

DEDICATION

To the activities and legacy of Bruce Standish of Elwood, whose lifetime commitment to natural health and deep caring for the plight of animals was the finest of examples of kindness and compassion in action. His gentle nature and sense of playfulness, combined with a determined work and health ethic, manifested themselves as unconditional support and assistance for anyone in need, resulting in an extraordinary capacity to foster and maintain the vegan way for the benefit of all.

This gesture of unceasing goodwill acted as an inspiration to others, facilitating friendships and distributing community cohesion. He benefitted the health of generations of people in Melbourne through his mentoring of the principles and practices of Natural Hygiene, which he disseminated from his 'unique' Natural Health Supplies shop, the first organic whole-foods shop in Australia.

"Intimation is all that is needed when the flame is lit".



Bruce Standish (22/03/38 - 01/01/2018)

[From the original painting by his friend, Emile Barolle]

VEGACULTURE

A Conceptual Narrative for Compassionate Living

VEGACULTURE

First Edition

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My respect and admiration for the persistence of activists in the support of social justice for harmonious living, and the insight of sages who point the way for the novice and experienced seeker alike.

THE AUTHOR

Melbourne suburbs were home to family and studies prior to world travel and a twenty-year career as a Consulting Engineer. Hepburn Springs in country Victoria beckoned in 1988 with the purchase of an old guesthouse called Continental House, providing a wonderful opportunity to interact with the broader community and to showcase the multiplicity of values and creative possibilities apparent within the vegetarian and vegan way.

Fellow travelers whole-heartedly embraced the facility, and I quickly realised I had entered a diverse caring community with a focus on health, wellbeing, healing and sustainable living. The beautiful environs and natural environment supported my conscious healthy vegan lifestyle, and close encounters with Permaculture during a seven year period of hosting PDC's, provided a useful education in the ways to sustainable living, expanding my appreciation of traditional practices and universal values.

The Vegan Guide to Melbourne was self-published annually from 1994 to 2000, as a record of vegan activity, and to meet the rising interest in all things vegan. My housemates and I hosted a Vegan Gathering in 1996, followed by a 'National' Vegan Festival in 1997, and eventually the 9th International Vegan Festival (IVF9), which spanned a two-week period during the 1998/99 holidays and attracted people from fourteen countries.

Certified studies in Shiatsu and Oriental Therapies, Nutrition and Yoga, and a sincere dedication to the principles and practices of Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure, were integrated into a wholistic lifestyle. Further renovation and development of the vegan sanctuary was supported by a name change to Hepburn Retreat Centre in 2008, resulting in a very busy schedule of workshops, yoga, meditation, vegan cooking classes, and health and healing retreats.

The vegaculture vision continued to expand with feedback from business activities complementing a vegan lifestyle that offered selective personal growth and responsibility, community building, environmental awareness, spiritual interaction, yoga, meditation, and much frivolity and enjoyment.

I relocated in 2014 to Kuranda, the village in the rainforest in FNQ, where I have developed a Raw Vegan Life Sanctuary known as Fairyland House, which functions to service guests who feel drawn to discover their own destiny in a peaceful tropical fruit garden paradise.

I continue to practice and watch with interest the unfolding and blossoming of vegaculture from the emergence of being.

PROLOGUE

Vegaculture keeps changing its spots! The word was coined in 1998 while I was immersed in a process of stabilising and refining my own personal philosophy and so vegaculture was envisaged as a term to describe the union of veganism and permaculture, as both these persuasions had been dominant in my daily experience and have many common objectives.

The initial emphasis related to vegan organic gardening, but the rapid growth and social networking of veganism exposed the potential for vegaculture to become a reservoir for a whole range of vegan related activity similar to the expansive nature of permaculture; and soon grew in imagination to be synonymous with changing patterns of social and community values, as well as becoming a personal philosophy and popular lifestyle choice.

The foundations for a valid commentary about the success of a vegan culture, especially the speed of community adoption due to its obvious appeal to youth in recent generations, is indicative of the trust and security that arises from positive personal experience when people discover their own truth; veganism and vegan culture have proved to be functional 'design tools' in the application of a lifestyle choice for the manifestation of compassionate and harmonious outcomes in both a personal and global context.

A small collection of recorded insights has grown into this conceptual narrative, which begins by identifying various paths that have lead to the concept of vegaculture, and then examines the evolution and developing relationships between people, animals, plants, and Gaia. An exploration of ways forward that incorporate the values inherent in a fair share exposes the emerging consciousness revolution as a means to wholistic lifestyle outcomes, consistent with the aims of veganism, and the movements for compassionate living and community harmony in the 21st century.

My personal interaction over two and half decades, saw the passage of thousands of guests, enthusiastic travelers, wwoofas, volunteers and helpers, through my vegan accommodation and retreat facility; the stream of people and interests was always fresh, and the local social and community life, rich and full and nourishing. Pursuant to their daily exposure to 'alternative lifestyle practices' and support for attempts at sustainable living in a totally vegan environment, many patrons became conversant with simply living their compassionate choices, which were eventually normalised in their diet and lifestyle.

I mention this anecdote as an example of how even a short exposure to another culture and lifestyle can have a profound life-changing impact. Travel of course frees one from their usual habitat, aiding and assisting individual insight, while the offering of a peaceful and supportive space conducive to personal growth reaps its own rewards; and I am reminded of the old wise saying, "helping just one person is enough".

As the merging of science, spirituality, truth and true nature continue to unfold; the challenge of paradox fosters a deeper enquiry, which has resulted in the inclusion in the text of a variety of quotes and helpful observations by great teachers. We all make our contribution to a harmonious world and I trust this initial sketch of the general principals of vegaculture is accessible to a broad range of readers, and invokes further interest in the vegan way. Enjoy!

In Peace, Zalan

Fairyland House, Kuranda

May 2018

A VISION

1. CONCEIVING

2. BIRTHING

3. GROWING

1. CONCEIVING

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished"---Lao Tzu

DESCRIPTION

Vegaculture is descriptive of the vegan journey, the application of veganism in daily life, it may be taken as a short form of Vegan-Culture or a contraction of Veganism and Permaculture; the term may be used as an adjunct or alternative to veganism, as a type of veganic-gardening or to describe a social movement, for it is intended to be a place of reference, a fluid framework for a social setting where change and growth occur harmoniously, with compassion, health and awareness for the earth and all its creatures, and with a common respect for each other in a global setting.

While culture is built from the transmission of accumulated knowledge, as a collective memory of human presence, our social interaction is a means of sharing this knowledge and developing harmonious communities. Social movements that could be included in the realm of influence of a Vegaculture would include veganism, humanism, animal rights, permaculture, environmental justice, non-violent action, slow-food, spiritual ecology, co-operative and sustainable living among others; all of these have a common theme, their relationship to care of people, animals, plants, the earth and the environment.

Vegaculture can act as a pointer to improve holistic outcomes in the social and cultural progression to a happier world; as a resolution of intent and good faith that can overcome the boundaries and pretexts of conventional habits, by recognising one's self in all things, and performing our highest good.

Vegaculture can also be practiced as an affirmative pathway to sustainable living in much the same way as permaculture, supporting thoughtful applications in daily living, by adopting a diverse range of designated priorities as a means of promoting and expressing the value of holistic benefits, in keeping with the fullest realisation of the breadth and depth of human endeavour.

The value of vegaculture is not in point scoring of one system versus another, but as a place of connection for improving outcomes with respect and sincerity in the adoption and growth of a universal humanism, including both spiritual and secular humanism. Vegaculture offers a context for compassion to be present and if we recognise the essential nature of consciousness as a whole,

the oneness is alive and operating in a non-judgemental way, through every living form.

As a conceptual narrative, vegaculture is a simple form of self-expression, to communicate a variety of resonant insights and ideas from my own journey that form elements for a coherent structure, not as a belief system, but as useful tools for guiding and understanding this life experience. Content has been selected to provide a balanced text, with references for detail, and I invite your interpretation in both a relative and transcendent form. I trust the fabric and content is accessible to a casual reader, and when necessary, supportive and adequate for your own reflection, growth and change.

Vegaculture can act as a receptacle for a range of practices and principles to coalesce, to recognise the diversity and content of the history of vegan thought and action, to record and provide access to the substance of vegan endeavour, and to demonstrate the tremendous value implicit in the vegan message and vegan way. Recognition of our cultural heritage supports and reaffirms one's own relationship to a unique set of values, and provides a space for contemplation and understanding, a useful tool for informing decision-makers of the value and potential of our actions.

We give value to vegaculture depending on our intention, and so it has multiple expressions as many influences converge in its derivation, these include inspiration for compassionate living, veganism, permaculture and social responsibility. As a vegan, it offers provision for cultural outcomes afforded by change and personal growth, which stem from kindness and compassion for animals and sentient beings, and manifest so as to foster the common good. Vegaculture is active in growing community and building awareness with traditional roots in compassionate living; and an interest in refinement and sophistication of technologies, and gains experience through the practice of living together in a complementary manner within the milieu of diverse cultural and social conditioning.

Our way of life influences the quality of the lives of others; the adoption of a vegan ethic is a powerful expression of the path of peace in the web of life, and is fundamental to a vegaculture. It is a place of congruence for movements in compassionate living, providing an easily identified and accessible lifestyle, for all those who choose to tread, irrespective of class, creed, colour, race, clan and culture.

The health advantages of a healthy vegan diet are scientifically documented and widely circulated, the vegan way being practiced daily by millions of

people around the world. Research into the over consumption of food and inappropriate food choices, is in favour of a move toward a vegan eating regime, which is attracting serious support, as more sections of the health fraternity, community and government re-evaluate their own nutritional advice to citizens.

History

"Meet in beingness and communicate in intelligence"---Amoda Maa

Opportunities for living on the land, close to natural systems, began to diminish in the late 18th and early 19th centuries with the arrival and rapid growth of a new era of industrialisation. Whereas small populations lived in relative harmony with care of resources; the growth of wealth and movement of human population leading to larger cities placed new burdens on the food supply chain, consequently, previously balanced eco-food systems were rendered less adequate.

Separation of spade and blade continues today with the increase in globalisation of food supplies, and this is but one example of many social systems, which have developed in parallel at unsustainable rates of growth. Projections for a stable economic future show the means to wealth in the old paradigm to be inadequate to provide the means of wealth and supply in a sustainable new world. This notion precipitates the necessity to introduce modern living concepts, one of which is to adopt a vegan dietary.

Vegaculture is about connecting to the meaning of life, by expanding the historical interpretation and cultural base; exposing the taboo of silent neglect for voiceless creatures, and recognising the significance of animal welfare and rights. This neglect of animal consciousness raises an ethical and moral dilemma; the disregard and denial of rights has long been tolerated as a cultural norm, but since being challenged, the denial can be recognised as either plain ignorance, selfishness and submission to base preference or taste, or a state of dispassion.

Vegaculture contends the action of exploiting animals for food and other purposes is no longer necessary; while reliance on animals for food has been integral with development of tribal and social traditions in most cultures, often claimed to spring from necessity for survival and food security, its unnecessary continuation can also be considered as a perverse form of speciesism, with a lack of respect for the inter-connectedness of all life. A voice of reason from a place of empathy and higher awareness has always existed, and its expression through a compassionate way of living

is powerful, becoming much more visible and widely dispersed.

When permaculture expresses its approach to sustainable living through care of humans, the earth and a fair share, vegaculture expands the vision and scope by further identifying our need to focus more directly on the welfare of all animals, by promoting *the care of humans and other animals, the earth and fair share*. The voice for those who cannot speak for themselves is finally included at the helm of our social obligations and support for modern holistic sustainable communities.

Practice

"Self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence"--- Viktor Frankl

The practice of vegaculture is a collection of actions or offerings independent of moralising and doctrine and is representative of the movement and expression of compassionate aims and objectives in all domains; its application is therefore universal, extending beyond prescriptions for living and the confines of relative dogma. Intent is involved, however the flavour of the vegaculture palate does not spring from prescription, it flows from the results of the expression of universal human values in the quest for harmonious living.

Vegaculture promotes a Vegan philosophy, which may be simply stated as 'choosing to live an ethical lifestyle for the benefits of humans, animals and the environment, and adopting an animal-free diet'. The identification as a culture supposes a structure and content, and in vegaculture this is formed by the collection of personal, social and cultural outcomes emanating from an egalitarian vegan philosophy and activity.

Currently the extent of the vegan footprint remains only partially detected in history, as framing of the attributes has not been fully undertaken. The Jain philosophy is a traditional Indian philosophy that promotes the concept of non-harm or AHIMSA, where there is avoidance of harm to plants, animals and the environments, and three jewels are offered, these being right perception and faith, right knowledge and right conduct.

As we open to our true nature, to the inherent values of our human beingness, we can expect that right actions will naturally flow, but rather than make a judgement of right and wrong, we can express our intent in a few simple statements to reflect the jewels in vegaculture, you may add more if you wish.

Valued perception

Valued perception leads to valued knowledge when the decisions we make are selected in

accordance with our own truth, both the quality and the effectiveness of our actions are thereby increased, and hence the provision of better outcomes for everyone. Vegaculture can assist us with identifying our personal truth, to grow as people benefitting a representative community; one that reflects the essential aspects and values we foster as caring citizens. By carefully considering the consequences of our actions, the rights and welfare of all living creatures may be more justly manifested.

Valued knowledge

Valued knowledge leads to valued conduct and vegaculture as a system of values recognises the relationships between food, clothing, energy and shelter, with the rights and welfare of people, animals and the earth. Promotion of respect for all life, and a belief in doing one's best, are considered central tenets. The application of 'valued knowledge', wisdom and acts of compassion in decision-making is believed to lead to the adoption of an equitable and just community for all beings; broadening the potential for holistic sustainable living.

Vegaculture identifies and utilises the practice of being 'vegan aware' at every opportunity; this essential ingredient may only be glimpsed initially but quickly develops with thoughtful consideration and the application of kindness in daily life. The process of refining vegan awareness expands with use; bringing one's focused attention to bear does not need to be a dramatic upheaval in one's normal activities, nor does it require the adoption of any other authority or dogma, and is a natural inclination for our minds functioning as we transform and refine our values to reflect the vegan way.

Valued conduct

Valued knowledge leads to thoughts that give rise to valued conduct; acting with principle is necessary when awareness is awakened. The experience is in the action not just the thought and saying a prayer may not absolve our indifference to action. Increasing our awareness of the plight of other animals, questioning old beliefs and habits, developing empathy and viewing our own and other's actions from different perspectives, are straightforward, simple means for improved living conditions. Social and cultural benefits arise as we practice vegaculture, vegan awareness prompts compassion and gradually extends into previous barren areas of the dominant social order.

Vegaculture is congruent with freedom and sharing, of respectful living and peaceful co-operation, and may be practiced in any location, and is readily incorporated into a sharing

community environment wherever we call home. There is always an opportunity to be involved in worthwhile service and activity, to find harmony and to enjoy simple pleasures in our attention to daily interaction. We can also introduce a broader awareness of the ramifications of individual choice and action, celebrate harmony and diversity, introduce life-enhancing solutions, seek justice in relationships and let go of fear and embrace happiness through self-reflection.

Vegaculture in the garden incorporates a willingness to utilise techniques where the principal methods of production do not rely on the use of animal inputs. Growing our own produce is satisfying, and potted plants and herbs can still be managed in an inner city apartment, while the urban home plot can be very productive. For those hankering to play seriously with veganic gardening and forest gardens, then a community garden with fellow workers or a rural setting might be more appealing.

The vegan garden will include a transition from present methods towards complementary crop planting for insect control; green food and plant manuring for composting and mulch, and retention of on-site nutrient for soil improvement; water and waste recycling, while herb and plant based sprays are to be encouraged. A wealth of experience and application of these and other stock-free practices already exists globally within both the organic sector, which includes a small vegan-organic or 'veganic' agricultural contingent, and the extensive modern or conventional farming sector.

Vegaculture on the farm recognises the need to move toward non-exploitative practices, and change from animal to plant-based food production. Presently, market forces rather than legislation dictate the direction and rate of change. The movement away from the current paradigm of animal exploitation presents a great challenge within our community, obviously requiring the provision of viable alternatives for food production and affected farmers. Farmer lobbying is needed, however support for organic gardening is already strong and often a preferred consumer choice; vegan-organic agriculture has similar potential, especially as the broader approach to sustainable methods becomes more widely understood and publicly accepted.

Practice in co-operative negotiations and decision-making recognises value in both current and traditional social and cultural influences. Purpose has numerous manifestations and by adopting the notion of freedom we can follow our own path, letting go of habits and making appropriate choices; we improve with practice and build

maturity, harmonising the search for adequate expressions of our higher self.

2. BIRTHING

"Beauty is the welcoming openness of the Truth toward us"---Ibn 'Arabi Sufi mystic

PATHS TO VEGACULTURE

Vegaculture is identified here in a variety of social movements, as the manifested creation of veganism and compassionate living, as the preservation of community, ecosystems and support for holistic sustainability, and as a driver of transformation, as society responds through cultural change. A vegaculture movement may be seeded by a small cohort of vegans, but the representation has inference for the hundreds of millions of vegetarians and likely many more unsolicited peoples, whose views on justice and compassion remain latent, waiting for a banner of identification.

Each of us has our own unique path and a vegaculture view provides a place for like-minded views to coalesce, and can act as a beacon for cohesion of the various interest groups; subsequently with the advantage of numbers, to bring the discussion to the fore in community and political debate.

Personal Inspiration

"The outsider can inspire and guide you, but knowing yourself has to come from within"---Sadhguru

Hosting a series of Permaculture Design Courses, (PDC) in the early to mid 1990's, presented a structure for my adopted lifestyle, and inspired me to continue to develop a valid narrative and historical context for my own journey. It was very obvious that the issues related to environmental pollution, particularly greenhouse gas emissions, had deep roots in the province of animal farming to meet the food production needs for both livestock feed as well as the end users, people in the market place. Public awareness and concern for ravaged rainforests was widespread, and the blindingly obvious solutions offered by a change of diet were already being canvassed in the media, and numerous articles and documentaries surfaced elsewhere to support an ecological move toward a vegan diet.

The energy for transitioning to a vegan way was prevalent the world over, and spurned social and political activism with hundreds and thousands of activists, and numerous organisations such as PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals)

in the US, animal liberation groups, farm animal sanctuaries, environmental groups and vegan societies. Now, within the flourishing realm of Internet connectivity, meet-up groups in social media, various blogs on animal welfare and rights, assistance with wildlife and environment issues, and campaigns continuously foster many avenues for keeping vigilance alive.

In Australia, organisations such as Animal Australia, Vegetarian Victoria, Animal Liberation, the Vegan Societies and Voiceless, and more recently Vegan Australia are interactive with community networking, and with the promotion of a vegan pathway with the distribution of education and campaign materials, are achieving remarkable public access, through the focus of vision and wisdom of policy-makers.

Inspiration is evident in the wider community for a radical dietary shift, from fast to slower foods, from soil harvested meats to plant based alternatives and even laboratory constructed facsimiles, from unhealthy to healthier choices, in keeping with feedback from nutrition studies identifying the advantages of any dietary regime that adopts less processed and animal content, all in the vegan direction. Together with the rampant onset of diabetes, which has loomed as the largest health issue across the richer nations of the world, the political will to control health budgets is encouraging community health programs with a renewed eagerness for clarity in eating choices and habits.

Awareness of the daily plight of animals in the food chain is indeed rising in the Australian community, and the media seem to be showing a remarkable tolerance to the many campaigns, while public awareness and response appears to be supporting a better deal for consideration of animal rights, with the Greens, a popular political party campaigning to transition away from live animal exports. The annual World Vegan Day in Melbourne is a popular event, and a place to showcase the vegan extravaganza, with some ten thousand people demonstrating that Vegaculture in Australia is already functioning well, thanks very much.

Personal growth in connectedness to technology warrants the exercising of personal caution within the context of an information overload. This cautionary approach appears reflected in the increase of 'part time' vegetarian/vegan dietary preference. The shift demonstrates sympathy without full commitment, probably allied with health aims more than moral imperative, but is still a significant gesture in the minimisation of animal suffering.

Inspiration in the spiritual arena is vast, and although he may not be a practicing vegan, few people have embraced the spectrum of spirituality and technology, traversed the established webs of power and cultures, and been a beacon of light for common humanity, as has the Dalai Lama. The quest for a common ethic, the introduction of compassion, and the movement towards a natural happiness, have been central to his efforts to promote the 'Unity of the Human Race.'

Scriptures and texts have grown around Buddhism, mostly penned around 500 years after Buddha passing (Ref.1), and a beautiful teaching on loving kindness adapted from the *Pali Metta Sutta*, is given here (Ref.2):

In order that I may be skilled in discerning what is good, in order that I may understand the path to peace

Let me be able, upright, and straightforward, of good speech, gentle, and free from pride;

Let me be contented, easily satisfied, having few duties, living simply, of controlled senses, prudent, without pride and without attachment to nation, race, or other groups.

Let me not do the slightest thing for which the wise might rebuke me. Instead let me think:

"May all beings be well and safe, may they be at ease.

Whatever living beings there may be, whether moving or standing still, without exception, whether large, great, middling, or small, whether tiny or substantial,

Whether seen or unseen, whether living near or far, Born or unborn; may all beings be happy.

Let none deceive or despise another anywhere. Let none wish harm to another, in anger or in hate.

Just as a mother would guard her child, her only child, with her own life, even so let me cultivate a boundless mind for all beings in the world.

Let me cultivate a boundless love for all beings in the world, above, below, and across, unhindered, without ill will or enmity.

Standing, walking, seated, or lying down, free from torpor, let me as far as possible fix my attention on this recollection. This, they say, is the divine life right here".

Path from Veganism

Vegaculture is an expression of the cultural effects of veganism in action; arising as a result of interaction and outcomes, through the practice of both individual and collective endeavour, of a vegan way of life---Veganism Statement

From the Vegan Society (UK): "The word "veganism" denotes a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude — as far as is possible and practical — all forms of exploitation

of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals" (Ref.3).

Derivations and definitions can be quite tedious although essential for our common understanding, but if we consider just two aspects of our relationship to Veganism, that is the extrinsic and intrinsic effects of the practice of a vegan diet and or lifestyle, then we find that both are continually generating a Vegan Culture. Veganism is the sum of its two principal parts, the collective interactions and cultural outcomes attributable to its' practice, and the individual development the vegans themselves gain from their adopted lifestyle.

Vegaculture can thus be used as a measure of the cultural effects of veganism in action. However, it is also necessary to document the fact that there are many instances in daily life, where actions are congruent with the philosophy of veganism, but not generated by vegans, due to a different lifestyle or dietary preference or circumstance, and this is discussed later.

Compassionate eaters, aspiring vegans, part and full-time vegans, can be practicing their compassionate intention with every mouthful. I contend the individual, social and cultural expressions of compassionate living, arising from veganism, can also be defined and understood as a Vegan Culture (Vegaculture) which is alive and well, a great return for a small investment; a simple dietary and lifestyle change, produces a quantum leap in self awareness and satisfaction, and a massive social and cultural contribution to people, animals and the earth.

Vegaculture provides an opportunity for kindness and compassion, for vegan awareness to extend and expand into the whole of creation, and be recognised in its fullest complement as an essence of harmony in a world of suffering. Vegaculture is basically a cultural expression of veganism, without any of the limitations or perceptions that might arise from the common association with an 'ism' term, a representative of the movement of vegan culture as a vanguard of opportunity in a world of abundance.

Path from Compassionate Living

Vegaculture is an expression of the movement to compassionate living, for the benefits of people, animals and the earth; it arises as a cultural outcome from the intentional avoidance of all forms of exploitation and cruelty, is fostered

***through the practice of compassion in the relief of suffering, and evidenced by the progression of cultural harmony leading toward world peace---
Compassionate Living statement***

Vegaculture is continually expanding its recognition, and its roots may be found in the many organisations that seek to identify or redefine compassionate pathways forward, and one of these descriptions springs from the aims of the Movement to Compassionate Living. The following website extract from the small grass roots organisation called the Movement for Compassionate Living, (MCL) describes the vision and aims of this organisation, which was started by Kathleen and Jack Jannaway in 1984. Compassion, a wish to escape suffering, is made tangible in this beautiful statement, which is most explicit in its intent; a precise, concise, heartfelt and extremely relevant statement for living together on Earth.

Kathleen Jannaway had been a member of the Vegan Society in the U.K. and it can be seen, from the description below, that her 'valued perception' for a peaceful and harmonious world future was not fully satisfied by the statement of the positive message of veganism alone; she expanded the fundamental premise of compassionate living into all realms of activity, using examples of social separation and need, to explain more fully the application of veganism in daily life. In so doing her vision is a most significant demonstration of vegaculture in action.

"Compassionate living is about making connections between the way we live and the way others suffer, between unnecessary industrial development and the destruction of the planet. It involves a commitment to work non-violently for change, promoting lifestyles that are possible for all the world's people, sustainable within the resources of the planet, environmentally friendly and free of all exploitation of animals and of people.

The Movement for Compassionate Living exists to:

- * Promote simple vegan living and self-reliance as a remedy against the exploitation of humans, animals and the Earth.
- * Promote the use of trees and vegan-organic farming to meet the needs of society for food and natural resources.
- * Promote a land-based society where as much of our food and resources as possible are produced locally.

Dietary veganism is an important first step, but if we are to work towards the liberation of both people and the animals of the Earth, refusing food and other products derived from animal exploitation alone is not enough. We must extend our compassion to all life:

- * To humans who suffer increasingly worldwide from starvation, disease, warfare and exploitation.
- * To wildlife that suffers as a result of the destruction of natural habitats.
- * To the whole environment on which the health of all life depends.

Only fully compassionate living will nurture the growth in human awareness and commitment on which the future of the world depends" (Ref.4).

The Center for Compassion And Altruism Research And Education (CCARE), at Stanford University in America has been involved with research studies of compassion for over 10 years now. The centre has empirically validated techniques for the practice of compassion that are currently taught and applied in a variety of settings and institutions including schools, hospitals and prisons. The benefits to people of the practice of compassion, "is understood to be as important as physical exercise & healthful diet" (Ref.5).

As a species we have to embrace compassion to progress from the insanities of the past and modern eras. The success of any movement for compassionate living must be borne out eventually, with 7.6 billion people and growing, including 490 million vegetarians (Ref.6); fertility is evident, and although religious adherence may account for large numbers of people, the seeds for a humanist vegan moral baseline, both spiritual and secular have been sown here.

Path from Permaculture

Vegaculture is allied with permaculture, recognising a place for the expression of our inner human beingness in daily life, with the provision of food, clothing, shelter and co-operation on the path of holistic sustainable living---Vegan-Permaculture Statement

Vegaculture grows naturally out of Permaculture, whose teaching and training programs, and extensive project applications, provide an existing model and social framework for its practice and dispersion. The landscape of traditional culture, as expressed in an historical context of sustainable living, has been well documented in permaculture literature and continues in an invigorated format today, with numerous examples of appropriate application and design outcomes being integrated with modern living to assist in all manner of

projects; while examples of vegaculture are a work in progress.

One of the many expressions of Permaculture comes from the Permaculture Institute (Ref.7): *"Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems, which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people providing their food, energy, shelter and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way"*.

While incorporating and disseminating effective design techniques and solutions in farming and landscaping activity, permaculture is at the forefront of visioning, designing, building and practicing sustainable living solutions; focusing on energy descent, interaction with community projects and transition networks, localisation rather than globalisation, slow food choices, and minimising reliance on central infrastructure. The environmental predicaments presented by excess energy production, such as peak oil and global pollution manifesting as climate change are being addressed as the dual challenges of our present generation; with continued focus on current practice in the market place, and searching for ways forward.

A more comprehensive article explaining permaculture principles was published in the MCL Newsletter No. 92 (Ref.8) some years ago. A copy is included in the Appendix and can be read now for the purposes of familiarisation. While attempting to respect the validity of permaculture principles to achieve its stated outcomes, I responded at the time with a commentary from a Vegaculture perspective, which highlights some differences in focus and nuance, and that response is included below.

"Whereas the Permaculture article mentions a basic application of three important ethics; Earth Care, People Care, and Fair Shares, as MCL readers know a fourth can be readily added. This is Animal Care - in the broadest sense animal care applies to all sentient beings.

The application of Vegaculture is essentially the same as for Permaculture except for the addition of an ethic directly associated with the Care of Animals.

Your article states: 'Earth Care encompasses the need to care for what still remains of natural ecosystems, to regenerate areas destroyed by humankind and to create havens for species, both animal and plant, which are in danger of extinction from our actions.' (Danger of extinction, rather

than timely action, seems to be becoming more accepted now as the catalyst for action).

Also: 'The need to co-operate with nature is stressed, and to provide for all life systems, which should be seen as having intrinsic value, regardless of whether they are 'useful to humankind' or not. Anthropocentrism may be discouraged, and human beings seen as part of the web of life'.

Permaculture may be one of our best friends, but the 'Earth Care' statement can be seen to project:

- a. the need to utilize systems which are useful to humankind (no distinction being made with respect to rights), and
- b. if systems are part of the 'web of life', then they also have a possible part to play in human utilization.

These issues have always concerned me, as I believe they may well concern many others; and that is because adequate protection for sentient beings has NOT really been advocated in traditional cultures, which underlie the ethical basis and means of sustainability implicit in permanent agriculture.

Permaculture notes that the wealth of countries and individuals has been synonymous with animal ownership and access. It also documents the successes of 'sustainable living' traditionally in a rural context, usually with the integration of animals, for food and work in that setting.

The unfortunate fact is that the history of 'Earth Care' HAS often placed anthropocentrism at the basis of agriculture. The history of human endeavour rides on the back of animals, by design. A return to lower population scales, and rural settings, would undoubtedly redress the present trends. In fact one of the four 'future scenarios,' which David Holmgren purports, as a result of the combined effects of peak oil and climate change, suggests this event (Ref.9).

The predominance of farm animals is the largest contributor to imbalances in animal exploitation and cruelty, with its unsustainable agriculture, land and water resource use, leading to loss of habitat, species and eco-diversity. In the present global condition, the level of welfare protection, let alone rights, is not guaranteed. There is a continuing debate between policy makers and their adherents, and the Animal Rights and Welfare groups in many developed communities who adopt a more particular view.

The scale of animal food chain contribution to problems of Earth Care is well known. Here in Australia, over the next twenty years, it has been suggested (Ref.10) methane production from

animals alone may actually outweigh the total pollution from all of our coal-fired power stations.

Non-exploitative farming methods, (often called stock-free), stand out as a sensible and obvious alternative; perhaps as one of the solutions permaculture is looking for, not one of the problems. Organic food production is often heavily reliant on animals and generally not stock-free. Vegan gardeners are moving from organic to 'organic stock-free' thereby protecting the animals.

Animal farming has to be viewed as a system, a very important part of the 'web of life' for many people. However, with UN estimates at 48.5 billion farm animals, and consequent deaths each year, this could equally be described as a 'web of death' (Ref.11).

The principal point I am seeking to make in the current context and debate surrounding the seeking of a permanent or sustainable culture, is that a balanced view needs to recognize animal rights, and is essential, considering the past habits of animal uses (for both human and web of life reasons), and the situation of animal abuse so prevalent today.

Both the concerned observer, and the pragmatist, can see the influential positions of interest groups, the many and varied cultural lifestyles and diets, and a myriad of other issues, which impact on a movement towards compassionate living. However, the potential for change is enormous. What I have seen evolve is globalisation, while a younger generation sees 'one world.'

When seeking to redress entrenched 'traditional' cultural positions, especially given the nature of the integration of animal and human behaviour, both in and outside agricultural participation, we need a powerful and integrated model; a philosophy and practice, for something other than past habits. This is where Vegaculture evolves and diverges from Permaculture.

I would like to see Vegaculture growing from Permaculture in the same way that Veganism differentiated itself from Vegetarianism all those years ago; to further refine the design principles necessary in an approach toward a sustainable world. Then Vegaculture will express not just veganism per se, but the broad spectrum of cultural inputs, a basis in non-exploitative agriculture and horticulture, the movement for compassionate living, animal liberation and rights, essential and embedded infrastructures, and recognise the validity of the paths to transition from one to another.

Other attributes such as natural energy systems; slow food, localisation and numerous sensible living methods may well become attracted to

Vegaculture as they have to Permaculture. What we need is a view to a 'sustainable present', not just a sustainable future.

By all means enroll in a Permaculture course this is a wonderful education. But ensure that vegan food is integrated into the program and question the dominant paradigm, which draws its experience from cultivation of animals as part of the food chain in traditional cultures, as well as being members of the web of life."

Path from Society

Vegaculture can be simply defined as a self-reflective system of social design principles promoting compassion in daily life through conscious living---Social Statement

My initial limited experience in Australia, of the historic place of vegetarian and vegan groups and individuals, and their integration into communities is that they have sometimes existed at the fringes of the social order; a common response has been a lack of certainty about what the terms mean, with vague notions of a strange personal food persuasion (variously considered both healthy and unhealthy), which may be linked directly to, or profess a form of allegiance to, or have membership of a particular faith.

