppressed by ableism. Naming animals as crips is a way of challenging us to question our ideas about how bodies move, think, and feel and what makes a body valuable, exploitable, useful, or disposable…Animal crips challenge us to consider what is valuable about living and what is valuable about the variety of life. In the end, it is not only disabled animals who could be called crips. All animals – both those we human beings would call disabled and those we would not – are devalued and abused for many of the same basic reasons disabled people are. They are understood as incapable, as lacking in the various abilities and capacities that have long been held to make human lives uniquely valuable and meaningful. They are, in other words, oppressed by ableism. The able body that ableism perpetuates and privileges is always not only able-bodied but human" (Taylor 2017, 43).

[11] Ableism is "prejudice against disabled [beings] that can lead to countless forms of discrimination" (Taylor 2017, 5). As Taylor notes, ableism also "informs how we define which embodiments are normal, which are valuable, and which are 'inherently negative'" (5) in addition to informing "our notions of what it means to be independent, how to measure productivity and efficiency…, and even what is natural" (21).

Thus, Taylor reminds us that it is not only the other animals who humans would call disabled, but also other animals generally, who are devalued and impacted by ableism in complex ways. Like Taylor, I too will apply a CDS framework in order to consider how ableist notions of language serve to exclude other animals from dialogical, liberatory frameworks. I will also use a CDS framework to consider how an attentive praxis might open up an appreciation for (and ability to learn from) the rich worlds of other animals, particularly those whom humans consider to be disabled. Thus, this paper will simultaneously be framed by ethics-based-epistemology, CAS, and CDS frameworks.

Threading in Playfulness and Difference

In addition to locating my work in these three aforementioned frameworks, I will also appeal to playfulness and difference approaches as guiding concepts in my exploration. While I have described my endeavour as urgent, it may seem strange that I am also attempting to thread playfulness throughout my work. Moral urgency and playfulness are not at odds, however. I use playfulness as Maria Lugones does in *Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception*. Lugones outlines the concept of "loving playfulness" as an attitude that gives playful meaning to an activity (1987, 16). Playfulness, as Lugones defines it, does not have rules – certainly not rules that are fixed and sacred – although it can be intentional (16). It is not an attitude that is self-important or concerned with competence (17). Similar to Cheney and Weston's ethics-based-epistemology, playfulness involves uncertainty, as it requires an openness to surprise, openness to being a fool, and openness to self- and world-construction and reconstruction (16, 17). I intend to engage not only with a liberatory praxis that is itself deeply playful but also with a playful attitude in how I present my proposed theory. I hope to offer a sense of exploration, a tone of critical generosity, and an openness to risk and surprise. At points, my paper will be reflective and imaginative while at other

points it will involve traditionally academic prose. In this way, I seek to playfully combine critical rigour with imagination, the personal with the large-scale, and detail with broad strokes.

Also, I will thread an appreciation for difference throughout my exploration. According to Matthew Calarco, "difference approaches" in the field of CAS seek to understand the ways in which individual differences are important, and they emphasize "the manifold differences that exist between and among human beings and animals" (2015, 28). Difference approaches contrast with what Calarco describes as identity approaches, which seek to understand the ways in which other animals are similar to humans (2015). Difference approaches, on the other hand, challenge the unidirectional comparisons that identity theorists make and want to allow for an analysis of how humans are similar to, and different from other animals (n.p.). Difference approaches are founded on an ethics of difference and a critique of humanism (29). I align my work largely with difference approaches, as I seek to appreciate the many dissimilarities between and among individuals, while not precluding the possibility for similarities. I believe that difference approaches allow for an appreciation of the infinite ways of being in and with the world, in addition to allowing for an appreciation of the singular uniqueness of individuals, without homogenizing them into general categories. In difference approaches, other animals needn't be similar to humans (although they may share similarities) in order to be valued. Rather, it is difference itself that is a source of celebration, wonder, and value.

I will proceed in this paper by offering an account of Traci Warkentin's iteration of an embodied praxis of attentiveness, which is partially grounded in Cheney and Weston's ethics-based-epistemology. In order to illustrate this praxis, I will introduce my feline companion, Murphy, describing one of our many attentive encounters. Then, I outline what Paulo Freire refers to as "problem-posing education," addressing concerns about the speciesism, anthropocentrism, and ableism of Freire's critical pedagogy, while also extending his work to meaningfully include other

animals. Next, I connect Warkentin's praxis of attentiveness with Freire's problem-posing model of education, arguing that the two approaches, in dialogue with one another, can serve as a framework for enabling other animals to be teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own liberation in Western, formal educational contexts. I will highlight how Freire's work complements a praxis of attentiveness by adding a distinctly politicized, liberationist, and pedagogical emphasis to a deeply embodied and relational praxis. At the same time, Warkentin's praxis of attentiveness facilitates nonverbal communication within a dialogical, problem-posing model of education. In the next chapter, I will introduce the Canada Geese of York University and a beloved beaver at the Toronto Wildlife Center in an effort to explore how learning from other animals opens up many diverse and "wonder[ous]…modes of being in the world,"; in particular, I focus on how attentiveness can open one up to multi-species resistance, complexity, and the insights that those animals who humans see as disabled have to offer (Lloro-Bidart 2015, 96). Finally, I offer an imaginative exercise, in which a class' unplanned encounter with some worms offers an example of my proposed praxis in the context of formal education, opening up multiple tensions and possibilities.

With the above trajectory in mind, I allow my thoughts to once again return to the curiosity and wonder of my encounters with the snails and skunks of Maloca Garden. What might I learn from the snails if I open myself up more fully to their messages? What might the subtle movements of their tentacles or their patterns of behaviour tell me? How might they lead human gardeners in their daily encounters? What might liberation look like for the family of skunks who live underneath the Maloca Garden shed? How might I come to understand and follow their liberatory visions? Other animals – not just the snails and skunks of Maloca – have rich, subjective lives that are important and meaningful to them. Despite this, other animals are widely marginalized and treated as objects and commodities for human consumption within the AIC. This systemic mistreatment of other animals is perpetuated, in part, by Western formal education which largely excludes other

animals as subjective beings and problematically includes them in ways that are reductive and objectifying. Having said that, there are many opportunities to learn from other animals and to meaningfully include them in formal educational spaces. In accordance with social justice frameworks, learning from other animals must be done in a manner which centers their leadership and attends to their liberation. Exploring possible ways to include other animals as teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own liberation in formal educational spaces will not only challenge the systems of domination underlying the AIC, but it will also enrich the lives of all animals, including humans.

II – Towards an Attentive, Problem-Posing Praxis

Murphy sinks her teeth into my forearm. I instinctively recoil and let out a small yelp as she releases her bite and stares fixedly at me with pupils that swallow the whites of her eyes. She crouches, tail swishing with the promise of a toothy follow-up as I slowly walk away and try my best to ignore her. A set of puffy welts announces itself on my arm with a small throb, and yet the absence of blood indicates a certain level of restraint on Murphy's part – a level of restraint which seems to me to be the result of her ever-growing sensitivity to my needs and vulnerabilities.

Online cat behaviourists refer to this type of behaviour as "play aggression." According to Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine's Feline Health Center, feline play aggression is one of multiple types of feline aggression that are not necessarily mutually exclusive (2014, para 2). Play aggression usually develops from normal play and can "be recognized in a [cat or] kitten's body posture" with a swishing tail, flattened ears, dilated pupils, stalking, hiding, biting, and scratching as common signs (para 5). While this framework is sometimes helpful for me in navigating my complex relationship with Murphy, I also find it woefully insufficient.

Perhaps the term "play aggression" captures an aspect of our encounters like the one above, but it seems to also erase Murphy's deeply communicative, intentional, and agential qualities. When Murphy bites me, our encounter is so much more nuanced and multifaceted than her merely releasing pent-up, instinctual hunting energy; we are engaging in a deeply complex embodied dialogue. While my ignorance far outstrips my understanding, I feel that she is communicating to me something about her subjective, sensory experiences and her mind-body needs – her energetic peaks and valleys, her acute sensitivity to her surroundings, her desire for and skill at hunting, her need to physically release the accumulation of sensory input that seems to build within her body throughout the day. Perhaps she is reminding me that she will not simply be subsumed by my daily routines and that her own cycles, rhythms, and routines demand acknowledgement and attention. Perhaps she is challenging our unequal power dynamic in which I have limited many of the choices available to her by keeping

her in our shared apartment where she is reliant on me for food, exercise, mental stimulation, and affection; perhaps she is rebelling against (inter)dependence in the absence of choice and consent.

