

# Schooling for Life

## How K-12 Schools Can Help End Our Species' Millennia-Long Animal-Abuse Policy, Annihilation of Nature, and Resulting Human Misery (First Edition, 2016)

A White Paper from Responsible Policies for Animals  
By David Cantor, Executive Director, Responsible Policies for Animals  
dcantor@rpa1.org ★ www.RPAforALL.org

Responsible Policies for Animals' (RPA's) white paper *Schooling for Life: How K-12 Schools Can Help End Our Species' Millennia-Long Animal-Abuse Policy, Annihilation of Nature, and Resulting Human Misery* is an important part of RPA's educational program aimed at establishing justice for all animals, including human beings. Ignorance of basic biology – knowledge of the kind of animal human beings are, their natural relationship to the rest of the living world, and impacts of their unnatural practices and lifeways on themselves and other beings – is a major obstacle to justice and to sound policy capable of supplanting long-established life-destroying practices and lifeways with those consistent with reversing the millennia-long Biocaust perpetrated by our species. See my essay “Beyond Humanism, Toward a New Animalism” for full definition, nature, and origins of the Biocaust, at the above website; hard copies available on request.

This first edition of *Schooling for Life* has four aims: (1) to assert the obligation of K-12 schools to teach children the truth about civilization's destructive impact on human beings, other animals, and the natural world; (2) to outline realities human beings must learn and live and govern by to reduce the vast scope of animal abuse and the misery it inflicts on humans and other animals; (3) to name some helpful sources on the matters at hand; and (4) to elicit comments from readers to help establish schooling for life as the norm, to improve and expand the paper for future editions, and to aid in the effort to reverse the Biocaust and reduce the misery it causes.

In three decades of full-time animal advocacy, investigating proximate and root causes of animal abuse and communicating with people in all walks of life and a great range of institutions, I've encountered, in all segments of society, shocking ignorance of the basic components of biology. I consider this ignorance a major factor in abysmal policies regarding food, health, environment, industry, war, and the economy; incalculable suffering in human beings and Earth's other animals; and our species' long and continuing assault on nonhuman animals and the living world. Hence the need of *Schooling for Life*.

The situation the white paper addresses is not the fault of K-12 instructors; all of them whom I've known personally through an entire human lifetime (including some family members) are knowledgeable, talented, and dedicated. Many years of teaching experience, a recent review of K-12 curricula, a lack of public influence on them, broadcast discussions of K-12 schooling, extensive reading about it, and communications with education departments, school boards, administrators, and teachers indicate that teachers are by and large prevented from teaching what children most need to learn and required to suppress science that debunks received belief and conventional wisdom.

*Schooling for Life* proposes a way for K-12 schooling to help our species out of the painful conundrum that all that sustains our outsized population and facilitates its comfort, convenience, recreation, and amusement abuses nonhuman animals and devours the living world. Teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers strive to teach children what they need to know as functioning members of modern civilization – enormously complex, unnatural institutions and systems. The task is difficult enough under a dubious assumption that civilization is entirely a good thing reflecting perpetual “human progress.” *Schooling for Life* promotes a healthy skepticism regarding civilization due to the undeniable misery it generates so intensely and on such a vast

scale. It has long been understood among all study the matter that humane and equitable reduction of the human population is crucial for improving the wellbeing of human beings and the living world. Yet few people grasp this; the need and the means to achieve it are suppressed in public discourse and appear to be excluded from K-12 schooling.

Recent generations have left increasingly calamitous and intractable problems to subsequent generations. It is crucial for children to become better informed than preceding generations about those problems and how they might solve them. Their own quality of life and fulfillment are at stake. The moral injury we endure from systemic and institutionalized violence and injustice is alone a terrible legacy to continue. Our K-12 schools must no longer leave it to chance for students to remedy the Biocaust by magic.

