

## 30. The Zoo of Enlightenment

*An exciting exercise in woke punishment*

In the magnificent Museum of Old and New Art, in Hobart Tasmania, there was once an exhibit composed of a middle aged man, cropped hair, naked to the waist, sitting upright on a chair, motionless, only the image to behold, enhanced by various tattoos on chest and arms. That was it. The man did nothing. Just sat staring blankly ahead. Visitors gawked at this unexpected sight. It was a fad in zoos many years ago to exhibit a human behind bars, going about his daily business for people to stare at, just as they might stare at other animal species in the zoo. It was in the early days of the second enlightenment (late 20th century) that made people in the west accept the idea that the world should not be centered on humans as something special, that all species were equal, that therefore animals should be treated as humans, and if that were not possible, humans treated like animals. That was the small, if not a little confused message in those days. Of course, some eastern religions had long recognized this, much to the criticism by the west, the worship of cows as sacred, for example in parts of India. This enlightened view of life expressed itself in the west in many ways, the most obvious, by the rise of the vegetarians and their more extreme relatives the vegans. In the 21st century, the second enlightenment continues to flourish, traditional boundaries between species now blurred, and has expanded its influence among the intelligentsia and their handmaidens the media, to eradicate the traditional boundaries between genders and their respective intercourses. We look forward to the new forms of art that will be created and discovered during the second enlightenment.

Such is the modern zoo established recently in California, by far the most progressive state of the United States of America, indeed, the progressive leader of the rest of the world, especially the Twitter world. It therefore comes as little surprise that San Francisco, with money donated by the dark knights behind Google, Twitter, Facebook and other beacons of 21st century enlightenment, has torn down its old zoo completely and established it anew on the island where Alcatraz, the infamous prison, once stood. This zoo is like no other. It has no walls or

bars except the wall that encircles its entire perimeter. Nor is it free range, although some might insist that it really is. But the popular free range zoos only allow certain animals to roam their paddocks and fields. They do not allow a free for all—the classic animal kingdom if you like, to range at will. In those zoos, lions and tigers are well fed, so they have no need to eat other animals that roam the zoo.

Think of any animal species. It is there in the Alcatraz zoo. You may not see it, depending on where you roam. That's right, not only do the animals roam, so do the humans, visitors or specimens. That is why there are many large signs that warn visitors against being eaten. The zookeepers do not feed the animals. The island is refreshed in such a way that the animals feast on each other and on whatever the perfectly reproduced "jungle" provides. So if humans are silly enough to offer themselves up to the animal predators, so be it. The zoo has only been open for two months, and so far, there has been no formal complaint laid concerning any ingestion of a human. It is true that one elephant was attacked by a pride of tigers, and every last morsel eaten by tigers, dingoes, and the like. There were no public complaints. So why should there be any if it happened to be a human? A human is no more special than an elephant. Or an ant, for that matter (so the extremists say).

Visitors to the old Alcatraz island, when the prison was still in its pristine, ugly condition, may complain that a great icon of America's criminal history has been destroyed. The builders have retained two of the original cell blocks, though they have been refurbished to provide the proper physical and cultural environment for visitors and specimens alike. Cell block one is what might be called the justice block—where the unique ability of human species to punish each other is on display (more about this exciting exhibit shortly). The second cell block is reserved for overnight and extended stays of animals and humans upon their request. That block is closed to the public once it has reached full capacity. Some have called this the animal brothel. For the moment only two species, humans and monkeys are permitted in that experimental cell block. This does not mean that other species are discriminated against. Simply we must take small steps in our great progressive agenda. But be assured for those of you who doubt us: we are committed to breaking down the boundaries of all species. To keep species separate, in our considered opinion, is tantamount to racism, the higher form of

which is speciesism.

One more important point. Animals of all species do not carry weapons, though there are rare species (monkeys for example) that have been known to pick up a big stick and hit someone with it. We do allow that level of tool acquisition and use by any animals or humans that are capable of it. However, we do not allow the carrying of any other weapons, whether guns, arrows, or spears. Sharp sticks and stones are permitted. So is using stones as projectiles.