A fully or part animal free dietary and belief system is prevalent in Eastern cultures, elsewhere, vegan exponents have formed pockets of influence similar to diasporas with a couple of longer term focused groups such as members of the 7th Day Adventist Fellowship, various philosophical and health oriented groups and more recently small specific interest groups like the raw food proponents in modern times. Many countries have a small number of adherents, and numerous people seeking weight loss, personal growth and healing still dabble with a vegan diet, much more frequently than with the fullest vegan lifestyle.

Generally the decision to 'go vegan' is becoming an integrated activity in the younger generation in the search for personal identity, while a plethora of health recovery methods incorporate the vegan diet in their recommendations. A brief scan of historical records shows minimal results for the relationship of a political active agenda with 'vegetarian or vegan movements' as such, however a few social connections are presented.

In the last few centuries, the vegetarian view has been readily expressed, and various adherents to compassionate food preferences have fought the fight on behalf of animal welfare and rights, but the identification of a "Social Movement" per se is generally limited to the 19th century adherents, where in England and America several influential people in the arts, health and business circles,

strongly supported the provision of a vegetarian diet (Ref.12). It seems sociologists may have deferred to nutrition and health advocates given the limited documentation on the history of the vegetarian-vegan preference.

A summary of the vegetarian way taken from a 'History of Veganism' (Ref.13) is given here and plots the course to the modern era, commencing in 7000 BCE with Mehragh and the Old Testament, and Hindu scriptures make reference to humans and animals living in harmony; the wolf and lamb together with Isaiah in the C8th BCE. Ethical examples include Pythagoras recognising all animals have souls around the C6th BCE, a healthy Greco-Roman dietary was geared to a vegetarian way, while first Plato, then Plutarch and Porphyry as vegetarians, recommended abstinence from flesh.

In the Middle-Ages, Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) is well known as a vegetarian and animal rights advocate; the early Christians and Chinese Buddhists and Taoists were purported to be vegetarian, with St. Anthony a vegan. Ritual slaughter was gradually being phased out and the Renaissance from around 1500-1700CE saw resurgence in recognition of animal rights and ethical vegetarianism, which philosophically and culturally has led to the modern era.

It is a fact that Mahatma Gandhi was a vegetarian, and successfully used non-violent protest and compassion as major tenets in the political arena leading to the rise of self-government in India and eventual ousting of the British (a magnificent accomplishment); written history though, does not necessarily place these actions in the context of shared ideals and the strength of a vegetarian-vegan movement, but almost solely in the realm of 'non-violent protest.'

Traditional religious and cultural family ties have demonstrated a significant influence in the continued maintenance of the dietary and lifestyle preferences, however, in the modern era, in India for example, an exposure to multiple lifestyles leads to multiple choices, which has no doubt caused some consternation in traditional vegetarian households and although around 30% of the population are believed to be vegetarian, only a tiny number amongst the Buddhists, Sikh, Jain and Hindu cohorts are likely to be vegan.

I can envisage a wider audience in all communities gradually adopting an openness as a result of the spread of vegan awareness and recognition of the outcomes from vegan activism, which does represent itself strongly in social media; and a more informed public is willing to align with animal rights issues that are drawing a lot of media attention, such as greyhound racing and the live

animal export trade in Australia. Thus, social influence will not only be limited to specific actions, rather a re-assessment of greater significance is underway, the education of large sections of the population.

What I perceive in this whole subject of the dominant presentation of social history is that we have avoided the baby elephant in the room so consistently, that remarkably little research is available to support the notion of the 'Vegetarian and Vegan way' having been coalesced into a strategic identifiable social context.

In 2017, the growth and acceptance of the vegan path is becoming synonymous with a ritual of youth passage, especially in the urban environment; a cultural recombination process is in motion. The 'Urban Vegan' experience is a major driving force in the expansion and adoption of vegaculture, and I am proposing that the time has arrived to revisit the social history books and reframe the story and influences in terms of Vegaculture.

Yes, when one does inspect the landscape of history, and identifies the on- going presence of a weedy hillock of compassion, a mound of purported dignity, at the fringes of society, in the gutters of the tanneries, in the fortified vessels of greed and ignorance, in the hedgerows of philosophy, in the statements from great humanists, scientists, spiritual giants; even dare one suggest through a cursory self reflection, the resonance deep in the bowels of ones own search for truth; maybe we have been a trifle lenient in letting this one get off the hook!

Path of Congruence

***Vegaculture is a reservoir of vegan awareness and a source of support for veganism and non-violent action that flows from vegan activity and compassionate living; enabling harmony through co-operation for emergence of world peace---
Congruence Statement***

The paths to vegaculture have been presented, the creative aspect from veganism and permaculture, the maintenance and vigilance from compassionate objectives, and the previously latent transformation can now be seen to be bubbling its way to a greater recognition within society. The path of congruence is the recognition and consideration of each and all of these elements in the holistic presentation of vegaculture in society, *as a self-reflective system of social and cultural design principles promoting compassion in daily life through conscious living.*

Vegaculture recognises that the everyday expression of compassion is part of the broader collective of conscious living, without recourse to

any constraints, open to everyone both vegan and non-vegan alike. When viewed as a way of living compassionately, to the best of our abilities, what we know, and what is being demonstrated here is that the common expression is congruent; which begs the question, will vegaculture become a legitimate resting place, a ready reference for peaceful expression of non - violence and a source of sustainable living solutions in the collective culture?

The answer to this question is being addressed on a regular basis in daily and social media, but was only at the fringes of public attention, when an article entitled "Why vegans were right all along", was printed in The Guardian, U.K. (Ref.14) over ten years ago discussing the effects of animal farming on the environment.

The full transcript considers the appalling living conditions and the inefficiencies of water and land usage associated with animal farming, and a copy is included for perusal in the Appendix while the damning conclusion is given here: *"As a meat-eater, I've long found it convenient to categorise veganism as a response to animal suffering or a health fad. But, faced with these figures, it now seems plain that it's the only ethical response to what is arguably the world's most urgent social justice issue. We stuff ourselves, and the poor get stuffed."*

That the 'only ethical response' as suggested here in coming from veganism is in itself admission to a universal failure of humanity to self correct the denial; there is absolutely no pleasure in the content of the suffering, but this article was an early wake-up call and is a fine example of vegaculture in action from a place of congruence. What do you think?

In order to understand the intended breadth of intent of the vegaculture message where, as far as is possible and practical, it needs to be viewed as a valid platform for convergence of vegan activity and as a cultural representative for the promotion of compassion and the development and use of animal free alternatives, I reconfirm the suggestion that 'any and all outcomes, which arise from actions which recognise and align with the practice of vegaculture, together with those that flow from the expression of veganism, are paths of congruence and can be legitimately recognised by the term Vegaculture'.

Path of Contemplation

Vegaculture is a contemplative philosophy promoting non-violence, unity, kindness, and self-reliance based on a simple vegan lifestyle, realised in silence and founded in personal peace, compassion, contentment and co-

operation; leading to sentient happiness and evolving as world peace---Contemplation Statement

History is limited by memory, and so are we in this relative domain. Documenting the tide of human thought and consciousness has provided solace for the seeker of truth, and although one may not expect truth to arise as a second hand experience, the nuances of contemplation have much to offer. A brief search of resonant beliefs has uncovered similarities, which prompt the following comparisons, and raise the case for a social philosophical position for vegaculture.

The first example is how religious domination is presented as having slowly given way to secular humanism, and in keeping with the rigueur of rational thought, it has been dying a slow death ever since. A reading of history was contemplated and presented by Teilhard de Chardin (Ref.15), who maintained that the wise choice might be one of recognition of values of each belief system, the religious and the scientific. People are certainly seeking meaningful alternatives to religious tradition as witnessed by the steady demise of Church attendance, and the advent of the Internet has re-invigorated the questioning of historical interpretations and authoritarian attitudes which protect institutions rather than people.

Vegaculture could claim legitimacy, for example, as a representative of social compassion within a cosmopolitan world, uniting with a post-religious spiritual foundation; where religious tradition transforms into a social compassion. The essence of the vegan way represents a transformation in awareness, and social acceptance finally secures the fundamentals of compassionate consciousness in the global public arena.

The second example is analogous and was elucidated in various ways by the Rev. Mathew Wright in an interview (Ref.16), where he describes the value of a "both / and" solution, rather than an "either / or" or competitive solution in the context of social discourse. By facilitating the introduction of harmony into the public domain, with what he calls a mingling of streams, he references Teilhard, and mentions the mother/father axis, and contends there is a post first axial stage, "where we are bringing in and uplifting the feminine, but we don't want to make binary, we need to move beyond this and go into Unity."

Thus the essential masculine and feminine is an archetypal, is a cultural construct; and we now see people as having a full display of qualities, and not just gender-based aspects.

These examples have parallels in the movement to vegaculture from the paths of permaculture and

veganism, by giving recognition to the adoption of compassion in the context of 'Care of Animals.' Interestingly, this recognition will demand a concomitant growth of awareness and acceptance in the vegan community of existing social values. 'Modern Urban Vegan' is not necessarily a universal or global solution presently in the relative domain, even though the direction is identified, patience will continue to be well exercised as recognition of animal rights and justice is by no means the only social issue, albeit a critical one, in the procession towards a more enlightened world order.

If we further the allegory and translate this principle into the movement from permaculture to vegaculture, the outcome becomes independent and unrestricted by limited historical insight; the movement to Vegaculture is one aspect of the greater awakening of consciousness to itself; it is a recognition but not a return to mother and the earth, where compassion is synonymous with the feminine aspect, but a genuine scaling of awareness, a state of expanded vegan-awareness becomes normalised in daily consciousness and a place of recognition of vegan awareness is secured in the path of Unity.

A metaphor that is often used for our relative presence in an absolute domain is that the earth and all its inhabitants may be expressed concurrently as both individual and inseparable expressions of the oneness of consciousness that we all are; like waves in the ocean; a contemplative path is integral to this realisation, bringing harmony to the ripples.

3. GROWING

"Everything is more complicated than you thought"-- Kwame Anthony Appiah

ROOTS

If Vegan Culture is an expression of veganism, we need to thoroughly inspect its roots, and in the following presentation I dissect the definition of veganism, and derive five statements. In doing so, I also suggest the words culture and lifestyle can be understood as synonymous with the expression, and utilised as alternative terms, for 'a philosophy and way of living.

"The word "veganism" denotes a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude — as far as is possible and practical — all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the

environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals"

* the *Cultural Intent* statement: "The word 'veganism' denotes a philosophy and way of living, which seeks to exclude--- as far as is possible and practical"

* the *Ethical or compassion* statement: "all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose"

* the *Lifestyle or animal-free alternatives* statement: "and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives"

* the *Benefits* statement: "for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment."

* the *Diet Statement*: "In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals."

Immediately one can perceive how culture and lifestyle are embedded in the very definition of veganism, and if this is accepted, then one can extend the focus of the discussion into the spheres of personal and collective cultural experiences, the realm of cultural influences that arise from veganism; and thus define vegaculture.

A Vegan Person

"Live Simply, So That Others May Simply Live" -- Mahatma Gandhi

Thus far intent, ethics, lifestyle, benefits and diet have been extracted from the definition of veganism. During my twenty-five years or more experience of veganism, there has been contention as to whether a person can be a 'vegan,' or whether they have a vegan dietary, or philosophy or way of life, so I now wish to suggest one can re-frame the definition of veganism in terms of an individual philosophy, there may well be other suggestions and definitions!

A *vegan* person (vegan, a *vegetarian animal*) is someone who adopts veganism, and may be defined in the following way: "A vegan person is one who excludes animals and animal products from their diet; and - where animal exploitation and cruelty are concerned – makes compassionate judgments in their lifestyle to the best of their ability; and by extension develop and promote animal free alternatives and healthy relationships with animals, for the benefits of humans, animals and the environment."

And a short form - *A vegan person adopts a diet, philosophy and ethical way of living, which guides their lifestyle choices for the benefits of people, animals and the environment.*

Cultural input to vegaculture for *individual vegans* springs from the pursuit of the art of life, which is the expression of the personality, not just from the application of their vegan objectives, but as a reminder of the wealth of individual human spirit, creativity, self-endeavour, enterprise and achievement that is inherent, ripe for self-expression and evident in personal growth. If one's action is consistent with one's identity as a vegan, then vegaculture is ready to be represented by that individual expression.

A Vegan Culture

Vegaculture is an expression of the movement to compassionate living; a recipient of cultural outcomes arising from the adoption of the philosophy, principles and practice of veganism; a collation of activity and description derived from the promotion of exclusion, as far as possible and practical, of all forms of exploitation and cruelty to animals---Vegan Culture Statement

Whereas one *could* identify diet preference as a *personal choice*; the selection and adoption of a way of living with benefits related to humans, animals and the environment, is also necessarily a *social choice*, and the implications and combination of these choices is considered to form the basis for identifying a collective vegan culture.

Cultural expressions of *collective veganism* may include for example, animal rights and liberation, cruelty-free lifestyle and alternatives, Ahimsa (non violence), non-exploitative agriculture, vegan farming, environmental and resource protection. Some questions readily arise from the analysis, and include:

- * How does contact with veganism influence the individual personality?
- * What is relevant to the vegan way of life, in the social landscape where a vegan finds himself or herself?
- * How does the accumulation of vegan influence differ from, or change the nature of, the landscape of life to reflect particular vegan traits.
- * What terms do we use to describe the collective, is it 'a potluck' or 'collection' or 'embrace' of vegans?

The answers to these and numerous other enquiries lie in researching and framing the social history, in discussing and sharing, and in our awareness and empathy with like-minded people. As a cultural journey, these questions require an examination of the actions of vegans, specifically in the arena of cruelty free living and the growth of a vegan influence.

This book does not pretend to have all the answers, indeed, it has very few, and also recognises a plethora of aspects which will need refining or defining, perhaps sitting on an imaginary fence between Veganism and Vegaculture. Whatever the outcome, if any, and the pace of recognition and adoption, the thrust of this explanation is to discern central aspects of the philosophy that are instated, and to instate more, deeply into the social and cultural domain.

One of the intents of this book is to introduce the overview, the potential for a wider recognition of the value of vegaculture objectives, and further investigations would likely include:

- * The documenting of both individual and collective outcomes, and effects of a social change movement, called veganism.
- * An extensive review of the lives of individual vegans and their cultural ramifications, since the introduction in 1944 of the vegan way by Donald Watson.
- * A gathering of prior historical knowledge, which supplements the vegan cultural view, such as the lives of the vegan committee at the time and prior inputs from people, at least as far back as Mahavira, the father of the Jains.
- * The growth of a traceable lineage of individual cultural values identified in the history of traditional cultural pursuits; the arts, literature, music, and other skilled endeavour.
- * The sources of community outcomes, which could measure or reflect the growth and influence of the veganism movement in the community. These will be found in a perusal and collation of the social effects of the dominant vegan values, the exclusion of animals in the diet, and animal exploitation from the lifestyle. That is, we would analyse the social benefits to people, animals and the environment for which this vegan influence may be responsible.

A Vegan Culture can be identified already, it is here now, in this room, in this city with this reading; but I suggest not so well recognised, nor documented as such, in the dominant paradigms. As vegans, we are responsible for vegan culture, our actions provide the nourishment it needs, to grow and mature. WE vegans need to reframe the existing socially accepted, but incomplete views, highlighting vegan culture, the uniquely vegan nuance.

Vegan Awareness

"One cannot be deeply responsive to the world without being saddened very often"---Erich Fromm

Surveys show people first try a vegan diet mainly as a result of influence from family and friends but also because of their personal interests in health, the environment, morality, social justice and logic (Ref.17). These influences, and campaigns such as 'Go-vegan' and '30 Day vegan challenge', are appealing and there is often a transitional period while the true import of committing to becoming a vegan becomes normalised. Changing one's diet and or lifestyle usually involves rather more than modifying food choices; not only is there a disruption and modification of one's priorities in the short term, but a serious longer term commitment to a prioritised way of life.

The term 'vegan awareness' is intended to convey a specific quality of attention that arises or can be brought to bear in all our relationships. The fact that a vegan is defined by values *'which seek to exclude — as far as is possible and practical — all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose'*, and that person chooses to align themselves with those values, is a form of self-confirmation. This willingness to adopt a set of values and principles supports the stage of attention needed to execute vegan values, to bring a vegan perspective, to practice or exhibit vegan awareness.

Critical thinking is a tool that will develop our understanding in any relationship, but generally usage of the term vegan awareness would likely be with intrinsic issues of morality, animal rights, animal welfare, and food and lifestyle choices that emanate from the above 'lifestyle' values. One's attention to environmental issues may differ because of ethical content, as an extrinsic outcome of the vegan way, a product of the 'benefits' statement that springs from due care of people, animals and the environment.

Once the attention to a vegan view has been aroused and practiced as a vegan though, it is unlikely to dissipate very quickly, so this state of attention may well be retained by ex-vegans for example; and opportunities for similar outcomes may well arise among non-vegans, but these circumstances are outside the scope of the expressed definition for vegan awareness.

Someone who chooses to follow the vegan path may be called a vegan, however, in this age of narcissism with its fashion for personalities and status and selfies, it is important to state lest there be confusion, this does not imply any privilege or special abilities that are not achievable by anyone

else. Like all paths in life, if we want to accomplish something, we train and commit our attention to the task at hand, and this includes 'vegan awareness' where our vegan intention is an integral aspect of one's attention in daily life as a practicing vegan.

Common usage may rend the term 'vegan awareness' interchangeable with 'vegan attention', however attention in this determination is more accurately an aspect of our relative self awareness; and while vegan-awareness has the potential for being fully realised by anyone, awareness in this text is presented as the consciousness and commonality of all, it is that which *we are*.

Walking the Path

"Ahimsa is the attribute of the soul, and therefore to be practiced by everybody in all affairs of life. If it cannot be practiced in all departments, it has no practical value" --- Mahatma Gandhi

A few random observations concerning our sketch of vegaculture from the path of veganism are presented; both as a collective, and with individual outcomes of influence in society, for the outline drawing has been done. The expressions and outcomes have been sorted into three groupings, these being the Universal, Collective and Individual Expressions, so lets stand back and evaluate the work.

The Universal Expression

The term spirit from the dictionary, means *animating or vital principle in man and animals*, and within the context of human evolution, our human beingness can be identified by our sensitivity and awareness to our own perception. This profound insight of being is also called spiritual maturity, and grants us the ability to recognise and identify one's self in others.

Reverence for spirit is expressed throughout history, with spiritual scriptures and texts and teachers adopting both lifestyle and dietary recommendations. The 'vegetarian diet' is integrated into the common spiritual path of numerous forms of Hinduism, with roots in written spiritual tradition for some 2500 years, and in earlier oral spiritual tradition. (Ref.18).

Mahavira (599-527 BCE), father of the Jains in India, taught a compassionate vegetarian diet, and both he and Buddha (563-483BCE) were samanas, seekers of a spiritual way, in the same era: according to Buddhist text, attachment is the root of suffering, and the sole aim of Buddhism as a spiritual practice, is the complete alleviation of suffering.

The killing and eating of animals is not forbidden, but rather considered impure, in the Chinese practice of Taoism, also in Shintoism in Japan. Recent changes in religion and culture have introduced a void in social conscience, and vegaculture brings into modernity the notion of the daily recognition of the need for a revised and updated compassionate lifestyle, the spiritual context translated as human beingness relevant to the 21st century; a reframing of one's attention in daily life, a continued perseverance leading to a growth in awareness as spirit is drawn to itself for further introspection, for re-identification, nurturing and evolution.

The Collective Expression

Some impressions and expressions of a vegaculture in community are identified below:

- * While some 'isms' are up to 5000 years old, with nominal adherence of around 4 billion people and volumes of manuscripts, initially written on clay tablets and the bark of trees, veganism is new. Vegan-ism is a recent innovation, around 70 years old, with a vocabulary of just 75 words, and only two or three generations of people. We can though claim some other historical links, perhaps with early Essene and Greek counterparts, and the Jains in India.

- * Traditional land and water based cultures have animals integrated into all facets of their lifestyle, forming a basis for inter-generational activity, evolving through family, location; their survival mechanisms recognised by, and integrated into permaculture. Vegan culture has grown readily in an urban landscape, initially dispersed due to the small population, and it would be very interesting to examine the rise of environmental awareness, in the light of both the vegan and vegetarian ways.

- * The vegan view has provided a great impetus, to verbalize and actualize social awareness and change; to catapult the issue of animal rights, as a measurement for animal cruelty and exploitation. Human history has largely been anthropocentric in its actions; only now commencing to recognize the extent of environment exploitation. Although a vegetarian view and influence has always been present, it has generally not been dominant.

- * The provision of elements to sustain a cruelty free world is rapidly underway, a whole new area of social growth. Veganism does not have the baggage or the momentum of older cultures. This allows freedom of choice and direction. The need for a renaissance, the streamlining of out of date practices is irrelevant in the freshness of the adopted vegan context; and thus a vegan culture could be expected to exhibit quick change, experimenting with new means and then moving

on. There isn't anything vague about Veganism... it is VEEg-anism not Vague-anism!

- * We can identify some major cultural events which promote veganism, landmarks such as World Vegan Day, Vegan Fairs, Cruelty Free and Lifestyle Expositions, numerous social media links, social and meet up groups, potlucks and other meeting places; and of course the various vegan festivals and celebrations. These activities actually provide the meeting place, a crossover of individual achievement and communal action, supplementing and supporting daily living.

- * Vegan societies, organisations, businesses, charities and trusts interact via the Internet, and just as social media changed the way people communicate, the range of veganism achievements is well canvassed by discussion, in film and documentaries, and continues to accumulate at a rapid rate; familiarizing us, and demonstrating the extent of the vegan portfolio and its compassionate aims.

The Individual Expression

Some examples of getting things done the vegan way:

- * Vegans have had to learn how to be self-reliant; they don't always accept shit from just anyone! Vegan organic gardening is non-exploitative of animals and thus does not rely on animal inputs for satisfactory outcomes.

- * Vegans can be resilient and vigilant, with plenty of thorns and spikes, as vegan culture is necessarily pioneering. The first plants and animals in nature have strong protection mechanisms from roaming predators, and from the elements.

- * The process of transformation, rebirth, is an essential facet of understanding the vegan journey. Casting off the old, the path of the alchemist, the phoenix! We should not be surprised at the reaction. The first move we make is towards food, the mother's breast. This IS the primary act, and yet as vegans *we question the source of food*. No wonder the term 'food anarchist' is proffered to describe a vegan dietary path.

So this act, of selecting a vegan dietary, has deep roots in our own psyche, and consequently, major challenges for the society as a whole. This is the power of a plant food-based diet, and a reason, I suggest, why as vegans we appear to be actively engaged and successful in endeavour. We are continually transforming. That is life and life IS change. However, certain rites of passage can unleash strong responses, the move to a vegan diet being one.

At the 2009 Brisbane Ideas Festival in Australia, where the topic was 'A Sustainable Environment', over 50 % of the audience indicated they were either vegetarian or vegan. This is amazing, given estimates of up to 5% as vegetarian, and much less than 0.5% of total population as vegan at the time, and indicates not only a strong social responsibility, but evidences the maturity and caring nature which partners compassionate action and environmental awareness.

Research in Australia shows an increase in Vegetarian numbers from 9.7% to 11.2 % of the population in just 4 years from 2012 -2016 (Ref.19). As a further comparison, in a 2014 study, population estimates in U.K. were between 7-11%; in Israel there has been an absolute surge of interest, vegetarians have risen from 2.5% of population in 2010, to 8% in 2015, with a 5% Vegan contingent, while Japan has 2.7% vegan, and Nederland has 0.1% vegan contingent. These numbers are supplemented by 31% of the Indian population, who are vegetarian (Ref.6).

Veganism is a culture of compassion in the making; expressing itself as a movement for compassionate living. Compassion may be both intuitive and conceptual; however, compassion and kindness cannot be legislated. Perhaps we can't all avoid suffering: but we nearly all *can* exclude animals and animal products from our diet. Everyone can do that. Let compassion arise from the practice of not eating animals, *Keep it simple*.

Acceptance

"You cannot run from your problem. You have to dance with it" -- Vietnamese proverb

Ten years ago this heading reference would have been called 'Weaning', to suggest the tentative nature of veganism on the social radar at that time; since then there has been a dramatic shift in community uptake and response to all things vegan due to the speed of recognition and integration of a shift in awareness that has thrust the vegan way from relative obscurity on the fringes of social movements, to be taken seriously at the centre of youth attention in the dominant cultural mix.

Veganism is new and has a fresh start; it is well skilled and well informed and questions everything. Some of the interests that are advanced by the vegan transformation include animal rights, non-violence, compassion, social ethics and justice, sustainable lifestyles, personal and environmental harmony. Our sensitivity as vegans is accompanied by a heightened response to these issues that sit at the core of our social relationships, and the vegan way has a great capacity to contribute positively to the community as a whole.

Veganism in all its guises, vegaculture included, is in the right place at the right time for the right reasons, (judgments that suit our purpose are of course acceptable)! An acquaintance commented recently, *"there is very little potential in the value of vegaculture, it is just an opinion,"* and I can understand the sentiment, as opinions and platitudes may have little value, but in this instance, I prefer to accept the benefit of the doubt in favour of vegaculture; just another opinion perhaps, but who would have predicted this rapid interest in all things vegan?

He then went on to expose a deeper crisis, the perception that vegaculture might lead to a disruption of innate cherished human values when he mentioned, *"and there are plenty of compassionate people who are not vegan."* Let it be clearly stated, *compassion is a universal response*, and laying claim to compassion is to reduce compassion to a material value, a view of things, where feelings and emotions are fixed elements in an (ir)rational subject-object relationship; and the opposite of the tenet of veganism.

His comment of course opens the proverbial Pandora's box for it touches on the fear of change, the potential to upset our finely honed balance between concern and dismissal; does one dismiss information as another opinion, or go inside to seriously evaluate the potential for personal growth. This reaction is not a personal criticism but a common response because at the heart of veganism is the challenge of knowing ourselves, the letting go of our security to reveal the ego grasping for itself. When the need to protect our deepest values is apparently threatened by our own admission that 'it is only an opinion and therefore has little value', there is definitely room for further contemplation and self-acceptance.

There is however a great sense of personal satisfaction and relief to be experienced when we meet the challenge, the world is suddenly a different place, we are naturally more at ease, because we have realised through our own experience, possibly for the first time, how simple life is with a reduced burden of cruelty in our sub-conscious, and the release can be therapeutic.

If formative experiences granted witness to common decency and functional relationships in a world of our own making, a non-threatening environment, a place with ready access to a natural sense of justice and a peaceful upbringing where relative harmony came to be accepted as normal, that perceived environment will be conducive to the acceptance of trusts and support, for an awareness and acceptance of a compassionate view

as an innate human value; a vegan view can flourish in these circumstances as a natural consequence of the human condition.

Veganism has already been recognised as a credible platform for social reform and vegan culture is close behind, exemplified by a plethora of feature articles in newspapers and periodicals such as the Jul-Aug 2017 Harvard Magazine where the author reports on 'The Rise of Vegan Culture', and mentions the rising interest in research by social scientists to investigate the phenomenon (Ref.20).

A review of the vegan journey so far indicates tremendous social transformation with strong foundations that are closely tracked in mainstream media and daily dialogue. It does require further input to discover and frame the range of cultural benefits which have come about through the vegan activism and presence, but I suspect we do have a vegan culture, one that is satisfying, vital, alive and sincere in its expression of goodness, and in its manifestation in action.

If we revisit the birthing of Veganism and the example of the foresight of the founder Donald Watson, he was not content with just EXCLUDING cruelty and exploitation, he designated an on-going striving, an affirmative position, to develop and promote the use of animal free alternatives. This is not a static philosophy; it is imbued with the desire to expand cruelty-free aspirations into the whole of the realm of human activity, and from his simple 75-word statement, look at what is happening!

PEOPLE

4. HUMAN SURVIVAL

5. HUMAN BEING

6. HUMAN GROWTH

4. HUMAN SURVIVAL

"Look after self, kin and community: if people's needs are met in compassionate and simple ways, the environment surrounding them will prosper"---permacultureprinciples.com

ORIGINS

Survival happens, and we are left in awe of the world we inhabit, and in our own capacities, our thoughts and feelings, our imagination and creativity, our commonness and connectivity to life as it is. A reference to survival brings focus to our common relative heritage, and as the breadth of relationships between human animals and non-human animals and the earth has expanded, to identify vegaculture as a point of contact with history and tradition.

While clothing, energy and shelter have a fascinating history, our focus will be on the adaption of food sources and we shall discover, just as the survivor exists as part of the whole, so the whole is also incorporated into the survivor!

The origin of life remains a mystery, and while the search for understanding the biological nature of the Last Universal Common Ancestor (LUCA) in the tree of life continues, that which is represented by a set of 355 genes estimated to have lived some 3.5-3.8 billion years ago (Ref.1), science understands the earliest signature are microbes, single cell organisms or micro-organisms, which extensively inhabit earth, with only around 1% being identified, leaving plenty of room for further investigation. We continue to search for water and microbes, as a sign of life elsewhere in the universe (Ref.2).

In a recent BBC documentary (Ref.3), while David Attenborough was holding a newborn baby in his arms, he expressed it this way:

"[This baby's] ancestry like that of all of us stretches back over 500 million years to a tiny little worm-like creature swimming in the bottom of the sea." Continuing to refer to the child, he said: "reptiles gave him his watertight skin. Tiny nocturnal mammals donated a bigger brain, sharper senses, and the manner in which he was born. His hands and colour vision came from the fruit-eating primates; and his larger brain and greater intelligence from the first humans." And David Attenborough's grand conclusion: "So all our features of our body can be traced back to our ancient ancestor".

However we can also refer to our human origins in other ways, in fact our truest identity in our subjective human experience is to confirm our

existence, which is often stated, as "I am I," a realisation that can rapidly limit further conversation! We can also hold experience at arms length and cognise knowingness that is a mystery beyond expression; just as readily we accept that we are conscious, this is ever our experience, but we are ignorant of the origin of consciousness. An insatiable quest for life and a path of discovery of the unknown "I" are at the foundation of human survival; and it seems, our greatest responsibility.

Natures Intent

Nature may or may not have any 'intentions', but it won't deter some of us from concluding that it does; what is clear though, is that change is inevitable and every thing is living, and interacting, with every other thing. It may be a rock weathering, a microbe moving, a person talking, a fog lifting, a dog sniffing, or the familiar butterfly flapping its wings, but each and every movement or stillness is part of the whole that is occurring at any instant; could it be that we are that whole?

Humans have claimed a unique capacity for consciousness, what evolution shows is a continual interfacing, with nature trialing the progress of its many manifestations daily for billions of years, adapting and accumulating experience in self-reliance, and creative problem solving, sharing and co-operating, experimenting and honing survival techniques. There were times when the challenges of nature were almost insurmountable; it is generally accepted that the total world human population stood at just 10,000 people around 60,000 years ago (Ref.4).

Attributing an intent in the first instance, and then double-guessing a response is a game at which we humans are very good; for enquiry is indeed a seed for thought, and something we generate habitually. The scientist Rupert Sheldrake (Ref.5) 'accepts the notion that the world constitutes a series of fixed habits, not fixed laws.' Science recently, it seems, has suggested multiple models of both this and parallel universes, where evolution may have no relevance, and the function of time may turn out to be non-existent (Ref.6).

Social evolution demonstrates a continued lack of foresight and extended deliberation to make fundamental changes to the way in which the mechanisms of the social order operate so as to benefit everyone; a dearth of enlightened experiences to address inequality does not only extend back to the dark ages, but throughout recorded history. Non-violent action has made some progress, but redistribution of nutritional wealth is needed, as malnutrition continues, even

though the numbers of obese and overweight people has exceeded the numbers in hunger for over a decade (Ref.7,8).

The enquiry arises, 'can cultures co-exist peacefully?' or does the challenge of a relative existence, separateness in subject-object, body and mind, them and us, preclude this possibility? Do we need to resurrect a common God, or can we form a consensus, a unity of consciousness of a shared global culture, with many manifestations of value and worth and rights, to unite and peacefully exist together while building the harmony into longevity, a sustainable solution?

Humans have elevated their self importance in the natural world to such a level that the present era of history has been defined as the Anthropocene; human 'endeavour' has been so significant that it is officially recognised as having scaled the geological time scale, which by the way is quite a bit higher than Mount Everest!

The list of social and environmental issues that demand attention keeps growing while nature responds with a growing ferocity. Comprehending life from nature's perspective given our long history of fighting for survival should come easily, and we already know the solutions.

Life is, and the approach to any issue can only ever be improved by approaching with an abundance of compassion and justice. With over 7.6 billion people, with a strong interest in happiness and freedom, the numbers are there, and rising. Combating our own ego has become the number one priority of the human species.