Living closely with a feline companion is a messy ethical process which consistently places me in positions of moral unease and discomfort. How do I open myself up to what Murphy is communicating to me so that I can actively listen to her and attend to her needs, desires, and choices within our relationship (even if , perhaps, she needs, desires, and chooses to no longer be my companion)? How can I make space for Murphy to lead in our daily encounters?

In the above vignette, Murphy, through bites and pounces, is clearly communicating something to me, even if I am not entirely sure what her intended (and perhaps unintended) messages are. My daily interactions and familiarity with her compel me to resist reductive explanations of her behaviors as merely instinctual, biological, or mechanical, and to instead open myself up to more complex understandings of her and her capacities for expression and intentional communication. These capacities are not unique to Murphy, however. Other animals are intentional, relational beings who have things to express and share (Balcombe 2007; Bekoff 2007; Cheney and Weston 1999; Fawcett 2000; Griffin 2001; Noske 1989). Unfortunately, many humans are unreceptive to this, and thus miss opportunities for meaningful, communicative exchanges with other animals. Given this reality, I wonder how humans might enter into better communicative relationships with other animals (like Murphy), in order to learn what perspectives, insights, messages, assertions, and imaginings they have to share. I believe that a praxis of attentiveness as outlined by Traci Warkentin is a useful means of guiding ethical, embodied communication among different beings.

Engaging with a Praxis of Attentiveness

In *Interspecies Etiquette: An Ethics of Paying Attention to Animals*, Warkentin "explores a philosophical praxis of paying attention, and the importance of bodily comportment, in human-animal interactions" (2010, 101). Warkentin's endeavour is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from many fields and theoretical approaches including practical phenomenology, ethics-based-epistemology, feminist philosophy, and beyond. Warkentin traces concepts of attentiveness from the work of Thomas Birch and Josephine Donovan to more recent iterations of it as a philosophical approach and practice of interspecies etiquette such as in Val Plumwood's "intentional stance" and "dialogical interspecies ethics" (1993; 2002). Like myself, she also draws upon Cheney and Weston's "environmental etiquette" and "ethics based epistemology" (1999). Ultimately, Warkentin suggests that a praxis of attentiveness can encourage applied, ethical interactions between species. I, too, argue that a praxis of attentiveness can enable ethical, multi-species engagements that can open up the possibility of understanding and learning among different beings.

According to Warkentin, attentiveness "involves one's whole bodily comportment and a recognition that embodiment is always in relation to social others, both animal and human" (2010, 102). It is an embodied, relational, and contextual practice that requires attention to one's own multi-sensory experiences, bodily movements, emotions, and situated context in the process of attending to embodied others (106, 109). It is not merely "polite," passive, removed, or "mild" observation (102). In fact, such politeness and passivity are counter to a praxis of attentiveness which requires an active inhabiting of one's own body and an intentional bodily responsivity to another (109, 110). Indeed, while attentiveness requires respect for embodied others, it is also an actively engaged and often messy process as opposed to a disconnected and polite endeavour. The active, intentional, and responsive aspects of attentiveness are fully compatible with the fact that it

can also include "thoughtful, reflective, [and] meditative" consideration of others (Birch qtd in Warkentin 2010, 106).

Like ethics-based-epistemology, attentiveness is a playful[12] practice which requires openness, generosity of spirit, love, vulnerability, and a willingness to seem foolish or be wrong. Both are also grounded in ethics; in fact, attentiveness is a form of ethical practice that necessarily precedes knowing other beings. It is through the ethical practice of attentive engagement that the possibility of different beings coming to "understand each other to a certain, limited degree" opens up (Warkentin 2010, 107). This possibility for understanding exists even between and among beings who are vastly different. As Warkentin notes, "bodies, however physically and physiologically different, can be grounds for nonverbal communication and for interpreting behavior through attending to the embodied movements of others" (109). Thus, bodies can be grounds for communicating with, through, and across differences. Ultimately, a praxis of attentiveness is an ethical practice of embodied engagement that opens up opportunities for nonverbal communication and the possibility of understanding – albeit limited understanding – among different beings.

Like Warkentin, I use a praxis of attentiveness as a means of ethically opening up opportunities for embodied, multi-species communication and possibilities for understanding among often vastly different beings. My experience with Murphy is an example of the value of such a praxis. In the above vignette, Murphy's decision to bite me initiated an attentive interaction – albeit a messy and imperfect one – in which we both intentionally adjusted our "postures, gestures, and actions made in relation to [each] other" (Behnke qtd in Warkentin 2010, 110). As I instinctively recoiled from Murphy's bite, she responded by releasing me, and although she was poised for a follow-up, she refrained from immediately doing so. Murphy also inhibited her initial

[12] Again, I use the term "playfulness" as Maria Lugones does. Lugones outlines playfulness as a loving attitude which is open to surprise, change, vulnerability, and foolishness (1987).

bite, which was indicated by the fact that she did not draw blood. This sequence of adjustments occurred within a wider context of our ongoing attentive interactions through which Murphy has developed a growing awareness of my needs and vulnerabilities. Just as Murphy responded to me, I, too, was faced with responding to her. Following my initial "involuntary, interkinaesthetic comportment" in which I instinctively recoiled from Murphy's bite, I adopted "transformative embodiments by actively re-inhabiting them and then consciously altering the pattern" (Warkentin referencing Behnke 2010, 111). In other words, I tried to alter my initial embodied response by intentionally and calmly inhabiting my own body while slowly walking away from Murphy. Thus, our encounter was deeply embodied, relational, responsive, and engaged.

Our encounter was also imbued with a loving playfulness. I approached Murphy with love and generosity, maintaining an openness to her complex, communicative capacities, even if I was not yet sure (and might not ever be sure) of her capacities and of what she was trying to express to me. While I cannot know what Murphy's experience of our interaction was like, I believe that the adjustments that she made in response to me (i.e., inhibiting and releasing her bite) were indicative of some level of caring response on her part. Vulnerability, risk, and uncertainty were also aspects of our encounter. While I was at risk of being bitten (again) by Murphy, she took on different and greater risks when choosing to engage with me within the context of our unequal power dynamic.[13] While there is a certain level of trust that we have developed over the past two years of living together, there is still a degree of uncertainty and risk in our interactions. Ultimately, attentive engagement allowed for Murphy and me to attune ourselves to each other's embodied expressions and respond to them. Our attentive engagement was highly contextual and particular to our unique

[13] I am in a position of human privilege and power. As such, the power dynamic between Murphy and me is unequal. Although I always strive to treat her with love and respect, I am in a position of power where I could harm her. Perhaps I already am harming her by placing her in a position where she is dependent on me for many of her basic needs in the absence of choice and consent. This is a dilemma which I hope further attentive engagement will help us to ethically address.

dynamic. It offered an embodied grounds for nonverbal communication and responsiveness in which we were both able to reach a limited understanding of each other that continues to grow. I now turn from an attentive praxis to a liberatory pedagogy in an effort to explore how they might complement each other and facilitate learning from other animals as leaders of their own liberation.

Exploring Problem-Posing Education

In the first chapter, I expressed interest not only in exploring how humans might listen to and learn from other animals, but also in making multi-species communication liberatory while centering the leadership and guidance of other animals. I also expressed an interest in learning from other animals in the challenging context of Western formal education where other animals are typically excluded as subjective beings and included in reductive and objectifying ways. Thus, I wonder how I might make an attentive praxis more compatible with formal educational spaces and how I might politicize an attentive praxis, directing it towards liberation. I will connect Paulo Freire's model of "problem-posing" education with Warkentin's praxis of attentiveness, offering these combined frameworks as one possible means of enabling embodied, multi-species communication, situated within an explicitly liberatory, pedagogical framework.

Paulo Freire's seminal work in the field of critical pedagogy, entitled, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, explores - broadly speaking - the links between the education, oppression, and liberation of humans. For Freire, the "great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed [is] to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well" (2016, 44). Freire offers a critical pedagogy that facilitates the transformation of humans from a state of dehumanization and oppression to one of humanization, liberation, and freedom (44, 47). According to Freire, a pedagogy of the oppressed is "a pedagogy which must be forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant

struggle to regain their humanity" (italics in original 2016, 48). Those who have the most to gain from liberation must be actively involved in directing what it will look like.

For Freire, education can either function as a tool of oppression or as the "practice of freedom" (81). He criticizes what he calls a banking approach to education which promotes a teacher-student dichotomy in which teachers are the ones who know everything and who "deposit" their knowledge into passive, unquestioning students (72, 73). According to Freire, this type of educational arrangement "serves the interests of the oppressors" by inhibiting the development of critical consciousness among students "which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (73). Students in this model of education are passive recipients as opposed to engaged critical thinkers and active transformers of the world.