It is quite understandable if you are already thinking that this is a plan for disaster. Of course, being killed and eaten is a disaster for the one killed. And you may also be thinking that the odds for survival in our real life zoo are very much in favor of the “lion king.” That remains to be seen. Besides, we object to the imperialist tone of that expression. America was established to get rid of the tyranny of a king. That was a result of the first enlightenment. This is a new age. Further, it has a genderist connotation. We think of all species as on a level playing field. All species are born equal. None is assumed to be greater than the other. All species matter. There is no better example of our commitment to this progressive idea than the cell block two exhibit.

Cell block one, the justice block, is not really a cell block. We retained only a few of the original cells of the block (Al Capone’s and the Birdman’s for example), since we all know now that the major form of justice produced by the 18th century so-called enlightenment was prison, of which Alcatraz, one of its many monstrosities, is a shining example. The remaining cells were demolished to make way for the construction of the gaming room where we have perfected a justice system that eradicates all bias and systemic speciesism from the justice system. It is the opposite to enlightenment justice in which there is a finite set of crimes defined in language that only lawyers understand, presided over by judges whose fallibility is well known, and lawyers make much money off the backs of their clients, whether offenders or victims. Instead, we have erased the entire notion of offender and victim. We consider all persons, actually all species, capable of crimes, or we prefer to call them accidents or simply events that must be punished. What these events are it is unnecessary to define or even identify. In fact, of course, everyone knows that you cannot punish an event. You can only punish a person, or should I say, one of a species. Or, more

precisely, one must have an object to punish. For example, kicking one's dog is an act that, in the old world, might be punishable. But again, one cannot punish the act, only the individual who did it.

Our solution to this unnecessarily complicated problem of who should be punished and what for is simple. It eradicates completely any possibility of injustice or bias. We leave it to chance. Hence our gaming room on Alcatraz. Visitors to our zoo must sign the waiver agreement that they will abide by all rules and restrictions of the zoo, and that they enter the game room at their own risk and choice. When they enter, they receive a number and when the room is full to capacity, we literally spin the wheel and the first number up identifies the first receiver of justice. In the outside world we know that about one person every ten minutes commits some kind of crime. Thus, we spin the wheel every ten minutes. If your number comes up you step into the pain infliction machine and are subjected to a brief, but very painful, electric shock to the buttocks. The shock is administered by whatever species happens to step on one of the large levers that are hidden about the zoo, including outside the game room. Thus, the randomly chosen justice recipient may be punished by an unknown species, and that punisher may even be ignorant of its role in punishing. There are many difficulties with administering this justice and we have much to do to make sure that it cannot be tampered with. Our aim is to produce truly pure justice that is incorruptible, applicable to all regardless of their species. The misleading portrayals invented by the corrupt 18th century enlightenment officials of "lady justice" blindfolded holding the scales of justice in one hand, has always been a lie. Our justice is pure, simple, and incorruptible. In cell block one you not only see justice administered, but you also have the chance to participate, if you are lucky.

Pleas of "innocence" by the way are never accepted. Our justification for this rigid rule is the famous and prescient observation made by the only great mind of the old enlightenment, Franz Kafka, whom we hold in great awe. He wrote in his wonderful story *The Penal Colony*: "Guilt is never to be doubted." It is inscribed above the entrance to the justice room. The idea was born in the old enlightenment. We have put it into practice.

Now for cell block two. Be warned. To some, what follows may be stressful, and may cause sleepless nights. However, we do not

provide prurient descriptions of the experiences in cell block two. Here, we provide only a general sketch of what happens, or may happen. One cannot for sure predict exactly what trysts will arise. It depends on many factors, the time of day, when a particular species has eaten, the actual physiological and structural make-up of the species, if you see what I mean. Inter-species intercourse may not be physically possible, though if you have watched birds at it, it is a marvel that they reproduce. The same with a large dog and a tiny dog. On the other hand species that are roughly the same size such as a horse and a donkey, are able to cross, though the outcomes are sometimes surprising. If you buy the premium ticket, you will have the opportunity to experiment yourself. We have had some customers who have a fantasy of being able to fly. At least, would like to have children who could live out that fantasy. Yes, that's right. The second enlightenment does not accept many of the old supposed adages, such as "pigs can't fly." One day, the interactive experiences possible in cell block two may show just how wrong that assertion is.