*Schooling for Life's* deliberate brevity enables it to highlight aspects of biology that most need our species' attention without drowning the message or the reader in minutia, equivocation, indirectness, and euphemism. Biology textbooks are great on how trees convert carbon dioxide to oxygen. *Schooling for Life* urges that children be asked to question whether it is altogether a good thing that trees be ground up and bleached with toxic water pollutants to wipe ourselves. The paper's assertions are noncontroversial scientifically. But many of them contradict conventional wisdom and received belief. The cognitive dissonance and umbrage *Schooling for Life* will generate, as I note when I state the facts in conversation and public presentations, reinforce the need of *Schooling for Life*; they do not indicate that anything in it is false.

It is no longer practical, safe, or morally acceptable for human beings to continue raising children as if their earning an income, paying taxes, voting, and perpetuating received customs, systems, practices, lifeways and institutions were sufficient. We all must learn to assess impacts of our lifeways and practices on nonhuman beings and the web of life, and to live and act accordingly – most especially, to press our officials for policies that accord with what we know.

This first edition of *Schooling for Life* is being mailed initially to the education departments of all 50 states, accompanied by a letter urging them to endorse it for their state K-12 school systems and promote it to their states' K-12 instructors, principals, superintendents and school boards. It will also be mailed to selected education associations, reporters who cover schooling, professors of education, and other authorities. It is offered to all interested K-12 personnel and persons who wish to share it with them. It is available to everyone at [www.RPAforALL.org](http://www.RPAforALL.org) or in hard copy on request from Responsible Policies for Animals.

## **Basic Biology**

Human beings are animals. Animals of a particular kind: mammal, primate, ape, plant-foraging herbivore. All animals, and all life forms, are genetically related to each other, having evolved from single-celled organisms over hundreds of millions of years. Some very close nonhuman relatives of our species are the bonobo, chimpanzee, gorilla, and orangutan.

Humans and their hominid ancestors have lived on Earth for at least seven million years, a small fraction of the time Earth has existed, thousands of times as long as civilization has existed and history has been written. Earth existed for billions of years before life began. Nonhuman animals, by pollinating, turning detritus into topsoil, spreading and fertilizing vegetation, being eaten by others, and decomposing, generated the web of life that makes human existence possible.

Though fearsome to humans who evolved as prey to large cats, reptiles, dogs, and raptors, predators are crucial to all life. They keep plant-eating animals moving about the landscape, preventing them from feeding in one spot long enough to eliminate all vegetation and change lush landscapes to desert. Killing mainly the ill, injured, and very old or young, predators keep prey animals' gene pools strong. Safety from other animals is not a natural condition of life. Even predators must watch for venomous animals.

Humans' organized assault on dangerous nonhuman animals, dating back hundreds of thousands of years, is unnatural, devastating to the web of life, and a root cause of incalculable

human misery. So is our species' supplanting predators by hunting prey animals. Among many other sources, *Man and Microbes*, *A New Green History of the World*, and *An Unnatural Order* (see Sources, below) indicate some of the harm done, including just about every human infectious disease we can name. *Man the Hunted* debunks the long-established "man the hunter" canard, showing precisely how it is known that humans evolved as prey, not as predators, and gives a reasonable idea of what original humans' daily lives were like. Humans are not "natural-born killers"; killing is invented, inculcated, learned, and rationalized, not natural, necessary, or normal in human beings.

Human intelligence, emotion, morality, politics, sociality, sexuality, and spirituality are innate capacities, evolved from preexisting animals – like teeth, limbs, eyes, vital organs, and other long-term evolutionary developments. The mind is the totality of electrochemical and neuroendocrine processes, inherent in the body though experienced as separate from it. Nonhuman animals live rationally according to their biological nature and needs. Humans originally did. Starting with the Animal-Abuse Revolution, humans have increasingly lived according to their elaborate imagination. Hence Responsible Policies for Animals' Petition To Change Human Beings' Zoological Name, urging the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature and people generally to use *Homo complexus* rather than the fictitious *Homo sapiens*. Our species' unnatural lifeways have incalculably harmful consequences for nonhuman victims, Earth's web of life, and all of us human beings as well.