Freire argues that banking approaches to education must be challenged by "reconciling the [teacher-student dichotomy] so that both are simultaneously teachers and students" in what he refers to as "problem-posing" education (72, 79). In fact, for Freire, such teacher-student reconciliation is the "*raison d'être* of liberation education" (72). Similar to Freire, I argue that learning 'from' is wholly compatible with learning 'with' and like Freire, I believe that challenging the student-teacher dichotomy is essential for genuinely liberatory education. Contrary to banking education, problem-posing education is deeply dialogical and communicative (79). It treats humans as conscious, intentional beings, who, through dialogue, can pose problems and challenges to one another in order to "develop their power to perceive critically the *way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves" (italics in original, 83). However, critical consciousness and "dialogical action…cannot occur apart from the praxis" (172). Ultimately, problem-posing education is the "practice of freedom" (81). It is what enables humans to transform from a state of dehumanization and oppression to humanization and liberation. In the following sub-sections, I will address

critiques of problem-posing education as a humanist endeavour and I will attempt to extend this critical pedagogy to include other animals.

Making Space for Gratitude

Freire's work has been extremely influential for many teachers, writers, activists, and artists in the fields of critical pedagogy, environmental and popular education, and beyond. His concepts of banking education, problem-posing education, and conscientization along with his emphasis on praxis, liberation, and dialogue are but a few of the influential elements of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Before addressing critiques of Freire's work, I feel it is important to first engage with a sense of gratitude for his contributions – something that often gets neglected in critical discussions of Freire. I engage with feminist theorist, cultural critic, artist, and writer bell hooks' reflections on Freire in order to give palpable space to her sense of gratitude for his work. I hope that this gracious interlude will also offer space for a playful generosity of spirit within this paper.

In a playful dialogue between herself, Gloria Watkins, and her writing voice, hooks speaks on the multitude of ways in which she has been influenced by the work of Paulo Freire (1994). In the following passage, hooks recalls how powerful it was to be given a language to express her lived experiences and social reality, and to engage with the politics of domination:

> When I came to Freire's work, just at that moment in my life when I was beginning to question deeply and profoundly the politics of domination, the impact of racism, sexism, class exploitation, and the kind of domestic colonization that takes place in the United States, I felt myself to be deeply identified with the marginalized peasants who he speaks about, or with my black brothers and sisters, my comrades in Guinea-Bissau. You see, I was coming from a rural southern black experience, into the university, and I had lived through the struggle for racial desegregation and was in resistance without having a political language to articulate that process. Paulo was one of the thinkers whose work gave me a language. He made me think deeply about the construction of an identity in resistance. (hooks 1994, 46)

While Freire's work is not without its flaws, it has had a profound impact on the lives of many people. The profundity of Freire's work is perhaps less obvious to, and thus more easily dismissed by, those who have the privilege of not being personally and profoundly affected by his words.[14] As hooks notes, it is a privileged position for one to be able to dispose of water that they consider impure while many people who are thirsty "are not too proud to extract the dirt and be nourished by the water" (1994, 50). For hooks, Freire's work, flawed as it may be, quenched her dire thirst for change in the midst of a marginalized, colonized status quo (50). For many people, Freire's work is not just a seminal piece of writing which they have the privilege of engaging with as detached, outside observers, but rather, it is something that "touch[es] [them] at the very core of [their] being," speaks to their social realities, and transforms their lives (49). Donaldo Macedo echoes this sentiment when he acknowledges that people all over the world, including friends of his, "risked cruel punishment, including imprisonment" simply by reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Macedo 2016, 12). Freire's work resonated so deeply with people that many were willing to take great risks to read it. Thus, an outright dismissal of Freire's work is also a dismissal of the experiences of those who connect with his work. It should not be dismissed or discarded, particularly not by those entering his work from a place of privilege.

So, how does one navigate a flawed piece of work while maintaining a sense of gratitude and generosity to it profound contributions? In describing her response to Freire's sexism, hooks points to the value of critical interrogation. According to hooks, while the sexism in Freire's work is a "source of anguish" for her, she "never wishes to see a critique of this [sexism] overshadow

[14] It is worth clarifying that Freire's work is deeply valuable for those who are oppressors as well as those who are oppressed – categories which are not mutually exclusive and often are inhabited simultaneously by individuals. Those who are oppressors can still be profoundly affected by Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. In fact, for Freire, the oppressed *and* their oppressors must be liberated through his pedagogy.

anyone's (and feminists' in particular) capacity to learn from the insights" (49). She does not seek to apologize for Freire's sexism, but rather, she advocates for a more complex response to his work in which the flawed aspects can be critically interrogated while still maintaining "the recognition of all that is valued and respected in the work" (49). In fact, as hooks points out, Freire's critical pedagogy encourages such critical interrogation and dialogue. This is not only evident in his pedagogy itself, but also in his actions. hooks recalls how when Freire witnessed efforts to silence her feminist critiques of his work during a meeting, Freire "intervened to say that these questions were crucial and he addressed them" (55). Thus, Freire in both theory and action encourages critical engagement with his work. I will follow hooks' guidance and pursue critical interrogation which is grounded in grateful recognition, as I subsequently address the speciesist and anthropocentric elements of Freire's work and look for opportunities to extend his ideas to include other animals. This practice of generous critical interrogation is a means of respecting the people who his work personally impacts and a means of preforming Freire's critical pedagogy itself. With a sense of critical generosity in mind, I will engage with critiques of the anthropocentrism, speciesism, and ableism in Freire's work.

Addressing Critiques of Freire's Anthropocentrism and Speciesism

In an endeavour to expand the application of Freirean problem-posing education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to include other animals, it is important to critically consider the ways in which the pedagogy excludes or problematically deals with other animals as a necessary precursor to including them in a meaningful and liberatory way. Multiple authors have pointed out the speciesism and anthropocentrism in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I will engage with several such critiques in order to enter into critical dialogue with Freire's work and to explore how Freire's (mis)treatment of other animals manifests in his text in addition to exploring opportunities for addressing this.

In "Beyond Human, Beyond Words: Anthropocentrism, Critical Pedagogy, and the Poststructuralist Turn," Anne Bell and Constance Russell address the anthropocentrism within critical pedagogy generally, and poststructuralist approaches to critical pedagogy specifically (2000). Bell and Russell note that the anthropocentric bias in critical pedagogy manifests itself in "taken-for-granted understandings of 'human,' 'animal,' and 'nature,'" in silences, and in asides (191). In order to illustrate this, they turn to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to show some of the ways in which anthropocentrism is manifested within critical pedagogy. They point to Freire's taken-for-granted assumptions about the differences between humans and other animals which characterize humans alone as possessing awareness, self-consciousness, the ability "to fulfill the objectives they set for themselves," the capacity to "infuse the world with their creative presence," the capability to "overcome situations that limit them," and the potential to actively engage with and transform the world (191). Other animals, in contrast, are passive subjects who do not possess these traits (192). These assumptions set humans distinctly apart from and superior to other animals, taking for granted the human/animal dualism while ignoring its "cultural and historical specificity" (192). Like Bell and Russell, I too am critical of Freire's reliance on the human/animal binary and devaluing of other animals.

CAS scholar Lauren Corman draws from the work of Bell and Russell, among others, in a critical engagement with the "reductive, fixed, and speciesist constructions of 'the animal' and animality throughout" Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2011, 29). Corman focuses specifically on the problematic treatment of 'the animal'[15]; she explains that "[t]o challenge Freire's understandings of nature without also carefully acknowledging his *particular* negation of [other] animals is to miss a key aspect of how he structures his argument" (30). Related to this is Corman's central claim that

[15] 'The animal' is a term which Corman critically employs to signify Freire's "singular, monolithic, and debased" representations of other animals in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2011, 30).

Freire's text is not just infused with anthropocentrism, but also with speciesism against other animals (30). As Corman notes, "there [is] a distinct exclusionary quality to his theory that precludes the possibility of [other] animal subjectivities, but there is also a direct prejudicial attack on animals throughout" (32). Furthermore, Corman argues that Freire's anthropocentric and speciesist treatment of "the animal" is not merely "incidental or peripheral" to his claims about oppressive and liberatory education, but rather, the very structure of Freire's argument rests on "'the animal' function[ing] as a primary Other" (31). While other animals "serve as humanity's [underlying] shadow Other (along with the rest of 'nature')…[they] are also explicitly constructed, called out, and metaphorically sacrificed as a key comparative figure in Freire's constructions of the human Subject" (32). Corman argues that the deeply embedded anthropocentrism and speciesism of Freire's work must be explicitly acknowledged and addressed in order to refrain from reinforcing these very systems of domination. Like Corman, I am critical of this framework in which only humans can be Subjects who can achieve liberation while other animals are Objects, unable to achieve liberation. Animals are problematically relegated to being passive Others against which humans can come to understand themselves and their uniquely human, transformative, creative, liberatory capacities (29). I focus in particular on Freire's categorization of other animals as non-communicative and non-dialogical, entering into conversation with artist, writer, and activist, Sunaura Taylor in order to emphasize the ways in which this categorization is based upon ableist and speciesist conceptions of language and dialogue.