We have retained the division into cells in this and cell block one. Generally, we have knocked out the walls between every other cell to make them larger, and we have kept the bars, and the locks on the doors. We have found this necessary because, as you may know, some species can be aggressive at times, in fact some, such as certain grasshoppers, will eat their partner after sex. There is also the constant fear—I hesitate to use that word—as generally we do not encourage fear except when it is born into certain species. Some species live in fear most of the time, such as grown deer and most humans, though their babies have no such fear, and for their own good must be taught it.

In any case, we keep a selection of species in each cell, having assessed their condition or receptivity, the stage in their reproductive cycle, and so on. We rotate these different species through the cell block, and allow free cellular interaction with our human clients according to their (plural) wishes. Human clients must sign a consent form, indemnifying us from damages, and also identifying next of kin so that should something happen, the species becomes pregnant or dies for example, these outcomes may be transferred according to the client's wishes.

Some of the cells that visitors may select, have options for darkening the cell, even making it pitch black. This means generally that visitors who come simply to look, rather than to

take advantage of our interactive experiences, may not see what they hope to see. We do provide night vision goggles, but in environments of total darkness that some species live, that may be impossible. However, overnight and even week or month sojourns may be allowed depending on the species.

Although we have not been operating long enough to see the production of cross progeny, we do anticipate that this will be a popular and natural outcome of our real life zoological experiences. We are working on developing a best practices schedule for those who parent such progeny, and, depending upon the assessment by our highly experienced social workers, we will come to an arrangement with the parents whether a home stay is recommended, or whether the cross progeny should remain here in the zoo.

No doubt you are already imagining all kinds of horrific scenes in which one species devours—in every sense of that word—its partner or progeny. Once again, we remind you that this is a real life interactive zoo. All behaviors that occur in the wild (a nasty racist word) are possible and indeed encouraged in this zoo. Its outcomes are explored and demonstrated in cell block one.

A modern zoo would not be complete without a performance arena, which is what we made from the old exercise yard of Alcatraz, famous for its image of the criminals walking around and around the yard, single file in a circle, as imagined in many drawings and photoshopped photographs. But even the smallest of animal zoos have always included in their exhibits, a performance section where animals of a wide variety are “civilized” by being taught to do many wondrous tricks by the masters, the humans. In the performances we offer, we try to level the playing field as far as it is possible, though keeping an eye out for acts that animals can do and humans cannot. The most well-known of these is the seal balancing a beach ball on its nose. How many humans can do that? It turns out quite a few, with the right training. Our “ringmaster” as we call our chief training executive will show you how it’s done (additional charge for admission to the performances). However, we do like to keep the performances as part of our overall interactive approach, so the trainer will allow members of the audience to select the method of training, (reinforcement with rewards, or punishment with painful electric shock). Of course, the majority of the audience favors the electric

shock schedule. They say electric shock is more “humane” (a species-ist word if ever there was one, certainly an insult to the animals including those that claim humanity), because it does not draw blood or even leave much of a mark on the body, or more correctly the exo- or intro-skeleton, thorax, head, abdomen, legs, arms or antennae.

As an aside, you may have taken offense at our use of the word “ringmaster” which on first hearing sounds prejudiced, certainly the nasty connotation of master and slave. The word comes, of course, from the now defunct circuses that treated their animals badly, though we insist, not as bad as regular zoos, since circuses did have humans perform mainly as clowns and sometimes as acrobats and contortionists, performing alongside their equals, elephants, tigers, lions etcetera.