I ask the question: what is my intent, and can a *Vegaculture* help?

Community

Commonly understood as a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common, community is representative of the many aspects of individuals in the collective, and as a consequence, able to be interrogated for its own sake. History confirms our extraordinary capacity for survival; an expanding group of social animals in a Garden of Eden, where 'strength in numbers' has brought the human story into the arena of modernity, a magical and inspirational opportunity for interaction and understanding.

The reason for introducing community into the vegaculture discussion is pretty obvious, as we need to consider social and cultural issues, and any discussion of survival must surely embrace the wealth of community. We often consider contact with 'like-minded' people as one of the fulcrums in life, a place where we feel secure and accepted,

and able to relax and be at ease; where daily challenges can be shared or avoided, at least for a while. Recognising our own need for communication, and then identifying the preferred outlet and place of respite can be considered an art; the science and fine art of community interaction, maybe an essential aspect of the human condition.

Usually, our circle of influence begins with family, and broadens as relationships and interests and circumstance determine. As we mature, so does our capacity for co-operation and sharing grow, and underlying this process is a sense of the common good. Like numerous other community influences, vegaculture can be viewed as a part of the web of communication, of the web of life. As an expression of the common good, it surely has a 'place of pride,' not in the sense of personal pride, but as a valued place to call home, where we can meet people with openness and shared values, where our endeavour will continue to enhance sustainable living practices and hence, community reinforcement and survival.

Food Security

"See harmony trying to find itself"--Canela Meyers

There are many reasons why it is important to uncover and document our dietary history, including the relationship of food security and diet within a broad understanding of evolution, the discovery of our heritage, and the development of comparative anatomy and the survival skills of our ancestors. It is interesting to study the variety of traditional foods, but a chasm of availability now exists between the food choices we take for granted in a sophisticated market place, and what our ancient ancestors may have chosen if lucky, or eaten if hungry. The reference to past habits is one factor in our dietary history, but not solely useful as the only relevant means by which to construct our diet.

The necessity to contemplate and fully understand the relationships between universal access to land and infrastructure resources, effective and sustainable crop production, environmental and species protection, efficiency in food nutrient conversion, means that food security is high on the agenda of topics for discussion. Political point scoring is rife in the planning debates around population numbers and rates of increase, and food security is regularly quoted and often misused to justify dubious opinions.

The following presentation gives an overview of food security in my local compact region of Far Northern Queensland (FNQ), which used to grow tobacco, but now has an abundance of fruit and vegetable growers; an excellent irrigation scheme

is in place, with variable soils and water quality, and a wide range of climate zones. Fruits such as mango, avocado, papaya, pineapples, banana and exotic tropical varieties are foundation crops, and farmers continue to experiment with crop plantings to maximise returns based on predicted market demands. Nearly all vegetables can be grown, and everything from stone fruits, berries and kiwifruit to jackfruits and durian, are available locally in conventional and organic forms, with weekly local markets and a thriving industry.

Arguably, the FNQ region with a population around 278,000 people at an average of around one person per square kilometre, [compare to India at 382 people/sq. km!], has close to the best food security in Australia, but let us have a closer look at how we purpose and manage this excellent fertile region, and what are the outcomes.

Climate change around Innisfail in the usually wettest area of the state, whose community relies almost solely on banana production, had farmers in 2017 raising the possibility of adding farm irrigation for the first time, and fertiliser run off to the World Heritage Great Barrier Reef continues to be needed to be monitored for pollution effects. While the region relies on a pristine environment to secure the tourist supported economy, this activity represented an additional influx of around 900,000 international tourists and 1.8 million domestic visitors in 2016-17 who also needed feeding (Ref.9).

Coal seam gas provided just 3 per cent of Queensland gas in the late nineties, and in 2013-14 this had elevated to 90 per cent (Ref.10); so far there are no local wells, but exploration is hovering. Small sections of the best fertile land have seen residential development, while large areas are utilised for sugar cane; with some being transported in 2017, hundreds of unnecessary kilometres along public roads every ten minutes or so, twenty four hours a day for months on end in tandem trucks, due to pricing wars between competing sugar mills.

The Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) released its 2018 Mareeba Health Needs Review (Ref.11), and after an extensive community review, key findings include:

- * the most common potentially preventable hospitalisations in Mareeba are diabetes complications, heart failure, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- * 62 per cent of adults are obese or overweight
- * 91 per cent have insufficient daily vegetable intake
- * 46 per cent have insufficient physical activity

* 18 per cent are daily smokers

* 25 per cent drink alcohol at levels that cause lifetime risk of health problems

Ironically, the local newspaper reported the NQPHN provider as commenting: "We look forward to collaborating further with providers and the community to ensure provision of high-quality, comprehensive primary health care for Mareeba residents, and helping them to live happier, healthier, longer lives." Don't despair as it might still get better! Not that these health inadequacies are the fault of the provider, but the lack of education and integration of social responsibilities for caring that precede our current status as a generation of sick individuals would surely demand a Royal Commission in other circumstances.

The major exported products from Queensland, which covers 22.5% of the continent, as a percentage of total Australian exports in 2014-15, were 43% of meat and meat preparations, 49% of sugars and sugar preparations and honey, 48% of coal, coke and briquettes, 50% of animal oils and fats, and 89% of fertilizers (Ref.12).

Land clearing in Australia is a world hot spot, with around 400, 000 acres being cleared in Queensland, on par with Brazil, and a combined threat to well over 100 animal and plant species even though there is supposed to be protection from the Nature Conservation Act.

I was always intrigued by the massive expanses of countryside, and wondered what valuable production was supported, and could it be considered to be essential for sustainable trading? I would love to believe that I can visualise *'harmony trying to find itself,'* but I guess there are limits to everyone's imagination.

Elsewhere, casual observation alone confirms there is hardly anyone at all visible in the agricultural and farming landscape in most Western destinations, where farm machinery is integral with the whole of farm production process; and there continues to be a significant movement to larger properties, with a corresponding reduction in younger people taking up farming. The situation here is in stark contrast to nearby, lower socio-economic countries, where one often finds the landscapes teaming with people and animals working together to secure food supplies, eking out a simple existence using traditional methods.

The average age of farmers continues to increase and is mostly in the 'over 50 year old ' age bracket in all destinations. Surveys show an average age of farmers in Australia as 52 years, with the US now at 58 years, and 67 years in Japan. The same reference shows "more than one third of European

farmers are older than 65, while less than 5% of farmers in analyzed countries are younger than 35-years-old! All OECD countries show similar trends " (Ref.13).

In 2016, a Japanese 'Wwoofa,' (Willing Worker On Organic Farms, Australia) showed me images of his 93-year-old grandmother planting rice in the rice field. Of the 100 rice and mixed produce farms in his valley, he is one of only two people of his generation who have decided to stay and work the farms. Like many issues that arise, food security is highly dependant on the distribution of resources, which provides a means for understanding both the problem and the solution.

The potential spread of viruses among livestock is rife, especially when living in close quarters, and the major use of antibiotics is in animal agriculture, mainly in the factory farming industry. Feeding of animal products to vegetarian animals can still occur, although regulations have been tightened in many countries around the world.

Strict laws govern the quality of food and labelling that is supposed to be in the marketplace, and those aspects of food security are not being pursued further in this publication other than to mention that in Australia, it is illegal to feed any meat or meat products to market pigs for this very reason. One detects a hint of darker irony in a system that restricts animal foods to purported omnivores, and yet elsewhere has continued to feed them to vegetarians.

An extensive study of 500 food supply scenarios based on *no deforestation*, was undertaken and published in 2016. The study revealed "global veganism would allow the most options for food production, while global rich meat-based diet would allow the least options. The differences in viability of diets compares a vegan diet at 100% of cases possible, a vegetarian diet in 94% of cases, about two-thirds for the average diet today, while a Western style meat based diet would work in only 15 % of the cases modeled (Ref.14).

A Vegans Australia report, entitled 'Impact of a vegan agricultural system on land use' (Ref.15), confirms the freeing up of grazing lands would add surplus cropping lands for the same comparative nutrient output from plant foods, whilst offering additional land uses such as forestry for logging and biochar from tree crops. Land restoration and regeneration of degraded areas could also proceed, with further potential for expansion of irrigation systems to increase overall food production, and hence food security.

This movement to a vegan agricultural system will eventually expand our overall farm capacity, and as the movement from carnism to veganism

gathers momentum, the ability to be self sufficient and effective with our resources, will be seen to be a natural fit in the post carnism phase of social transformation. The international organisation 'Beyond Carnism' (Ref.16) founded by social justice advocate Dr. Melanie Joy exposes the myth of carnism and supports people being as vegan as possible; 'this shift in consciousness will positively assist all of the metrics that measure our impact on the state of the health of ourselves, other species and the whole of the rest of the planet'.

NOD NOD, WINK WINK, SAY NO MORE!

5. HUMAN BEING

"Act out of Being and not out of Doing"---Jon Kabat-Zinn

BEINGNESS

The vegan way is often approached as a result of attempts to discover, normalise and integrate the various beliefs we have as individuals from a deep personal searching, and this section presents a basis for a typical ethical and moral exploration that is common to such a journey as it is an important aspect of the vegaculture model, and although the experience is common, a typical discussion is not so commonly integrated into vegan texts.

Beingness can be defined as a quality, state or condition of existence, and has both relative and absolute expressions. In common usage it can be interpreted as synonymous with and referring to a physical form, elsewhere and in the mystery traditions, being and beingness are often used as synonyms for Self, Unity, Consciousness and Universal Spirit, and many other names in various languages and cultures, to describe something that is an absolute aspect beyond the physical form.

The commonality is in the pointing here, for although we can look at a physical form and see a 'being', the 'Absolute Being' is a formless being, which makes writing about it rather difficult; but it does open the door for infinite interpretation and because words can become inadequate, we simplify our attempts at description to a single letter 'I', because *we are Being*. Yes, surprise, surprise! A smidgen of debate surrounds the interpretations of the 'I' of course, for we conjure our own identity, but that discussion is for another time.

This particular introduction to human beingness is just one of many commentaries on the mystery of life, and the intent here is to identify a generic meeting place for discussion by suggesting and

describing central elements of the exploration that will enable a wide range of readers with varying beliefs to reflect and consider their own relationship and journey through philosophical and spiritual enquiry. Everyone has their own beliefs, but we can easily fall prey to the influence of enticing phenomena and commentary; in addition to family and cultural backgrounds, there are numerous universal philosophies with a host of nuances, archetypal myths, neuroscientific information, social and psychological models, entrenched dogmas, intense devotion, religious teachings, outdated clichés, loving teachers, hero worship, peer group pressure and others, along with fear, uncertainty and doubt [FUD].

Education systems are dominated by the teaching of 'externalised beliefs' and we become overwhelmed with useless information; we do not always allocate time or effort for self-reflection, and as self-enquiry requires navigation, some of us will have the 'wind in our sails' and others will remain in the 'doldrums'. A deeper exploration of our selves however, is an unavoidable fact of life, an inevitability if we believe in soul destiny, and an essential ingredient as the common denominator for understanding of wholeness; the capacity to acknowledge both the relative and the absolute forms of being enables us to appreciate our own abilities, and to express them in a satisfying and balanced way.

Self-knowledge of our own state of beingness, through attentive self-awareness, can be of great assistance in our journey through life, and bring profound wisdom to our relationship with every other form that exists in our worldview. The commonness or oneness of our individual expression forms the basis for sharing; in our ability and capacity to understand our self and each other, and as we proceed to embrace a fuller manifestation of vegaculture, through the development of vegan awareness, the relevance of this particularly section will continue to be revealed.

Communication from our own knowingness or beingness is at the heart of self expression, a hallmark of maturity that represents the insiders view rather than a reactive response that verbalises second-hand information, teachings, habits and modern conspiracy stories; and so the serious student of life can readily act and respond in harmony with one's true nature, and although we won't always get it right, being aware and being ready to try and try again is a wonderful asset; and in the instance of this vegaculture narrative, this valiant aspect of our beingness is a core ingredient for an effective and successful interaction.

In our relative world paradigm, we appear to be living in a duality of cause and effect, of subject and object, this is the stuff of our five senses of human experience; taste, touch, sight, sound and smell. Our thoughts, memories, emotions, conceptions, perceptions, appearances and senses are all relative phenomena in our experience of life as it is commonly lived.

Our universal beingness, our absolute or true nature, is of course always present, and although the relative worldly adjuncts and desires experienced through physical form, space and time are useful in the process of self-enquiry into the absolute nature of existence, the pursuit of worldly desires for self-discovery may also be a hindrance, by continually obscuring the universal presence.

Some of the fundamental elements of the concept of our human beingness have been selected and are intended to remind us of our own personal focus, while the brief description constructs a common understanding for the conceptual narrative. The content below essentially relates to a belief system called 'Non-Duality', but is used as a metaphor for generic philosophies, and in order to minimise confusion, a few terms are defined prior to that introduction.

The narrative can also be viewed in relationship to the archetypal 'Hero's Journey' outlined in a book of the same name by Joseph Campbell (Ref.17), and although our experiences and circumstances are individual, myth is central to an understanding of our human beingness towards self identity in the traversing of experience in consciousness, self and spirit; and in this narrative, by seeking a path through illusion, we are connected with a oneness, a nondual reality, to realise our true nature.

Consciousness

"This is It, and I am It, and You are It, and so is That, and He is It, and She is It, and It is It, and That is That"---James Broughton

There are numerous definitions of consciousness, however the most important comment to make here, is to distinguish between the relative and absolute usages of the term. As mentioned in beingness above, consciousness in an absolute sense can be equated to an unknown explanation of the whole of existence; a Oneness that emanates life and is synonymous with an indescribable universal mystery.

Relative consciousness generated by the brain, is our daily relationship in waking, dreaming and sleeping, (gross, subtle, causal); an excellent model of the nature of consciousness and an approach to 'the theory of everything', based on research, is presented by the philosopher Ken Wilber (Ref.18), who documents a variety of

experiences and their relationship to each other as states and stages in his 'Integral Theory'.

The Global Consciousness Project (Ref.19) is a scientific study that collects meaningful random data at various locations around the world, and an assessment of over 500 major world events, has shown some deviations from the random expectations when certain major events occur, and these variations are statistically relevant. The data can be interpreted as a measurable confirmation of the effects of a conscious collective, and demonstrates the scientific imprimatur for the recognition of an amassed human consciousness, which exemplifies the importance of co-operation for successful outcomes.

These type of studies parallel the increasingly widespread experiences and interest and research in neuroscience, which together with the massive expansion in access to information via the internet that has so preoccupied human interaction over the last few decades, complement the explosion of interest in meditation, a continuing interest in mind altering substances, numerous documented personal testimonies of extra sensory realms of consciousness phenomena, and a popular interest in near death and spiritual awakening experiences in ordinary people; all of these examples are various expressions of consciousness.

These numerous signs are leading to further exploration that portend a degree of optimism for positive movements and refinement of our knowledge of relative consciousness; while in the dominant public arena, research and development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) occupies a major place in scientific endeavour, so perhaps we are in the midst of a consciousness revolution, which some would argue is exactly what is needed for human survival.

Wholeness

"One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular"--- C.G. Jung

The role of our human beingness can be considered to be the recognition of our complete nature, this includes both the relative and absolute aspects of consciousness, which can also be identified by the term wholeness, as a state of unity; 'the forming of a complete and harmonious whole', and also as 'a state of being unbroken'. This definition appears simple enough at first glance, but if we inspect it closely, we perceive the very seeds of life here, the same terminology and expressions are used in mystery traditions for the properties of the universal consciousness, often

stated as Unity Consciousness, or Oneness; while a reference to the state of being unbroken, is a common metaphor for the absolute aspect of consciousness, an infinity which is pure awareness.

Wholeness recognises life as one holistic movement on an endless path, but while the path presents itself in a series of steps, we are bound to consider the next step, and all steps are worthy of a position of attainment on the path to freedom and sustainability. Some of us will have already stepped out and integrated the suggestions here, moved beyond the limited views being proffered. When we decide to *let go*, the blindingly obvious is brought into the light and common sense will surface, no matter how dense and complex the baggage in our personal mixture of social and cultural events.

This broad recognition of wholeness is at the essence of discussions regarding 'Emergence', which arose during the exploration of this narrative, and is discussed in detail in a later chapter, but what is being suggested here is that a movement in wholeness is underway, congruent with the movement in consciousness, and that this movement can be understood as an evolutionary development. Emergence can be viewed as the corollary of the Darwinian evolution, the human being has reached a stage of universal blossoming, where we suddenly 'get it', a spectrum of clarity will arise, but we all get to glimpse the wholeness of life as it is, no matter where our individual connectedness is within the matrix.

Emergence of wholeness is exposed as a support mechanism; an increase in awareness and understanding comes through the practice of seeking as a result of need. The very essence of wholeness as conscious awareness is the self-expression of unity or oneness, of itself. Or if you prefer, the essence of wholeness as conscious awareness is the Self; an expression of unity or oneness of itself!

Self-Awareness

"We are all sense organs of the infinite"---Dana Sawyer

Neuroscience has established that brain, body and culture form our sense of self, with the narrative self, dependant on memory formation. Our own observation could be from a relative form or matter perspective, or a wholistic consciousness perspective, these are two different ways of relating to the world. In the relative world, self is commonly held to be the subject of ones own experience, while in the mystery and spiritual traditions, 'Self' has many expressions, and in wholeness is the over-arching unity or oneness.

An abundance of holistic self-expression becomes available as self-knowledge deepens, supporting self-realisation, personal harmony and awareness of being, or in spiritual terms, spiritual clarity.

A change in our behaviour to reflect our own true holistic self-expression leads to holistic outcomes, and increases our capacity for happiness and enjoyment in daily life. How is this identification of self-awareness as unity related to vegaculture, and can it prevent the repetition of past mistakes?

Vegaculture endeavours to empower decisions with their utmost value, and the more we feel connected with 'others' in the relative experience that is our day to day life, the greater the possibility our actions will lead to holistic outcomes, including equanimous rights and welfare of *people, animals and the earth, and a fair share*.

Spirit

“Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality” --- [Carl Sagan](#)

The term spirit, from the dictionary, means *animating or vital principle in man and animals*, and in the text is used to express the quality of this vitality in humans, as opposed to material or physical things. Our spirituality is referenced to our very existence, and to a sense of purpose in life, as we find value in our own meaning and relationships, and throughout this text is used independently, hopefully impartially, and is not intended to be confused with the term religion.

If for a moment, one imagined they were able to adopt a position of enlightened awareness, perhaps we could see how the individual consciousness is an expression of the greater collective. If we can become cognisant of a mind seeking itself, we may reflect on the mystery of life, and be accepting of ourselves as conscious spirit. Life is happening now, whether or not identified by one's presence or awareness, life is as life arises, with or without distraction.

Cultures expand through an ongoing exploration of sub-cultures with their expressions feeding back and again converging, enhancing the dominant features, and this process is a reflection of wholeness, an integral part of the common reality, and a place from which everything naturally emanates; a sense of knowingness pervades our presence, we can more readily accept our own being as a place of rest and contentment; we are getting to know ourselves better.

The adoption of a philosophy automatically erects barriers, however, the inclusion of self-reflection as a tenet of observance provides an avenue for

growth and expansion. Ethics and morals are wonderful companions, there is value in their latent form and it may be their greatest potency lies here, however in the world of manifestation, in the relative domain, in daily life as most of us experience, application is key. Ethics and morals then become active and the results will speak for themselves.

A tangible presence of silence and stillness accompanies the movement towards a greater spiritual awareness from the earliest glimpses to a fuller embodiment, and it has been stated that these fuller states cannot be adequately understood from the relative perspective. There is a place of experience where wholeness arises and the forms of separation are realised as an illusion; one becomes aware that they are not identifying with their body and that any notions of separation eventually disintegrate; this experience has different names in different traditions, but is characterised as merging with the 'universal oneness' itself.

Documented experiences from ordinary awakening people (Ref.20), suggest relative values do lose their meaning, including the loss of the subject-object relationship; a movement occurs to just beingness, with little or no doing. Without our own personal experience, this can neither be truly verified nor discarded; however, it seems reasonable to expect personal growth and an expanded sense of compassion accompany the awakening process; some adherents will choose to relate to the phenomena in terms of Neuroplasticity, others in the spiritual tradition will discuss the evolution of spirit as a movement along the spiritual path.

Vegaculture is not offered as an end in itself but is continually evolving, and although a vegetarian diet has general acceptance in spiritual communities, which is consistent with the tradition of 'do no harm', information that would provide evidence for the linking of spiritual advancement with an individual's change in lifestyle to vegan dietary choices is not so obvious. An interest in social justice issues is very evident, and the extension of this compassion and awareness toward other animals may occur, but the self-realisation of this compassion in the practices of an individual's diet is open to further investigation.

Spiritual ecology and indigenous wisdom are both avenues which connect the dots between our spiritual nature and conservation of the environment, and this area of discussion is broadening as the global community begins to re-assert some traditional values that were dismissed with the scientific revolution in the 16th century.

It is worth noting here that spiritual progress grows from the same fundamental values that science purports to claim sole ownership; and that is that the history of spiritual development as with science, has been a series of trial and error solutions, based on hypothesis, with proof that is undertaken through repetitive experience, albeit personal spiritual experiences of the mystery of life, as opposed to observed physical experiences of the science of the mystery of life.

The difference in 'believability' is that others cannot replicate personal experiences, whereas science maintains a means of repetition. The human relationship with and within each of these domains is continually being refined, and we live in exciting times as neuroscience, behavioural science, and now Neurotheology (Ref.21), extend our scientific knowledge into the domains of spirit and consciousness.

Seeking

"The unexamined life is not worth living"---Socrates

The term seeking is used from the spiritual perspective for investigation of the self, or spirit, and when we adopt this activity, we are said to be 'going inside', that is seeking is not to do with external proofs, but to understand directly our very own presence at it's most basic expression as consciousness. Each finds their own way on this journey, but we *can* consider life to be a distraction by adopting the role of seeker of the 'real self' as an ongoing pursuit; it is likely that a very long list of seekers have remained fully occupied on this mysterious journey into non-identification with the ego, as it is well-known to be a circular path.

There are many teachers and teachings, which confirm that when the veil of separation is lifted, the experience of self-awareness does arise for the seeker, and so the dialogue and focus returns to experiencing a self that we already are; the presumed advantage of all that seeking, being that we end up knowing ourselves 'properly'!

During the last few centuries, social identity and cultural values have been strongly focused by our familiarity and achievements in the realm of science; in fact science has captured and sorted history as it was, and either meticulously reframed and discarded some of the contents, or confirmed preferred aspects of the rest, to become knowledge as it is.

A useful background essay on this subject is entitled Critical Structural Realism in Anthropology (Ref.22), and discusses elements of scientific and materialist anthropology that appear to form a sound basis for the postmodern seeker.

The essay nominates epistemology, a distinction between justified belief and opinion; ontology, the philosophical nature of being; and critical science as three critical elements of the structure of realism, and if one is to attempt the philosophical route to further discovery, perhaps this is a good place to start. Seekers know however, that we still have to express the ultimate self!

Illusion

"The mind itself is a place of subjective experience; because it is an illusion, does not mean it is meaningless. The realm of experience is the realm of reality"---John Astin

The word illusion is sometimes glibly used to support misguided attempts to marginalise and dismiss values that give purpose and meaning to our lives, as if the results of our actions are of no avail, because "the 'thing' or 'circumstance' is just an illusion". Some people will argue that we can just 'kick things around until they disappear', but these attempts at dismissal of our experience, remind me of the old adage, 'ignorance is bliss', for if we can't take ourselves seriously, and confirm the validity of own reality, we are not in a position to accept responsibility for our self, and become inhibited in our appreciation of difference.

Our suspicion of life as an illusion is in some ways inevitable, as the mind itself is an unknown quantity, and we can only but acknowledge the truth, that all of thought can be reduced to the first "I thought, the "I am" or the "I-"I" state, which as we read later, is also claimed by some people as an illusion. One cannot fully vouch for the validity of the experiences of others, and so the comments are offered simply as an exploration of the topic in good faith. Personally, I find this subject particularly difficult to present, as I move my awareness from one level to another in contemplation of my own reality.

If the realm of experience is to be the realm of reality, then illusion will be; 'something that deceives by producing a false or misleading impression of reality, which is not in accord with our experience.' Two examples are presented, first, the illusion in consciousness that nature, the world and everything in it is a permanent reality; not because nature and the world and their form based content, may or may not really exist, but because they are always changing; we live an ephemeral life and inhabit a continuous temporary creation of our own making in time and space; in a conventional sense, a new world is born at every instant, with every thought.

The second example is the illusion in consciousness of separation, the identification of ourselves with the physical body as an individual,

an animated person living and interacting within an external world, where we see everything other than our bodies as a world of separate forms; a subject, me, sees an object, them or it, and therefore an object of separation from our own concept of our self. This view is strong in Western traditions, but nowhere near as prevalent in the Eastern traditions and indigenous cultures.

The words duality and oneness are used as a way of differentiating two distinct states of awareness, helping us to make sense of ourselves, and our varied experiences. While we perceive ourselves, we are said to be separate from the oneness, or in duality. Einstein stated that mass and energy are two sides of the same coin, and this also applies to duality and oneness, and to illusion and reality.

Illusions continue to inhabit the consciousness and experience of the seer, and the repetition of many expressions of these states of consciousness are being sought and experienced, with their results being downloaded onto media platforms where numerous unlikely phenomena and sensual information are available for integration into our social relationships. Reality is the complementary diad to illusion, and is introduced next so that we can find a balanced approach in our understanding of phenomena, and as a basis for further comment where pointing is required.

Nondual Reality

"Mysticism is simply a transcendental form of common sense"---G.K. Chesterton

The main reason for this brief introduction to nondual reality is to confirm the validity of the immense capacity of human beings to experience a wide variety of phenomena in many different realms, so that we can grant credence to other views, and extend our capacity for our understanding of each other outside our own limited individual experience. Various claims and explanations can be made, but the take-home message for understanding these states is that *'the realm of experience is the realm of reality'*.

Daily reality is multidimensional, and separation of subject and object is our lived experience of us as a conscious body experiencing an external world, which explains our natural willingness to accept the premise of what is called Dualism. In contrast, Nondual Reality or Nondualism acknowledges all of creation as a Oneness, which is pure awareness; a state beyond which the 'experiencer' does not experience a body or the world.

Traditional Indian teachings confirm real awareness is not awareness of anything, the 'Self' is not an awareness of itself, it is what we always are; pure limitless awareness, sometimes stated as

reflexive, not objective. These descriptions of states of awareness have a long history in philosophical discussion because they have offered clarity in understanding of our selves; and in the context of this conceptual narrative, they offer a useful means to deepen our own understanding of who 'I am', the essence of our relationship to life.

Knowledge of the Nondual reality, the Oneness or Unity, comes from the direct experiences of numerous people who move in and out of states of awareness where there is no separation, and although we all do this each night when we go to sleep, most of us don't remember our returning to our natural state of being in sleep. The cognised experience for some people when they open their eyes from sleep, is that they are NOT separate from the world, *they are the world*, the relative and the absolute are one; the earth, the landscape, the movement, the air, the water, the clouds, plants and animals and we ourselves are all the same Oneness. (Ref.23).

People who report on their experience in the transcendent state confirm that upon entering into the realm of Oneness, the transcended consciousness inhabits a realm of experience where 'nothing is really happening', and so the relative world view and everything in it from the perspective of the 'experiencer', can legitimately be considered as an illusion, because presence can be experienced 'in reality' as a 'continuous temporary creation', and this recognition is a signature experience of Oneness.

The knowledge of transcendent states experienced by Timothy Conway (Ref.24), has led to a powerful model for evaluating phenomena in a constructive and meaningful way that is entitled *'The Three Simultaneously True Levels of Nondual Reality'*. This approach identifies a middle way, which has been used in the text as a tool for understanding contradictory views and the paradox generated when individual experiences of one event, are being attested to differently by a number of individuals at the same time; or indeed the corollary of the experience of a single individual altering their perception of the same event.

If we can expand our tolerance to include for the opinion of others, we automatically invoke the potential for an increase in our capacity to develop a constructive way forward; a practical example being the willingness to demonstrate our own compassion, to optimise the vegan message in the context of issues relating to vegan awareness, and to guide our response in evaluating the outcomes that become manifest through the whims of duality. The 'truth levels' are simultaneously true, and a brief juxtaposition of content that relates directly to this narrative, is given below. A copy

of the original transcript is presented in the Appendix.

Level 3 Simultaneous Reality:

"A relatively 'true level' pertaining to the realm of multiplicity, the situation for sentient beings here on earth and lower subtle realms; the pragmatic level of mundane reality and conventional experience, involving the 'appropriate and inappropriate,' 'helpful and harmful,' 'skillful and unskillful,' 'right and wrong,' 'justice and injustice,' 'pleasant and painful' and so forth;"

Level 2 Simultaneous Reality:

"A relatively 'true level' pertaining to the realms of multiplicity, to the 'highest heaven realms' the 'psychic' or 'heavenly soul' level of Reality, which yields the realization or epiphany that whatever happens is ultimately 'perfect,' because whatever occurs is the 'exquisite manifestation of Divine Will' for the sake of ALL souls eventually coming Home to God-realization."

Level 1 Simultaneous Reality:

"The 'Absolutely true' level of Reality, wherein it is realized that whatever happens in the play of manifestation is a dream, so nothing is really happening, there is no fundamental multiplicity, only the nondual singularity of GOD or Pure Infinite Awareness is truly HERE. This Divine Self is absolutely Real as the sole Identity (prior to or beyond all worlds, souls, events, experiences).

As a guide to their application, the author suggests that "when we don't honor together all three of these 'levels' or 'aspects' or 'dimensions' of Reality as being simultaneously true, we tend to get caught in a constricted viewpoint:" and "we can easily fail in morality, compassion and empathy, falling into an insensitive apathy, ignoring the rampant forms of injustice that inflict pain on sentient beings."

"Furthermore, denying level 3 may lead us to mistakenly believe that being discerning or critical —'coming from the head, not the heart' is to constrain ourselves to a uni-level or one-dimensional and limited view of the Totality of Reality."

Obscuration of the truth by false notions and misinterpretation naturally leads to confusion; whereas, if we can invoke a broader view of reality and grasp the benefits of a tolerant understanding, we can envisage a clearer pathway for the emergence and flourishing of the consciousness revolution.

True Nature

"True nature is nothing but presence, which is at the same time awareness, oneness, and knowingness"---A.H.Almaas

In a recent interview, Shakti Caterina Maggi (Ref.25) made some simple yet profound statements regarding truth, which have been paraphrased here; she said that 'truth is looking for itself everywhere'....'we are the truth'... 'everybody is looking for this truth'...'we can address any person.....'to see what "truth" is doing there!' 'I am the truth' *is the truth* of our own true nature, which we can all experience. The seeker will gauge the strength of the nondual reality message, and I find personally find resonance here.

Humans have a wide range of personal relationships with nature, and it is not uncommon for nature to be considered as just a physical form, opening the way to manipulation; attitudes vary from being a place totally external to our own self that we need not exhibit any real concern about the damage we may invoke, while for others nature is the essence of the upmost concern, and its upkeep is a relative measure of how we care about and treat ourselves. Social discussion is often presented as polarised, with derogative terms such as greenies or rednecks, and a dumbing-down and over simplification of nature is presented.

According to the experiences of the author of numerous books on self-realisation, A.H. Almaas, *"True nature, the fundamental nature of what we are—and of everything—is what matters most when it comes to spiritual transformation. It is the single most important element for liberation"* (Ref.26). When the word nature is used in the spiritual tradition, our "real nature" is the comprehensive over-arching consciousness, a reference to the oneness of life, the permanence or 'that', which is common to all experience; this leaves no doubt that nature is being represented as the essence in truth.

Each approach is unique to the seer, and so messages and words and language can be used until the proverbial 'cows come home', (which is what we are working towards), but there may be no glimmer of connection between these opposing views of nature where in one view, nature is purely physical and in the other it is life itself. I trust this brief introduction to the teachings of non-duality will enable a more comprehensive understanding of separation, and help to identify a reasoned view for the variety of recognitions of reality; the dominant 'functional' view is that we are each perceiving the one reality that is being experienced differently; clearly the trajectories of our perception can be on different wavelengths, and this can be considered a fine metaphor for the nature of illusion.

6. HUMAN GROWTH

"We have to be a light to ourselves"---Bruce Lee

ADAPTING

The author recognises his using Vegaculture as an expression of his own need to understand the world, and the process of writing is to explore and validate, but what of the reader, what do I do with Vegaculture, how is it relevant to me, and how do I adapt? An intentional expression is a sign of creativity of the artist, and by manifesting our self-expression, we allow the self to shine through. Perhaps offering Vegaculture to others, as a guide for consideration is valid, to be approached from awareness, without effort; for that is how it is being offered.

One can question whether it is enough to just add animal rights to the wish list of special considerations for protection in a permaculture setting, using self-proclaimed philosophical argument when practical judgements need to be made; we can only point, identifying the appropriate solution is always the prerogative of the student or practitioner.