### **Original Humans: Living Naturally**

All that existed and occurred before humans instituted technological innovations is natural. Human innovation generated ever more unnatural practices, and in the process destroyed and injured ever more human beings and nonhuman animals, increasingly disrupting Earth's ecosystems and biosphere. Once children learn what kind of animal they are and how their present lifeways diverge from their natural one, they will be able to understand their basic needs and evaluate civilization's countless products, services, and impacts more accurately than under the indoctrination they are currently subjected to and conditioning by industrial interests.

Original humans lived naked and weaponless on the African savanna, prey to large cats, reptiles, dogs, and raptors – like many other primates. Humans evolved as plant-foraging herbivores, not as omnivores as is widely believed. Original humans' main sources of enjoyment were food, play, grooming, sex, and the rich, infinitely complex, constantly shifting sights, sounds, and smells all around them and sunshine and wind on their skin. All of their experience was direct – nothing mediating between our earliest ancestors and the natural world that formed and sustained them: no clothing, manufactured weapons or tools, writing, buildings, vehicles, roads, agriculture, or animals genetically remade to meet human needs; just the human body (person), the extended-family society, and the boundless land, vegetation, water, shifting weather, passage of time, and numberless other animals of infinite variety living according to their evolved natures.

The original human mind was constantly engaged by omnipresent animals whom original humans observed directly, without mediation by folklore, literature, religious or secular ideology, or science. Nonhuman primates in their natural homes, similar to original humans in many ways, are highly attuned to everything perceptible their surroundings. Attention to other animals helps them avoid danger, locate food and water, and otherwise survive, thrive, and take care of each other.

Morality is innate in human beings as in many other animals. Different species manifest different forms and degrees of morality, depending on the particular species' evolution, ecology, and social and political nature. Being a moral animal does not mean one always does the right thing; moral animals just know what will help or harm others, how their acts and omissions will be perceived and assessed by others, and that their social status is based on their contributions to others' wellbeing. Morality is a set of capacities which tend to produce justice, peaceable relations, safety, and homeostasis. Basic human moral traits are empathy, sympathy, altruism, compassion,

reciprocity, a sense of fairness and justice, and biophilia – an affinity for nonhuman animals, vegetation, and life-supporting landscapes. As with other traits such as size, speed, alertness, and physical strength and coordination, humans, like other animals, possess moral traits in different degrees and combinations.

Original humans knew all of the other members of their society and their status and position in relation to all of the other members. There were no mass societies in which people lived mostly among strangers and had to be taught to get along with strangers. There were no ideologies holding any type of nonhuman animal or human being less than human or unworthy of life or self-determination. There was no accumulation of private property, manufactured weapons or power over others, forcing those of lower status to dedicate their lives to those of higher status or to labor at grueling, dangerous, or boring tasks. Within the natural hierarchy, all were essentially equal. Among social animals in nature, meritocracy and proto-democracy prevail.

In nature, there is no such animal as a pest, a game animal, a farm animal, a nonhuman pet, a laboratory or experimental animal (or a laboratory), a fur animal, a fishery, or any other invention of the human imagination designed to systematically oppress or destroy other animals.

### **Civilization: Humans Living Unnaturally**

In his award-winning *Out of the Earth: Civilization and the Life of the Soil*, Daniel J. Hillel asks, “How did one species gain such overwhelming dominance over so many others, indeed over the very processes that control all life? And how could the members of this clever species fail so utterly and for so long to realize the dire consequences of their carelessly exercised dominance?” Part of the answer: Civilization is based on innovation, not on nature but on its disruption, subjugation, and destruction. Notwithstanding the dire consequences we see all around us, boosters of innovation and destructive industries persist in proudly proclaiming “the conquest of nature.” Three major waves of technological innovation, the earliest starting tens of thousands of years ago, make civilization what it is today and explain the ever increasing harm civilization does: the Animal-Abuse Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. The second and third of these are widely known. The first is coined in my article “Let’s Use the Brains Our Species Was Born With,” published December 5, 2014, by *Dissident Voice*, easily located online.