Ableist Conceptions of Cognition and Language

Taylor makes clear that an ableist, speciesist privileging of human language and cognitive capacities has a long history, pointing to Aristotle who argued more than two thousand years ago that language separated humans from animals; this "help[ed] lay the groundwork in Western

traditions for language to be regarded philosophically and scientifically both as uniquely human characteristic and as central to what it means to be human" (Taylor 2017, 49). Freire's privileging of human language and dialogue, then, is not something that is unique to him; rather, it is part of a long history of ableism, human exceptionalism, and speciesism. Not all human communication has been or continues to be viewed as language, however. Aristotle suggested that hearing was necessary for speech, which in turn was central to thinking (50). This line of thought has persisted, encouraging the historical and ongoing treatment of gestural languages as less sophisticated and advanced than human oral languages.[16] Thus, there is a long history of not just human language being privileged, but more specifically, human oral languages. This hierarchy denigrates and undermines gestural and multi-species languages and forms of communication.

Taylor paints a picture of the complex "ways categories of race, disability, and animality have been entangled in and co-constitutive of one another" through the example of the historical and contemporary privileging of human oral language (50, 51). For example, sign language was racialized and "associated with people of colour who were themselves seen as primitive, rudimentary, and animal" (51). Animal metaphors – particularly ones referencing monkeys and apes – were also frequently used to describe sign language gestures and facial expressions (51). While gestural language was discouraged among humans, sign language in other apes was viewed as a "special faculty" (Baynton qtd in Taylor 2017, 51). This double standard reflects the complex ways in which speciesism and ableism manifest themselves and co-constitute one another. While other animals were praised for being like humans in their capacity for sign language (but of course, not similar enough so as to upset notions of human exceptionalism), humans who used sign language were animalized and denigrated as primitive, lesser humans. Though sign language was taught to other primates beginning in the 1970s, Taylor notes that "the need to match physical, intellectual, cultural,

[16] It is worth noting that not all human oral languages have been counted as language across time and place, either.

and species-specific needs with a form of communication that fits those needs continues to be overlooked" (Taylor 2017, 53). Sign-language was imposed upon certain primates in the absence of an attentiveness to difference, particularity, or context. Ultimately, Taylor suggests not that "nonhuman animals and disabled humans are uniquely similar, but rather that we must begin to examine the systems that degrade and devalue both animals and disabled people – systems which are built upon, among other things, ableist paradigms of language and cognitive capacity" (52, 53). This attention to difference allows for a more nuanced critical engagement which acknowledges that different beings can be impacted by the same systems of domination but in different ways. It also allows for an appreciation of the singularity and difference of individuals, without homogenizing their experiences through reductive analyses of systemic domination.

Such ableist and speciesist paradigms of cognitive capacity and language are evident in Freire's liberatory pedagogy which is "defined by and grounded in dialogue" – a dialogue which is distinctly human and oral/written (Corman 2011, 33). In fact, dialogue is necessary for one to become a liberated, humanized Subject (33). As Corman notes:

> Freire's pedagogical method is structured around two major sets of polarized dualisms. On the one side exists oppression, dehumanization, and objectification; on the other side exists liberation, humanization, and Subjectivity. Dialogue is the necessary catalyst that transitions the oppressed from the first state into the second. Given that the capacities for dialogue and communication are defined exclusively as human capabilities and, crucially, ones that rest at the heart of what it means to be human, we can understand Freire's pedagogical method as essentially and primarily a humanist discourse. (37, 38)

So, what are the implications of the speciesist and ableist conceptions of language in Freire's work? Corman's critique, when placed in conversation with Taylor's analysis, makes clear that if language is treated as a uniquely human capacity, then in a context where language and dialogue are central to the process of liberation, other animals and humans who do not

communicate through oral language are excluded from dialogical education and liberation altogether. This is deeply disturbing, particularly in a context where the perceived inferiority of other animals is used to justify their routine and systematic exploitation while disabled humans continue to be marginalized. Again, this form of exclusion is not unique to Freire, but rather, it is part of a long legacy of speciesist and ableist conceptions of language and cognition. It is in this context that I seek to explore how a praxis of attentiveness – with its consideration of particularity, difference, and context and its openness to embodied modes of communication – might serve to supplant the ableist conception of language and dialogue in Freire's work.

Including Other Animals in Problem-Posing Education

So, how do I utilize Freire's meaningful work without also condoning its anthropocentrism, speciesism, and ableism? Furthermore, is there a way in which one could actively engage with Freire's work as a tool for multi-species liberation? As Corman argues:

> Animality is conceived by Freire as a key limit against which humanity can define itself. Animals must be rendered static and debased for Freire's logic to hold: He is most interested in soci-cultural change, such that there is identifiable movement from an oppressed state into a liberated one. Animals serve as embodiments of the first state, in which the achievement of liberation is made visible through ascension from a base animal object state into a fully human elevated one. For Freire, animals are a fixed, immutable, non-labouring, non-transforming Other against which the essence of humankind is thrown into sharp relief (see also Bell & Russell, 2000). Such common logic presupposes that humanity achieves its identity through that which it is not. Animals' presumed inadequacies highlight our achievements. Their supposed inferiority marks our superiority. (32)

Thus, according to Corman, the very structure of Freire's entire argument rests on a highly problematic human/animal dichotomy in which humans are seen as Subjects capable of achieving liberation when measured against animal Others who are static, non-agential beings incapable of

liberation. It is clear from reading Taylor's analyses of ableist and speciesist paradigms in conversation with Corman's critique, that Freire's work, with his conception of cognition and language in particular, is not just speciesist, but also ableist. While *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* structurally rests upon a problematic human/animal dichotomy and ableist assumptions, I do not believe that this need be the case. Freire's argument needn't define humanity against the key limit of animality or render other animals static and debased in order to function. I also believe that Freire's pedagogy need not be articulated within a humanist discourse where oppression corresponds to a dehumanized, animal state and liberation corresponds to humanization. Furthermore, language and dialogue needn't be solely human capacities in order for dialogical education to remain meaningful and liberatory. So what, then, might a Freirean problem-posing education look like that is species-inclusive and that refrains from human exceptionalism, speciesism, and ableism?

Anthony Nocella has explored and applied Freire's pedagogy to other animals, with a specific focus on animal liberation movements that challenge the AIC. In *Unmasking the Animal Liberation Front Using Critical Pedagogy: Seeing the ALF for Who They Really Are*, Nocella writes from a context of an unfolding "mass political repressive environment whereby the state is targeting Earth and animal liberationists" in order to "protect capitalism from its critics and challengers" (2007, 1). In light of this context in which animal liberationists are targeted in an effort to protect capitalistic interests in the AIC's use of other animals as commodities, Nocella seeks to shed light on the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), addressing harmful misconceptions and offering a defence of the ALF. According to Nocella, "[i]f negative images of ALF actions prevail, industries will win support, liberationists will lose sympathy, and few will protest when the state pounces on the ALF with fierce repression" (4). Nocella argues that critical pedagogy approaches, like that of Freire, can help in building understanding for the perspectives of members of groups like the ALF. Through a

critical pedagogy lens, one can understand that the ALF is a non-violent group motivated by love and a desire to defend freedom and justice (7).

My application of Freirean critical pedagogy differs from that of Nocella significantly. While I believe that critical pedagogical approaches like that of Freire can serve allies to other animals in numerous ways, I would like to focus specifically on how other animals can be included in Freire's dialogical model of education as leaders and visionaries of their own liberation. My approach, I believe, is deeply in line with Freire's theory and praxis in which a pedagogy of the oppressed "must be forged *with*, not *for* the oppressed" (italics in original, Freire 2016, 48). Instead of focusing on how Freire's critical pedagogy can aid human allies in advocating for animal liberation, I explore how other animals as individuals and communities can be centered in liberatory, dialogical relationships with human beings. One of the central problems which Freire's work addresses is the question of how "the oppressed…[can] participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation" (Freire 2016, 49). I, too, seek to address this question in the context of other animals. How might Freire's problem-posing model of education apply to other animals, allowing them to develop and lead their own liberation through critical, multi-species dialogue with humans?