A guide to effective use is within the determination of the quality of a decision; we can assess the 'degree of holism' present in the decision-making process, does it satisfy scientific, ethical and moral scrutiny; in lay terms we ask is it in tune with my own feelings, does it make common sense?

The proposition here is for a vegaculture approach to be embedded as a touchstone and input, an essential element in all aspects of interaction whenever possible, but even more radical changes may be needed to temper the tremendous momentum that exists within the status quo. How do we maintain vigilance and can we identify a path to a holistic sustainable world?

Big ideas are paramount in the co-creative process and our ability to react to change in a technological landscape raises many issues; finding strength and solace within the extended connectivity offered by social media is useful and surely a massive bonus; but keeping one's feet on the ground is also necessary, securing a foundation for our personal growth, and maintaining roots in the natural landscape.

Holistic Living

"Live in wonder; breathe in mystery"---Tim Winton

One of the incredible aspects of childhood and growing up, is how the progression of family and culture supports each of us within the confines of the circumstances and location of our birth; and

how we manage the demands made on our filtering process, where information input is massive, while somehow the personal decision making just keeps on keeping on.

What is the natural world and how do I arrange my life experience in empathy with the creative urge? Is it at all possible to live a life naturally, or are all lives lived naturally, perfect as they are? How should I interact with the relative world, and what expectations might I adopt?

These questions arise, and as we begin to explore the premise of a unity of consciousness, our self-importance as an individual gives way to the emergence of a place in the collective; our presence attracts like minds, and we enter the evolutionary stream, where recognition of our collective nature is reflected; a sense of holism develops, living is no longer a series of battles or hardships or successes, it is a continuum of holistic living.

We keep on growing and the nature of our existence is perceived in self-reflection. Philosophies can place limitations on our thinking and actions, and a free spirit may wish to differ or defer, but boundaries are useful, and need not be permanent, and changing our mind can be fun too. Health is important, and good health more so; the basis of good health requires will power and vigilance, appropriate foods and suitable nutrition.

Health Philosophy

"Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit. When one is free from physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the soul open"---B.K.S. Iyengar

Adopting a 'health philosophy' provides a fundamental personal relationship to health, inducing limitations admittedly, but also minimising our tendencies to become lost in the vagaries of competing systems and the last resort of therapies and medicines.

Various health philosophies have existed for thousands of years, and generally adopt an approach based on prevention rather than cure. Health models existed in the Eastern traditions of Yoga and Ayurveda in India and the Yin/Yang, warming/cooling concepts in China and elsewhere in the East; while Nature Cure gained favour in Europe, and Natural Hygiene (Ref.27) prospered widely in America with a focus on healthful living into the 20th century, prior to being overcome by the 'cures' of modern medicine.

The following brief overview of the American health model of Natural Hygiene gives a simple, concise and accurate presentation of the style and content of a traditional approach to health through

the guise of healthy living. Rather the scientific approach than the 'she'll be right mate' model and subsequent struggle with a hotchpotch of well-intended advice, and a final grasping at emergency treatment in the middle of a health crisis.

Natural Hygiene is a philosophy and a set of principles and practices based on science that leads to a higher level of personal health and happiness, and maintains that physical, mental and emotional health, are inseparably linked, and that personal, environmental and community health are parts of a whole. The recommended dietary is a vegan whole food plant-based diet of mainly un-cooked fruit and vegetables, legumes, raw unsalted nuts and seeds modified to individual needs. Also, where indicated, the intelligent reduction of food or abstinence of all food (fasting) except pure water.

Natural Hygiene is unique in its contention that health is normal and that health and disease are a continuum. The same physiological laws govern the body in sickness and health. Healing is a biological process and the result of actions by the body on its own behalf, except under extraordinary circumstances. One common denominator among the health traditions was the adoption and practice of a healthy lifestyle, which until recently played a very minor role in the merchandising of medicine, which has mostly fixated on resolution of sickness.

Hygiene can be defined by the fundamental principle of Orthopathy (Ref28), which states that Hygiene is not something we do when we are sick and abandon when we are well, but something we do all the time, and what distinguishes Hygiene from the therapeutic systems, where a collection of treatments are employed only when sick.

Orthopathy identifies a range of prerequisites for good health, these include good air, pure water, comfortable body temperature, internal cleanliness, sleep, proper foods of biological adaptation, exercise, sunshine, play, rest and relaxation, mental poise, security of life, self-mastery, love, appreciation, esteem, expression of reproductive instinct, peer interaction, need for inspiration and motivation.

The Natural Hygiene motto, "self-care is health care", reminds us that personal health is largely in the power of the individual. Our central relationships with the world can also be viewed within the 'four realms model' of experience; these are physical, emotional, mental and spiritual realms. By focusing our awareness, we can begin to identify correlations between the food we eat, our feeding, and each of these realms. Sophistication of technology has provided a wealth of useful information, however simple hygiene is still a major factor in delivery of successful

outcomes, and the principles and practices of Natural Hygiene are worthy of elevated acceptance and inclusion in community health procedures.

In the dominant sphere of community health, the change of focus and extrapolation to preventative measures of health care, rather than the previous status quo of mostly just treating sickness, is rapidly gathering wide support and been successful in introducing wide ranging reforms throughout the medical institutions, while clarifying good practice. Epidemiology, modern instruments and refined procedures, offer huge benefits for countries whose health budgets are strained, mainly due to lifestyle diseases (Ref.29). In Australia, 30% of the health budget targets just 1% of the population, and one suspects the imbalance is typical elsewhere (Ref.30).

Healthy Choices

"To ignore mortality is the greatest ignorance;" / "If you are conscious that you are mortal, there is no time to do anything stupid. You have to stay on track"---Sadhguru

Health science now has definitive information about the healthiest selections for the 21st century, and it seems that vegan foods are a wise choice, as although humans may confess to have adapted to a variety of foods, the consequences to human health of the responses to that adaptation vary, and as longevity has increased, so the demands of refining our diet become more critical.

Both food and its source directly influence our state of health, and a judicious selection is recommended. This is not to suggest we become obsessive with food choices. Yes, when trying to stabilise, we do our best to take precautions, but the infiltration of advertising and marketing is so extensive, finding the common ground for a balanced diet can be difficult, and especially during periods of transition. An Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) survey of 145,000 adults found only 24% of women and 15% of men met the criteria for daily fruit and vegetable intake, with eating out and convenience foods implicated as related causes (Ref.31).

In his book 'Natural Foods', (Ref.32) Kenneth Jaffrey reminds us *"From a practical viewpoint man's vegetarian nature can be proved by the fact that those who adopt a natural diet always improve in health, no matter how healthy they believed themselves to be prior to this."* Similarly, reducing any food substance known to be harmful, which actually includes processed meats and red meats now in the latest 2015 WHO recommendations, and foods that are stimulating

and lack nutrient density, is a good starting point for improvement (Ref.33).

Further on Jaffrey states, *"if a person lived on the original diet of man he would necessarily and automatically become a vegan"*. Does seem a little intentional here, but hey, what's wrong with a just a smidgen of self-interest? Besides, health studies confirm that both vegetarian and vegan diet leads to health benefits, which is echoed by many a personal testimony.

We are inundated with numerous good choices, but also with a seemingly infinite number of poor choices at present for many reasons, and so it can be expected, and has to be considered acceptable, that there is a process of trial and error. If one maintains good faith and awareness, as Jaffrey alludes to above, outcomes will be greatly improved no matter what has been previously eaten.

The 2015 WHO document referenced above, reporting on poor health outcomes from digesting animal products and some meats, is at least a start to inform people that a common food item regularly eaten and processed by numerous generations for millennia can have the potential to harm. This issue is serious on a number of fronts, and leaving aside the animal content for the moment, which is quite a reasonable thing to be doing, is this to do with our improved capacity for measurement and comparison, or have the ingredient quality or processing methods altered, are the effects of extended life expectancies involved?

A large study conducted by a group of doctors from the Harvard School of Public Health, involving 120,000 people has shown that consumption of red meat significantly reduces life expectancy and is clearly correlated with a higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and metabolic diseases (Ref.34). The highly respected American nutrition policy advisor, Marion Nestle, recommends a plant-based dietary and addresses the folly of believing in health stories circulated by the food industry, and how our choices become limited, in her book Food Politics (Ref.35).

The McDougall Program, with roots in the practices of Natural Hygiene, focuses on a low fat high starch diet as a transition to a mixed vegan dietary, for both beginners and people with compromised health. The website also has a series of testimonies for a range of health issues that have been improved by this eating plan (Ref.36). Opportunities for courses and training in hands-on vegan food preparation are numerous with excellent tuition available in a range of media.

Challenging our existing food habits by taking the time to feed ourselves properly as we know we can do, will lead to subtle and worthwhile personal growth, affirming the value we truly place on being healthy and happy within one's self. Take the opportunity for creating beauty in colour and taste, with an increasing variety of fresh, vital and lively fruits and vegetables eaten in a quieter, natural setting.

Dietary response is subjective but qualified assistance with understanding our dietary responses during transition is readily available. Simple home-prepared meals using seasonal plant foods can offer a wonderful nutritious and satisfying daily fare; practice makes perfect!

Personality Traits

"Your body works towards maintaining the dynamic to support its existence"---Lama Dondrup Dorje

An interesting approach to the dietary discussion has arrived in the form of a classification of diet types, based on a large study of subjects and undertaken by behavioural scientists at Australia's peak scientific organisation in a report entitled "CSIRO Diet Type".

With an exploration of the personality traits of over 90,000 Australians, this work makes interesting reading, and is a much needed attempt to extend the debate and further our knowledge of the driving forces which ultimately could assist the community health profile, and educate the wider public with appropriate choices (Ref. 37).

The Personality traits of the 5 'Diet Types' are based on responses to questions aimed at eliciting the attitudes, barriers and triggers that relate to an individual's food choices and weight loss attempts.

The consequences and outcomes, which arise from this introduction, will eventually filter into the public debate, and there is an on-line form to identify your own type within the categories produced below:

The Thinker: Defined by overthinking which may lead to stress and mood swings, which may impair healthy eating choices.

The Craver: Defined by heightened experience of food cravings, which may predispose to overeating in a variety of food related settings.

The Foodie: Defined by predominant thought patterns related to food and associated with strong positive drives to preparing, eating and experiencing food.

The Socialiser: Defined by the prioritised need for flexibility around food occasions and avoidance of

strict food restrictions, which may stifle social occasions.

The Freewheeler: Defined by a spontaneous and impulsive nature, and associated with making snap decisions which may lead to consuming takeaway or convenience food.

The introduction of personality traits is likely to be helpful for many people to enable them to improve their food choices. It is also important to remind the reader of our biological inclination to satisfy our energy requirements, and that there is no one diet type in terms of food intake, we have individual needs. There exists within us all a blueprint for harmony in our relationship to food, a natural wholistic relationship, which will re-assert itself more thoroughly and become more apparent as we transition to healthier ways of eating.

7. HUMAN FEEDING

"Whatever may come our way, how we respond to it and what we make out of it is 100% ours" --- Sadhguru

FOODS

Simple observation demonstrates there is no universal diet; rather each has individual needs. The discovery of suitable foods is therefore in our own self-interest; and personal experimentation rather than cultural tradition is encouraged.

The adaptive nature of animals and in particular humans, has demonstrated an incredibly diverse range of foods that may be eaten. I like the term 'adaptive frugivore' to describe the human preference, as it recognises earlier anatomical origins, but is still relevant on a daily basis, therefore adding more credence.

Until recently, science suggested no genetic difference in humans in the last 45,000 years, however, since farming began 10,000 years ago, genomic studies show more than 100 genes indicate positive selection, the best-known example being change in the lactose tolerance gene, which has gone from almost zero to nearly 100% in northern Europe, while others relate to infectious diseases; so human evolution is alive and well, although highly debatable in the case of dairy tolerance (Ref.38).

Nutrition

"I am thinking for myself"-- graffiti thought bubble, Windsor Railway Station, Melbourne 1980

Human nutrition is a science - very interesting and recommended reading. The word 'nutrient' describes a substance, which the body can utilise, and that is in harmony with our natural wellbeing. The physiology of the body dictates a certain range of nutrients be available to enable the organism to exist and continue in good health. Our minimum food intake is automatically governed by the body's need to satisfy its energy requirements.

There is even a dietary category now called 'Nutritarian,' for people who focus on high nutrient plant foods. Our food provides the source of nutrients by which the body survives and prospers, however, it is important to distinguish between foods and 'non-foods' (Ref.39). The principal nutrients are Carbohydrates, Lipids (fats), Proteins, Vitamins and Minerals: the body has pathways to assimilate these nutrients, also water and alcohol.

Energy efficiency and energy use are central to the metabolic process and are guided by the wisdom of our body, and unfortunately the lack of wisdom of advertising and marketing. The unusual suggestion of just breathing as a potential source of nutrition is discussed in a later section. Food Authorities introduce various terms whose value varies by age and gender for standard servings of food as a basis of daily nutrient intake.

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA), Reference Daily Intake (RDI), and Adequate Intakes (AIs) are a guide to nutrient, while each nutrient, has its own Daily Value (DV). A Daily Value is often, but not always, similar to one's RDA or AI for that nutrient. Food labels actually provide the %DV so that you can see how much (what percentage) a serving of the product contributes to reaching the Daily Value (Ref.40).

There is generally no way of knowing exactly what nutrients and their proportions are contained in our food. Apart from some basic labeling of most processed products, food tables only give an indication of average or typical nutrient content. Nutrient density is important when feeding to avoid so called 'empty calories', which entice our taste buds, rather than feeding our being. Our assimilation of nutrients is an important aspect, and to this end, the constitution of the micro flora in the gut called the micro biome, which is a collection of around 100 trillion cells, bacteria, viruses and parasites, is being heavily researched, with discussions regarding its status as an additional organ. Soil quality and farming practice influence the potential value of nutrient capacity.

Government regulations are designed to provide community and industry safeguards, and to ensure good practices in the growing, transporting and sale of foodstuffs. A number of institutions get

involved in nutrient discussions, including the World Health Organisation, (WHO) the United Nations Food and Agricultural organisation, (FAO) the US Food and Drug Administration, (FDA) and locally the Food Standards Australia New Zealand, (FSANZ) where volumes of data is collected, and there rests a responsibility for licensing food products.

There are Health Department guidelines and campaigns, and literature distribution to assist with suggested means to gain adequate nutrition to maintain a secure and stabilised health status. On the personal front, our genetic heritage, and other factors such as relaxation and harmony, cultural habits, metabolic rate and body type, all influence our assimilation of nutrients. Many challenges occur in daily living and we are more likely to succeed with a nutritious dietary, if we take a positive interest in our food choices and note our body responses to those selections.

We know that food science can construct a 'properly balanced diet' from a variety of nutritional inputs, while we as individuals with our numerous preferences and external influences, self-select for food style and choice; however, superior nutrition inevitably leads to superior health. As we become self reliant, so does our confidence in the body's wisdom grow, to help and guide our selections.

The revival of interest in nutrition is a symptom of the increase in public awareness that nutritional claims relate to health outcomes. Shopping habits, expectations, and market freedoms are deeply embedded in our culture and rarely questioned from a truly impartial perspective. Feedback is prolific in the social media but also confusing, while scarcity might be an effective means of adopting a national nutrition program, it would most likely suffer from a lack of popularity.

Currently, our wealth of knowledge about nutrition and health provides a basis for excellent dietary welfare, but if we strive to be exacting, then we will need to accept there have been as many 'diets' as there have been individuals, and this still holds true today. Lifestyle dis-ease is often caused through dietary maladjustment to a myriad of processed items currently sold as foods resulting in an alarming array of health problems; an over consumption of 'non-foods' leading to a lack of or imbalance in nutrient assimilation. More education and attention to dietary choices is required to confirm differences in nutritional composition, to distinguish as to what constitutes a nutritional food choice from a 'non-food' and the balance of nutrients therein.

The competing interests of marketplace freedom and responsible community health controls on

food products and their advertised benefits is really disruptive to education programs that could secure effective public health outcomes, but finding the political will and capacity to introduce restrictive trade practices with product regulations, such as strong warning labels, or size restrictions, or reduction in 'additives' to save people from themselves, is an ongoing task. It is too harsh to describe the health system as only a sickness system, but we can observe a tradition of poor choices, combined with the momentum of industry expectations and influence on the status quo, as being indicative of perpetuating unnecessary harm, at tremendous expense to both individuals and the public health system.

This is not only a western phenomenon, it is a universal truism; as access to processed foods and global marketing techniques, when presented as a consumer choice, feeds directly into the residue of human survival strategies where the psyche is bound to enquire and experiment for itself; these 'survival-only' strategies lack the educational refinements needed for longevity of vital health, resulting in a continual lowering of levels of public health. People may have longer life spans, but at a reduced level of immune capacity, and a lifetime of health issues, all the while being supported by a gratuitous public health system to maintain a degree of chronic sickness.

There is a growing consensus amongst health educators (Ref.41), to alert people (yes, people not consumers), that a nutritious quality diet should contain a high proportion of plant foods, with little processing, eaten fresh, with a minimum of salt, oil and sugar: the SOS of health.

Media and supermarket outlets go to great lengths to promote fresh foods, while vending tens of thousands of processed products, many with health claims, but even with the best nutrition our health is still dependant on many other factors. A simple glance from the supermarket door indicates where food is, be extra careful with the rest. We have the knowledge to assist but poor choices and indifference are the norm.

Public health is not only dependant on nutritional education, and the contrasts of health status and needs in the global context is enormous. Just one example shows why: *"In India a staggering 626 million people still defecate in the open, the excrement making surrounding communities highly vulnerable to diseases carried in faeces and spread through contamination of water. The resulting diarrhea prevents children who have access to decent food from absorbing the nutrients."* As a consequence, malnutrition is still a major social concern (Ref.42,43).

Traditional Diet

"The belly rules the mind"---Spanish Proverb

A fascinating review of the importance of carbohydrate in human evolution was published in the Quarterly Review of Biology in 2015 (Ref.44), and draws from many references to give an up-to-date description of the values of carbohydrates in the diet, their likely sources, and explores the link between salivary amylase and the adoption of cooked foods. An intimate relationship exists between human desires and biological preferences; this pointing to successful health outcomes for the organism, is a mix of nature and nurture.

Much information has been collected to piece together a story of human evolution, and we should recognise that the traditional dietary is but one chapter of this story, of an enormous jigsaw. Research of a common ancestor through teeth markings shows that prior to Homo sapiens, in our tree dwelling habitat, fruit was a dominant food. Teeth analysis (Ref.45) indicates a variety of leaf and root matter, nuts and seeds, and a preference for softer foods.

There is some evidence of cooking being incorporated 400,000 years ago, and possibly up to say 800,000 years ago, while signs of fire remnants date to perhaps 1.9Ma. (Ref.46). Archeological finds suggest a long history of humans as dietary lovers of animals. As opportunistic feeding is in principal a useful survival strategy, it makes anecdotal sense to consider humans naturally extended their pre homo-sapiens tendency for fruit, into an omnivorous diet with various proportions of plant and animal content.

An article in Scientific American magazine states: *"What we can say for certain is that in the Paleolithic, the human diet varied immensely by geography, season and opportunity. We now know that humans have evolved not to subsist on a single, Paleolithic diet but to be flexible eaters, an insight that has important implications for the current debate over what people today should eat in order to be healthy"* (Ref.47).

When reviewing this statement, we can see how a term such as flexitarian might be useful, as it is suggestive of a pragmatic dietary response, and humans can gain nutrient from an amazing array of food sources, for instance the Amazon rainforest produces at least 3000 fruits, and 'of these only 200 are now in use in the Western World, while the Indians of the rainforest use over 2,000' (Ref.48). Peru farmers have 400 varieties of potatoes, while a few centuries ago, the Incas had around 2000, and today only 20 are common in the West (Ref.49).

Symbiosis is defined as the close and often long-term interaction between two different biological species; the term 'symbiont' has been used to describe humans who have a symbiotic relationship with fruit, suggestive of the natural role that fruit played for tens of millions of years in the pre-human tree dwelling stage of development. *"Life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking"* (Ref.50). This peaceful exchange and co-operation between arboreal animals and fruits, is an eminent reminder and guide for a sustainable food supply and focused dietary path.

An evaluation of 'percentage energy intake' for the entire ethnographic data [n=229 hunter gatherer societies], showed the mean subsistence dependence upon gathered plant foods was 32%, whereas it was 68% for animal foods (Ref.51). Of course the quantities of gathered plant foods may still have been greater than 50%, but their derived energy input will be substantially smaller, due to the higher energy value of fats and protein.

Another measurement of interest is the human tropic level (HTL) calculated from FAO data (Ref.52). On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the score of a primary producer (a plant), 2.5 being half plant-food and half meat and 5 being a pure [apex predator](#) such as a tiger; humans scored 2.21 worldwide; the lowest score was 97.4% plant food (Burundi), and the highest score of 2.54 being Iceland eating slightly more meat than plants.

A more detailed analysis of the HTL of various nations and between eastern and western economies can provide valuable health data and while a worldwide average of nearly 80% plant foods is an encouraging statistic, it needs to be digested with data on individual nutritional adequacy. This data not only finds a different perspective for an often-quoted remark that we are close to the top of the food chain with our preferences, but it clearly exposes the self-validating myth of carnism in human populations.

A quick comparison with the hunter-gatherer (Paleo) data shows a significant movement away from reliance on animal foods compared to present consumption, which tallies with the move to an agrarian lifestyle and economy; and probably they had never tried chocolate!

I am reminded of the simple analogy that circulates in philosophical discussions regarding the presence of the ego, the more we try to find the ego, the more we realise it may not actually exist; it is a convenient fabrication for a limited relative understanding. Likewise for human carnism, it has been continued as a convenient fabrication to justify the desires of the non-existent ego.

When we drop the ego we let go of false notions and we are open to a greater realm of experience, a place of benifience in personal growth; similarly, by dropping the notion of reliance on animals in the diet, we expose ourselves to peace of mind, an improved health profile and a quantum leap in wellbeing and awareness.

Attempts at connecting the dots from traditional dietary to infer the most suitable diet in the 21st century, seems rather twee to me, given the millions of years time frame, the extended gaps between the dots, and the lack of information surrounding quality, quantity and nutrient of the dot itself.

When we add factors such as evolution and extinction of plants and wildlife, climate variations with changing habitats, and then fast forward hundreds of thousands or more years, to the cultural selections today, which themselves have been subject to millennia of selective breeding programs, the outcome will be contentious.

It is axiomatic in the sphere of human enterprise, for people to search for provenance to confirm their own opinions, and the hunter-gatherer slogan is firmly established in the lexicon as a marker of human activity during certain historic periods, but is much too general a term to be of any real dietary value unless further qualified.

Alternative tags such as *protector-gatherers*, or *mega fauna destroyers*, for instance invoke a different emphasis, but are also valid short form expressions of historic survival activity. Blindly following cursory tags and shallow remarks about archetypal activity could leave us thinking that women may only gather food, make home and babies, while men are really just philosophers; well aren't they?

Food Selection

"The soul is the same in all living creatures, although the body of each is different"---Hippocrates

If people wish to clarify their current dietary selections, by reference to the classic debate, every view has the proverbial "foot in the door". Although around half of the world's population are still involved with daily sustenance from hands-on food growing, for the rest of us, over three and half billion people, the maintenance of a traditional dietary is non-specific and may only be really relevant to a very few, often indigenous peoples, living in more remote locations; or those seeking a traditional lifestyle experience.

All of the paths have purposeful adherents: the primatologist seeing evolutionary advantages with early cooking, the conspiracy theorists as well as

the advertising and marketing brigade, who have a need to justify just about any particular view; the carnivorous view which seems contrary to comparative anatomy, but draws on the extinction of mega fauna to prove it; the vegetarian who maintains that eating meat is unnecessary, more a dietary supplement or fortuitous addition in the process of evolution; and as one travels further along the path of surrender, the eating of a purely vegetarian (vegan) diet, the move to a rawfood diet, sustenance by fruit alone as a claim of frugivore originality, and as some practice and proclaim, the absence of the need for food altogether, called Breatharian.

The suggestion to limit or fix our present feeding habits, by selecting a particular time in history as a blueprint for what we should eat now, to revert to old ways, can be seen to be somewhat flawed, because of differences in the ingredients, the environment, the society, the culture, the availability, the selected varieties, the size, sugar and nutrient content, activity levels, lifestyle, etc. Yes, we can envisage a facsimile, find themes and principles, but it can never be the same experience, and why would you want it?

When we consider the available options, and the social settings and circumstances by which we now live, the style of eating and food preparation principles express facets of traditional culture, but the dietary choice is ours; some would flavour this morsel with a peppering of traditional preference.

A simple comparison of the two central historic dietary examples, of what until recently were considered proper foods of our biological adaptation in 'Traditional Orthopathy' (Ref.53) is shown below. The chart does not, and is not intended to have current authority, but offers an insight into the then 'scientific basis' of previous generation's dietary. The carcinogenic effects of eating meat are referenced elsewhere; and Orthopathy suggested eating your food as raw as possible, and that food combining is important.

VEGETARIAN

Fruit is our primary food. Vegetables, nuts, seeds are secondary. Grains, cooked potatoes are tertiary. Avoid meat.

STONE AGE - hunter-gatherer!

Vegetables and meat is basis. Nuts, seeds, berries are secondary. Eat minimal amounts fruits. Avoid grains, cooked potatoes.

This presentation is straightforward; meat is included in one list, while fruit is predominant in the other, dairy is not mentioned, and so it offered a neutral case determination for dietary selection of 'proper foods based on biological adaptation' from traditional diets.

The possibilities to exercise free will to satisfy our own preferences and the choice of our personal dietary is ours alone; if we are seeking to find more conclusive evidence of a suitable diet, we can keep gathering opinions, but personal experience of our own adaptation is the true measure.

Food Style

"We wear names and eat ideas"---U.G. Krishnamurti

There is a well documented path in social behaviour in the progression of food styles based on food preferences that takes one away from the standard cultural dietary, in the West referred to as the SAD diet, or the Standard American Diet, toward Vegetarian and Vegan selections (Ref.54). By cleaning up our digestive system and improving our assimilation as these dietary paths are navigated, with shorter or longer transition periods between steps, one eventually experiences improvements in health and awareness.

Most people have access to the will or stamina, but not the desire to progress at all, however many people do move along the feeding path, particularly in search for better health outcomes, often due to peer pressure or simple enquiry. Each food style has a tremendous variety of creative dishes and means of preparation, and really there is no need to be concerned about variety or nutrition if one is sensible about one's transition, as the pioneering has been done with many experienced practitioners of each style to assist with transitioning, and ready access to good information.

Another reference to food style comes from Sapote Brook, in his book 'Eco-Eating,' where the dietary progression moves through seven steps, going from Junkivore to Carnivore, onto Piscavore and then Vegetarian; followed by Macrobiotic, Vegan and finally Symbiotic. The 'symbiotic' here enjoys a diet of raw fruits, green vegetables and nuts (Ref.55), and has access to a chart for balanced eating for health and vitality, leading to better health and a greater life expectancy.

Elsewhere, fruitarians also use the term symbiotic to describe their fruit only dietary preference; seed-bearing foods which are botanically defined as "fruit," include avocado, sweet pepper, cucumber, tomato, eggplant, pumpkin, zucchini, etc. and even nuts and seeds; a further distinction is required here for Eden Fruitarians for instance (Ref.56), where one will refuse eating foods which will partially or fully disturb the plant (greens and vegetables), or limit the reproduction potential by destroying the nut or seed.

Numerous methods of cooking and raw food preparation are available, with feeding and presentation that follows both cultural cuisines and creative preferences. The opportunity for satisfying nutritious feeding is available daily, and practiced by billions of people, with amazing variations that are usually unimaginable, and accompanied by an evolution and rejuvenation of culinary skills as one progresses; but no two people eat exactly the same type and quantity of food, which confirms our experience that we each have our own preferences and thus individual needs.

General knowledge alone indicates certain population cohorts are better adapted to some foods than others, and probably most of us will not be around when our own statistic for life expectancy reveals itself, but the quality of life we experience is definitely influenced by our food choices. There are a host of scientific studies relating food choices to health and sickness outcomes, and so there is a tendency for most people to be somewhat judicious with food, in their individual choices, even within the general food style usually adopted; with an excess of one food type being a particularly strong marker of poor adaptation.

The question for vegaculture then, is why vegan? We can only ever successfully answer this for ourselves, few people are rarely persuaded by argument, and we also know change occurs more often when faced with the consequences of poor health, or by eventually gaining an understanding through a growth experience of personal wholeness.

A compassionate perspective would almost certainly preclude meat as a food of choice due to the taking of a life, and so the answer to the vegaculture enquiry, is just to say that there is no need for meat at all, and experience has shown that a move to a vegetarian dietary is almost always found to be beneficial.

Personally, having experienced many cultural offerings and dietary styles, I can easily resist eating animals and their parts, eating out at restaurants and take-aways, buying or consuming any packaged and processed foods and condiments. There is no temptation to cook, although the activity can be very creative, as can raw food preparation, and my preference is to mainly enjoy a huge variety of raw fruits and salads.

Plant-Food Diet

"Cows scream louder than carrots"---Alan Watts

In the instances of health discussions and advice from natural health specialists a *plant-food diet* has

regularly been used to describe the absence of any animal products, that is any inference to a 100% plant-food based diet is synonymous with a vegan dietary.

A similar term *plant-based diet* is frequently used to describe the initial source of nutrient input, however the term is open to interpretation as to its' exact meaning without further definition, and the term can be expected to enter general usage, to suit the needs of languaging and fit with a variety of dietary descriptions. Whenever the marketing and advertising brigade get involved in selling and branding products, especially something as precious as food items, we can expect a little bit of nonsense to creep into the conversation; and even advocates of personal choice may feel inclined to suggest their individual food choices align with particular generic terms, even though this is untrue, and confusion may reign.

Typical examples for the justification of attrition from a value of 100% plants in a plant -based diet, will suggest that plants are only the basis, that is what you eat first, or some portion that is allocated to plants, the rest being what 'we' define to suit our purposes! Also, processed foods might include the addition of animal content in miniscule amounts to satisfy a legal means of manufacturing tolerances due to contamination in product lines; or the use of refined chemicals from other than plant sources, as allowable food additives, or perhaps just a blatant suggestion that any diet which has over 50% plant foods, is plant-based.

Hopefully one will not need to substantiate the percentages of plant-food in a *plant-food diet*, in contrast to a *plant-based diet*, but labelling regulations are important fodder for shareholders, and so we can only wait to see how the plant-based term fares, it may well become, well, -----adulterated. A similar discussion regarding the authenticity of Fruitarian and Rawfood diets has raged for many years, and the general application of these terms remains unclear, with various individuals and interest groups making claims and inventing categories to suit themselves.

This discussion leads to a proliferation of viewpoints, which might see both the considered and pragmatic positions accepting the notion that someone who has an ill-defined amount of plant food in their diet, but enough such as to be the 'dominant' source of nutritive content in terms of calories or weight of produce for instance, or even numbers of items in the refrigerator at any one time, will legitimately consider themselves to be eating a plant-based diet! On average, if we consider the HTL mentioned previously, the 'average person' is consuming much more than half of their diet from plants, which is quite a

surprising statistic; and would be made more meaningful if the ratios of natural raw produce to processed foods were investigated.

Historically, in the realm of vegetarian explanations for definitive terms, vegetarians also include lacto-vegetarians who consume dairy products such as cheese, milk and yogurt; ovo-vegetarians who consume egg products while the most common type is a lacto-ovo vegetarian who consume both dairy products and egg products. "Semi-vegetarian" variations include pollotarians who do not consume red meat or fish and seafood, and pescetarian, who restrict their meat consumption to fish and seafood only.

My observation of the wider permaculture community indicates there is a penchant for growing an enormous range of plant foods, with mostly organic or biodynamic farming methods, and a large proportion of a typical diet is based on a mix of cooked and raw vegetables and fruit, with grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and usually with a regular or occasional animal content. These dietary sources are accompanied by a strong interest in food freshness and also preservation of harvested produce to minimise waste, in addition to various guidelines for sustainable living practices and respect for the earth. Many dietary advocates have aligned with the permaculture preference, which has a huge following and reputation with smaller organic farmers.

From a vegan perspective, the definition of a vegan diet is often stated as a 100% vegetarian or pure vegetarian diet, the inference being that it eschews any form of animal content; and it would be correct to say a Vegan Diet consists of 100% plant foods, with all nutrient inputs and feeding solely from plants. In summary, the application of Vegaculture would necessitate the term plant-based diet to be referring to a 100% plant-food based dietary source and content, if it is to be used accurately in a vegan context.