The Animal-Abuse Revolution is the set of innovations in practice and thought which made it commonplace for humans to kill other animals despite the human person’s possessing no parts evolved for doing so. Starting gradually in our species’ natural home on the African savanna deep in prehistoric times, the Animal-Abuse Revolution was in full swing 50,000 years ago when *Homo complexus* (the truthful zoological name for modern humans), by then adept at manufacturing weapons and organizing to kill predators and to hunt animals to eat, began migrating northward out of Africa. In the original human home, it is believed that typically seventy-five plant foods – edible leaves, flowers, seeds, berries, nuts, roots, fruits, and legumes – were available at any given time. Moving northward, prehistoric humans eventually took up living in areas where winter significantly diminished plant foods humans could subsist on. Hunting then must have come to seem natural as it came to seem necessary. As children today experience automobiles, television sets, books, manufactured toys, and countless other human innovations as if they were natural components of their surroundings, purposely killing nonhuman animals other than in self-defense long ago came to seem natural although it is an innovation.

Just as innovation can alter the way people meet their needs, generate desires, and determine how people fulfill them, they can also nurture, undermine, subvert, or overwhelm humans’ innate morality. Human beings’ innate sociality, biophilia, altruism, empathy, sympathy, compassion, and their physical, moral, spiritual, political, and sexual nature served them well for thousands of generations. It is natural for humans to sympathize with other animals. After all, in the original human lifeway and home, being horrified at the fate of a member of the deer family (eland, gnu, impala) or a wildebeest, zebra, or monkey torn apart by a saber-toothed cat, a lion, or a family of hyenas served humans well, reminding them to be on guard, as when such animals

killed a fellow human. Those of us who deplore hunting and other animal abuse today are just recovering the full scope of our innate response to the suffering of others. Suppressing that response in the interest of lifeways unnatural to our species has wrought incalculable harm.

Other innovations that simultaneously abuse nonhuman animals and inform civilization include killing other animals for recreation, social or familial bonding, or relaxation – hunting, fishing, etc.; killing them incidentally by felling trees and destroying other vegetation; plowing, bulldozing, and paving landscapes; constructing buildings, roads, dams, fences, walls, and other structures; burning fuel for transportation, manufacturing, heating, cooling, and other purposes; bombing, setting landmines, destroying homes, farms, and factories and perpetrating other mass destruction in war; testing weapons, pharmaceuticals, other chemical inventions, surgical and dental procedures, and other products and practices on nonhuman animals; forcing nonhuman animals to live among human beings for labor, service, and companionship; controlling their reproduction and altering their genomes through selective breeding and genetic engineering; and otherwise abridging their species' original, natural dignity and self-determination.

Nearly a century ago, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud noted some basic aspects of civilization particularly relevant to what *Schooling for Life* recommends teaching K-12 students. “[W]ild and dangerous animals have been exterminated; the breeding of tamed and domesticated ones prospers.” “[E]verything ... that can be helpful in exploiting the earth for man’s benefit and in protecting him against nature – everything, in short, that is useful to him – is cultivated and effectively protected.” Freud might as well be saying that civilization fulfills Francis Bacon’s exhortation, centuries earlier, to put all in nature to human use. All of this seemed to serve humans well for a great many generations, before human beings started to consider that (1) the vast majority of human beings live in misery rather than enjoy the comforts of civilization like the affluent minority; (2) it is wrong for humans to cause nonhuman animals agony and unfulfilling lives; (3) about three plant or animal species are vanishing every hour due to human practices, policies, and lifeways; and (4) nearly all human suffering one way or another is traceable to animal-abuse culture and policy and our species’ annihilation of nature.