Here is a brief listing of the performing species, though it changes constantly, depending on what species are available and at what stage of regeneration they have reached. However, we do apologize for not including microorganisms in our displays or performances. Be assured that this is among our forthcoming exhibits, when we have obtained the necessary funding to set up micro-view facilities. And to be honest, the extremists on equality are putting great pressure on us to consider microorganisms as part of the universal species list, so they argue that microorganisms should have the same rights as larger species. Just because they are small, does not mean they have fewer rights. They have the same right to life as any other species or class of species. Obviously there are very serious implications of this expansive view of universal rights and these are still being worked out. For the moment, our leading science ethicists do not agree that microorganisms, especially those that may cause widespread death and destruction such as a pandemic, should be treated just like any other form of life which we hold precious. For the moment, they advocate keeping alive only a few samples of such species (one never knows whether they may turn out to be a force for the good), and the rest should be euthanized.

The performances that may be seen in our interactive arena are:

Applying electric shock, teaching a bull terrier to bite a black person’s hand and lick a white person’s hand (and vice-versa).

Applying electric shock to train a person to lick the paw of a dog, and to bite the hand of a monkey.

Using a sharp prodding instrument, such as used by Indian elephant trainers, to teach an elephant to balance on one leg. Do the same with a person except require the balance on an inflated beach ball.

Have humans imitate copulation techniques from a group of macaques, and explore inter-species mating.

Have humans fight bare handed with selections of species that are upright walkers or runners, such as the gorilla and monkey species, kangaroos, and bears.

We provide this list merely as suggestions and to give the flavor of what to expect. Remember, we are entering the second enlightenment. Anything is possible. We encourage you to send us suggestions for species performances, now that we have opened your minds to these fascinating possibilities.

It was the performance arena that forced us to face up to the biggest taboo of the last many centuries, culminating in the first enlightenment, that raised humans up to a very high pedestal. The second enlightenment, while much has been achieved in breaking down decrepit taboos and old fashioned practices that have no cultural value, or that discriminate with or without intent, has forced us at the Zoo of Enlightenment to face up to the one immovable taboo that has remained unquestioned in civilizations everywhere. This is the taboo of cannibalism. Yes, there have been unique occurrences when cannibalism was forced on people marooned on an island, or lost in a desert, or some other extenuating circumstance. Though as evidence of the depth of this taboo, many of those caught in those unusual situations chose to die before giving in to eating another of their species. Once we saw the insidious speciesism hiding within the expression “Animal Kingdom” as we noted earlier, we realized that we had to confront it.

Generally speaking, the supposed hierarchy of the animal kingdom puts those at its top (lions, tigers etc. plus humans) of the “food chain” as it is called, essentially an arbitrary ordering of those who live off the lives of those beneath them. This is hardly in line with the idea of species equality engendered by the second enlightenment. Besides, there is also the question of population control. But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

As an intermediate step towards full species equality, we offer a



full funeral service to our premium customers who can have themselves of their loved ones who pass away returned to the “animal kingdom” and thus fed to the lions and other meat eating species. There are certain formal requirements for those offering their bodies, and our brochure outlines all of these. For example, whether you want the bones to be crushed and turned into fertilizer, pecked clean by vultures and other meat eating birds or animals, and so on. Our aim is always to assist you in returning your loved ones to the earth from whence they came. This is, however, an interim step. By the way, we will offer a wide choice of animals for feasting, and it is part of our ten year plan to add a shark pool on the west side of the island where loved ones can be fed to the sharks.

We look forward to breaking down the greatest taboo of all that has masqueraded as the jewel of civilization, that of cannibalism, exploited by the imperialists of the first enlightenment to justify their colonization of so-called primitive peoples who routinely practiced it. As part of our reparations to those “savages” we will accept applications from those whose natural pre-imperialist societies were destroyed, to join the “animal kingdom” in the arena and stalk volunteer white supremacists and feast upon them. Our ultimate aim, of course, is to have all peoples, regardless of race or color, to feast on each other, to live in “wild” equality. We acknowledge that this is maybe an unreachable goal, but following the Paris accord on climate change, we believe in setting up such goals to spur societies on, to make the commitment of reparations and repair the damage done to the world by 18th century enlightenment and before. By the year 2050 we will achieve zero inequality.

**Moral:** *Unequal punishment is the handmaiden of justice.*