ANIMALS

8. ANIMAL SURVIVAL

9. ANIMAL FREEDOM

10. ANIMAL ACTIVITY

8. ANIMAL SURVIVAL

Care of animals is one of the principles of vegaculture, which complements other principles, care of people, care of the earth, and a fair share---Animal Care Statement

ORIGINS

The story of the non-human animal is just as awe inspiring as our own, as all animals are considered to be sharing the same evolutionary path and although the origin of life and consciousness remains a mystery, they also feed on organic matter, typically having specialised sense organs and nervous system, and as conscious organisms are able to respond rapidly to stimuli.

The vast array of animal species restricts generalisations about animals, and often our focus goes to the higher mammals; during the course of evolution, some people and animals have chosen to eat other animals, and some people and animals have chosen to eat people; food is just as essential for animal survival and again our interest here is to reference our common relative heritage; and as the breadth of relationships between humans, animals and the earth has expanded, to identify vegaculture as a point of contact with history and tradition.

The fascinating realms of biology, adaptation and animal behaviour, and the history of human evolution provide the broader context for our discussions, but we will narrow our focus and explore the fundamental relationship various people have made with certain domesticated animals and those that happen to constitute our common food sources.

Nature's Intent

The statement for nature's intent for animals is similar to that for people, as we have no definitive knowledge that there was any intent for animals or people, and although humans claim a unique capacity for consciousness, we know all living beings are conscious and what evolution shows is a continual interfacing, with nature trialing the progress of its many manifestations daily for billions of years, adapting and accumulating experience in self-reliance, and creative problem solving, sharing and co-operating, experimenting and honing survival techniques.

I trust the repetition of this previous statement for humans, may bring greater clarity and recognition of the similarities of all living beings, in consciousness. We are not always aware of our own state of consciousness, often our focus is on involvement with the doing, and not with the witnessing or the being, and so our experience of

the life of other creatures can be quite limited and superficial. If we want to justify our personal view of separation by adding the weight of the credentials of the Natural Kingdom to support our position, it is important to remember that nature encompasses all of life.

Community

The reason for introducing community into the vegaculture discussion for people was to remind us that social and cultural issues influence our survival, and the wealth of community is just as essential in our discussions relating to animal survival. We can recognise many aspects of our own communal and social relationships, within various groups of animals; and there is a collective noun for well over two hundred groups from the rookery of albatross to the zeal or herd of zebra, which indicates the importance and characteristic of social preference present within these groupings.

Most animals have undergone extensive human observation, and the biological sciences continues to provide evidence of complex activity in the animal realm with use of tools and language becoming better known as we investigate more closely. It is reasonable to suggest simple explanations such as safety in numbers, mating potential, and basic food identification strategies being valid reasons to form social groups (Ref.1).

We well know through daily experience the variety of personalities exhibited by animals we come in contact with, and there are wonderful tales and recordings documenting a plethora of social activity, both humorous and touching, and stories of mutual support, even for animals of other species when found to be challenged by predators; and although people contact is usually with domesticated animals, there are numerous books and films and stories of interspecies relationships, where friendly bonding takes place with the most unlikely of mates, and the abundance of compassion between animals is evident.

A video showing a live goat placed in the lions' den as a daily food item went viral on the internet sometime ago, after the fearless goat actually took over the lions' shelter, and was accepted as an equal in the caged surrounds. It is indeed fascinating and intriguing to ponder these facets of behaviour; of the lives of other animals from their own perspective, as well as considering our own values and the validity of our own interpretations.

Although investigations into conscious processing continue, an extensive review in 2011 conceded, *"the extent to which non-mammalian species share with us the gift of subjective experience remains hard to fathom"* (Ref.2). The book *"Being a*

Beast" chronicles the attempts at experiencing the lives of non-human animals, when the naturalist Charles Foster spent long periods living variously as a badger, a deer and a fox (Ref.3). He has since been awarded the acclaimed 'Ig-Nobel' prize in 2016 for his masterful efforts.

If we want to, we can easily imagine that all animals are integrated into a greater social community, as members of the web of life, part of the global community to which we all belong.

Food Security

"Food is symbolic of love when words are inadequate"---Alan D. Wolfelt

The question arises, if there are ten times or more commercially slaughtered farm animals a year than people, what is the situation with their food security I wondered? A novel introduction to a common problem, and without any hesitancy my mind turns to free-range animals on marginal lands, disappearing rainforests in Brazil, un-natural composition of food ingredients in intensive farming situations, mono cropping of large acres of farmlands, and major crop dedication such as corn and soy bean to feed the exorbitant numbers, and to fuel our vehicles to transport them.

Many commercial and industrial process wastes that may have an economic balance in favour of nutritive additions to an animals dietary, end up being recycled in animal feed, chopped up animal parts have been fed to vegetarian animals, and huge transport and energy costs are needed to deliver food inputs to large intensive factory farming installations; and there are competitive pressures on wildlife species trying to survive in diminished habitats, with competition for farmland between ethanol fuel producers and plant production for feeding people.

I guess if we add climate change, (the big C.C.), then we have all but wrapped up the point I would be trying to make here, and that is the threat to food security for animals must be at least as bleak as that for people.

No pleasure at all in this statement for anyone, and surely a prima facie case for reducing our dependency on animal foods, rather than looking forward with delight, at the marketing prospects for 'continued growth in the sector'.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of people in the growing middle-income Asian populations are copying the outmoded unhealthy western style dietary choices, leading to a rapid increase in serious health issues, unsustainable lifestyles, and horrendous animal suffering.

Chapter 9. ANIMAL FREEDOM

"Besides love and sympathy, animals exhibit other qualities connected with the social instincts, which in us would be called moral"--- Charles Darwin

RECOGNITION

Freedom is a state of not being imprisoned or enslaved, and a wild animal may have the freedom to live fully within the restrictions of a natural habitat, while a domesticated animal is likely to not be fully free, but partially so; there will be some degree of imposition or restriction, as a result of their greater reliance and dependence on the human social setting. Regulations and legislation usually provide a mandated level of restriction in both wild and domestic settings; however, the recognition of freedom varies widely from country to country, and is quite subjective in the domain of domesticated animals and wildlife protection.

In the human context, freedom is taken for granted as a basic human right, and while we continue to be vigilant with our efforts to prevent further incursions of that right of freedom, we need to understand that animals without freedom are being denied a basic animal right, with no means of response. There are multiple expressions of freedom, and in this section I have chosen to mention freedom as a form of animal liberation, within the three contexts of animal welfare, animal rights and animal protection.

While animals continue to be treated as objects, which is mostly the case in law, then appropriate policy cannot be implemented; the thrust of many activist groups is to have a *Universal Declaration of Animal Rights* recognised and enshrined in constitutions, so that an ethical framework can be built which ensures a level of respect and freedom for animals to live a life of value and worth, to limit the extent of restrictions to freedom in law; rather than negotiating minimal welfare measures, which cannot guarantee to properly address the actual levels of suffering that animals undergo in daily life as conscious beings.

Legislating and upholding various agreements is an ongoing task, and recent examples of a successful implementation include the passage of Bills in 2015 in New Zealand, which recognises sentience in animals, with similar Animal Welfare laws having been passed in France and Quebec (Ref.4). A further development in New Zealand Law (Ref.5), is the recent decision to consider a river and its environs to have citizen status, and hopefully this type of approach and model may

eventually be translated to assist the cause of freedom for animals.

Consciousness

“Consciousness cannot be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted for in terms of anything else”---Erwin Schrodinger

There are numerous disciplines of science, and the animal kingdom has received plenty of scrutiny, so for those of us who need the imprimatur, a prominent international group of cognitive neuroscientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientists gathered in 2012, at The University of Cambridge to reassess the neurobiological substrates of conscious experience and related behaviors in human and non-human animals; an extract of the drafted declaration (Ref.6) is presented here, and a copy of the full text is included in the Appendix.

The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness*

We declare the following:

“The absence of a neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Nonhuman animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates”.

Scientific research has therefore demonstrated that emotions and decision-making develop in all life forms 'down to' cephalopod mollusks (e.g., octopuses); and this statement is introduced here to provide the narrative with a commonly accepted foundation for further discussion and understanding in the determination of human interaction with our animal brethren. The fullest recognition of this declaration can be of great assistance towards a world where respect and compassion may be granted to all creatures.

If one is willing to consider the esoteric position, it is interesting to note some Buddhist and Hindu traditions provide a bridge for the expression and movement of consciousness between different forms by granting a status to certain animals that includes the concept of animal karma, which might mystify many people unfamiliar with the Eastern cultures, but this inclusive view is consistent with the belief that consciousness is evolving through

successive animal forms, and can be used to explain the plight of individual animals.

While it may seem far-fetched, a well-documented account (Ref.7), from one of the major sages of the 20th century, Sri Ramana Maharshi, stated that his favorite cow, Lakshmi, through devotion to Ramana, actually gained enlightenment in 1948. The cow would often attend his talks and sit next to him or at his feet, and on occasions would start crying. Fascinating and beautifully related, this story is available on the web and recommended reading; with confirmation from those present at the time, including other recollections.

Many other topics such as animal Intelligence, animal communication, the use of tools, and examples of compassion shown by animals for their brethren make excellent viewing and reading, however, this publication will leave those details to be perused elsewhere.

Balanced Expression

“I could dance with you till the cows come home. Better still, I'll dance with the cows and you come home”---Groucho Marx

Balancing our means of expression to find harmony in communication helps to bring clarity and avoid confusion, which is especially important and significant with discussions related to highly emotive topics such as the treatment and provision of support for animals. Dancing with the cows instead of around them, is a cause for passionate discussion within the vegan community and one needs to be mindful of the sensitivity of this topic; and in the search for a balanced expression and presentation of animal freedom, it seems appropriate to utilise the concept of the '*three simultaneously true levels of non-dual reality*' that was introduced earlier, as a tool for analysis and evaluation, which is well intentioned and not meant to be provocative, but rather an attempt to explore and integrate anomalies, inviting a common place of reference.

If we use this approach and the analogy of the issues associated with Animal Liberation, then Animal Welfare is the *simultaneous level three truth*, a view from the 'Conventional Level', commonly referred to as conventional wisdom; a result of tradition, instigating social norms and procedures, and has an element of truth therein; having a functional nature.

The pondering of Animal Rights takes us deeper, where we recognise that welfare is not enough, the 'Psychic-Soul' prompts our consciousness, we realise more needs to be done and the inalienable rights must be recognised. The pathways of response form a pragmatic interface with the issues, from a position of moral truth recognition

and authority on behalf of the voiceless: the pondering reframes the welfare debate, and advancement moves into the *simultaneous level two truth*, as our awareness continues to increase; the influencing nature of compassion becomes relevant. We may find acceptance in ourselves knowing that the destiny of the world must play out, while we endeavour to assist as best we can.

Animal Protection, as expressed by the abolitionist movement, is something else; it is the expression of the truth in its absolute form. It proposes an interface that totally removes the issue itself, for it never existed, and so the metaphor of stepping beyond the relative is invoked and The *simultaneous level one truth* infers 'Only God', cognition of what an absolute position might entail, can be satisfied. If the light is clear and shining bright, there would be no sense of separation here, as the relative is not present, and the only consideration is an absolute truth; that is our essential nature.

Aspects of truth are inherent within each approach, and in this interplay between the tiers of 'non-dual reality,' each can expose aspects of the path of Animal Liberation needed for final salvation; and all are worthy of our best efforts. If we can bring ourselves to recognise and accept the different approaches and expressions of these three simultaneously true levels, our own suffering and dissatisfaction may find a place of rest, our relationships may become far more harmonious, and our work for a common cause become more effective, knowing the world is representative of each of its human expressions, us, doing our 'level best'.

Animal Liberation

"Compassion is the expansion of the heart centre to its highest capacity"---Swami Girijananda

The influence of organised Animal Liberation groups to expose cruelty to animals, and where possible rescue them, has had a major impact due to the relentless input from numerous dedicated volunteers from all walks of life. Persistence and consistency of message has ensured a strong voice for animal rights and welfare issues, with on-going public exposure of embedded animal cruelty in so many areas of human-animal interaction; particularly within so-called 'sports' and gambling arenas, but also the hidden pet trade and of course the food supply chain, where we are witnessing a revolution in human response.

The wider community is realising of the need to change current practices that lead to animal rights abuses, with dedicated media exposure of the key issues of factory farming and the myriad of problems endemic in the live animal export trade.

Framing of legislation to include inalienable rights for animals as precedence over current food industry standards, proceeds, together with the removal of regulation and restrictions on natural animal behaviour and mandatory support for greater vigilance.

The oppression of liberation is integral with the suppression of the voice of the oppressed; this is axiomatic whether the issues are to do with people, other animals, or the environment. The parallels between the issues of animal rights and gender freedom are interesting. The divine feminine has been the cultural archetype for compassionate response in human affairs: and in the age of patriarchy, and as a result of the gender hierarchy has remained subservient, ignored partially or completely, or else deliberately silenced by oppressors.

It is not surprising then, that there is resurgence in animal liberation at the same time in history as we see the freeing-up and liberalisation of gender roles in both the community attitudes, and in the statute books. The spiritual teacher Matthew Wright (Ref.8), maintains there has to be a healing before there can be a celebration; "a lack of feeling in the way we nurture and think of compassion is the denial of the mother, of the feminine; freeing half the population is in line with freedom for animal rights".

The promotion of a vegan dietary path continues to be integrated into the lifestyle of animal activists and adherents, with some animal liberation organisations providing mentored training and transition, with assisted programs such as the "30 Day Challenge," as a positive educational tool to increase self-awareness, as a step towards ending animal suffering. This was not always the case, and I recollect being informed of the dedicated efforts taken by a few caring vegans in Melbourne to raise the lifestyle awareness of various activists and groups as recently as the 1980's, when a vegetarian diet was at the limits of common dietary behaviour and social awareness, even within parts of the animal liberation movements themselves.

More recently, Vegan Australia news reported activists have been taking to the streets with their computers and showing videos to members of the public of how animals are used to produce food, with the results from one group of Brisbane activists reporting over 650 people had immediately declared a vow to try the vegan diet. The readiness for behavioural change is there, and novel ways of engaging people on a one to one basis, is a very effective means for exposing the facts of the vegaculture message.

Animal Welfare

***"Sometimes even to live is an act of courage"---
Seneca***

Both animals and people suffer at the whims and ignorance of others through a lack of respect for their basic instincts and life necessities. Animals are further disenfranchised due to their inability to converse in words, and in the instance of farmed animals, their complete reliance on both social and cultural norms, and maintenance and security of welfare programs. Welfare negotiation involves maintaining lines of communication, and within that role, various interest groups tease out the issues while promoting their own self-interest.

So it is in the realm of animal welfare, the need for good will and awareness of negotiators has a major influence on outcomes; while diplomacy and pragmatism are called forth. Change can happen instantly, but this has not been the experience within the conservative reality. The topics of rescued animals, zoos, and wildlife protection also raise important welfare issues, and illustrate the diversity of application present within the context of animal welfare. Integrated species survival programs, where wild animals are removed to breeding programs are part of a complex and dedicated attempt to transition animals back into the wild.

These positive contributions are pursued with great diligence, and we see humans as immensely caring in our common attitudes towards compassion; but many dark spots are there in our vision when it comes to recognising all species as valid recipients of our love and attention; in some sections of our activity, we are still deplorably ignorant and abusive. The following random examples of attempts to make improvements in welfare outcomes indicate the complexity involved.

The British commentator John Webster suggested streamlining existing animal agriculture regulations and adding alternative production and welfare methods with the introduction in early 1990's of Five Freedoms of Welfare to guide the marketplace, in a serious attempt to make a change for the better as a pragmatic gesture in working with industry practice. These include the freedom from hunger; discomfort and exposure; pain, injury and disease; fear and distress; and freedom to express normal behaviour. The limitations of these freedoms have prompted further revisions, and options being canvassed have included an increase in the lactation span of existing herds, and the use of some calves as dairy, others as beef, to minimise the 'bobby calves' production (Ref.9).

The introduction into International legislation of a quality of life approach more in harmony with biological animal responses is discussed in an

article that examines the updating of welfare regulation and practice to provide a 'Life Worth Living' (Ref.10). The opinion paper points to various perceptions and differing expectations that arise from use of the word freedom in the Five Freedoms Model; with further detail of biological needs and the human-animal relationship necessary for animals to avail themselves of positive experiences.

Elsewhere, medical research is continuing at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to replace animals in the laboratories with tiny brains made of human neurons and cells. The use of these mini-brains, which are made from adult human stem cells, could lead to mass produced 'organoids', which could supersede the need for testing on laboratory animals for drugs and neurological scientific research (Ref.11). Made from adult human stem cells, researchers confirm these brains aren't capable of conscious thought or cognition, nor are they capable of experiencing pain or suffering.

Animals Australia announced today (2017) that Compass Group, the biggest food company in the world, is turning its back on battery cages. Dependant upon your point of view, this may be a big step backwards, or perhaps a small step forwards; either way, the movement has occurred because of public pressure by representatives of the Humane League and others, not due to a change in law or political will, but by those who care about the horrendous living conditions of caged birds. The discussions and eventual instigation of the changes, involves aspects of both animal welfare and animal rights (Ref.12).

A sheep farmer being interviewed on the National Radio Rural News (Ref.13), said she was 'sleeping lightly' and keeping constant vigilance during lambing season, to ensure the welfare of the birthing mothers and their lambs. Her comments referenced the flock, numbering around 1000 sheep that are farmed caringly, and she also retains and loves a few lambs as pets. Her concluding remarks, *"They live in paradise. They taste good too!"*

Locally, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, IFAW, is just one of numerous organisations bringing a global focus to wildlife issues, reporting on the animal trade, and the movements within the establishment to offer better protection and legislation. While animals have an established genetic code, a capacity for freedom, only some maintain their wildlife habitat; and front line welfare workers know only too well that more comfortable cages will never be an adequate substitute.

I am reminded of a succinct blog comment recently that sums it up nicely, "We eat them because we want to, we can survive just fine without. And even if we eat them, it MATTERS because it matters how we treat them anyway - *Even if we choose to eat them.*"

Animal Rights

"I am in favor of animal rights as well as human rights. That is the way of a whole human being."---Abraham Lincoln

Here we are two centuries on! It is no coincidence animal-rights has become such an important area of debate with an increasing potential for extensive recognition and greater inclusion in legislation. Ethics regulate self-interest, giving us a better understanding of good and bad outcomes, and generations of thinkers and activists found clarity and support in the book *Animal Liberation* (Ref.14) by Australian ethicist and philosopher Peter Singer, who was one of the first to activists to make definitive statements about the ethical treatment of animals some 40 years ago, leading to further support for animal rights.

The normalisation of the vegan way has quickly evolved, and new horizons are being sought by the vanguard of thinkers and lawmakers, as the understanding of the ethical and moral issues improves. Recognised for some time now as the most neglected aspect of the traditional legal framework (as contrasted to newer issues like genetic research and AI), many are advocating a major rethink and consideration of our relationship and treatment of animals.

In Australia, this includes notable public thinkers and leaders such as ex-Chief Justice of the High Court, Michael Kirby, who with others in the legal profession, joined with the Voiceless organisation to expand both the discussion and debate (Ref.15).

There is now an elected representative of the Animal Justice Party in the NSW State Parliament (Ref.16), and this follows on from trends in European countries, notably Holland, where the social and political debate has been broadened to regularly include consideration of the animal rights agenda in many facets of legislation. The abolitionist movement is discussed later, and its introduction has further deepened the focus we all need adopt, if we are to fully realise the profound issues under scrutiny.

Animal rights, like so many other issues has also been catapulted into the wider public debate due to the rise of social media, and the prevalence of activity surrounding the use of animals as a major input to worsening Climate Change, both of which have been driving forces for open dialogue and earnest discussion. Obviously human food

production for over seven billion people is one factor in the climate debate, but few understood that we are also feeding at least one hundred and fifty (150) billion slaughtered animals per year, including the fifty six (56) billion farm animals; and in addition they don't have any rights (Ref.17).

We can be swayed by advertising campaigns and images, and together with social media access it is easy to add our signature to the thousands of others in well meaning campaigns against injustice, and then share the news with our friends; but we have to perform a reality check here, are we being congruent with our own truth, or simply reacting with a timely emotional response? Expressing our priorities and asking others to consider changes are valid and effective tools, however, the broader moral issue demands the fullest assessment of our own lifestyle. Are we taking full responsibility for our own actions?

The survival of animals and humans is inter-dependant, and inseparable, and the sooner we recognise the futility of maintaining animals as a major source of our food supply, and recognise their own inherent worth, the quicker and easier a transition to a holistic sustainable earth. The ethics of [earth care](#), [people care](#) and [fair share](#) form the foundation for interaction in traditional societies, and are identified as essential principles in permaculture (Ref.18). It is self-evident that as human power, complexity and exploration grows, our moral and ethical values need continuous revisiting, and become more critical for long-term cultural and biological survival.

Animal Protection

"Animal welfare reforms are not baby steps; they are big steps in a backward direction"--- [Gary L. Francione](#)

In their book entitled "*Animal Rights: An abolitionist Approach*," (Ref.19) Gary Francione and Anna Charlton examine the limitations present within the existing protection mechanisms and point to positive alternatives. The abolitionist movement supports animal protection and offers moral clarity around the issues of animal rights and freedoms.

I have taken the liberty of reproducing a transcription of text, and 'The Six Abolitionist Principles', which they refer to, are listed here:

- 1) Abolitionists maintain that all sentient beings, human or nonhuman, have one right—the basic right not to be treated as the property of others.
- 2) Abolitionists maintain that our recognition of this one basic right means that we must abolish, and not merely regulate, institutionalized animal exploitation, and that abolitionists should not

support welfare reform campaigns or single-issue campaigns.

3) Abolitionists maintain that veganism is a moral baseline and that creative, nonviolent vegan education must be the cornerstone of rational animal rights advocacy.

4) The Abolitionist Approach links the moral status of nonhumans with sentience alone and not with any other cognitive characteristic; all sentient beings are equal for the purpose of not being used exclusively as a resource.

5) Abolitionists reject all forms of human discrimination, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and classism—just as they reject speciesism.

6) Abolitionists recognize the principle of nonviolence as a core principle of the animal rights movement.

One of the conclusions from their analysis is that *"the only real option, on the individual level, is to embrace veganism as a moral baseline and, on the social level, to engage in creative, nonviolent vegan education from an abolitionist perspective."*

Just as vegaculture recognises compassion is open to all, so too does the abolitionist approach to animal rights; the authors state that the moral judgement reminds us "that one may be a spiritual person or an atheist, or anything in between, it does not matter, what does matter is that:

1. you have moral concern about animals and that you want to do right by animals. That moral concern/moral impulse can come from any source, spiritual or non-spiritual; and
2. you regard as valid the logical arguments that our moral concern should not be limited to some nonhumans but should extend to all sentient beings and that we should abolish, and not regulate, animal exploitation".

The rationale makes eminent sense, leaving no room for denial, and the bittersweet path to *absolute* realisation is expounded in its fullness here. Will we as individuals, and society as a collective, recognise and succumb to the highest truth, or will we continue to flounder, ignoring the handle to the doorway of truth, even when the lamp is held high?

Since the year 2000, the World Society for the Protection of Animals has been calling for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) to be backed by the United Nations (Ref.20). The dominance of conventional thinking and practice, seeking to slow the inevitable expansion of light, demonstrates we have hardly even started the journey, let alone expanded to our highest capacity even though abundant abolition

can be readily envisaged. It is apparent that resolution of the question of animal protection will remain *unresolved in its infancy* until there has been a Universal Declaration of Animal Rights.

The magnitude of our vision is given true value in the abolitionist approach, ultimately we have to act; once this happens, the doors are flung open to the flow of universal consciousness. In the meantime (the mean time!), Leonard Cohen captured the simultaneous sentiments of truth, pragmatism and hope in his lyrics to the Anthem song (Ref.21):

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.

10. ANIMAL ACTIVITY

"Lokah, Samasta, Sukhino, Bhavantu'-May all beings be happy and free"---Sanskrit mantra

DOMESTICATED

The decision to domesticate animals from the wild happened gradually, with the likely expectation that benefits would ensue from both sides; and now, after 10,000 years or more, the arrangement continues. Herds of sheep and goats and cattle and pigs were perceived as essential element for survival, offering a predictable and secure food supply; in addition, the herds became a means to wealth and prosperity. Dogs were the first it seems, and the following dates are a guideline to the beginnings of the process of the domestication of the ancestors of the animals that we have today (Ref.22).

10,000 BC- Dogs: 9000-7000 BC- Sheep and goats, cattle and pigs: 4000BC - Draught animals to drag [sledges](#), [ploughs](#) and [wheeled wagons](#): 4000 to 3000BC Cats, 3000BC -Horses, Asses, Silk moths, 3000 to 1500BC - Camels: 2000BC- Poultry and pigeons, elephants: before the 6th century BC-honey bee: from the 1st century BC-rabbits.

There have been a myriad of uses for animals, both novel and unpleasant, and fortunately the introduction and refinement of new technologies has reduced the potential load of a working animal in some circumstances, but their numbers continue to increase as do farmed animals who alone currently number over 50 billion. Domestic animals have always been exploited as a resource, and the relationships we form with domesticated animals are extensive and variable. Trading of animals, their capacities and their parts is endemic

in the social and cultural matrix of the web of birth and death.

Companion

"A Horse! A Horse! My kingdom for a horse!"---Shakespeare

Companion animals come in many shapes and sizes and varieties. Humans as we know, can be great companions and so there is no reason for exploitation to arise in a companion animal's relationship; although folklore suggests some humans attest to the opposite experience, that they were chosen by the companion animal! Many species of animal have been domesticated for thousands of years, and wonderful relationships have been built and lost over the eons, so finding harmony is a central and significant issue.

Making the effort to fully consider our motivation and intentions when fostering animals into a companion setting is very important lest we find ourselves embroiled in an act of indifference, of which there are numerous examples. Animals live in the moment and drag us with them, we become their companions, and finding an equitable balance between our needs and those of the animals who support us demands our best.

Where the end game is preconceived, the place on the table is reserved, or the daily meal of animal products is contemplated, we are predators and open to our own deep moral judgement, especially if we value and are to take literally the advice 'do no harm'; a central tenet of human companionship through out history. The majority of animals exist at the bequest of humans who grow them, whether for companionship, as pets or helpers, as workers or slaves, as a focus for our tastes, as pleasure and fun, as real life opportunities for the stuff of fantasy and lost traditions, or as props for our narcissism in a web of 'conspicuous compassion'; a huge responsibility if we are to take life seriously.

Working

"Things end because something else is ready to begin"---Anon

Draught animals from cart dogs to horses to elephants have been responsible for building and carrying the human burden for millennia. Although the mechanization of agriculture had a colossal impact on the whole of human society, especially from the mid 1800's, working animals are an integrated and habitual aspect of daily service in Asia, S.E. Asia, China, South America, and Africa; some would maintain they are an essential aspect, with around one half of the world's population involved in outcomes reliant on working animals.

Never before in history have there been so many slave animals, and the context for moving forward with liberated agendas seems daunting. What springs to mind are the old adages, of responding to the most needy, and also the wisdom to place resources where influence has the best potential for results. If vegaculture were to address these two criteria, what is evident in the need for a redistribution of the world's resources, a further and deeper education of animal handlers, and continued support for a change in the diet and lifestyle of people living in urban centres whose daily needs do not directly rely on animal labour; and to reduce the number who are reliant.

I well remember leaving an island jetty on Lake Titicaca in Bolivia in 1993, watching human draught animals, around five or six people hoeing or tilling the soil near the beachfront. One held the curved implement into the ground, one supported his back, and three or more were harnessed at the front pulling. In that moment it became very clear to me, that working animals will continue to be integrated as a preferred companion in subsistence farming and more generally in poorer nations and circumstances where access to technology is unviable.

An FAO report (Ref.23) on Animal Power suggests the renewable energy that animals provide is the most appropriate source of power for rural areas in a mixed farming system, leading to sustainable practices. It also stresses the importance of good management and welfare, which is not always appreciated. The situation is unlikely to change, a direct quote from that report states: *"Animal power should become an integral part of national development strategies, including those relating to food security, resource conservation, rural transport, employment and women in development"*.

The working animal is still in an unenviable position, as every day the burden is transferred to that creature, and so the availability of individual animal rights is virtually denied, because of the demands and activity in its daily life. Possibly the most crucial act in this circumstance *is* to provide a life worth living by *raising the education and welfare of the people* in the community, to foster a more enlightened and harmonious work place. The domain of daily activity with working animals has a 6000-year cultural tradition that dictates the circumstances, conditions and their way of life, while the quality of that existence is highly dependant on the quality of the handler or carer.

Assistance is provided by a network of volunteer animal aid charities that fund various projects for working animals across many countries, targeting community education and medical treatment needs

for some of the overworked and abused animals, including donkeys, horses, mules, dogs, elephants, bullocks, camels and more. Animal welfare for some animals will benefit from continued improvements in community education, health and economic independence, but life is seldom as prescribed, life is what happens; and conscious awareness will control the manifested quality of compassion in the moment.

Pets

"Home is where the heart is"---old proverb

Pets are our companions whether they prefer it or not, which many seem to do of course, particularly cats, dogs and birds that have been integrated into the human family for long periods. Human relationships with these species in the home are the dominant point of inter-species contact, with a casual acquaintance visited by urban birds and other feral creatures. The value of these relationships have great meaning at many levels of our being, and for some people, and likely many animals, the expression of a 'best friend' is quite accurate.

Meaningful activity is essential for all animals to act out their natural traits, and the use of the unique skills of various species has been recognised and in many instances deliberately developed to assist human enquiry into any manner of activity. Training of pets is commonplace, and includes specialist-training roles, which many animals undergo for numerous commercial and humanitarian interests. Working animals are often considered to be pets, and a distinction is not always made or obvious.

The dominant cultural view that oversees the need for continued 'growth' has its adherents in the pet industry as well, which naturally delights in the opportunity to promote its own interests. As pet numbers increase, so does demand for food, and in the US for example the number of pets now exceed the number of people, with 470 million versus 316 million people. According to the bioethicist Jessica Pierce (Ref.24), a large part of this rapid growth since the mid-1970s is due to the very effective strategies and marketing of the pet industry.

A vegaculture view sees many facets in this complicated issue of nutrient use; the cash crop economy, the dedicated mono-crop use, the land and marine based animal food supply chains needed to support pets, the act of fishing and its methods, the distribution and priority of use of the 'high nutrient' food source, and the inability for the general presentation and relationships we have with our animals to foster knowledge that is not as myopic in outcomes; the less obvious aspects of

our interconnectedness to all life need to be visualised and rationalised in a considered way. Rationalising the rations is an apt description of this jumbled activity.

The plight of many pets may be just as serious and troubled as the plight of farmed, labouring and laboratory animals, but with our more intimate and regular connection, we tend not to think about the animal welfare relationship with pets in the same way as other animals in the animal production industry, which is well aware of the need to keep factory farmed animals out of sight, and out of mind. Competition between pets and humans for food and energy resources is a daily reality; a de-facto choice is happening, with the result that animals endure needless suffering.

It is sobering to realise that the massive Antarctic marine resource, one of the worlds richest marine harvests annually sweeping up the coast of Peru in the Humboldt Current, has been utilised for pet food, while starving and malnourished people are still struggling to find nourishment. The contribution to human health through re-distribution of portions of the existing pet food trade, combined with re-distribution of other food resources from waste and excess would give significant advantages to poorly resourced peoples around the world, many living and working where the food is generated.

So, the question 'Is it ethical to have pets?' is surely one that requires a considered response. The advice from the bioethicist Pierce is to *"Think twice about getting an animal that is going to be cage-bound, or in a tank that can't provide good quality of life. It's really complex," and "It's not just, 'It's a bad thing to do.' There are so many positive things about keeping animals as our companions."* Whereas specialists such as Pierce want to encourage people to look at the world through the perspective of our pets, her advice is in principle applicable to all animal relationships; and so Vegaculture would extend this sentiment to one where we also look through the perspective of all animals, humans and the earth.

One Bad Day

"Everything is more complicated than you thought"---Kwame Anthony Appiah

I had a visitor recently who had just completed his attendance at a local tropical Permaculture Design Course (PDC), and so I enquired about the teaching segments to do with animals. He went on to explain that the course participants had spent a day on a nearby farm to view how animals were integrated into the landscape design, and I asked what he had learnt and how they were treated. His response was an exact repetition of the farmer's

comment "*One Bad Day*"; delivered in a blunt way, as if it had been practised many times before; and I was struck by the simplicity of the statement.

The immediacy was stunning and its accuracy flew like an arrow to my heart; there is a finality here that leaves no room to manoeuvre and requires no further discussion. The statement has such an audible ring of truth, the unfolding of life in this domain we inhabit, the temporary nature of our time here and ease by which it can be terminated; one is drawn to the fragility of our existence. All is explained in just three words, *one bad day, a perfect execution; the farmer moves on, a poet is proud, a zen master satisfied!*

My mind recoiled, and silently I had matched slogan with slogan, '*life is cheap*' I thought and was left dumb founded; wondering whether the depth of this educational experience was adequate, and how much mindfulness and attention was actually involved in this trite repetition; had he any real understanding of the gravity of this euphemism, and for the potential outcomes of all of the applications he perhaps now felt qualified to deliver.