Civilization inflicts deep moral injury on all of us who benefit at the expense of countless others and the future of the living world. Recognition of what we’ve done and continue to do sends waves of sadness through the enlightened and conscientious human mind. I have written elsewhere, “If you are not heartbroken, you are not paying attention.” Many suppress knowledge, not because they “don’t care” as animal and environmental advocates often lament, but because of what I call *the morality paradox*. As moral apes, we need to see ourselves, our society, and our lifeway as *good* and not to see them as *bad*. Confronted with the demoralizing reality and with how difficult it will be to reverse the devastating trajectories of recent millennia, we reflexively insist we’re not the guilty party; it isn’t our fault; how we live through civilization and its innovations is part of the natural order – “survival of the fittest” (social Darwinist propaganda, not true Darwinism); there are “humane” and “green” ways to live without reversing the Biocaust.

K-12 schooling and children’s upbringing take civilization and our species’ unnatural lifeways for granted. The most important questions are addressed mainly by people and organizations marginalized in public discourse and excluded from K-12 schooling. Most adults therefore are taken aback and thrown into rage and denial by basic realities, for example, that transportation methods they’ve always known kill millions of nonhuman animals each day and hundreds of thousands of human beings each year, or that production of pseudo-foods original humans would not recognize as food, are the most powerful factor in global heating and massive ocean dead zones.

If not for the long, gradual shift to unnatural lifeways and dependence on innovation, the concept of the “well-adjusted child” would probably not exist. Like other animals, original humans would have raised their young without having to adjust them for anything they were not innately adapted to. Once we recognize that the human brain-mind did not evolve in civilization but in the natural world, it becomes easier to understand and demystify the widespread, intense

stress, anxiety, and mental illness civilization generates, their physical symptoms, and the immense difficulty of raising and instructing children in civilization.

## The Proof Is in the Putting To Use

Let's consider how to apply the concepts of *Schooling for Life* to major school subjects and topics of general interest and importance that inevitably arise in school. The following provides a few basic suggestions. Opportunities and methods are as infinite as our species outsized 'imagination.

### English

Literary classics and religious scriptures invoke nonhuman animals as threats, pests, symbols, deities, metaphors, economic commodities, anthropomorphic characters, instrumentalities, slaves, and products of humans. Very little literature represents nonhuman animals accurately and truthfully as learned from up-to-date ecology, zoology, and particularly ethology, the branch of zoology dedicated to the study of nonhuman-animal behavior. Nearly all human discourse and word usage related to nonhuman animals is human-supremacist and speciesist. Since usage and literary portrayals inform human thought, feeling, and practice, it is crucial that children not continue being shaped by misimpressions about their nonhuman relatives.

K-12 schooling can help reduce harm caused by humans' misunderstanding other animals, considering them not worth understanding in and of themselves, and treating them accordingly. Accomplishing that involves focusing children's attention on literature's mistakes and omissions. What is the likely experience of whales harpooned in *Moby-Dick*? What are some impacts of humans' unnaturally killing whales on whales' families and on ocean ecosystems that lose dead whales' bodies as significant food sources when humans haul them out of the ocean? With *Black Beauty* intensely sympathetic to enslaved horses and calling upon the reader to be, are the precise nature and needs of these animals as they evolved to live fully revealed? How are human characters affected by the way they relate to nonhuman animals? Is moral injury discernible?

Joan Dunayer's books listed under "Sources," below, provide useful guidance for reversing prejudice against nonhuman animals by changing how we think, write, and speak about them.

### Arithmetic

Children need to know a great many practical things numerical that can help them make sound policy in the interest of human beings, other animals, and the rest of the living world. Not having taken a math class since 1973, I don't know if math instruction still relies largely on morally neutral or inconsequential examples like what portion of a pie remains after two of its eight equal wedges are served.

If children can learn from an early age to apply arithmetic to important phenomena like human population growth and technology, species extinctions, disease rates, outbreaks, and causes, nonhuman animals killed and injured by human innovations and industries, numbers of human beings imprisoned merely for trying to relieve pain generated by civilization (drugs), human poverty rates, and other life-and-death biological, moral, and political matters, they will be better able to improve on established policies, practices, and lifeways than if arithmetic ignores such crucial matters.