With criticisms of Freire's speciesism, anthropocentrism, and ableism in mind, I apply Traci Warkentin's attentive praxis to Freire's problem-posing model of education in an attempt to extend his liberatory pedagogy to include other animals. Warkentin's attentive praxis offers a way to engage in embodied, multi-species dialogue that is not necessarily comprised of oral language and that is not exclusive to humans. As Warkentin notes, "bodies…can be grounds for nonverbal communication" (Warkentin, 109). Thus, a praxis of attentiveness, in combination with problem-posing education, offers a way for human allies to enter into embodied dialogue with animals of other species, centering their perspectives, messages, and visions of liberation. Attentiveness in the context of Freirean multi-species education would require that humans first ethically approach other animals

with attentive consideration in order to enter into embodied dialogue with them and before possibly understanding what problems they pose to us and what liberatory visions they conceive of. Liberatory visions will be different for different individuals and they may not always be straightforward in their embodied manifestations. For example, my attentiveness to Murphy's frustrated embodiment suggests to me that she was expressing a desire for choice and consent within our interdependent relationship, including choice over our daily routines. While I cannot be sure exactly what Murphy's bite was expressing, attentive engagement over time allows me to approach an understanding of the liberatory visions that her particular embodiments express.[17] Thus, Freire's problem-posing education politicizes a praxis of attentiveness and offers it a liberatory goal, while a praxis of attentiveness offers Freire's problem-posing education an embodied ethic with which to include other animals in liberatory dialogue.

In the following chapters, I will explore in further detail my attentive, problem-posing praxis. I will explore several examples which illustrate how an attentive, problem-posing praxis can open up diverse modes of being in the world. I will also engage with an imaginative scenario that illustrates attentive, problem-posing praxis in the context of Western, formal education.

[17] It is worth clarifying that attentiveness does not always lead to liberation. The particular kind of attentiveness which I propose does not aim to enable humans to learn from other animals in order to dominate and control them, but rather, it aims to enable humans to engage in "stepping in tune with [another] being" so as to learn from and with them in relational, embodied attunement (Bringhurst qtd in Cheney and Weston 1999, 124). This type of relational, respectful, and attentive engagement in which humans learn from and with other beings is only liberatory when paired with problem-posing education which guides attentive engagement towards the liberatory visions of others.

III – Richly Different Modes of Being in the World

> What we can teach and learn from other species diminishes if we are not open to seeing them in unexpected and diverse ways (Affifi 2014, 54).

There is immense value in difference. I use this chapter to explore what lessons might be learned from other animals through an attentiveness to the vast differences among species, communities, and individuals. As the above quote from Affifi notes, it is important to open oneself up to seeing other animals in unexpected and diverse ways; doing so expands what can be learned from them and encourages more respectful and understanding engagements with them. A praxis of attentiveness opens up the "wonder of [richly different] modes of being in the world," allowing for a deeper appreciation of the marvelous "insights that might be gleaned from [other] worldly and embodied interactions" (Lloro-Bidart 2015, 96). A praxis of attentiveness, in combination with problem-posing education, situates nuanced insights that arise from different embodied modes of being within a dialogical framework in which these insights inform and guide multi-species engagements and liberation. I would like to offer several examples in order to explore what nuanced lessons and liberatory visions might arise if humans practice an attentive, problem-posing praxis with other animals and open themselves up to their different modes of being in the world. In doing so, I will emphasize the concepts of resistance, thriving, and complexity as well as the importance of looking to richer understandings of disability beyond merely suffering.

Opening up Resistance, Thriving, and Complexity

It is May 15, 2017. The afternoon sways languorously and persuades me to partake in its sensuous and leisurely pace. I approach Stong Pond, and sit near the water's edge, allowing the heat of the day to absorb into my skin. The musky-sweet smell of water, algae, mud, decay, and new growth is stirred by a breeze.

Several ducks glide past me as the sunlight snags their iridescent blue-green heads. An ant traverses my leg while a Red-Winged Blackbird calls out from atop a broken birch tree. I let out a small gasp of delight as I notice a community of Canada Geese drifting on the other side of the pond, including nearly two dozen goslings. One of the adults preens their feathers, their long neck gracefully curving as they peruse their own wing. Another dips their head into the glassy water. Yet another stretches their wings before neatly folding them against their body. The adults appear to have formed a protective circle, allowing the goslings to explore and wander, encased in watchful safety.

While the geese appear peaceful and passive on this beautiful afternoon, they are engaged in ongoing resistance, choosing to remain in and return to their communities and nesting sites in the face of continued displacement efforts targeted specifically at them. The displacements efforts are a part of York University's recurring "Goose Management Program" which uses "occasional bursts of loud sound" similar to fireworks to "discourage goose settlements" near Stong Pond which is an important nesting site for the Canada Geese who live on the York University campus (York University, 2017, n.p.).

Watching them drift along the water, I feel the intense gravity and significance of their presence in this place. This feeling is heightened by my familiarity with and attachment to this particular community of geese, who I encounter with varying degrees of intimacy on an almost daily basis. I have watched them take to the skies during migration, form monogamous pairs, congregate in large groups to graze, and collectively raise their young. I have also watched them settle disputes through hissing and charging at one another. On several occasions, I have witnessed groups of Canada Geese call out and slow down for those who lag behind the rest or wander out of sight. I have watched them cross busy roads during rush hour, forcing long lines of vehicular traffic to come to a halt. I have observed them resting in grassy fields and sharing gosling-monitoring duties. I have helped reunite a lone gosling who strayed near a busy intersection with their flock.

Even with my familiarity of these geese, I have so much more to learn from them. What might more time with them reveal? How might an intentional engagement with my full range of senses allow me to better learn from

them? What might their embodied reactions in response to me uncover? As I continue to watch them, I can't help but feel joy in seeing that they continue to survive and thrive in the face of efforts to displace them from their home.

What insights do an attentive, problem-posing engagement with the Canada Geese reveal? What embodied modes of being are uncovered? Certainly, prolonged, attentive engagement with these beings uncovers their capacity for resistance. This is significant in a context where other animals are perceived in limiting and reductive ways that perpetuates their exploitation and comodification within the AIC. As dian marino notes:

> Everyone has a history of resistance, but we might not remember this history as being about resistance because it is often coded in the language of the persuader [i.e., people in power who persuade others that it is in their best interests to support the practices and policies of the powerful]. The resistance might have been seen, for instance, as bad behaviour, inappropriate actions, wrong attitudes, breaking the rules, or something calling for punishment. (1997, 23)

In the case of the geese, their choice to continue to use their nesting grounds in the face of targeted displacement efforts might be coded as "stubbornness," "mindless habit," or "instinct" instead of active resistance. What lessons and liberatory visions might open up if we were to instead acknowledge the persistence of the Canada Geese as ongoing resistance?

In a similar vein to marino, Maria Lugones acknowledges that "those who are the victims of arrogant perception are really subjects, lively beings, resistors, constructors of visions even though in the mainstream construction they are animated only by the arrogant perceiver and are pliable, foldable, file-awayable, classifiable" (1987, 18). Lugones uses Marilyn Frye's concept of "arrogant perception" which outlines a kind of perception in which the arrogant perceiver "organizes everything seen with reference to themselves and their own interests" and does not "countenance the possibility that the Other is independent, indifferent" (Frye 1983, 67). In arrogant perception, the world and everything in it is there for the arrogant perceiver (69). Frye points to the powerful

influence of "how one expects another to behave [on]…how the other does behave" (67). According to Frye, despite the power of expectations, the arrogant perceiver will engage in expectation without attention or care (69). While Frye's concept of arrogant perception, and Lugones' iteration of it, were used to apply to humans (with male, white, and Anglo humans in particular as arrogant perceivers), the concept is also useful in considering how other animals are arrogantly perceived by humans.