Will this slogan help carry him through a lifetime of animal-human interaction, confident that he has grasped the very nature of our historic relationships to the earth and all of its creatures? Could this become a new catch phrase in the vernacular of animal welfare participants, repeated ad infinitum; it is such a profound comment, especially when used as a slogan, it has a potential for many subtle interpretations and meanings, such a clever response, and possibly well intentioned but I could not tell, as there was no elaboration.

'One Bad Day' summed up the farmer's attitude; a lifetime of input and care, and when having done their duty, dictated by the needs of the marketplace or the family table, the light needs to be extinguished, the life had become expendable. My visitor was very satisfied and expressed a strong motivation from the course teachings, but the encounter was only brief and we did not dwell any further on this issue.

I mention this story as it could be a typical hobby farm story, where animals are integrated into farm and family life and events, their carers well versed in animal welfare and that variable lengths of a brief life in free-range Aussie farms is a life worth living. This, unfortunately or not, is not the typical story for the millions of animals in a commercial marketplace setting, and as we shall see later, this model may well be preferred.

How, why, when and where; I still remember the emphasis placed on the importance of these four interrogative or questioning words from my

English grammar lessons in secondary school. I can answer two of them; why I am writing is because the story requires a deeper response than simply animals have 'one bad day' in their lives, and when is now! But how and where does one begin to unravel the story?

My mind begins to wonder, the profundity of the message has no ultimate response, it is a truism, an objective recognition of death, an acknowledgement of self-appraisal, and yet this is but one perspective, for life continues through transformation, consciousness ever present in a process of birth and death. However we rationalise the ways of the absolute in the relative world, we are doomed to failure, but we can rationalise the ways of the relative existence in a relative world with a re-introduction of the model of *three simultaneously true levels of non-dual reality*, to help disentangle the web of confusion we have woven.

Conventional wisdom, or *simultaneous level three truth*, would have it that a life well lead is a good life, worthy of the opportunity and better than no life at all; the fact it is terminated early in its potential span, in a predetermined fashion is sad perhaps, but of marginal consequence. After all it is perfectly rational, the reason the life was given in the first place, the reason why I exist at all, and the effort that has gone into supporting me, is the result of the good nature and foresight of the farmer who bred me and brought me into this domain to help; I really owe my life to him! Or if it really were me, 'I'm going to make the best of this life, and anyway, anything can happen to anyone at any time, so why worry what the future holds, or what fate has in store'; not dissimilar to my lot as a human being really, hhhmm!

The *simultaneous level two truth* is drawn to exercise a view from the higher heavens, which integrate birth and death as a continuum, where life is perfect as it is. The individual though, is still open to the relative senses, and recognises an imbalance here, the potential for an assumed authority, for judgement, a partial assessment tinged with a good smattering of self-interest. The farmer questions the conventional wisdom, and examines his own relationship to ownership and rights, thinking deeply about a means of equality that can be instigated in his activities, how to find a meaningful balance between exploitation and kindness; am I really the creator in this transaction, or am I an intermediary, a messenger, a midwife carer at the birth of my animals, a supporter of their health and welfare while in my tenure?

If I were the farmer, I might be asking myself 'How much longer can I continue in this role as protector, and all the while live with my deeper

knowing of duplicity? At every birthing, and no matter how tired or busy I am, the same mystery is aroused within me, and I recognise an amazing act of grace, of nature reinventing itself, yet I sense a dissatisfaction with my duties, with my actions, and I am called upon to justify myself, to balance my actions through the necessity of making a living and carrying on the family tradition, and respecting my culture, my dependants and fellow travelers. Will suffering ever end?"

The *simultaneous level one truth* has no opinion, for this is the realm of the absolute, the consciousness itself, ever capable as the creator but never able to distinguish, for the realm of consciousness is uninterrupted by thoughts and actions and relative events, they do not exist: only in the relative domain do we have knowledge of judgement, right and wrong, live and let live, birth and death, pain and suffering. Thus I conclude, 'I am left with my own opinion; I cannot acquiesce to a higher authority, for there is none; please help me understand the choice I am making'.

As I consult my own human beingness, I can defer to my spiritual or secular human inclination to guide me, but ultimately the choice of death after birth is possible; we have as a species always exercised that capacity, and at the latter part of 2017, legislation in Australia has been amended to include the right for human animals to choose their time of death. I wonder if this right will ever be extended to other animals as well?

The level of suffering that is maintained is dependant on the level of truth we recognise and choose to operate within; and there is value in reminding oneself that death is the opposite of birth, not of life, which may be considered interminable.

A factual perspective, dare I say, a vegan perspective, is available if we are willing to question the shallow motivations of self-interest, and look more closely into this issue. A simple calculation indicates for 56 billion slaughtered animals a year, the actual number of bad days for animals, based on an average bad day, is 56 billion/365 days = 153 million farmed animals slaughtered EVERY DAY. That is yesterday, today, tomorrow and every other day, possibly at an increasing rate, AD INFINITUM, unless we change our behaviour; some yarns don't need spinning.

We can easily be persuaded into neglecting the actual facts when we turn a 'blind eye' to them, and I almost forgot to mention, the bad days for slaughtered farm animals don't include chickens, which when counted in 2016 claimed another 53 billion lives, or in chicken languaging, another 144 million bad days, every day for chickens; animal

farmers will have to get even better at spinning their yarns.

The following chart is an extract with comments, showing the age of slaughter of animals in Australia (Ref.25), that tells another side of the story; and unfortunately, this story continues to be a common vegan yarn.

	Typical Slaughter Age	Natural Life Span
Chickens (male in egg industry)	1 day	Up to 8 years
"Veal" calves	1-24 weeks	15-20 years
Chickens (broilers / meat breeds)	5-7 weeks	Up to 8 years*
Ducks	7-8 weeks	6-8 years
Rabbits	10-12 weeks	8-12 years
Goats	12-20 weeks	12-14 years
Geese	15-20 weeks	8-15 years
Turkeys	4-5 months	Up to 15 years*
Pigs	5-6 months	10-12 years
Lambs	6-8 months	12-14 years
"Beef" cattle	18 months	15-20 years
Chickens (egg laying hens)	18 months	Up to 8 years
Pigs (breeding sows)	3-5 years	10-12 years
Dairy cows	4 years	15-20 years

"Most animals are slaughtered as babies, at a very small portion of their natural life span, regardless of whether they are raised conventionally or in operations that are labelled "humane", "sustainable", "natural", "free range", "cage free", "heritage bred", "grass fed", "local" or "organic".

* Most chickens and turkeys are bred to grow so fast that their bodies cannot endure very long. When not bred for consumption, chickens and turkeys can grow at a rate their bodies can sustain for many years".

For the uninitiated reader who is interested in further references to data surrounding the broader environmental effects of animal farming, and feels prepared to face the shocking facts, an overview of the industry statistics and methods is available from the 'Cowspiracy' website (Ref. 26).

PLANTS

11. PLANT SURVIVAL

12. PLANT FREEDOM

13. PLANT GROWTH

11. PLANT SURVIVAL

"Death is the opposite of birth, not the opposite of life"--Eckhart Tolle

ORIGINS

The story of plant survival predates the story of human and animal survival, and we simply refer here to plants as living organisms, other than humans and animals, which also feed on organic matter, typically having specialized sense organs and 'nervous system' and able to respond rapidly to stimuli. Our interest is again to reference our common relative heritage; and as the breadth of relationships between humans, animals and the earth have expanded, to identify vegaculture as a point of contact with history and tradition.

During the course of evolution, as well as having to feed themselves, plants have also been the initial food source for all people and animals, and their origins have been traced back to one green cell (Ref.1). *"The world's lush profusion of photosynthesizers—from towering redwoods to ubiquitous diatoms—owe their existence to a tiny alga eons ago that [swallowed a cyanobacteria](#) and turned it into an internal solar power plant".*

The oldest-known fossils of a land-dwelling organism yet found, is a fungus that lived 440 million years ago just before moss-like plants (Ref.2). The focus on plants in this book is related to their use as a food source, and so the many traditional healing, medicinal and esoteric uses are not discussed in this book.

Nature's Intent

As a fundamental engine of life in this realm, photosynthesis is a symbiotic process between the plant cells and the bacteria, taking light, carbon dioxide and water, to make sugar as well as oxygen as waste. The advent of plants demonstrates the unique capacity for consciousness, we know all living beings are conscious and what evolution shows is a continual interfacing, with nature trialing the progress of its many manifestations daily for billions of years, adapting and accumulating experience in self-reliance, and creative problem solving, sharing and co-operating, experimenting and honing survival techniques.

I trust this continued repetition of intent might reinforce with clarity and recognition the similarities of all living beings, in consciousness. We are not always aware of our own state of consciousness, as often our focus is in the doing and not in the being; hence our own experience can be quite superficial. When we strive to understand how the life of other living beings is

experienced, it is useful to remember the vagaries present within our own realm, and the limits of our own investigation of our selves.

Community

Many aspects of our own communal and social relationships may be recognised in plants. As our discussion here is mainly focused on plants that constitute common food sources for people, the fascinating realms of biology and adaptation will not be explored. Social and cultural issues influence our survival, and the wealth of community is just as essential in discussions relating to plant survival, as it is to people and animals.

There are many areas of sentience that plants inhabit and exhibit, and if one wishes to investigate the interconnectedness of life or make judgments with the benefit of a large body of knowledge, there are numerous fascinating observations and experiments to cater for your whims. One recent book has scientific studies supporting how the forest can be viewed as a social network (Ref.3), describing how trees are like human families, living together and communicating with their children, assisting with nutrition and warning of dangers.

Numerous other communal and interactive facets include symbiosis with animals through the spectrum of water and land based creatures and life forms; and their role in the realm of evolution of species health, sacred and sacrificial rituals and offerings, and the writings of Anastasia (Ref.4), for esoteric input.

Food Security

The evolutionary path is long and varied, and the interaction of life and consciousness has of itself, been explored ad infinitum, from what we may observe. The human interface has been directly responsible for plant selection for some time, with the current technology still advancing at a rapid pace. The breeding and dispersion of preferred plant types continues, while seed saving and cataloguing has many functional adherents, with major government backing in many countries in addition to the extensive grass roots input (no pun intended) from people with a wide range of intent, but all of which could be viewed as providing assistance in the propagation and survival of existing species; while concurrently gene technology and experimentation proceeds.

Climate zones, soil types, water supplies, nutrient levels, local ecology and eco-climates, shelter, competition, etc. all impact on the degree of vitality and food production. Whether plants are growing in the wild, or under human supervision, the will to live and adjust to the conditions are

integral to a successful presence. In a farmed situation, the plant is subject to the security provided by the farmer, in the wild, the plants capabilities are wholly subject to the vagaries of nature, but under the guise of self sufficiency and independence, just like you and me!

A vegan plant food based diet is certainly less wasteful of plant life than one where consumption of animal products is involved; as well as being sentient, farmed animals are also nearly all herbivorous. Once we accept that sentience is present with plants though, we really need to question our own moral responsibility, to further examine our relationships and minimise the harm that may result from our actions.

12. PLANT FREEDOM

"Whatever may come our way, how we respond to it and what we make out of it is 100% ours" --- Sadhguru

RECOGNITION

Recognition of freedom for people and animals is a much-canvassed topic, however, the context for debate is not as familiar for members of the plant kingdom. While the term anthropocentric has long explained a human centred view, with the term animal-centric gathering momentum at the vernacular fringes, the health food brigade has ambushed the term 'plant-centric' to express dietary preference: so this leads us to consider the term biocentrism, as a possible means for recognition of plant freedom.

Biocentrism in a political and ecological sense is an ethical point of view that extends inherent value to all living things (Ref.5); and the topic therefore acts as a conduit for an extended debate between science/atheism, and consciousness/spirituality (Ref.6). Suffice to say, science is confirming an extensive range of plant sentience, which invokes the need for serious ethical discussions regarding recognition of plant freedom.

This subject is raised here because freedom implies a lack of interference with natural tendencies, and we know that most plants we grow are farmed or utilised within an anthropocentric setting, and assist with the human production of food, clothing or shelter, and their freedom is therefore interdependent and likely compromised.

The onset of civilisation is defined by the agrarian revolution, and this new relationship to plants represented a landmark social change in human activity. The period started with cultivation of grasses, and has been deliberately extended to

encompass all edible plant types ever since. The realm of plant life is massively diverse, massively exploited and continuously explored and manipulated, possibly without peer as the subject of the most attention in the history of human endeavour.

There are of course highly evolved comprehensive systems for botanical classifications, with species and varieties and genus, and many Latin names. Retention and maintenance of extensive information resources exist within the traditions of indigenous peoples and historical records, within Governments, N.G.O.'s and private conglomerates, and amongst farmers and members of the public; about growing preferences, climate potential, water needs, soil types, pest resistance, seed saving, identification, companion planting and more.

We are familiar with common plant terminology, categories for trees, shrubs, bushes, herbs, canes, grasses, etc. and with certain families of plants, such as nightshades, which include egg plant, tomatoes, capsicums for instance; and perhaps reproductive groupings such as bulbs and seeds. When we discuss a plant-based diet, we are referring to edible plants including fruit, vegetables, grains, pulses, spices, herbs, and sea vegetables.

Every facet of life on earth is inundated with the integration of plants and their various properties, and a symbiosis exists in the provision of basic necessities in the areas of food, clothing and shelter. A pioneer plant is a term given to plants that are early colonists of barren soils or where conditions of survival are difficult.

Consciousness

"Plants and trees also have emotions and can feel fear. You can sense that if you have a compassionate heart"---Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi Devi)

Animals have historically had a place of reverence, where our sense of their sentience and companionship is relatively unquestioned, whereas our relationship with plants has been very different. The life of plants is fascinating in its comprehensive mirroring of our own selves, an opportunity for all of us to reframe and educate ourselves with a totally revised understanding of the mystery and seeming magic of this highly developed creation, yet only recently has our attention been drawn to elements of sentience of this grouping in nature.

Plants have been expendable in the general sense, and the farming of plants is universal, an integral aspect of earth ecology, and the source of food supplies; in the human domain their attendance

provides work for half of the world's population. This immense biomass is commonly utilised as an everyday resource, and yet we are finding that plants incorporate extensive sensory capacity, with sophisticated modes of consciousness and behaviour, which cultural awareness has previously only afforded to humans and animals.

A visual scan of every landscape readily identifies plants embedded into the whole fabric of ecology, and so the potential for greater attention and refinement of our awareness of plant sentience in our relationship is staggering. A brief overview of recent history of the search for plant intelligence is given in an article entitled *The Intelligent Plant* (Ref.7). In the previous section on animals, I invoked the concept of *three levels of simultaneous truth* in the human-animal relationship; and the same approach will now be used to evaluate the more subtle elements of the human-plant interface.

Balanced Expression

"Food is simply sunlight in cold storage"---John Harvey Kellogg

It is worthwhile mentioning here that stability in our own daily dietary is a necessary foundation for all facets of a healthy relationship. Personal sensitivity is subjective, and being open to perceived constraints in diet and lifestyle can be challenging. Our first priority is really to do no harm, and the first recipient of this advice is our very own self.

The biological concept of life suggests organisms are self-reproducing and self-maintaining, and it is a limitation of the organism that all human and animal forms 'eat' at the expense of another life at some stage. Even plants can be conceived as eating minerals from the soil and the transformation process for each and every living form is dependent on another form, a family of forms of connectedness; arising, sharing and returning to Gaia.

The *simultaneous level three truth* is a 'relative human view' of the human-plant dynamic, and illustrates how habit in the guise of conventional wisdom enables a day-to-day practical relationship for the ongoing provisioning and distribution of plants, most particularly our consumption of plant foods. The tending and caring of plants takes place to suit the designs and whims of the propagators; the setting could be bush land regeneration, roadside clearing, mono-crop farm production or cut flower marketing, but at the human interface, all activity is within a controlled environment.

Meanwhile the feeding process continues; feeding plants to humans, to other animals, and even sacrificing plant life to feed other plants for

mulching or clearing, or as a nutrient source. The daily reinforcement of the dominant paradigm continues with varying degrees of human awareness of the plant sentience we are in relationship with, the tradition of one species providing sustenance for another, in the time honoured symbiotic acceptance of life as presented in nature. There are of course carnivorous plants, so this is not necessarily a unidirectional issue.

The *simultaneous level two truth* includes an 'active awareness' of the potential of our actions, not only involvement in the physical activity, but also from a position of empathy, at the level of sentient awareness, which invoke a moral and ethical response. The responsibility and onus of the growing recognition of plant sentience is going to influence the ways in which we relate to the world, and in particular, maintain our own moral compass with respect to our food sources.

This situation has been examined and is progressed in practice by an increasing number of people in the raw food and fruitarian communities. The extension of compassion into the realm of plant sentience has been practiced for many years, and generally the lessons learnt have led to a change of focus.

Although we all have individual needs, and the move to a plant-based diet is currently widely recommended for improved health outcomes, the transition from general consumption to a mostly plant food dietary, leads to a more sensitive personal interest in a selected range of plants. Often this is expressed as a natural tendency towards a greater interest in growing one's own food, or purposely selecting suppliers using organic or spray-free techniques, and for some people the eventual adoption of a pure fruitarian diet.

The fruitarian path closely follows an ethical and moral compass for plant sentience, as only the fruit itself is eaten, while the seeds are not, and so in principle the ability for the tree or plant to maintain its existing tenure, and the capacity to reproduce, are both able to be respected.

The pure fruit diet is actually liberating, and does not need to be considered restrictive, there are hundreds of fruits and experience shows that our frugivore nature is still very capable of re-adapting from restrictive cultural practices back to fruit as the principal food source (Ref.8).

Empathy with the absolute or *simultaneous level one truth*, might be expected from the few people whose spiritual path or life journey has resulted in a strong and inspiring spiritual awakening; where the seeking has produced a profound self-realisation and a sense of knowing the self

absolutely; however, as mentioned in the discussion of spirit earlier, my limited research of published dialogue and interviews, indicates there is minimal interest in either food choice or the human-plant dynamic; the need for a personal opinion seemingly remains non-existent or becomes defunct, or is eclipsed by other factors.

The path of plant liberation does have its proponents though, the challenge of plant sentience is actually being experientially addressed by a group of people, who are forming universal bonds within Unity consciousness through the practice of Inedia or a Breatharian approach to nutrition, but membership of this support group, to use the famous cliché, is not for the faint-hearted! The position adopted here challenges adopted notions, instead it develops its own *authority*, the capacity to extend the credited norms of human behaviour beyond prior accepted physical limits.

'In The Beginning There Was Light' is a film that examines the subject of the potential of the human being, using the example of Breatharians as a thread to investigate the limits of current mystical practice and research (Ref.9). The film was produced as an impartial review of claims, and is well regarded as a record of events and as a pointer to esoteric studies.

This particular cohort has an increasing wealth of experience through practice of avoidance of foods altogether. The numbers of people attempting the Inedia path are claimed to be in the thousands, and a lot of information and programs are available for people willing to undertake this unusual course of activity.

There are well-advertised instances of individual Breatharians, often involved with teaching others the techniques and assisting with training that is needed to reach this state of being (Ref.10).

I can understand how some people might view this subject as radical and inconsequential in daily life, however, an examination of our actions and the reasoning we use to embrace our adopted beliefs, is very relevant to the journey. At the margins of human interaction, there is always a case for greater understanding, and a few pioneers can seed the changes in social norms, whether they are plants or humans, in the greater story of evolution.

Plant Liberation

"Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth"---George Washington

Plant Welfare, Rights and Protection loom large on the agenda for future discussion, as does the issue of plant patents, which is also a complicated and worthy topic; however the subject of plant liberation is worthy of some comment if only as a

result of the recent New Zealand decision mentioned previously, to legislate the rights of a river and its environs by declaring them to have citizen status. This liberal conservation measure can hopefully be a marker for further recognition of plant and animal rights, as it must now be recognised as a landmark decision in the cause of environmental justice.

I personally observe a vacillating complex relationship within my own experience of gardening and planting and eating; I have sensed my connection to plants at times, where I have decided not to take some plant foods, focusing for extended periods on only eating fruit; and refraining from pruning and weeding, while planting fruit trees and herbs in preference to annuals; also making an extra effort to provide for plants that appear to be stressed. Conversely, there are numerous instances where individual plant sentience is not in my awareness, clearing land and rationalising and judging which plants might prosper fully, while deliberately decimating or killing others.

These experiences confirm a genuine psychological-soul interface between plants and people can occur, and I am not referring here to plant hallucinogens, but in conventional reality, this *simultaneous level two truth* of 'knowingness' arises, an empathetic personal communion takes place, and a compassionate response is invoked.

What I take from these experiences is the opportunity to ratify and harmonise my own holistic approach to the issue of plant sentience; accepting the relationship as it arises, knowing from experience that I may react one way or another, and being prepared to grow beyond habitual activity.

If we recognise a rising of awareness as a necessary prerequisite to social change, then consideration and application of a compassionate outlook is ultimately unlimited. A transcendence of suffering, even for a moment, is a positive movement for the whole of manifestation!

By introducing a 'plant-awareness' into our relationship with plants, one will likely find a greater opportunity to explore our own limitations. Traditional shamanic teachings and practice secure an important place for plants in the daily life of many cultures, and the use and liberation of plants has many facets, congruent with human development and potential.

13. PLANT GROWTH

"Be ready, relaxed, focused and spacious"---Richard Moss

GARDENING

The term gardening has origins in purpose, so an edible garden grows food, while a flower garden or medicinal garden, or craft material garden, has its own distinct plants. Gardening requires attention and maintenance, a host of skills, a keen eye and resources; and although pilgrims used to plant and cast seeds in their travels, unless one is fortunate enough to live in a forest garden or fruit jungle, to be self sufficient, we need to create an edible garden as a reliable food source, which is demanding of time and presence.

Historically, the tending of gardens or food crops signifies a time of settlement in human evolution, and if one digs into the Internet, we find signs of evidence of protected gardens about 10,000 years or so ago; and that grains were beginning to be 'gardened' in a similar time frame and gradually extended from Northern Africa, the Middle East throughout Asia and South East Asia over the next few millennia. The modern era has ushered in a rapid 'unsettlement', with people becoming remote from food gardens, mostly in the last century.

The freshness and vitality of home garden food is a unique and immediately satisfying experience. Life is bountiful and many dedicated gardeners continue age-old traditions, planting and tending and harvesting a plethora of food and beverage selections to satisfy our ardent desires for taste satisfaction, and the sheer pleasure of having one's hands in the ground.

Farming and agriculture are general terms allied towards food production, and discovering that they often include some form of animal farming, our interest rapidly shifts to searching for other paths, and then we discover horticulture, which includes fruits, vegetables flowers and other cultivars and is more in keeping with smaller gardens, tree planting and edible landscapes; much more interesting for self-sufficient vegan gardeners and particularly amenable to the conservation practices of vegaculture.

Home gardens may be in decline due to space restrictions imposed by denser living, but community gardens have always played a role, increasingly so now in Australia, and are a popular way of socialising with like minded people, food gathering, and learning what grows well in your locality. There is a community interest group called The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network (ACFCGN), linking people to gardens around Australia (Ref.11). Permaculture societies offer a contact point also, and are well represented in both urban and rural areas.

Special interest groups like Friends of the Earth (FOE) have developed wonderful networks of people and information, to source food quality and environmental friendliness, and the FOE Food Campaign in Melbourne is an example of a well-established resource (Ref.12). Gardening programs and media in general, particularly YouTube, offer great access and information and although nurseries have been affected by the changing lifestyle and the fast food brigade, there is always an experienced presence about, and plenty of advice can be had from local markets and farmers markets.

School gardening programs are becoming more common, with primary, secondary and tertiary institutions all providing examples of gardens as a teaching resource for hands on educational training and practice; in addition the programs offer a school food resource and a landscaping opportunity for the school grounds.

As a casual gardener, I am struck by the enormous array of interactions that can selectively take place, the tasks of collecting, planting, growing, watering, shading, mulching, composting, pruning, weeding, transplanting, seed saving, swapping and selling, are just some of the myriad of opportunities one has to learn about plants, even in a simple garden setting. An avid gardener may add propagating, breeding, gene shearing, grafting, murcotting etc. to the list; and there is always the food related activities, the harvesting, collecting, shopping, preparing and ultimately eating; phew!

Conventional Gardening

"Did you ever stop to think, and forget to start again?"---A.A. Milne

The term 'Conventional' in Conventional garden and farming practices is used to refer to practices that may utilise man-made synthetic products, pesticides and herbicides to protect the crop from competition from insects, animals and other plants; and other products to stimulate plant growth. The conventional practices are often contrasted with organic gardening, which only uses natural methods; however, there is essentially no restriction on the use of any other natural technique, such as crop rotation or green manuring or other traditional measures, and these may be used in some circumstances. Food sourced from plants, which have been genetically modified, to produce genetically modified organisms, GMOs, are also accepted. Genetic engineering techniques are introduced to either select for desired aspects in plants, or prohibit the expression of undesired characteristics.

A pesticide is a substance that is toxic to living organisms and used to protect cultivated plants

from insects and animals, or as a herbicide to protect from other plants. Pesticides threaten the health of all living organisms, and so concerns for human health and the environment are always factors in discussions on the practices to do with conventional gardening and farming.

A safe level of toxicity can be suggested, but maintenance of safe levels will always be of concern, and while auditing of chemical carry-over is strictly regulated and measured in farming practices in many countries, the instances of misuse and abuse of additives of all sort, the idea that a little bit more 'won't hurt', can and does lead to health problems. The provenance of all food sources is important, and many people often consider the eating of conventional food products a potential health risk, which has led to a variety of alternatives and support for home-grown produce and other methods.

Biodynamic Gardening

'The sensory world is the school, without which the human being would never come to the spirit'---Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Steiner introduced Biodynamic (BD) Agriculture (Ref.13) in 1924, and his ideas and procedures quickly gathered interest to a broad community of farmers at a time of concern about loss of soil nutrition.

The idea of maintaining complete farm ecology with attention to the relationships between soil fertility, plant growth and livestock input, laid a foundation for successful reclamation. The lunar calendar is a critical tool in the process of planting, tending and harvesting produce; and the use of 'homeopathic' concentrations of crop sprays is also pursued.

There is a strong bonding here to the 'mother earth' lineage in the various methods, and Steiner prompted farmers to take heed of all the esoteric influences that can affect crops.

The practitioners of biodynamic agriculture need to be very dedicated and committed to the prescribed lunar timings, which dictate the program for activity in the garden or on the farm, and there is no doubt that BD gardening preferences nature over conventional gardening soil techniques, and as an early proponent of organic farming methods, BD gardening continues to improve the soil and the quality of the produce is well acclaimed.

Organic Gardening

"I have never had so many good ideas day after day as when I worked in the garden"---John Erskine

The term 'organic farming' was coined in a publication called 'Look to the Land' (Ref.14) in 1940, when Lord Northbourne in the U.K. described the practices he was introducing to his farm in Kent, which paralleled many of the practices of bio-dynamic farming.

Organic farming methods employ a range of traditional growing techniques that are designed to encourage and improve soil quality, and work in harmony with natural eco-systems to produce nutritious foods, while sustaining bio-diversity with minimal impact to the environment. The term organic is often used to describe the use of naturally occurring inputs to feed soil quality, assisted by crop rotation and other practices to protect the land.

The avoidance of pesticides and minimal use of man-made products makes organic gardening a safer and therefore preferred method of plant growth. In most traditional cultures, organic gardening has seen a marriage of activity, of plant cultivation, and the use of animals for labour, and their manures for nutrient dispersal.

The use of animal labour and manures though, is not an essential criterion for the production of organic food, which has led to the introduction and use of stock-free, or animal free gardening methods, hence veganic foods.

Forest Gardening

"The Gods plant reason in mankind, of all good gifts, the highest"---Sophocles

The famous raw vegan gardener, Robert Hart, commenced a cooler temperate climate garden system, circa 1940, based on what is commonly known as a forest garden, a term he coined, which is also supposedly the format of the earliest of pre-historic garden methods.

A seven-layer system was developed, known as 'Intercropping.' The change of technique came about when he decided to take farm animals out of the garden landscape, and the following description has been taken from Wikipedia (Ref.15), which gives an overview of the method.

"[Robert Hart](#) pioneered a system based on the observation that the natural forest can be divided into distinct levels. He used [intercropping](#) to develop an existing small orchard of apples and pears into an edible [polyculture](#) landscape consisting of the following layers:

* '[Canopy layer](#)' consisting of the original mature fruit trees.

- * '[Low-tree layer](#)' of smaller nut and fruit trees on dwarfing root stocks.
- * '[Shrub layer](#)' of fruit bushes such as currants and berries.
- * '[Herbaceous layer](#)' of perennial vegetables and herbs.
- * '[Rhizosphere](#)' or 'underground' dimension of plants, grown for their roots and tubers.
- * '[Ground cover layer](#)' of edible plants that spread horizontally.
- * '[Vertical layer](#)' of vines and climbers.

A key component of the seven-layer system was the plants he selected. Most of the traditional vegetable crops grown today, such as [carrots](#), are sun-loving plants not well selected for the more shady forest garden system. Hart favoured shade-tolerant perennial vegetables".

Forest gardening captured the imagination of many people, leading to further examples and duplication, and a variety of gardens can be viewed on-line, including a video tour of the original property with Robert Hart. I was fortunate to visit the garden in 2002, with one of the caretakers, and can confirm the comments that have been made about the peaceful energy and integration of the garden plantings forming a natural environment (read overgrown); a serene food forest in stark contrast to the open fields nearby.

Hart recommended the maintenance of soil structure, by using 'no-dig' principles, companion planting, and the regular application of mulch to stabilise ground conditions as much as possible over the changing seasons. His attention was drawn to discovering the variety of produce available in nature, and by way of comparison noted that in the wild, orangutans for instance eat from around four hundred plants and know their locations, while the average number for humans has diminished to around twenty.

I venture few people living in a large Western metropolis today would know the locations of even these twenty plants, which is a stark reminder of our reliance on others for our own food security.

Veganic Gardening

"All gardeners know better than other gardeners"---Chinese Proverb

Veganic gardening, or alternatively vegan-organic gardening, has gained widespread acceptance from adherents in vegan communities, and been adopted in many hobby farms and where organic growing is important in a self-sufficiency setting. It is similar to organic gardening, the difference being an avoidance of animal manures and animal 'by-

products', and synthetic additives, eliminating a large portion of anti-biotic residues; whilst seaweed, vegetable and plant compost, rock dusts, crop rotation, green manuring and no-till methods are used for soil improvement and conservation.

Veganic techniques deliberately restrict animal based nutrients, the alternative sources perform similar functions and although sustainable techniques are available and the use of renewable resources are preferred, it would be fair to suggest that gardeners and farmers have a myriad of preferences and methods, and a whole spectrum of soil-improvement activity is regularly retained or dismissed for any number of reasons; mainly dictated one suspects, by cost and availability, crop and site conditions.

Agricultural development is seen as an important point of reference when considering the practice of designing a veganic garden, keeping abreast of technology offers advantages in costs and efficiency. Small amounts of vegan produce are deliberately grown; people are experimenting with vegan composts and many individuals are gardening in a vegan-organically way, however, apart from a few exceptions, commercial quantities are generally not available or identified.

In contrast to vegan organic (veganic) gardening, the simple term *vegan gardening* would be applicable in situations where organic practices are not instigated and there is an exclusion of animals and their products in the gardening process. Otherwise, garden techniques and practices could be common to existing agricultural and horticultural methods. Hydroponic gardening might be an example, and while the 'vegan' term may be unknown to the farmers themselves, their produce could be in keeping with 'stock-free' food production. Depending on the practices, fine foods can still be produced; but they may also come at an unknown cost to our health, mother earth and eventually all life forms.

The following extract is just as relevant to veganic gardening today as when first printed:

"Providing soil nutrient and organic matter are maintained by alternative means, the integration of animals may assist, however, the animal factor is not a necessary element of sustainable agriculture. There is sometimes a vague assumption that the very presence of animals ensures fertility maintenance - this is simply not true as animals do not add to the total nutrient pool, they simply redistribute those nutrients already present within the boundaries of the farm" (Ref.16).

So lets examine this a little more closely; rather than accepting at face value what the traditions may have to offer. The nature of veganic

gardening can obviously be claimed to be a restrictive gardening method, and due to this constriction, vis a vis, not as good as other organic farming. Sure, vegaculture can be seen as selective, because it is seeking balance, the harmony of head and heart; it restricts the excesses of mind and its mental domination, and gives credence to the responses of the heart and intuition.