When it comes to engineering, economics, genetics, and other matters affecting the future and quality of life, it will be beneficial for instructors to be familiar with *America the Raped: The Engineering Mentality and the Destruction of a Continent*, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, and other sources that enable students to explore the morality of applied mathematics. It should not be assumed that every application of mathematics that benefits a human faction in the short term is ipso facto a good thing.

## History

Read about *big history* at Wikipedia to see that leading educators and thinkers, even computer magnate Bill Gates, urge the teaching of history starting with the Big Bang, covering long time frames, and incorporating diverse fields including biology, astronomy, and other sciences as well as the humanities. Children cannot truly understand our species' past through narrow approaches focusing on famous people, events, and dates. It makes sense to teach the "big picture" since human beings are beings whose experience, innovations, creations, lifeways, disasters, upheavals, migrations, and ideas are rooted in their animality and that of animals who preexisted them.

Educated persons have at least some inkling of the Agricultural Revolution as the basis of civilization and today's human subsistence and lifeways, and of the Industrial Revolution as greatly accelerating technological change. *An Unnatural Order* and the award-winning *Man the Hunted* are invaluable for teaching big history (see "Sources," below). I also recommend my above-mentioned article where "the Animal-Abuse Revolution" is coined. For human beings to understand civilization, its current state, their current lives and struggles, their impacts on other animals and the web of life, and how to begin to remedy them, they must realize that the first major human technological innovation was not agriculture but hunting with manufactured weapons and that humanity and the Biocaust are informed by that far-reaching change.

## The Economy and Jobs

The most difficult dilemma confronted by our families, our society, our nation, and our species is that the global economic system on which human beings depend for sustenance and fulfillment is one and the same as industrialized animal abuse, annihilation of nature, and generation of human misery. In recent generations, anyone endeavoring to teach the truth about the capitalist economy and consumer-capitalism has been branded "communist," prevented from teaching, and suppressed or ridiculed by the news industry and the academy. Children are indoctrinated into capitalism, the work ethic, and other ideologies that guide them toward material self-aggrandizement and protection of their families against poverty without being taught rational critiques of the economic system as provided in some of the sources recommended below.

K-12 must begin to abandon the standard one-dimensional view of the economy as a morally neutral pursuit of jobs, careers, high incomes, and status. A model for achieving this is the way German schools teach children the evils of their Nazi heritage and the moral injury with which it afflicts them even though they did not personally perpetrate the Holocaust and World War II. The Animal-Abuse Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, all of the innovations that inform human life do far more harm and cause far more suffering than the Third Reich alone did, notwithstanding its devastation and its unceasing impacts.

A few key things children can benefit from understanding about economics: Money, poverty, and all systems of exchange, investment, labor, management, and ownership are inventions of civilization; none is natural. Work is what people do because the few have the power to prevent the many from meeting their basic needs. The economic systems humans have devised since the Agricultural Revolution have caused humans to overpopulate and over-occupy Earth, mainly because agriculture and settled living replaced the natural plant-foraging human lifeway where fertile human females gave birth about every four years with an unnatural lifeway where they gave birth approximately once a year. Every serious environmentalist understands that human overpopulation is a major factor in our species' annihilation of nature, human poverty, food and water insecurity, famine, and war.

## Politics and Government

The Constitution is based on six inherent human values: justice, liberty, equality, defense, tranquility, and the general welfare. Tyranny, violence, war, and prescientific ideologies rooted in the Animal-Abuse Revolution undermine those values and thus the American Revolution, the

perpetual endeavor to implement the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. These documents and “the shot heard around the world” inspire all of humanity because they hearken to our species’ innate moral, political, spiritual, and nonviolent nature. This understanding should foster reverence in children and parents for our founding documents, the Enlightenment values that inform them, the ongoing American Revolution, and the persistent effort of citizens to defeat counterrevolutionaries and endeavors that undermine the Constitution’s stated values.