When considering that other animals have been and continue to be arrogantly perceived by most humans as non-agential, passive, and voiceless beings who are incapable of active resistance and visionary construction, it seems significant that attentive, problem-posing engagement can open humans up to their capacity for resistance. Being attentive to other species' and individuals' embodied resistance can help to guide what their liberation should look like and can inform human allyship in challenging the AIC and its underlying systems of domination. A critical disability lens further emphasizes the significance of opening up to multi-species resistance. Sunaura Taylor notes how animality is often turned into a form of disability in which "animals are dumb (voiceless), weak, and frail" (Taylor 2017, 62). Even among those who want to help other animals, this kind of arrogant, ableist, and speciesist perception is pervasive as "the idea of helping beings who cannot help themselves tends to be more attractive to many people than acknowledging that those who are dependant and vulnerable can also have agency and opinions" (62). Taylor powerfully argues that other animals are not voiceless, and that such a view is in fact rooted in ableist assumptions about what counts as having a voice:

> Animals consistently voice preferences and ask for freedom. They speak to us every day when they cry out in pain or try to move away from our prods, electrodes, knives, and stun guns. Animals tell us constantly that they want out of their cages, that they want to be reunited with their families, or that they don't want to walk down the kill chute. Animals express themselves all the time, and many of us know it. If we didn't, factory farms and slaughterhouses would not be designed to constrain any choices an

> animal might have. We deliberately have to choose not to hear when the lobster bangs on the walls from inside a pot of boiling water or when the hen who is past her egg-laying prime struggles against the human hands that enclose her legs and neck. We have to choose not to recognize the preferences expressed when the fish spasms and gasps for oxygen in her last few minutes alive. (Taylor 2017, 63)

Taylor reminds us to look beyond ableist narratives that depict other animals as suffering, voiceless, and victims and to instead consider them as expressive, complex beings, who are capable of being active participants in their own liberation.

Indeed, other animals are not voiceless, but rather, they are systematically silenced and ignored. Just as other animals are expressive beings, they are also capable of being active agents of their own resistance and liberation. Jason Hribal outlines historical and contemporary examples of other animals intentionally acting to liberate themselves from oppressive circumstances in *Fear of the Animal Planet: The Hidden History of Animal Resistance*. He offers numerous examples of other animals who plan and execute often highly complex escapes and who actively evade human attempts to recapture them. For example, Alfie, a macaque at a zoo in Pittsburgh, fashioned a bridge out of a fallen tree branch and escaped his enclosure in 1987 (Hribal 2010, 93). After six months of evading extensive search and capture efforts, Alfie was spotted in a town in Ohio (93). People were stunned that an animal who had been born in captivity could survive alone, outside a zoo environment (94).

Not only will other animals escape captivity, but they also have long histories of resisting their captors and abusers. Hribal offers the story of Tatiana, a four-and-a-half year old Siberian tiger who was being held captive at the San Francisco Zoo (2010, 21). It was December of 2007 when Tatiana escaped the 25-foot wall of her enclosure and attacked a teenager who had been part of a trio that had been taunting her (21). The other two teenagers ran, but Tatiana tracked them down at a café, ignoring the other visitors at the zoo while she searched for those who had teased and prodded her (21). As a result of her rebellion, Tatiana was shot dead by police officers (21).

Hribal offers a compelling case for the intentionality behind so called "vicious attacks" and "rampages" that are led by other animals in captivity. He notes that when elephants – who are capable of lethal damage to humans on a large scale – go on "rampages" they often ignore the vast swaths of human observers and instead target specific individuals (24, 25). One such example is Janet the circus elephant who went on a rampage in 1992 (25). During her rampage, she paused to allow someone to remove children who had been riding on her back, before proceeding to target circus employees (25). She then picked up a bullhook – a sharp instrument which had been used to "strike, stab, and cause pain and fear" during her training – and began repeatedly smashing it against a wall (25). As Hribal notes, humans often reduce attacks such as this to "rare" occurrences, "accidents," or instances of "wild" animals merely following their "instinct" (24). This serves to reinforce arrogant and reductive perceptions of other animals as merely instinctual beings, denying them their intentionality, agency, and rich qualities. It further serves to remove human accountability by erasing the human-imposed oppressive conditions that other animals such as Tatiana or Janet are acting out against. Alfie, Tatiana, and Janet are not isolated examples and Hribal makes clear that the incidents of other animals making deliberate escapes and targeted attacks against their captors and abusers are widespread and span many individuals and species.

During my experience as a volunteer at the Toronto Wildlife Center (TWC), I witnessed active resistance taking place, although I did not consciously recognize it as such at the time. The resistance I refer to was carried out by one particular red squirrel who was responsible for a whopping thirteen incident reports in one week. Incidents reports are used to formally document any instance in which a volunteer or employee at the TWC receives a significant injury. Incident reports in the squirrel nursery are a relatively uncommon occurrence; during my eight months as a volunteer in the squirrel nursery, I only ever witnessed one such report being filed. The red squirrel who was responsible for thirteen incident reports in the matter of one week was quite an anomaly. This squirrel's resistant

behaviour caused quite an upheaval in the squirrel nursery. As he repeatedly bit volunteers in response to being held captive and handled, incident reports had to be filled out, warnings were written in bold and highlighted in fluorescent pink on his chart, and special gloves were purchased and placed near his cage for those who were "handling" him. Those who refuse to comply are often arrogantly coded as trouble-makers, criminals, difficult, bad-apples, or wild. Similarly, many of the wildlife volunteers referred to this squirrel as "evil" and "a biter," implying that his behaviour was an inevitable result of some personal defect or untamed quality. This served to undermine the very intentional nature of his resistance to captivity and control and reduce his complex behaviours to simplistic explanations.

Thinking of the transgressive red squirrel at the TWC, I cannot help but feel admiration and respect for his tenacious and daring acts of resistance. Having said that, the Canada Geese of York University remind me that resistance does not always take the form of a grand gesture or escape: resistance can include simply continuing to live in a place, in the face of hostile displacement efforts. The resistance of the Canada Geese is daily and requires stamina and active persistence in a place.

An attentive, problem-posing praxis opens up not only the possibility that other animals are capable of resistance, but it also makes space for the liberatory visions that their acts of resistance suggest. In the case of the squirrel at the TWC, an attentiveness to his resistance might reveal his vision of liberation to include freedom from captivity and non-consensual touch. In the case of the geese, their resistance in the form of collective persistence might suggest that their liberation includes freedom from violence, threats, and targeted eviction efforts. Their liberation might also include flourishing. As ecofeminist scholar Chris Cuomo emphasizes, ethics must attend to flourishing (1998, 65). For Cuomo, flourishing can include thriving in terms of one's "own capacities or physical requirements," physical health, change, thriving communities, self-directedness (of individuals and communities), and ecological thriving (69-77). By including flourishing in liberation, we can begin to understand how the Canada Geese's vision of liberation might also

include access to safe, familiar nesting grounds and thriving community networks. Based on my recurring embodied engagements with this particular community of Canada Geese, it seems possible (although my understanding is admittedly limited) that they envision liberation as including access to ample field-space for grazing, gosling-rearing support systems, and human allies who stop their cars while they cross the road.

While an attentive, problem-posing praxis opens up multi-species resistance and the liberatory visions that such resistance suggests, it also opens up deeper and more nuanced understandings of the geese themselves and their resistance. Attentiveness allows space for complexity to reveal itself, challenging reductive depictions of resistance as characterized by merely struggle and suffering. Looking beyond limiting narratives of struggle and suffering, I wonder if the Canada Geese who live at York University are also thriving in some ways. While numbers can be deceiving, their communities seems to be flourishing with adults and young alike. Not only are their numbers high, but they also seem to demonstrate a level of community cooperation and resiliency which also indicates flourishing. I notice several geese take on the role of watching the goslings while the rest of the adults graze elsewhere on campus. I notice couples pairing off and then reintegrating into the larger flock at various times in the day. I notice adults calling and communicating to one another when they have lost sight of one of the flock. I also notice humans stopping their cars to let geese cross the road or giving space to the goslings who are grazing nearby. All of these behaviors suggest a level of social complexity and (multi-species) community support that indicates some level of flourishing. It seems possible that these geese are actually thriving in the face of hostile displacement efforts. Thus, attentive, problem-posing praxis can open up more complex understandings of the geese, allowing for them to simultaneously be engaged in resistance, thriving, and enriching community networks.

What other acts of resistance exist across species and individuals? What liberatory visions might they suggest? If we begin to open ourselves up to the many varied forms of mutli-species resistance that exist, what messages and visions might we also open ourselves up to? Certainly, a common theme is a vision of freedom from captivity, abuse, hostility, and control. What more nuanced visions might long-term attentiveness and careful thought reveal? It seems that simply recognizing, respecting, and celebrating other animals' acts of resistance is vitally important and a necessary component of attentive engagement. Humans can acknowledge the agency of other animals and begin to understand the diverse manifestations of resistance that exist in multi-species contexts. This in turn lays the foundation for actively co-creating space for multi-species resistance as knowing what resistance and dissent might look like can help us to collectively make space for it in all of its forms. Making space for resistance may include simply adopting an attitude of openness and a willingness to acknowledge and learn from acts of resistance. I turn next to a beaver from the TWC in order to engage with the richness of disabled modes of being, beyond suffering.