It places compassion for all, over the myopic excesses of single mindedness, the removal of suffering of animals a priori over the value of the efficient use of wastes of slaved animals, whose sole purpose is to secure a better attempt at human excellence, from a less than ideal and partly conceived hand-me-down knowledge, all the while unaware of the massive process of denial that supports the web of tradition and righteousness; the need to hold and proffer the value of long-ago historic insight and necessity appropriate in the dim dark ages of human frailty dependant on every available means for survival.

Conversely, one might reverse this claim, and wonder if some organic and biodynamic gardening practices are restrictive gardening methods, because they don't always respect the rights of animals. This particular statement is actually at the crux of all of the discussions regarding a 'Vegan view', and many other books journals and writings have made significant progress in dispelling the narrow-minded outlook, which that type of argument demonstrates. There is general recognition that all organic methods of gardening can provide greater respect for the earth, by the simple fact of feeding the soil, and not just the plants.

Thus the larger body of vegans does not delve into further detail for justification, satisfied that the philosophical and practical benefits, which stem from a basic vegan way, are adequate of themselves to stand alone in this type of debate and discussion. Human understanding and opinion is diverse and agreeing to disagree may be a sign of maturity; can I disagree with myself?

Resources

"The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses"---Hanna Rion

Vegaculture aims to secure a better attempt at responsibility and human excellence, by developing non-exploitative alternatives to the whole gardening and indeed farming process. Not all recycled waste products are suitable, so the type, qualities and quantities are important if one is seeking holistic long-term outcomes, rather than short term 'gains'. Our thoughtful relationship to plants, our role in the food chain and the type and

scale of activity we settle for, may be just as important as what plants are grown.

Serious gardeners will readily gravitate to the planting and seed saving and potting and watering and composting and mulching and harvesting, with an absolute dedication that sets them apart from the casual householder; and some things may be best left to them, while one gains satisfaction from other aspects, such as planting a few trees or restoring soil condition in barren locations, perhaps focusing on tending fruit trees rather than vegetable gardens, potting herbs and making herbal preparations, providing infrastructure for food distribution, creating recipes and preparing food, assisting with working bees and trading skills, and recycling old tools and garden implements.

Assembling one's own resources and specialising within a preferred skill base might be very satisfying and effective, and consistent with commitments we have in the broader unfolding of daily activity.

Inputs

Vegaculture will always strongly question methods that integrate the idea of eating sentient beings or their parts and products into any projected vision of a sustainable world ecology. A mindful selection of garden inputs, preferably recycled wastes from on-site is encouraged; but all processed wastes are eventually discharged to mother earth, for where else can they go? As for the issue of animal manures, whether human or other animal, it is really just another opportunity for a non-prescriptive creative garden, depending on your point of outlook.

Our energetic and emotional response to the use of animal faeces might vary considerably depending on the physical source; the use of recycled intensively farmed animal waste has different implications for exclusion, than say the support for waste from an animal shelter, or the family cow.

One could discuss in detail the process of transformation that takes place, from manure into soils, and the separation and re-emergence of compounds of elements that foster new plant growth, increasing organic content and supporting those marvellous little microbes in their lives work; not one semblance of harm?.....well that depends!

I have had discussions regarding the use of manures in the Biodynamic process with various practitioners, and it has been put to me that although inputs are of animal origin, the transformation in nature from manure to soil and the subsequent uptake of minerals by crops from

the soil is a place for disengagement of concerns about animal inputs.

I am a little surprised and slightly suspicious that proponents of a gardening method so dependent on esoteric, spiritual and mystical practices might neglect the potential of an energetic transfer by the plant; the source of manures and their gathering appears a critical aspect in the pursuit of the BD farming method, and one assumes the sources must be vetted prior to use.

A metaphor that comes to mind, when we practice the dissection of our actions into smaller and smaller fragments, is of the elephant in the room, various parts are visible depending on where one stands, only the tail, the toes, the trunk, the ears etc, are seen depending on which part you are familiar with. The mind is also clever enough (sic) when necessary, to 'kick things around until they disappear'.

A similar strategy was being used in commercial weapons manufacture; each component is separately sourced, just fragments of the final weapon, and therefore more acceptable for worker interaction; only on final assembly is the full reality, including the context for killing and destruction exposed.

The need to hold onto and proffer traditional values of long-ago historic insights is a view still retained today, and one wonders whether or not the broader ramifications of continuing to be reliant on the use of animal products in all farming methods could not be advanced now that nearly a century has passed since the adopted lifestyle of that era.

Experience wrought from nature is precious, and while animal manures are a good source of nutrient; sacrificing a life for a regular supply of animal shit is well removed from a fair share; especially if one is not even recycling their own. Lest we revert to survival strategies from the dark ages of food scarcity, there are alternatives that visionaries of 21st century enlightenment have been practicing for some time.

There is a host of specialist information on garden inputs and plant welfare readily available, and regular Permaculture Design Courses, can be accessed in numerous countries around the globe; and occasionally a vegaculture course may also be on offer. With such a vast expanse of topics and options to choose from, various teachers incorporate their own knowledge, expertise and interests in course construction.

Usually the place of assembly has a capacity for demonstration of techniques, with theory and hands-on practice by students to gather garden and landscaping design experience, and one can quickly gather practical knowledge from

'wwoofing' or managing their own plot as the seasons progress and issues arise.

Compost

The cycle time for compost is usually not an issue in hobby situations, and presumably commercial operations have the facility to ensure continuity of their garden methods, and plan accordingly. In larger acreages, tractors and a variety of mechanical handling would be used to provide quantities needed for crop feeding and mulching. Raw kitchen waste can still be located with garden mulch directly to plants and trees, although it takes longer to break down and may attract disturbance from feeding animals, whereas fresh grass cuttings among other additions can be used for hot compost and do away with the need for animal manures.

Numerous vegan compost recipes are available from a simple media search, and when the siting, method, quantities and mix, and intent are reasonably balanced, satisfactory compost can be readily produced. Redistribution of mature tree clippings, clearing of grass and cuttings, recycling of kitchen waste and nutrient is possible in established areas.

Off-site materials such as tree lopping and chipping, additional mineral content, and topping up from the local tip or council depot might be considered at times depending on many factors including local climate, water and soil conditions, time of year and crop requirements.

Competition

"One of the worst mistakes you can make as a gardener is to think you're in charge"---Janet Gillespie

My direct experience with garden animals is mostly with the natural wildlife, tree birds of course, but also bush-turkeys, kangaroos, wallabies, worms, wombats, possums, mice, rats, insects and anteaters: apart from feral visitors and pets, and a visit from next door's abandoned gloating goat, which managed to devour my 10 year old succulent garden in one sitting and parked itself on my front doormat soon after to remind me of her recent satiation. Listening to the wild birdcalls and following the antics of progressive families of birds enjoying life around the backyard is a fair swap for a bit of garden produce, and another reward for our time spent tending our creative vegan garden.

Rather than blurring our opportunistic practices with indifferent intentions and conceptions of sustainability, we might still find ways to invite animals to a *shared* garden table rather than just our own, we could appreciate their input and support in the quality and quantity of shared

presence and produce, rather than the quality of their meat and quantity of potential offspring. The excesses of current farmed animal practices is an easy target, and few would condone these practices, but the roots of it began and remain in the tradition of wanting to eat animals.

Insects are often preferred in a balanced garden environment, although monitoring of unfriendly species may require a means of protection for the plant at various times. Companion planting of various plants and herbs to dissuade unwanted insects is a typical ploy, and extra attention to persistent attacks will need a change of heart or a change of technique. If we think we are being attacked, then we will be. Exploring the circumstances of our actions fully can reveal the mistakes that may have led to the perceived predicament.

Adjusting to animals in the garden setting may also require the need for a reversal of the intuitive thinking that prompts us to erect fences and barriers. The type of crop and reasons for planting become significant factors in the equation, and while sharing abundance seems a reasonably equitable response from the gardening perspective, the alternative may require starting again, which can be disheartening. I recollect a massive red kangaroo on a friends' property, feeding on the corn, and my friend being too frightened to dissuade it, because of its size and the majesty of its possession of his garden precinct!

If only the sulphur-crested cockatoos could have waited for me to be first to eat the apples in my temperate climate garden, and now the passionfruit and lychee in the tropics, and then allow me to distribute the seed for their pleasure, rather than distribute the leftovers of their desires for me to make sense of! We not only have to refrain from retribution, to retire and reconsider our own thoughts and actions, but wait patiently for the rest of the local animal kingdom to come to a similar realisation; lest we forget that unsustainable numbers of people are just as prevalent as hordes of cockatoos and locusts.

Hence the variety of garden yarns and practical responses that gradually filters into the folklore. Some people are happy to be pioneers, while others have a limited capacity for adapting; being clear with our intention, and choosing the right location and security measures are important considerations. White cockatoos and whitetail rats can be messy, but fruit bats, wild pigs and a rigid upbringing will present many challenges, not only for the vegan farmer-gardener.

Expectations

“Doing nothing is better than being busy doing nothing”---Lao Tzu

Garden design requires careful consideration of our own expectations in addition to the basic skills and inputs one might expect from a practical perspective. I have long observed a tendency for people to focus on the goal of self-sufficiency in many discussions, relating their desires to the subject of personal freedom.

However, it is useful to note the context for self sufficiency that has started to proliferate now with community gardens and localisation is moving the reliance from the expectation for a fully independent capacity, to that where the sense is that one's garden can be a contribution to the collective feeding; the feeding of people, animals and the earth, and an ongoing exploration of what one considers to be a fair share.

This expectation of an extended community and sharing bides well for growth into a holistic sustainable presence; the scope for personal satisfaction is huge, and the discovery of one's own niche in the web of community life has potential to provide huge personal satisfaction. Interacting with local organic farmers and producers, shopkeepers, market stall vendors, chefs and diners in the hospitality trade can be a diverse educational and richly rewarding experience.

Employment opportunities abound within the food and hospitality, and horticultural and agricultural industry sectors, offering ready participation in plant growth, food production and edible garden landscape design and maintenance.

Adopting the vegan way is a laudable and essential right of passage to maturity, however, reconciling our own holistic expectations with those of the cultural and social norms is a task in itself. We know we can and do our best, but finding acceptance by others of the vegan way and message, finding support for veganic gardening, and pioneering the path to a holistic sustainable lifestyle will obviously meet with degrees of resistance.

Our true nature is universal and the capacity to realise our fullest potential realised through change and growth, is ever present. Letting go of concepts and expectations frees us to be ourselves in the moment. Observation of the states and stages of others on the path provides assistance and can help clarify our own path and life purpose through the focus on achievable goals and aspirations!

Eventually we find confirmation of our own middle way, and the monk's begging bowl can be seen as a metaphor to guide our expectations; if we choose to, we can disengage from worldly pursuits, and humbly accept whatever comes our

way, confident in the knowledge that we don't need to be in control; there will always be another time or place where our expectations can be met, or will have dropped away.

GAIA

14. GAIA SURVIVAL

15. FARMING

16. FOOTPRINTS

14. GAIA SURVIVAL

"Rebuild natural capita; the Earth is a living, breathing entity. Without ongoing care and nurturing there will be consequences too big to ignore"---permacultureprinciples.com

TRANSFORMATION

The formation of the Earth is presently dated back to 4.54 billion years ago, and with more stars in the universe than grains of sand, and more atoms in a grain of sand than all of the known stars, a single planet Earth has a paradoxical relationship in the human psyche (Ref.1). As we further uncover the layers of perception, science tells us that the atoms of matter are actually miniscule energy manifestations, which have a capacity to appear and disappear, and are governed perhaps by some partially apparent and unknown universal energy or consciousness.

The earth can be an object, is a planet in the solar system, synonymous perhaps with the term 'world,' and possessing multiple environments; a place inhabited by each and every living creature, plant and animal and mineral. People offer gender aspects to the earth and the sun, finding the metaphor for life intrinsically linked with an earthly mother that has the 'stuff of life' present, and the light of a universal father, the spirit of ultimate conception. There is an incredible array of fascinating myths and rituals that relate directly to this wonder of wonders, celebrations and sacrifices abound, and the search for the origins of life continue, not only for Gaia, but for the life of and on other planets as we observe the growth of the universe through telescopes, listening and measuring devices.

Just as science instructs us that the earth has evolved from a big bang of energy and coalesced as matter, a reality that physically arises from a place of singularity; so does spiritual knowledge (Ref.2), suggest a Nondual reality, a singular awareness, an unknown, an indescribable unity or oneness. Arising from this awareness is the birth in this realm of the relative domain, where a creation and merging of awareness and universal consciousness manifests the World, God and the Person; all of which/whom are impermanent, appearing and disappearing at the same time.

Some cultural traditions bring this experience of presence to the personal relationship each of us have with the earth, as a dominant aspect of daily experience. Others seem oblivious, and are apt to ignore the totality of the possibility of a living breathing consciousness in their actions, by simply pillaging the minerals and living creatures, and under the pretense of disposing of wastes and

remnants from their own reality, have little regard for their actions or outcome. Rebuilding natural capita may take many forms, and many years of both doing and undoing.

In the realm of philosophy and psychology, it seems the undoing and the unraveling, the surrendering aspects of the human psyche, are the keys for release of darkness, lighting the way and enacting freedom to generate a meaningful life and existence with harmony and satisfaction, and caring and love and understanding.

Perhaps this same key will turn the lock that past generations have installed on many of the expressions of the life of the earth; a key to renaissance in thought and awareness and action and consideration, these are the ingredients for ongoing care and nurturing, a key so magnificent as to manifest universal peace and oneness in the human psyche, as majestic as the natural capita of the earth itself.

As we come closer to recognising the oneness in all life, so our tendency to respect ourselves, and the environment around us grows; and just as was previously stated for people, animals and plants, the default position is a basis for action; it is to 'err on the side of life'.

Feeding

"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself"---Rumi

In one sense, the earth feeds itself by the process of continual transformation of all that has evolved, that which has come into existence in a form eventually returns to the earth as part of a biological cycle. Whatever is born has a birth process and recognition in life, and a subsequent experience of disintegration or death, and this process of impermanence proceeds in the earthly realm as a 'coming together and a parting of form'. The oxygenation process from plants and sunlight, and now with the interaction of ultra violet light on carbon dioxide, certainly can be construed as both feeding and breathing.

As a manifestation of form, we are part of the recycling and transformation, eventually feeding the earth with our spent bodies and manufactured waste. It seems likely we all contain elements of the history of previous sentient and non-sentient life forms, constructed of atoms and particles from bygone eras and ancient civilisations. Certainly in human biology the evolutionary tail is made clear, meanwhile unseen particles of cosmic matter and/or energy are continually passing through the universe and all that it contains; what sustenance the earth gathers from these known observations, and indeed all the unknown experiences in this

infinite universe that Gaia may value, who can tell?

The visible universe is only some 4%, the remaining 96% is a scientific mystery, however there is a reasonable consensus among scientists that earth as a planet, and indeed the sun as a star as we experience them, will enter into an extended period of hibernation, gradually losing their own life force as their 'food supply' dissipates. A projection of the space/time continuum will eventually see the temperature dropping and life as we understand will terminate, with just the minimal life force needed to sustain the remaining elements and minerals, subject to cosmic forces (Ref.3).

All physical forms can also be considered as energetic creations, emanating from a source, which can be called consciousness, with the ability to arise into a manifest form to appear in life, as vital aspects seeded from tiny elements formed from a massive burst of a grand bubble of energy into matter, exuding an invisible formative energy. This unfolding of life, the coming into fruition from a seed of possibility, has been postulated as containing elements of previous manifestations, and in the science of biology, the unfolding and growth of forms has been studied in detail.

The Cambridge Professor Rupert Sheldrake (Ref.4), gives credence to the development of the human organism as capable of inheriting previous knowledge, just as the morphogenesis of the biological growth proceeds, so does this process of morphic-resonance encompass life experiences from previous forms, the resumption of an ongoing consciousness in a new form; a situation where the laws of nature are expressed as laws of habit, as each individual inherits a collective memory.

A similar metaphor for the comings and goings of previous universes as a cyclical episode in the realm of a space/time continuum has some advocates, and yet if we were to ask the earth what it would like to be fed with, it may have no particular preference, as investigation indicates numerous atmospheres and challenges and collisions, all of which could be considered to be part of a worldly diet over the last 4.5 billion years or more. Humans though have a degree of self-interest, for we can see the ramifications of a less than healthy diet in our own human activity, and the affects of the human condition are being shared with other species.

The parent form 'Gaia' may or may not be oblivious to the needs of the children, but the current shopping expedition the children have embarked upon, indicates at least a hiccup, with more than a few belches and a sneeze or two, and

we get a sense that as the temperature rises, anger is brewing!

Waste

***"It's not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives. It's what we do consistently"---
Anthony Robbins***

Humans do not set a particularly good example when it comes to feeding themselves, and unfortunately this tendency also applies in our attitude to feeding the earth, as evidenced by the topic of waste in the following Earth Day 2018 (Ref.5) comment:

"By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans', by weight; currently, the largest of five patches is the size of Texas"!

Is this a way to rebuild natural capita; does our discarded baggage really provide intentional ongoing care and nurturing? In previous times, we could discard our packaging, and it is likely that it would nurture the earth, providing food for foraging animals, mulch or compost for plants, or shade and homes for insects, but the days of banana leaves, cane baskets, timber utensils and honed stones and tools are mostly gone, certainly in the more technologically dependant countries.

The problem is, that as a human collective we have not fully realised this yet. The speed of change has overtaken our capacity to adapt. The throwaway society was long ago apparent, but in the rush of enquiry, our reservation and caution were overwhelmed by the exploration of the earth; and combined with advances in technology, the imbalances have been normalised in our acceptance of a diminishing natural resource, and an increasing level of global pollution.

The dominance of human neglect and narrow-mindedness still continues today, and the results of this collective neglect, compounded by a lack of vigilance and a slack commitment, is presently labeled Climate Change; and of all the things we have managed to discard, it seems CO2 is going to respond in kind. Feeding the earth is a learnt process, like all of life, a process of trial and error. Recognising our errors and taking responsibility for them, was previously a choice, which has transpired to become an imperative. The human organism and its actions have been likened to a poisons factory, where nutrient is absorbed and metabolised, and that which has no further value is rejected; a truism in biology and a fine analogy for waste production from the social collective.

Vegaculture recognises the value of integrating our decision-making processes within the context of 'do no harm'. All of the earth's creatures feed themselves, and in the grander cycle of life where the mother of freedom is manifest, the earth is also

feeding itself. Gaia is the wondrous residence of the materials of physical form and coalescence of energy, and is not only the recipient of all human pollution and discharges, but also the recipient of discharges and waste from the whole of life on earth; reclaiming and recycling; the earth is both the parent and the undertaker of transformation in this interdependent realm.

15. FARMING

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated"---Mahatma Gandhi

FARM PRACTICE

Food comes from farms where the grower determines the farming methods practiced and thereby the quality of our food. Broad acre agriculture and mono cropping are frequently used in high production farms, with many variations in nutrient source and application methods, including integrated pest management programs, and other systems to minimise inputs and maximise cost effectiveness in plant protection and production. Farming also involves a large investment of time and effort, and trial and error, and incorporates a wide range of skills and tasks, with an increasing reliance on monitoring detailed environmental information, technical expertise and equipment.

Major buyers such as supermarkets have carried out chemical residue and base metal testing, also taste testing of produce, and have in place specialised quality assurance procedures to ensure freshness. Stocks may still be held for numbers of weeks before being available to the consumer from the wholesaler, fruit and vegetable market or storeroom. Cool and cold-room storage is an integral extension of the farming practice.

The tendency to pick produce 'green' is always a consideration because of potential wastage when allowing for food transport and distribution. Full ground or tree ripening is thereby restricted, which also affects nutrient content. Some criticisms of farm practice suggest that 'goodness' has become a less important ingredient as crops are 'pumped with water' to increase size but not nutrient content, and varieties may be selected for shelf appearance, often with a less pronounced taste.

My first contact with commercial gardening research was in the late-sixties at the Burnley Horticultural Gardens in Melbourne, as a casual gardener during university vacation. The Burnley management team was trialing varieties of onions and tomatoes, and went to great lengths to sample every conceivable physical property, *except taste!*

This came as a complete surprise; a total contradiction to my previous experiences at two major food-canning factories, Heinz and Rosella; where regular tasting of manufactured and processed products was essential to trial consumer preferences. This ability to manipulate tastes in processed foods, may partly explain a seeming indifference that was then apparent, perhaps even now, in many commercially available fresh foods.

Hydroponics has found a niche in food production, and is well established and widely used for certain crop varieties, such as tomatoes, herbs and green leaf. The production capacity for hydroponic foods is limited compared to open acres, and there is still some doubt about security as a longer-term resource of adequate nutrient level for humans, and we are part of the experiment presently. Foodless foods have been developed previously, however before we make uninformed judgements about further slippage, some research findings indicate that nutritional value is subject to farming practices whether done with soil or without (Ref.6).

Vertical gardening has been trialed in small-scale commercial production, based on hydroponic nutrient delivery, and is a practical and novel approach for city-based agriculture where space is at a premium; and some modern buildings have gardens designed into the architectural fabric. Green building facades are now a requirement in Singapore's building regulations.

Yes, the robots are coming! A range of agricultural robots are being developed and trialed, and can perform tasks such as mapping flowers and fruits on trees, selectively spraying individual weeds thus lowering herbicide quantities, and by being in the field 24 hours per day, able to keep up with maintenance and information feedback to farmers of crop status; and according to a report on Robots and Future agriculture (Ref.7):

"It's not unreasonable to imagine that in the future with technology like this you might actually be able to have mainstream organic produce that is actually farmed at the kind of scale that the current non-organic crops are farmed at". A provocative comment indeed that raises many complex issues relating to integration of the newer technologies into existing social structures.

Organic and Non-Organic

"Earth Care can be taken to mean caring for the living soil. The state of the soil is often the best measure for the health and well being of society"---permacultureprinciples.com

From a vegan perspective this issue is particularly delicate as conventional wisdom and conventional farming (non-organic) practices view farm animals

and their wastes as a resource, a reflection of dominant cultural traditions, and animal products are also widely used in organic food production. Either the organic lobby and conventional farming advocates are unaware of the unsustainable practices that they themselves may be engaging in, or they are in denial, and possibly just indifferent to the real needs and suppressed voices of the some 56 billion non-human farm animals that continue to be slaughtered and replaced on a continuous basis.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was forced many years ago, due to public concern over the vested interests of self interested lobby groups, to rethink their definition of 'Organic,' resulting in stricter wording and controls, which was a win for common sense. There is definitely an advantage in having an organic farming lobby, however Vegan Awareness needs to permeate the decision making process, as ultimately it must.

Compared with 'conventional', the Organic/Bio-Dynamic (OBD) community suggests their methods of agriculture are more sustainable; hence better for the environment and people. Improvement of soil quality is fundamental, particularly so in the case of Australian soils, and any agriculture (soil-culture) that is known to be unsustainable has to be continually modified, and should also be continually improved. Organic and Biodynamic farming can therefore provide greater respect for the earth, by concentrating on feeding the soil, whilst the less sustainable 'Conventional' farming practices are said to feed the crop, by making use of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides.

In basic terms, the four principal elements of soil sustainability are: soil's physical protection against erosion: plant nutrient maintenance: organic matter build-up and control of accumulation of toxins. Generally, organic and biodynamic farming utilise animal products in soil preparation and during the growing and subsequent phases prior to harvest. Although some restrictions on manure sources and handling are published by the organic organisations, including hot composting of animal matter to retain organic certification, to render antibiotics and hormones harmless, manure used during soil preparation can carry over antibiotics and pathogens from animal stock.

The reliance on animals in the landscape is one thing, but the perceived need for an 'animal farm ecology' that includes eating animals and their products as an essential method of gaining one's own food supply, presents a practical and philosophical issue for those following a vegan lifestyle. Substitution of weeds and other plants instead of animal manures in composting and

spraying, is an area for further research, and makes sense if one is pursuing a wholistic vegan farm approach.

Farmers and growers understand the real value of their asset to them, and are reluctant to apply just any product to their soil, as the cost of inputs is a prime consideration in a commercial venture, but soil condition can be rendered secondary. Consumers are used to paying a premium for higher production costs for the presumed additional labour inputs and quality of organic agriculture, and I noticed some wag at the Cairns market was recently advertising his produce as 'biological', which confirms creative advertising and marketing skills are still alive and well in this competitive arena.

Spraying crops with a variety of products may take place during growing, flowering and fruiting with further applications prior to finishing and packing. Calling this a 'fact of life' is perhaps inaccurate, but it is apparently still part of current practice.

Pesticides and Chemical Residues

"All substances are poisons; there is none which is not a poison. The right dose differentiates a poison"---Paracelsus (1493-1541)

Unfortunately farm animals have no way of washing or cleaning the chemical residues from their foods, which has motivated the farming sector to raise organic crop-fed cattle for sale as 'organic meats.' Antibiotics are one of the many residues that humans consume when eating animals, with animal farming accounting for 70% or more of antibiotic use; and where the animals eat conventionally grown feed crops, they also consume pesticides and herbicides, which are concentrated and stored in the flesh. In the U.S. animal products are responsible for about 80 to 90 percent of dietary pesticide and herbicide exposure (Ref.8).

When the question 'Are Australian agricultural systems sustainable?' was posed some decades ago in an agricultural journal, the agronomist Dr Roberts (Ref.9), stated *'Thus, apart from some serious differences of opinion on the adequacy of phosphate supply, the use of synthetic chemicals for pest and weed control remains the only major difference in approach between organic and conventional farmers. Every effort should be made to reduce the quantity of persistent synthetic pest and weed control chemicals being added to the soil-plant complex'*.

Foods of animal origin are the major source of pesticide residues in the common western diet. A comprehensive database derived from actual sampling of pesticide usage for all crops and all chemicals has been proposed, and the long-term

effects of eating these chemical residues at low doses that would be experienced by vegans is unknown.

Organically grown fresh fruits and vegetables which are lower in the food chain are relatively free of pesticides (Ref.10). A report (Ref.11) in 1999, suggested the worldwide deaths and chronic diseases due to pesticide poisoning numbered about 1 million a year.

Subsequent to the issues being identified, the farming community responded with the introduction of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) systems in the late 1990's, which gained wide acceptance, and current monitoring of these pesticides in foods, indicates levels well below the recommendations of food authorities. There are no guarantees of course, but from a human health perspective the potential for quality has improved, while in the environment, mixed use and varying legislation is likely to produce variable results.

The introduction, marketing and widespread planting of GMO produce, has brought with it a further source of universally applied patented poisons, and a 2016 report (Ref.12) indicated that the total quantity of the most popular pesticide called glyphosate, which is the active ingredient in the Monsanto product Roundup, had reached 8.6 billion kilograms since its inception in 1974, with distribution to farmlands in over 150 countries. The use of this product continues to increase, with around 56% of global use being applied to genetically- engineered herbicide-tolerant crops.

Even though the FAO and WHO regularly monitor the effects of pesticides on the environment and human health, the continued reliance on this one product will likely present longer-term health issues; as given the massive quantities, one can assume there will be major repercussions just through misuse alone.

Ethical farming techniques need to be introduced on a broader scale, as pesticide residues are not only implicated in human health considerations, but many environmental damaging situations, with reductions in life span of bee populations still concerning many environmental groups. Fortunately there is change, as the European union has voted to ban bee-killing pesticides, so some good judgments are being made.

One of the exciting challenges is the further development of organic and biodynamic farming practices so that a symbiotic relationship with all animals, including humans, in a mutually respectful manner can be advanced, the seeds of which have are now being sown in veganic gardening.

The 'Clean 15' list in their non-organic form contain the least amount of nasties. These foods are: asparagus, avocado, cabbage, rock melon, kiwifruit, eggplant, mushroom, grapefruit, [onion](#), mango, peas, watermelon, sweet potato, corn and [pineapple](#).

If you want a diet rich in pesticides, select these foods; the Dirty Dozen list (Ref.13), is made up of [fruit and vegetables](#) with higher residues and include apples, capsicum, blueberries, celery, grapes, cucumber, lettuce, nectarines, peaches, potatoes, strawberries and spinach. Buying these items in organic form is recommended if eating them on a regular basis.

Rooted

"The less people know, the more stubbornly they know it"--- Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

Unfortunately the heading is misleading, as many farm animals are now unaware of what this is. A single Google search and who would ever have thunk it! "Fertilization can take place away from the bull and the two animals do not even meet! Although AI, animal insemination (in the form of Intrauterine insemination) is not frequently used in human patients, it is the most commonly used method of breeding food production animals in developed countries, with more than 90% of pigs and almost the same proportion of dairy cattle bred by this method in the European Union and North America" (Ref.14). So lets document how many actual individual animals in just a few of the worlds' countries we are discussing:

Pigs and hogs: In 2013, 146.1 m in EU, and 64.7 m in U.S., with 12.8m in Canada in 2014.0.1 gives a total of 223.6m.

Taking 90% as AI bred, leaves 201million (Ref.15).

Dairy Cattle: In 2013, 12.3million in Canada; 152.5million in EU, 91.27million in U.S., gives a total of 256.07million.

Taking 90%, leaves 230.5million (Ref.16).

As an aside, when we compare the total numbers of livestock in China, with 482.1million pigs in 2013, we see that the numbers are greater than all the animals in Canada, the US and the EU combined; and by inspecting the dairy herds, we can tell that even the influence of a largely lactose-intolerant population could not restrict China from raising any less than 35.67million dairy cattle in 2013.

Perhaps this is enough information already. Survival is the most basic instinct all life has been endowed with, which naturally requires reproduction, but apparently 90% of farmed pigs and dairy cattle do not get that opportunity to reproduce naturally, in two of the world's most

developed [sic!] continents; what they are blessed with is artificial insemination instead; a fine statement of animal rights. We know some people use IVF treatments, but where is the balance here?

If you want to read more, The Guardian newspaper in 2015 published a concise article entitled 'Industrial farming is one of the worst crimes in history' (Ref.17). This article provides a brief history of domestication of animals, with a summary of the numbers involved at that time, and explains the reasons why the fate of farm animals is a central ethical issue in the 21st Century.

Abattoirs

"There are no correct answers for wrong questions"---Ven. G. Dhammarakkhitha thero

A question that arose in the media recently:

'Are there enough abattoirs to slaughter animals in Australia?'

Part of the response is summarised below, and the issue of infrastructure is a turbulent one, particularly in the context of debates raging around live animal export, the use of Australian farms by other countries to farm their own stock here, and the dynamics of interstate competition for a piece of the economic wealth generated by the trade in animal production. Vegaculture would remind the participants that a comprehensive approach to this issue should include input for phasing out of all animal farming, the need to meet our carbon quotas, and early development of alternative crops.

There are around 8.5 million cattle slaughtered in Australia each year, and around 1 million are exported live, thus live cattle exports make up the smaller portion of the total cattle industry. There are plans underway for several new abattoirs in the north of Australia. Apparently one large cattle abattoir near Darwin has opened (2017), and others are considered for Broome (WA) and Queensland. As a result of the exposure of animal abattoir cruelty in Indonesia in 2011, the Australian Government suspended the live export trade, and during the one-month suspension many cattle originally destined for Indonesia from the Northern Territory and north Queensland were slaughtered in Queensland.

The decisions surrounding use of abattoirs include the antics of internal industry competition as powerful interests clash in the common battle between values adding to local produce, as opposed to simply exporting the raw materials. In this instance of course, we are discussing sentient beings, but the industry self-interests were demonstrated when, one of the country's biggest meat processors Teys Australia, had reportedly *"slammed proposals for live export from the*

nearby port: (F)or the city of Rockhampton live exports out of Port Alma would be unequivocally bad... It means decreased value into the economy and less people we're able to employ" (Ref.18).

Australia's major sheep processors have confirmed they have the capacity to process all sheep currently going to live export and approximately 32 million sheep are slaughtered in Australia each year. Numbers fluctuate significantly according to environmental conditions, international disputes and currency exchange but each year live export companies send approximately 1 million live Australian cattle and 2 million live Australian sheep overseas (Ref.19).

I leave the readers to draw their own conclusions about the live animal export trade, but the solution appears to me to be obvious, and we can now look forward to repeating the example set by Brazil in early 2018, when the government announced they had decided to ban live exports. It is a doubly cruel irony, that the catch-cry for the Government on the one hand, is to 'Stop the Boats' coming into the country, and on the other hand, pursuing the opposite policy to transport our animal brethren for sacrifice to a host of other countries; a topsy-turvy world indeed!