K-12 schooling can serve children well by teaching them how to participate in policymaking, the defining practice of citizens under the Constitution. Informed of biological matters outlined above, students who benefit from *Schooling for Life* will be better able than their predecessors to make sound policy, to govern in the public interest, and to distinguish among the public interest, the popular interest, special interests, and vested interests, selecting altruistic, moral representatives and other officials over demagogues. Children will do well to engage in politics from a young age by communicating with officials and decision-makers; merely following the news or forming opinions is not political engagement.

## **Sex and Sexuality**

Human beings, like many other animals, are not only spiritual, moral, social, familial, and political beings, but also sexual beings. Each species has its own evolved ways of courting, fertilizing eggs, and raising offspring. Driven by the senses, the imagination, hormones, and pheromones, sex is the most salient aspect of our animality which civilization’s denaturing endeavor cannot squelch. DNA’s primary function is to replicate itself. It “programs” animals for sex and provides powerful incentives for it. Ideologies, punishments, and ostracism regarding sex cause incalculable needless suffering. Marriage of course is an invention. Monogamy appears not to be natural to human beings, considering how regularly it is violated despite powerful promotion of it and decrying of extramarital sex. That is not surprising since monogamy is generally unnatural among primates. It is natural for some human beings to be homosexual; to experience themselves as members of the sex opposite their genitalia; or to be hermaphrodites.

K-12 schooling can help students mature into healthy nonviolent human beings, avoid unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, and lead fulfilling lives by demystifying sex and debunking erroneous received beliefs and common insults and stereotypes; assisting members of the school community in accepting everyone’s sexuality; ensuring that students learn the totality of basic human biology from a young age, including our species natural range of sexuality; and incorporating discussions of sex into all school subjects where it is relevant so children will feel comfortable thinking and talking about sex and will learn about harm done by false beliefs and ideologies about sex.

K-12 can thereby also help eliminate rape culture. Rape is so especially traumatic because our species evolved to experience sexual activity as mutually consensual, as a show of affection and affirmation, and as pleasurable. Forcing someone debases them, treating them as less than human, “a piece of meat.”

## **Race**

All human beings are members of the same species. The most distantly related humans share 99.5 percent of their genes with each other. The concept of race was invented to rationalize white people’s abuse of dark-skinned people. No group of humans possesses innate superiority over others. Like imagined human superiority over other animals, notions of racial superiority are based on the might-makes-right attitude that being able to kill or enslave others makes one’s own group superior.

A white man interviewed about the presidential campaign on public radio in September 2016 declared that no black person could ever be a member of his family because black people



aren't a part of his race which "evolved over thousands of years." Such thought, not rare, reflects K-12 schooling's failure to inculcate basic biology.

## Media

Nearly all human experience is mediated today. Hardly anything that a human being thinks in modern civilization is some way planted by sources other than direct experience. Stuart Ewen, one of the founders of the field of media studies, remarks in *PR!: A Social History of Spin* that after his lengthy interview with a pioneer in scientific mind management / public relations (PR), he wondered whether he'd ever had a thought not instigated by PR, including most news content. Today even "fake news" is rearing its head, manufactured in unknown locations and circulated online with no reliable "vetting." K-12 schooling will serve children well by ensuring that they learn how to assess all communications. What am I being told directly? What is implied? Who is communicating, and why? How did the speaker or writer ascertain the accuracy of what they say? These are among the crucial questions students should learn to ask about everything they are told.

## Animal-Knowing

Children and teachers are starting to learn the practice I call *animal-knowing*: contemplating a free-living animal to observe features, appearance, and behavior without labeling or judgment. Animal-knowing enables human beings, deprived by civilization of their natural hands-off relationship with other animals, to grasp nonhuman animals' personhood, their unique existence as a body with dignity and self-determination. A brochure on animal-knowing is available from Responsible Policies for Animals on request and at [www.RPAforALL.org](http://www.RPAforALL.org).