Beyond Suffering: Opening up Richer Understandings of Disability

I only met him once. One of the Toronto Wildlife Center's (TWC) interns poked their head into the squirrel nursery where I volunteered and asked if I would like to see the one-year-old beaver who had recently arrived in the TWC's care. He was about to have scheduled water time and I was invited to watch. According to the intern, the beaver was at the TWC because he had been attacked and rejected by his family. While his wounds healed, his access to water was limited, with scheduled water time being offered only so that he could relieve himself (something which he would only do in the water). I eagerly agreed to the intern's offer and followed them to a dimly-lit room, equipped with a large tub and a drain in the middle of the cement floor.

I hesitantly stood in the open doorway - watching from what I hoped was a respectful distance - as a small team of TWC staff and interns guided the beaver out of a kennel and into the tub of water. As I watched him plop

into the water, I was surprised at his physical size and the coarseness of his fur. He had a palpable presence which filled the room and had the strange effect of making me self-conscious of my own. I tiptoed several inches closer, making sure to scarcely breathe. Although I could not possibly know what he was thinking and feeling, I got the distinct sense that he was content in the company of his human caregivers – a hunch supported by a long-time veterinary technician who commented that he was an exceptionally friendly beaver. I continued to watch him with a sense of wonder as he quietly floated in the water. After several minutes, he proceeded to somewhat clumsily, and without prompting, clamber out of the tub while his caregivers guided him back into the kennel.

Beavers are exceptionally social creatures and involved parents, rearing their kits for two whole years after their birth. In light of this, TWC staff were prepared to raise the young beaver for an entire year, serving the role of his parents until his eventual release at the age of two. While this would be an extremely costly and labour-intensive process, staff members seemed generally excited to interact with such an affable creature. Unfortunately, medical assessments determined that he had an untreatable neurological condition which caused him to experience seizures. It was suspected that this was the reason why he had been abandoned and attacked by his own family. Due to the fact that he would be unlikely to survive for long upon his release from the TWC, this otherwise healthy and happy beaver was euthanized shortly after my encounter with him.

My brief attentive engagement with the beaver made me intensely uncomfortable with, upset by, and critical of the TWC's decision to euthanize him. In combination with attentive engagement, a critical disability studies framework illuminates how the decision to euthanize the beaver, while not made lightly, was undoubtedly informed by ableist assumptions. As Sunaura Taylor points out, ableism is projected not only onto other animals, but also onto other animals who humans would call disabled (Taylor 2017, 43). Ableist assumptions devalue and limit other animals, with disabled animals in particular, to the realm of the pitiable, the suffering, the vulnerable, the voiceless, the weak, the incapable, the contagious, the despised, and the feared.[18] But what possibilities and

[18] Not all other animals or disabled animals are devalued by ableism in the same way or to the same degree.

lessons open up when we begin to challenge these ableist assumptions by opening ourselves up to the rich possibilities that lie in different "modes of being in the world" (Lloro-Bidart 2015, 96)? What different kinds of understanding, meaning, value, enjoyment, and fulfillment might be revealed?

After the beaver's neurological condition was discovered, he was faced with two common ableist reactions to disability: pity and destruction (Taylor 2017, 23). The impulse to put disabled individuals out of their misery is rooted in pity and destruction in addition to being fueled by stereotypes of disability as something worse than death. I wonder if the TWC might have been able to accommodate the beaver in some way so that his unique neurological make-up could be accommodated, although this raises challenging yet important questions regarding what "accommodation and access, or working to dismantle ableism even mean[s] for different species" (41). Even if no accommodations could be made, and the beaver would not survive long upon his release, who is to say that he would rather be "humanely" euthanized than live extra days, weeks, months, or even years in his natural habitat before perhaps dying prematurely and painfully? Does the pain and suffering of an unsupervised and untimely death outweigh the richness of life's experiences leading up to such a death? Furthermore, his experience of disability would not necessarily result in suffering or an untimely death. Taylor points out that numerous examples exist of disabled animals who survive and even thrive in the wild (27). What happens when we challenge the ableist assumption that the beaver's disability necessarily entails suffering and a premature death, when in fact, different experiences of disability are often compatible with survival and thriving?

Disability studies has tried to move away from narratives of suffering, not to deny or erase suffering, but rather, to encourage a richer understanding of what experiences of disability are. It seems, however, that the TWC perpetuates a narrative in which disability is viewed *as* suffering at the expense of richer understandings of disability. In the eyes of the TWC and many of its staff,

death by euthanasia is a preferable option to living with a disability and eventually dying. The challenging decisions that TWC workers are faced with on a daily basis are indisputably complex, but how might their decisions change if they were guided by richer understandings of disability? Who might get to live if ableist assumptions were no longer informing TWC decisions? Would the friendly, laid-back beaver be alive today? What diverse range of experiences might he have had? What diverse modes of being, knowledges, and visions might he have had to share?

An attentive praxis offers an opportunity to engage with another being(s) in their full complexity. Perhaps if the TWC staff had adopted an intentional attentive praxis, they might have looked beyond reductive and ableist notions of disability *as* suffering and instead developed an appreciation for the richness of the beaver's subjective existence. Thus, an attentive, problem-posing praxis makes space for complexity and difference to reveal themselves. From complexity and difference, nuanced lessons of multi-species resistance can be learned, specific liberatory visions can be revealed, and simplistic narratives of struggle and suffering can be exchanged for richer understandings of other animals and their experiences.

IV – Imaginative Musings in Formal Education

So far, I have discussed an attentive, problem-posing praxis, weaving in examples from my life involving snails, skunks, Murphy, a beaver, squirrels, and geese. An attentive, problem-posing praxis seems particularly compatible with what Ramsay Affifi refers to as our "lived curricula" (2011, 49). While certainly, this praxis can and should apply to multiple contexts, the challenge lies in applying it to spaces from which other animals are excluded. So, I once again return to the question of what tangible forms this praxis might take in the challenging context of Western, formal educational spaces.

In responding to this question, I draw inspiration from two particular imaginative, critical endeavours, with the first being the visionary science fiction collection, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* (Maree Brown and Imarisha 2015). In this collection, science fiction short stories written by community activists, educators, and organizers are imaginative tools for social justice. The second source of inspiration is Helena Pederson's inventive engagement with a real student's proposed project that was not approved by their university (2012). Through a fictional engagement, Pederson carries out the denied project in which the student intended to spend one month in a pig crate at a commercial slaughter facility (2012).

Drawing from these sources of inspiration, I engage in an imaginative scenario, offering a fictional example of how an attentive, problem-posing praxis can be applied in formal educational settings. Concurrently, I remain cognizant of both the possibilities and tensions that may arise from this imagined situation. My hope is that this fictional scenario will offer a clearer idea of how an attentive, problem-posing praxis can be used in formal educational

spaces while at the same time infusing my paper with a playful attitude that is open to discovery, risk, uncertainty, change, and foolishness.

Liminal Lessons from Worms

A class of grade five students makes its way along the paved walkaway. They are on their way to the nearby city park where they do nature journalling every Tuesday afternoon. Today, rain is smattering against the pavement in fat, staccato drops. Amidst the drumming of rain, one of the students eagerly calls out to no one in particular, alerting the group to the countless earthworms who have surfaced from the soil and lie along the paved path, their slick bodies glistening with rain.

Attentiveness opens up opportunities for discovery in the liminal spaces and unanticipated moments between planned lessons. Problem-posing education requires a disruption of the teacher-student boundary in which students raise topics for discussion, pose critical questions to their teachers, and are active participants in directing educational dialogue. In light of this, the teacher feels it is important to respond to the student's observation and reminds the class that they have been presented with an opportunity for attentiveness, a term which they are all familiar with by now. The teachers offers the students (who are also teachers) time and space to engage with the worms, reminding them to practice consent, respect, compassion, sensory engagement, and responsiveness while approaching the worms. The teacher also requests that the students remain open to the lessons that the worms might have to share.

While most of the students quietly observe the worms, one overzealous student bends down and picks one up off of the ground. As the student holds the worm in the palm of their hand, the worm thrashes and wriggles. The teacher gently intervenes, reminding the student of the guiding values of respect and consent. At the teacher's prompting, the student decides to set the worm back down, interpreting their thrashing as a refusal to be held. The teacher discusses the thrashing worm with a cluster of nearby students, seizing the opportunity to learn from and critically engage with what appears to be the worm's refusal to be held. Some of the students suggest that the

worm was afraid or hurt by being picked up. Other students think that the worm wanted to be remain with the other worms on the pavement. The teacher reminds them that while they cannot know what the worm is thinking or feeling, they can become more closely attuned to what the worm is expressing through careful, attentive engagement. The teacher asks the students to consider the different kinds of risks that worms and students might face when interacting with each other and to consider how that might influence the kinds of interactions that worms find acceptable, and the kinds of interactions that they reject.