## Sources

The following books, easily located in libraries, online, or in bookstores by author and title, are useful for understanding basic biology, our species' animal nature, the nature of other animals, Earth's infinitely complex web of life, how civilization infringes on humans, other beings, and the web of life, and how the current state of affairs came to be. Many of these books or their authors have received prestigious awards. As far as I know, nothing significant in any of these sources has been refuted. I recommend these sources for K-12 instructors, administrators, and curriculum designers. Some of them are suitable for some K-12 students.

- Balcombe, Jonathan. *Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good*.  
Bales, Kevin. *Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide, and the Secret to Saving the World*.  
Beder, Sharon. *Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*.  
Bekoff, Marc and Jessica Pierce. *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*.  
Benyus, Janine M. *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*.  
Brown, Lester R. *Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*.  
Capra, Fritjof. *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*.  
Cheney, Dorothy L. and Robert M. Seyfarth. *Baboon Metaphysics: The Evolution of a Social Mind*.  
De Bell, Garrett, ed. *The Environmental Handbook* (compiled for the first Earth Day, 1970).  
Devall, Bill and George Sessions. *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*.  
De Waal, Frans. *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*.  
Dunayer, Joan. *Animal Equality: Language and Liberation and Speciesism*.  
Ehrlich, Paul R. and Ehrlich, Anne H. *The Population Explosion*.  
Ewen, Stuart. *PR!: A Social History of Spin*.  
Fox, Michael W. *Agricide: The Hidden Crisis that Affects Us All*.  
Harris, Sam. *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*.  
Hart, Donna and Robert W. Sussman. *Man the Hunted: Primates, Predators, and Human Evolution* (Expanded Edition).  
Hillel, Daniel J. *Out of the Earth: Civilization and the Life of the Soil*.

Karlen, Arno. *Man and Microbes: Disease and Plagues in History and Modern Times*.

Kellert, Stephen R. and Edward O. Wilson, eds. *The Biophilia Hypothesis*.

Kolbert, Elizabeth. *The Sixth Extinction*.

Kovel, Joel. *The Enemy of Nature*.

Kruse, Kevin M. *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America*.

Kunstler, James Howard. *The Geography of Nowhere*.

Lakoff, George. *The Political Mind*.

Marine, Gene. *America the Raped: The Engineering Mentality and the Devastation of a Continent*.

Mason, Jim. *An Unnatural Order: Uncovering the Roots of Our Domination of Nature and Each Other*.

Masson, Jeffrey Moussaieff. *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals*.

Needleman, Jacob. *The American Soul: Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Founders*.

Nestle, Marion. *Food Politics*.

Nichols, Steve. *Paradise Found: Nature in America at the time of Discovery*.

Ornstein, Robert and Paul Ehrlich. *New World, New Mind*.

Patterson, Charles. *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*.

Peterson, Dale. *The Moral Lives of Animals*.

Post, Stephen and Jill Newmark. *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*.

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*.

Rachels, James. *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism*.

Quammen, David. *Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic*.

Schumacher, E.F. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*.

Schwartz-Nobel, Loretta. *Poisoned Nation: Pollution, Greed, and the Rise of Deadly Epidemics*

Smith, David Livingstone. *Less Than Human*.

Stannard, David E. *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*.

Wilson, E.O. *The Creation: An Appeal To Save Life on Earth*.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*.

## Conclusion

In the time it takes you to read *Schooling for Life*, countless thousands of nonhuman animals will have been killed by automobiles, slaughterhouses, fishing boats, laboratories, war, construction, demolition, road-building, pest control, hunting and trapping, toxic pollution, and other human practices. All of these practices subvert the kind of animal humans are by nature and disrupt the natural order. Consequences are dire for human beings as well as other animals and the web of life. K-12 schooling can ensure that children, parents, communities, our entire species learns the unfortunate dark side of civilization and begin create remedies. Responsible Policies for Animals offers this white paper in the spirit of altruism, biophilia, justice, and the search for knowledge to protect and perpetuate life. I am available for private and public discussions of matters presented here, and I will appreciate receiving suggestions for improving *Schooling for Life* and RPA's educational program and campaigns.