After the students have had time to attentively engage with the worms, the teachers suggests that the class continue walking to the park, reminding everyone to tread with care. The group navigates the countless worms on the pavement, taking care to not step on any of them. As a result of their mindful walking, the time it normally takes them to get to the park is nearly doubled. One student complains about the time that was wasted while walking to the park. Another student responds by pointing out that if they had walked any faster, many worms would have been accidently crushed. The teacher takes this opportunity to critically engage the students with a challenge to human-centrism. The teachers wonders aloud whether the well-being of the worms should be prioritized over human schedules and conveniences. The teachers asks the students whether the presence of the worms on the pavement posed a challenge to human privilege and asks them to consider how humans might behave differently if the well-being of worms was a priority. How might earthworms wish for humans to behave towards them?

Finally, the teacher asks the students what they learned from the worms. One student points out that worms can't talk. Another student corrects the first, pointing out that the thrashing worm who had been picked up talked with their body. Yet another student interjects, telling the class that they learned that earthworms like the rain. The teacher acknowledges that while the worms were out in the rain, they cannot know how the earthworms experience the rain and what their feelings are towards it. However, the students can, over time and through attentive engagement, hope to understand the worms in a more complex, albeit still limited, way. Stepping in tune with worms is a valuable ethical process and they have only just begun.

This scenario simultaneously raises multiple opportunities and tensions with the application of an attentive, problem-posing praxis in formal education. Significantly, attentiveness creates opportunities for learning in unplanned moments or between scheduled lessons. This example demonstrates how even in structured formal education, attentiveness can provide opportunities to embrace and learn from the unknown and surprise. This example also points to the opportunities that an attentive, problem-posing praxis provides in terms of allowing students to actively participate in and guide problem-posing education. The students who noticed the worms, complained about the extended walk time, and expressed concern over stepping on the worms were all able to shape the ongoing critical dialogue in meaningful ways. An attentive, problem-posing praxis also enabled the students to learn from other animals, even when the other animal rejected an invitation to engage. In the case of the student who picked up a thrashing worm, important preliminary learning opportunities opened up about different expressions of refusal, consent, and respect. The worm's refusal to be held also inspired thoughtful reflection on the worm's subjective experience of being picked up.

Tensions also arose in this fictional scenario. Allowing the students to freely pose problems and attentively engage with the worms was in tension with ensuring that the most vulnerable beings in the interaction (in this case, the worms) were treated compassionately and respectfully. In this scenario, the teacher addressed this tension by intervening with the student who picked up a worm. The teacher intervened to facilitate a more respectful encounter at the expense of a more unmediated learning experience that was possibly open to greater surprise. Certainly, attentiveness can be messy and full of risk. This example raises the challenge of how to balance safety and respect with risk and surprise when they are in tension with each other.

This example also raises a possible tension between structure and flexibility. An attentive, problem-posing praxis allows for unplanned and unexpected learning. However, in the above scenario, the unexpected opportunity for attentive engagement with the worms, and the resulting attentive walk, more than doubled the transition time between the classroom and nature journaling. If formal education is to be open to the unexpected learning that comes with an attentive, problem-posing praxis, it must also allow for some flexibility in schedules.

Tensions and Possibilities in the Classroom

In what other ways might an attentive, problem-posing praxis be incorporated into formal educational spaces where humans can learn from other animals? Anthony Weston points to a very simple way that opportunities for interspecies attentive, problem-posing engagement can be encouraged. He encourages us to open the blinds and windows, to talk about the more-than-human-world, and to make it an everyday practice (Weston 2004, 39). He also encourages teaching outside while creating more workable outdoor classrooms such as amphitheaters (39). Weston points out that insects exist around us at all times and suggests engaging with them in classrooms. He describes how a "spider, say, thus emerges as another form of awareness, another presence, a co-inhabitant of what we thought was 'our' space, an independent being from whose point of view we can perhaps come to see ourselves in a new way" (43). Thus, there are opportunities, even within traditional classrooms, to engage with other animals.

There is plenty of room for attentive, problem-posing praxis in formal education. While such a praxis is compatible with formal education, it is not without its challenges and tensions. Certainly, more work must be done in order to meet the challenge of making Western schools tenable sites for attentive, problem-posing engagements with other animals.

V – Conclusion

> Rather than toning things down…take a reasonable idea two steps too far, connect it to five others, and then suggest that the resulting vision might be a good beginning. (Weston 2012, xii)

I have chosen to conclude my exploration with the above sentiment which Anthony Weston uses to begin his imaginative, celebratory, and exuberant environmental manifesto (2012). It feels fitting to use an opening as a closing, as I hope that my endeavour ultimately serves to open up new possibilities, tensions, curiosities, and questions; a preliminary vision within a medley of multiplicity, opportunity, and challenge. While I don't claim to have captured Weston's bold extravagance that is hinted at in the above quote, I do hope that I have offered a "good beginning" that is playful, exploratory, and unabashed in its liberatory vision (even if, perhaps, it falls short of such a grand goal).

Ultimately, I have explored a praxis of attentiveness in combination with Freirean problem-posing education as a means of enabling other animals to be teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own liberation in Western, formal educational contexts. I have situated my endeavour in a context of multi-species entanglements in which other animals are expressive and complex beings whose lives are rich with value, relationships, experiences, knowledges, and meaning. I have also situated my endeavour in a context of moral urgency in which other animals are routinely silenced, ignored, marginalized, and exploited in often brutal ways within the AIC. In an attempt to attend to and learn from the meaningful and rich lives of other animals and to respond to such moral urgency, I have offered an attentive, problem-posing praxis. This praxis combines the playful, relational, embodied attentiveness of Traci Warkentin's ethical attentive praxis with the liberatory, politicized, and dialogical pedagogy of Freire's problem-posing education. In line with other critical and social justice frameworks, this

ethical praxis centers other animals as teachers, leaders, and visionaries of their own liberation. It allows for humans to listen to the embodied messages that other animals express, possibly coming to learn from them and to recognize their complexity, difference, capacity for resistance, liberatory visions, and rich lives beyond discourses of struggle and suffering. While this praxis can easily apply to personal, informal encounters, it can also be applied to the trickier circumstance of Western formal education. In an attempt to give life to my proposed praxis, I have offered a fictional scenario, illustrating how an attentive, problem-posing praxis might be realized in the challenging context of formal education.

My endeavour, I hope, will perpetually be unfinished, continually being taken up by others, challenged, added to, and reimagined; a source of many beginnings. So, where might one go from here? What are some uncertainties, questions, tensions, challenges, and opportunities that might be taken up as a next step? Certainly, it is worth considering how this praxis applies to different animals who are categorized in particular ways. While my endeavour looked broadly at all other animals, a next step might be to take a more specific approach, considering, for example, how animals who are categorized as "food," "wild," "invasive," "pest," "pet," "working," "parasite" and beyond might be differently attended to through attentive, problem-posing praxis in formal educational spaces. Who might be engaged within these spaces and who might it be unsafe, disrespectful, non-consensual, or impractical to engage attentively with?

This is connected to uncertainties related to mediated encounters. I empathize with Anthony Weston as he grapples with the seemingly impossible task of "commun[ing] with the other wild creatures in classrooms" such as bears or vultures or orca, acknowledging that "[s]urely we need them…yet it is not clear how to invoke them" (Weston 2012, 42). In a context of embodied attentiveness, I wonder if there is room for mediated engagements with

these other wild creatures. Might one engage in attentive praxis with an orca on a computer screen or a vulture through a set of binoculars? Can classrooms utilize narratives, imaginative activities, or artistic endeavours to engage with a bear in an attentive, problem-posing manner? It is not yet clear what role attentive problem-posing might play beyond highly direct and unmediated multi-species encounters.

Related to this, what other praxes and frameworks might supplement an attentive, problem-posing praxis? Additionally, how might formal educators navigate practical challenges such as making sure that students have access to proper clothing and outdoor equipment, attending to students with plant and animals allergies, accommodating students with mobility access needs in a variety of environments, or dealing with formal education's bias against embodied learning and including other animals? How might different levels of education (e.g., preschool, post-secondary, etc.) differently incorporate an attentive, problem-posing praxis?

While my preliminary exploration has raised multiple tensions, questions, and further areas of inquiry that must still be addressed, it has also highlighted the immense opportunities that arise when applying an attentive, problem-posing praxis to Western formal education. Ultimately, this praxis allows humans to learn from the embodied dialogue of other animals, opening up their wondrous modes of being in the world to respectful consideration, acknowledgement, and engagement. This praxis situates multi-species learning within a total liberation framework in which other animals are leaders and active participants in their own liberation.

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