Non-Exploitative Farming

"Whilst part of what we perceive comes through our senses from the object before us, another part (and it may be the larger part) always comes out of our own mind"---William Jones

While a primary focus of vegaculture is to improve, support and strengthen the quality of life of animals, and to eventually remove them altogether from exploitation in the farming systems, exploitation is also widespread amongst farm labourers, and not just confined to isolated farms; it is in fact endemic to most nations. Social justice issues include abuse of employees with low wages, unsafe and poor working conditions, contracted labour hire services, visa restrictions, and inflated accommodation and transport franchises; systematic exploitation of farm help is purveyed by companies and contractors who manage these schemes in the free labour markets. All of these methods of exploitation including slave-like conditions were the subject of investigations in Australia that implicated major food retailers in an agricultural industry crisis in 2015-16 (Ref.20).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) points out that over 60% of all child labourers aged from 5-17 years old, work in agriculture, and that 59% of children involved in hazardous work, in the same grouping are employed in agriculture (Ref.21). Support for organic farming is much less

exploitative to the environment, preventing or minimising pesticide dispersion to air land and waters, and the wildlife that is a secondary recipient of our waste; and while we are part of the collective, we are still partly responsible for exploitation in all its manifestations. The pursuit of another way has led to the term 'non-exploitative farming', and vegan-organic farming is most certainly an advocate for social justice in farming systems, which is consistent with the principles of vegaculture.

Certification processes have become an industry standard in western countries due to expectations amongst consumers who want confirmation of the degree of security in food growing and purchasing. A major exodus of farmers occurred with the recognition of certified organic growers and produce; this occurred throughout the 1980's and 1990's in Australia, and a part of the loss was due to the cost of organic certification that is borne by the farmer, which smaller producers refused to pay.

The establishment of farmer's markets with a preponderance of fresh, organic, homegrown produce, was likely influenced by that watershed. One presumes many millions if not billions of people are presently benefiting from vegan food sources, but as there is presently no formal lobby to promote vegan produce apart from a few organisations such as the Vegan Organic Network (VON), in the U.K.; vegan food products are unrecognized as such and therefore 'go under the radar'.

Stock-Free

The context for stock-free farming has of course through necessity for comparison to be placed in an historic timeline. Vegaculture is at its inception, and while there are some known exceptions, as in Japan where animal products were separated from agricultural food production for periods of the last 200 years, the fact remains that veganic gardening has dedicated and skilled adherents, but is not as well explored in the traditions, as veganism only recently defined itself in the last seventy years.

Meanwhile, traditional gardening practices suggest an historical basis for animal inputs and their use in organic farming and the principles of permaculture tend to support the utilisation of animals in agriculture. Most societies and cultures have been based on agriculture with animals being part of people's daily life, which in itself is a good reason to further our interest and investment in horticulture; this movement from ground crops to tree crops can be an important aspect of the permaculture-vegaculture progression.

Contemporary Organic farming is in general strongly supportive of an integrated animal presence, with farm inputs based around the spread of land-animal or fish based products in fruit and vegetable production; similarly with bio-dynamic (BD) farming. The products of animals grown for both dairy and meat production are sold at a premium when raised and certified in accordance with these two industry standards.

The Vegan Organic Network, (VON) suggests a progression from conventional chemical agriculture, to organic agriculture and then to vegan-organic agriculture. *"Such a shift requires a fundamental change in culture. For the vegan organic method of growing food is revolutionary as well as evolutionary in as much as it encompasses a way of living that is based on non-violence and non-exploitation"* (Ref.22).

Guidelines and a Logo have been in place in the U.K. thanks to VON, which introduced the 'Stockfree Organic Standards to commercial growers in 2004; and The Welsh College of Horticulture has adopted the Standards and has been selling organic vegetables through a box scheme and instigating a training program. VON publishes Growing Green International, a magazine with cruelty free growing and ethical techniques, and has been acting as a catalyst to bring about agricultural, cultural and social change.

A universal system of conversion identification is needed for transition to 'Vegan-organic,' and the VON directory lists 20 stock-free organic commercial growers in the UK, and a further 20 overseas, mainly in North America. The 'stock free' symbol provides a guarantee for consumers, and even from this modest start, "over 1500 people are fed every week, demonstrating that food can be readily grown in accordance with the values of non-violence".

I well remember the blossoming of the organic food industry in the early 1990's, when labels and logos and various certification groups were only beginning to appear to guide the growth of the emerging organic industry; and a conversation I had while researching the Vegan Guide, with the Fresh food Supervisor at the major Coles Supermarket, who commented that organic produce was just a small niche market. It will be of great interest to see how the veganic stock-free model, and similar activity progresses over the next 25 years; and whether it will parallel the phenomenal growth of the organic food revolution.

Design Parameters

There are many facets to growing; the introduction of nutrient source and content, distribution

methods and effectiveness of resources, available and renewable energy inputs, the resolve of the responsible farmer/gardener; these and many others are just some of the design parameters which require juxtaposition in the overall conceptual design, leading to acceptable practical outcomes if properly considered.

A non-exploitative garden based on veganic garden principles would in this context, have much in common with, and readily flow from, the practice and experience of permaculture.

The initial permaculture design manuals, namely Permaculture One and Permaculture Two (Ref.23,24) provide design guidelines, while organisations such as VON provide extensive practical and educational resources relevant to stock-free gardening design; the web is replete with information, enthusiastic supporters and self-help educational videos in relation to veganic and forest gardening methods, conservation agriculture and access to other detailed writings such as the Anastasia books for instance, provide valuable insights and are also recommended.

We are inundated with social justice issues, with power, greed, influence and economics maintaining their grip on social contracts; but even if we could democratise authoritarian gardening practices, the entrenched positions of the major players in food production, and the various influences of lobby groups and self-interested corporations, the chemical companies vending their products and at the end of the chain, the supermarkets and distribution outlets, would we then see a flourishing of sensitive environmental outcomes?

This question begs us to look at the problem we lead ourselves into, that of centralised thinking; whereas the whole is the sum of parts, and if we work towards an explosion of horticulture and animal free agriculture, then this will proliferate, and in so doing eventually find its accepted place in the overall scheme of things. There are always opportunities to promote a fair share, and every fruit tree we plant is another step closer to breaking the reliance on others for solving our conceptual problems.

What are practical garden inputs and where are the limits of exclusion and pragmatic solutions to the applications of animal contents in a vegaculture farm/garden? Often an issue of debate, and no doubt resolved by personal judgement, but it would be cowardly and inappropriate not to broach the subject of stock-free and some of its notable implications.

Endeavouring to find natural sustainable habitats for feathered friends in a non-exploitative garden

design is a useful occupation and reminds me of the duplicity we endure. Perceptions of acceptability for practical gardening solutions are quite subtle, and hold great educational promise for an aspiring vegan gardener. Chicken tractors are often employed to direct the efforts of domesticated birds, whereas if one were to catch the local bush turkey and re-employ their help, rather than endure their hindrance, all manner of responses would converge on the participant.

There is no one solution but the prescription for success remains: the extent of 'exclusion as far as possible and practical, of all forms of cruelty and exploitation of animals for food, clothing or any other purpose, to develop and promote animal free alternatives' demands an individual response; we each select our own simultaneous level of truth and meaning from this statement.

Many dedicated people are walking parallel paths, while localisation can remind us of our responsibility as parents and teachers to reach out to the values of self-sufficiency, and celebrate the joy and dignity of simple living. If we are ready to expose the pretense and misguided attempts at sustainability practices, which currently pass as acceptable farming techniques in many areas of agriculture and intense animal farming, the growing, feeding and killing of animals and using their bits, we will then understand that these misguided cultural practices are what led us to the unsustainable practices in the first place.

Where the pragmatist sees a waste product as an opportunity, the vegaculture adherent is also seeking to identify alternative solutions to promote a stock-free veganic farming/gardening process, which denies the necessity of being involved in the perpetration of animal slavery, and the tail end of animal slaughtering, now over 56 billion animals a year (not including fish where the measurement in 2012 was 158 million tonnes, and chickens which number 144 billion a year slaughtered) and the by-products and wastes of animal farming, which have horrific consequences to the environment and community health (Ref.25,26).

Farm Visitors

"Farming is a profession of hope"---Brian Brett

Irregular plagues of locusts and other flying insects can obliterate large expanses of farmed land very quickly, and this situation will be sorted by whoever is in authority at the time. The proliferation and spread of unbalanced numbers of species is part of the greater story of human history, and in our interaction with the natural world. It will be no consolation to the farmer, but imbalance in large scale mono cropping is a contributing factor in insect plagues.

Kangaroos are in the news again; this is the iconic Australian marsupial that appears on our National Coat of Arms, and one that attracts a large portion of overseas visitors to our shores, and happens to be adapted to the Australian landscape and drought conditions as only an indigenous animal could be. Amazingly, when faced with a deficit of food and not excess, kangaroos have adapted and can apparently withhold their pregnancy for up to five years, and halt the development of the embryo waiting for harmony to arise in their environment.

With around five million killed annually and the population still increasing amid drought conditions, the competition between Australia's native animal living at home, and the introduced herds of cattle and sheep and goats, has the farming fraternity all in a titter, for they are eager to maintain the quantity and quality of their roaming herds, and having to jostle for the remaining food and water resources is a continual annoyance. The redistribution of water as a resource for farming, while retaining essential flows for environmental safety has become a balancing act and likely to be even more critical given the predictions for a drier climate.

Excessive population numbers and spread of introduced animals such as (humans and most farm animals), wild pigs, cane toads, yellow electric ants, camels, carp, feral cats and rabbits are just some of the problems that continue to cause controversy in Australia. We still experiment with introduced species for assistance and as potential solutions to various imbalances that we manifest; however, dung beetles are touted as a success story, helping with soil cultivation and parasite control, if security is maintained.

16. FOOTPRINTS

"Learning leading to Truth and humility is good"---Sri Ramana Maharshi

ISSUES

A calculation for measuring one's own ecological footprint on the planet has been available via digital search since the 1980's, and was gaining popularity decades earlier. Around twenty-five years ago when I was transitioning from a vegetarian to a vegan diet, I could see my ecological footprint decreasing rapidly and approaching a minimum. My permaculture friends would chide me, suggesting that it would still not be as good as a permaculture baseline, but I was satisfied and pleased with my efforts, and the footprint was easily measured. Where is Vegaculture today?

Veganism is becoming an agent for change; this IS where Vegaculture is today, approaching the public debate with facts and science, and not embedded in cultural dress. Disruption is increasing in our society with the increased rate of technology change; and globalisation may be considered to be still in its infancy with only some twenty percent of information, and around five percent of capital flows, crossing national borders (Ref.27). If business as usual continues with the introduction of even higher levels of technology, we shall soon see the wide scale introduction of robots and driverless vehicles for instance, even as the population and jobless queues are bulging beyond budgets.

The following statements by environmental scientist and author Haydn Washington, about what sustainability *cannot be*, demonstrates the process for correction is well understood, but societies lack either commitment or conviction or both in their application (Ref.28). *"Sustainability and denial are mutually exclusive. It cannot be a denial of reality; it has to be about 'realism'. That means we accept the problems we have and solve them. Sustainability cannot be ethics-free. It cannot be based on an anthropocentric 'human supremacy' approach, where humanity always seeks to be the 'Master'."*

The issue of sustainability is in the process of change to an offensive position, from the long rued defensive position as evidenced by the massive movement away from coal to solar for example, and 'this process will ensure that new tactics, strategies and objectives which are developing will get sorted; and so the foundation for a more sustainable path is created in this process of transformation' (Ref.28).

Vegaculture is a part of this transformation, and a significant step towards a more balanced approach occurred recently when Vegan Australia made a submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into the regulation of agriculture (including animal welfare) on 19 August 2016 (Ref.29). The full text appears in the Appendix, and outlines a procedure for ending animal agriculture, and attempts to show two things:

"First, that any agricultural system that uses animals will cause suffering to those animals. And second, that humans do not need to consume any animal products, as has been shown by extensive research in nutritional science".

The truth of these statements is self-evident, and although the Commission results were eagerly awaited, the entrenched positions resolved to maintain the status quo. Typically, we have placed infrastructures as the fabric of the social

relationship with the citizens. The infrastructures offer a dispersal of power and inputs that govern political policy and action, set against a background of cultural and social diversity; while we as a people of a collective civilisation, our psychology maybe common, but our traditions and diversity leave us ill equipped to immediately converge right thinking and right actions.

Environmental Protection

In the words of Bob Dylan---'everybody owes somebody'

Data on the human ecological footprint in 2013, showed a bio-capacity deficit, that is insufficient productive land needed for human consumption for their national populations, in three quarters of all the world's countries; (Ref. 30). Meanwhile the FAO released a report entitled World Agriculture: Towards 2015/2030 (Ref.31), which contains a summary of the 'Prospects for the Environment' in relation to major trends in agriculture over the proceeding 30 years. Water and air pollution, biodiversity, land use, and climate change are implicated as major drivers in the determination of prospective environmental outcomes.

Population numbers and density continue to increase; where balance may previously have been achieved with small diverse populations, the pollution from animals in farming and fishing will have a profound effect, and is associated with deterioration in all instances. The nutrient value retention of all animal wastes, including human, and the environmental effects associated with their disposal and use is a major issue for the whole of society, not just vegans.

Although the gravity of environmental issues is daily reading in the media, it is useful to be aware of the old adage, 'think globally act locally', and we often don't know what is happening locally. There is a tireless effort at the grass roots level for a movement towards sensible outcomes, which respect the greater good, and a couple of relevant examples are given here to demonstrate the complexity of vested interests; and they form a useful metaphor for any campaign, which the public get involved in, when taking the institutions of government and embedded social norms to task.

The first example is as a result of a discussion about resource protection with a local activist regarding forest activity in the Wombat State Forest, Victoria where we both had settled. Dave has been a dedicated environmental activist for decades, and an exponent and teacher of non-violent direct action and campaign construction and management; he has been in the front-line of keeping the peace, and negotiating with authorities

and interest groups at many sites of confrontation around Australia.

He explained that the forest is at the headwaters of five rivers, and pertinent issues to be addressed included the effects of soil erosion and nutrient dissemination, and streamside vegetation in what has been historically the site of old gold diggings, also the current policy allows both Forestry and Mining; and the various interest groups had been reminded one of the outcomes of felling the forests, is that if there are no trees, there may be no water!

He remarked that the Government has all the correct Forest Legislation in place, but other contradictory legislation still allows development to over-rule it. So actually it can be seen that what is happening in the third world, often without legislation, is also happening in the first world with legislation in place, the same issues have just become INSTITUTIONALISED in the supposed Environmental Establishments, but the politicians are still accessing the veto; the only remaining solution therefore is for revolution to come from *Localisation!*

"Getting the local groups to continue discussion has been a real issue, as we have Landcare, Permaculture 'permies,' the sustainable forest action groups, wildlife protection, stream side vegetation lobbyists, and farmers with Government and Private Land holdings".

Dave reckons that no matter what the proposed outcomes for protection may be, there is always a 'sleaze element' that creeps around the Legislation somehow, and *so one cannot trust promises*. We have to be vigilant, and then raise Public awareness. Even then, action of simply getting people together to begin the process is time consuming and the lack of general competition with other causes remains a problem to be continually confronted.

We then moved onto the issues of the need for river water protection, which can be degraded by pine forest plantings, of the water use due to young trees growing taking the water as trees do. Responsible management needs a raft of vigilance including the protection from sprays harming the watercourse and knowledge of expiration rates and eco climate effects. An agreed forum for planting and growing is needed to properly address issues to do with the principles of urban populations around the river headwaters, and the siting relationship of humans and forest activity.

Existing sites may require a re-assessment due to human over-population, while the forest use and proper thinning are important. A map of rivers and flows needs to form the basis of where population

should be allowed. His proposal was to work with Local council, as a window of opportunity presents, to get some Legislation enacted at the local level for locally prepared guidelines, the inclusion of a 'Forest Manifesto' as a much preferred solution; rather than having Local Council just adopting policy from the remote State Government beaurocrats who might be standardising information, rather than addressing local issues.

The second example, now some 10 years later, shows a novel approach to protection that was reported in the media (Ref.32), through the introduction of a Bill to grant New Zealand's third largest river, sovereign rights as a citizen; the river and forest becomes its own person, and therefore cannot be owned. This legal position satisfies the will of the original peoples and their relationship to the land while protecting the environment in legislation, and if as predicted it passes into law, the rewards will be significant and a successful demonstration of a new way forward.

The efforts being made by these activists have many parallels in social and environmental causes to promote a better world; and any vegan activist and Animal Liberation campaigner will attest to similar experiences. Following on from the above Forest Campaign discussion, I recognised the enormous advantage that we have as vegans in our capacity to effect change and the empowerment we harbour as individuals.

Whereas the success, or otherwise, of the various social issues which one subscribes to is largely dependant on the Community choice in the realm of politics, what one finds in the realm of personal choices such as Food Choice, is actually independent of the politics and embedded external decision making processes. Thus we have the Prime Motivator, the First Principal of Direct Action working on our behalf. We can choose, 100% effectively, to be part of the solution to so many issues, through the power of personal choice.

We don't need to lobby committees or political structures to be effective, to have our opinions sidelined or compromised by other interest groups. Our hopes and efforts are not at the whim of those who would act out of greed or influence; the values of our actions are maximised, total and 100% effective. This IS the real value of personal choice.

The fact remains, no matter how we try to disguise it, predicting futures is fraught with unknowns, the sooner we start to make some inroads the better, as lead times are going to be long. For the vegan community the adoption of the most ethical methods in the transition to a new way seem essential, otherwise we are still sacrificing one life

for another in the continual web of life and death, and eating up the planets resources.

Eating Animals

"Animals are my friends...and I don't eat my friends"---George Bernard Shaw

Avoidance, perhaps fear and reticence of contact have been useful survival tactics for wild animals, but for millennia now in the realm of domesticated animals, those which people commonly want to eat, the cows, the chooks, the pigs, the sheep, the goats, the ducks, the turkeys, we can mostly still approach and contact and make friends of sorts with these fellows; why do we still want to eat them? This subject of eating animals raises a question that remains for each of us to answer truly in a responsible way, with all of our senses intact. We need to examine the issues carefully and listen truly to our inner voice, to determine the best outcome for any animal including ourselves!

Many people are disconnected with their own feelings, and make gross assumptions about their food sources. A few decades ago, a Melbourne artist advertised he would kill a cow in a public place; the suggestion caused so much reaction and alarm, he had to relent. His acceptable public statement, an artwork entitled the 'Butchers Shop Window' display, was subsequently accepted into the National Gallery of Victoria, as a reminder of the animal-human relationship.

While land animals are available for us to make contact with, sea creatures are not as accessible. The tradition of people living close to water, seashores or lakes and rivers, is to accept that fishing is a 'natural' activity, for it feeds billions of people daily, and throughout history, and so it is seldom questioned. However, if you think eating fish and crustaceans is natural, but have not yet been responsible for baiting and catching and filleting one yourself to really see how natural this food gathering is for you, then perhaps there would be a surprise in store.

Conversely, if you have always been involved directly with the responsibility of taking a life, have you ever trialed the experience of NOT TAKING A LIFE? Most of us have entrenched formative experiences, which blur the line between the activity of taking the life and the association with the world at large. The circumstances often become dominant, either through cultural connectivity of family outings, balmy nights at the local pier, a relaxing day on the water, or a trudge up a pristine creek in a pair of long gumboots, maybe even the experience of going hungry. If this is your relationship to fishing, then maybe you might be wondering what all this fuss is about; after all, they are just fish aren't they?

To be explicit, YES, they are just fish, and in that context, you and I are just people, are we not? And it is possible to start the disassembling right here and now, in this moment, to truly think deeply just what this means to you. Is the practice of eating any animal able to be seen clearly for what it really is, or does the excuse of being an easy or enjoyable meal mean more to you, than the life that has been taken? The simplicity and relative ease with which we take lives, or accept the offerings which someone else has killed on behalf of us by their involvement in the food chain, is now well programmed into the human psyche, and has a backlog of acceptance and commonness that seems insurmountable in many cultures.

One important aspect of our reflection is to include the consideration as to whether this was actually a necessary intervention on our part, this joining into the perpetuation of a cycle of human selective birth and death; is there another way? By gently refusing the offering, with the awareness that there are in most instances adequate non-animal alternatives, or a chance to skip a meal, one gathers experience at satisfying hunger and social pleasures, without involvement in the web of animal death.

The English past time of competitive fishing involves throwing back the catch, a gentleman's prerogative; similarly, if a fish is not big enough to get a proper feed, it might be returned as well, a minor interruption to the honed skills and practice of hunting for one's daily food supply. No harm done really? Really? Please note the attempt here is to individualise the experience, because it is only from this place that we are able to truly understand our personal involvement in the practice of harm and killing.

One is readily appalled, fearful actually, of the horrific statistics and stories about loss of habitat and marine life diversity, like sharks with their fins cut off, just left to drop to the seabed, and false kills due to the current methods of gathering of numerous sea creatures on a massive scale to feed our habits, and socially 'refined palettes;' and how could we possibly forego the delight of the bounty of nature in its final aesthetic; the cold stark beauty of that bright open eye peering up at us from the bed of fresh lettuce; and perhaps a mild dressing of lime and coriander, a row of roe and a touch of sweet chili sauce. The delights of the human gastronomy!

Balancing the paradox in nature is an art, a discipline, and requires awareness of our actions, bringing clarity and resolution to our own understanding. It will arise, but in the meantime thoughtless and needless destruction, greed and inequity need boundaries, and we are all

responsible in the quest to identify the limits of our own mastery of the environment.

Surrendering to the facts of our existence can be daunting, but it is ultimately an essential and honorable pursuit. Follow the path of knowing back to its source: 'I have always eaten them because it is how I was brought up,' or 'it was our main food source, and there are plenty more in the ocean', true or false?

If one is to fully comprehend the significance of each of us committing to make a difference, then let us refer to the FAO report on Local Knowledge Management Systems (LKMS) (Ref.33), which states: *"But perhaps, one of the most important advantages of using traditional systems is that they contain mechanisms (if still viable) "which promote relatively equitable access to the resources by the weaker and poorer members of society", thus furthering our goal of reaching the poor rural populations"*.

Notice the comment in brackets, *(if still viable)*; and if we examine the reason for this comment, we see in the background a looming catastrophe of annihilation of the traditional systems, because there are so many people now that the solution which once functioned, has reached the end of its tenure.

Over-fishing is a prime example, with traditional fisheries along the North-Eastern seaboard of the North American continent being fished out, one of innumerable instances; it also illustrates the imperialist potential of richer nations, having ruined access to their own food source they put pressure on poorer nations; evidenced elsewhere as cash cropping of coffee and drugs in primary industry, and cheap labour in secondary industries.

Vegaculture suggests we go back to source, recognise and accept the interconnectedness of the food chain as a driver of a host of environmental and equity issues and stop reinforcing the problem; animal DNA can be modified to try to reduce methane production, and fish can be bred in captivity, but are these ever going to be significant alternatives to the problems generated by an abundance of animals and fish in the food chain.

A focus that addresses the cause, not the effects is needed; eventually the vegan solution will gain political and social traction, and the sooner we support its involvement as the dominant methodology the better. Both science and expert opinion agree that the most efficient way to maximise the benefits of short-term methane reductions, is to minimise the contribution of farm animals.

Livestock Change

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple”---Dr. Seuss

The debate about causes of climate change has been active for some time, while political will is building and legislation is in place to address various issues. The 2015 Paris Agreement (Ref.34) will assist in defining pathways forward, and certainly raises one's hopes compared to previous attempts, by placing a lower limit on denial, converging resources and supporting the momentum for action. Just as reduction of livestock intake is the first personal step to recovery, so global recognition of the issue is the first collective step for unified action.

At the core of our attempts to grapple with the effects, and the need for slowing of climate change, is the realisation of the momentum that has been unleashed in the provision of goods and services, the expectations of social stability, and the limitations for 7.6 billion people (2017) to respond, to cope with rapid change.

Pollution from livestock feed for pigs and chickens in China comes from deforestation in Brazil (Ref.35); while the rich and diverse fish supplies inhabiting the current from the Antarctic regions as it sweeps the Peruvian coast, are collected and fed to meet the demands of the pet food market. Likely the richest nutrient source in the world it has a heavy burden, for in the top 20 countries alone there are now 355 million dogs, and a modest 235 million cats vying for a feed and support (Ref.36).

A tipping point has been reached in world history, where discussions regarding a man-made environment, defined as the Anthropocene, are now commonplace. Climate change is here, the effects are understood to be in motion now, and the sooner our infrastructures and collective actions are organized to a greater extent, the more effective our response; and an example of the speed of change we need to combat is shown below.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation at the United Nations (FAO) calculations, for greenhouse gas production that could be attributed to various influences, were stated in a report in 2009 (Ref.37). The FAO report calculated the contribution to global warming from the livestock industries at around 16%, with subsequent reports (Ref.38) suggesting a relative value of some 21% might be more realistic in the parameters of the present debate. Either way, it is easy to see that varying one's dietary to include less animal products could make a significant reduction and contribution to the climate change scenario.

Soon after, the environmentalist and influential member of the World Bank, Robert Goodland, alerted his colleagues and the world in general that the predicted climate change tipping points in 2017 to 2020 could be prevented by a modest 25% reduction in animal products in the diet. By 2014 with virtually no positive response from world leaders or governments, a 50% reduction was required to achieve the same goal; such is the speed of climate change (Ref.39).

Although there is controversy surrounding all calculations, *the rate of change* is a major feature, and in just the last few years demonstrates the drastic need to act now with a nimble and concerted approach. Lost opportunities will continue to grow until there is a change of circumstance within our present governments and institutions, where there is a distinct under-representation of the common good compared to the influences of the rich and powerful, and a legacy of diversion to satisfy the private materialist outlook.

History shows that nations can react very quickly to overwhelming circumstance, and the harnessing of resources with political and personal will and determination is absolutely essential now. The hedging of commitment is evident and the key to success is discussed below, a global challenge has to be met with action rather than slogans.

Global Pollution

“The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing”---Walt Disney

Global pollution is the cause of global warming and climate change, which are the symptoms of illness due to an overloaded immune system. Global pollution is therefore what must be removed for Gaia to recover its pristine nature, and although climate change denial is decreasing, our population and its demands continue to increase. A very simple algorithm:

POPULATION == POLLUTION (*fullstop!*)

An Australian example of an earlier warning came with a report headed 'Diet and the Atmosphere,' authored and published by Bruce Poon in 2007 (Ref.40), which attempted to gather support for action and highlight the issue of farmed animal inputs in the climate change estimates for Australia. Some extracts are given below and contend:

“Without any other expensive changes to our infrastructure, by the simple expedient of becoming vegetarian, we could reduce our overall greenhouse gas emissions by 30%. What is more, with the land freed up being returned to native forest, we could extract carbon from the

atmosphere equal to the other 70%! That is a 100% reduction with no financial cost".

"Even more importantly, recent evidence shows it is Methane not Carbon that is responsible for a lot of the warming currently happening, and Methane is up to 62 times more damaging than CO2 over a 20 year period, by which time Methane will largely be dispersed."

The report quantified Australia's cattle and sheep produced about 3 megatonnes of methane per annum. Utilising a Co2 equivalent of 62, the sum equates to 186 megatonnes of carbon dioxide per annum, which indicates our cattle and sheep will *"release more pollution and have a bigger impact on climate during the next 20 years than all our coal fired power-stations, which together produce only about 180 megatonnes of carbon dioxide."*

These results have been challenged, and a similar report (Ref.41), suggests the contribution of animals to green house gases in 2005 showed elsewhere only about two thirds of the 16.8% total agricultural content came from enteric fermentation, which is substantially lower than the previous reference. Statistics are what they are; a group of numbers given meaning by the issue that is being quantified, and how their make-up is interpreted.

Either way, a meaningful reduction in animal farming in Australia can have a huge impact in the preservation of a stable climate. However, the likelihood of government intervention with commensurate policy decisions is minimal because of entrenched attitudes; and being pragmatically difficult to instigate, it is difficult to see what planning strategy is going to manifest this directional shift. Vacillation continues and the debate is still a hot one in 2018!

As of 2015, the Queensland and Northern Territory cattle farmers are considering the gearing up of export trade to meet a predicted 200% minimum increase in the Chinese markets over the next 5 years. Not quite the responses that this author was hoping for, but given the strength of institutionalised denial and a myopic vision, an outcome that may well have been envisaged (Ref.42). Queensland in October 2017 was on a par with Brazil as the largest contributor to land clearing in the whole world; however, in May 2018 the State Government has finally passed sanctions to restrict this activity.

Society is going to have to transform itself if we are to successfully navigate this climate challenge. Perhaps the Chinese as the leading nation of polluters, and Australia as the leading individual polluters, will see some advantage in the minimising of food-chain-based global warming

inputs. A significant adjustment of the dominant paradigm is needed to influence the political will, for although science is present to show the need for us to rapidly reduce animal inputs; it appears to have little traction when balanced against existing political and trading prerogatives.

If as we suggest, the most practical and useful short term reduction of green house gases comes from reduction and eventual minimisation of all animal farming, we have to be aware of the consequences of the actions taken during this change, less we swap one killing field for another. It is unlikely that we would see an increased cull of animals; rather the present rate of attrition, assuming fewer births, would rise as numbers dwindled.

The commercial introduction of Faux-meats and protein foods currently in advanced stages of development will rapidly change the market place, and food sources will move from farming of animals to farming of technology; but the issue of moral and ethical benefits needs to be raised with each and every killing, not only those that supposedly help us to survive, or for whatever other excuse is available or expedient at the time.

Based on a natural life span of farmed animals, adoption of restrictions on animal farming may take up to 25 years before significant reductions occur. In an autocratic or survival situation, one may see the farm population diminish in a shorter time, but this is really at the limits of future scenarios; currently there is about a five-year life cycle for cattle, the larger contributor, presently in place. Apart from influences of other catastrophic events, any estimate in practice might occur over say a minimum of ten years, even with the best political will, whatever the persuasion of government.

It is difficult to see this change in the context of trade markets in a globalised economy, but only if you don't want to see it, and presumably if Australia were to start the process it would be because others were also doing the same. If left to others (market forces)? Well, the farmers may in the end prefer to see the longer lead times, and provided they progress to rallying around the fruit and vegetable, grain and legume cropping market, the shift will eventually come; and we could expect to be well compensated by their efforts, something they themselves might embrace.

FAIR SHARE

17. RELATIONSHIP

18. CARING

19. SOCIAL NUTRITION

17. RELATIONSHIP

"Who is the who in who am I?"--Papaji

SELF

The various sections of the conceptual narrative are arranged to reflect the original vision of vegaculture as it unfolds through a simple examination of our essential nature and to portray elements for discussion that relate to care of people, animals, plants and Gaia, and now we have arrived at fair share. I was recently asked about the values that seemed most important in life, and after some reflection I realised how simple my life had become and I found myself answering 'peaceful contentment', which well describes the place I now recognise as home.

Some issues or topics are more likely to draw our attention to action than others, and in the process of determining a fair share, a number of factors become relevant to our response. Three popular instigators that prompt consideration and discussion are social justice, compassionate living and freethinking, and within these essential elements, one can recognise the seeds of mind, body and spirit in the unfolding of an emergent wholeness. A perceived threat to a fair share requires a response, and some of the factors that go to determine the direction and quality of that response are included here and form the basis of this treatise on vegaculture.

Harmonious outcomes arise readily when we can accept our own limitations, but first we need to recognise them, and we do this through a deeper understanding of our self. The distribution of focus and proportion of our attention are implicit elements that will determine the fairness of the share, and human endeavour proceeds readily when it appears synchronous with our destiny.

Thought and Belief

"Thought is a material process; Truth is beyond thought"---David Bohm

Thought has created the thinker, and various philosophical models of consciousness are displayed in the literature, leading to an abundance of intriguing explanations of consciousness in the human relationship. One opinion worthy of consideration is by Bernardo Kastrup (Ref.1), whose view of Nondualism is derived purely from reason and scientific insight, and does not require a reference to mystical or spiritual insight; the power of rational scientific discussion and example is adequate to propel our awareness, and to envisage a place where the truth becomes evident.

The Australian philosopher David Chalmers (Ref.2), known for his comments regarding the 'Hard Problem', (trying to understand how matter could give rise to Consciousness), suggested we build a 'conscious system' and then have a conversation with it. This preparedness to take consciousness seriously as a scientific pursuit, confirms the credibility that a consciousness revolution is indeed well underway. The qualities of subtle interaction required with this approach appear very demanding, but would presumably improve through refinement and empathy. Presumably an exploration of universal self-talk would mirror ones personal approach to the world, invoking that deep reflection and trust one has of their own ability to resolve issues and guide ones' actions appropriately.

What level of legitimacy can consciousness command from scientific enquiry; will it be given a place alongside energy and matter, as an interchangeable phenomena, or an even more hallowed status, a priori recognition as the source of all life? Is it conceivable that scientific enquiry could lead to acceptance of consciousness as a verifiable, infinite source, a virtual reservoir or suppository of all independent subjective experience; is it a puppeteer or just an unknown function of brain activity? These questions have massive implications for the human species and the world we inhabit, and if answered truthfully, afford a grand vision of universal oneness that has not been evident or as widely accepted previously.

J. Krishnamurti (Ref.3) offers a couple of responses to the unknown when he identifies a space for the introduction of reason, compassion and creativity. In reasoning the truth, he maintains that the inclusion of both the physical and psychological information is essential in any decision making process, and 'that the person and/or mind wants order, this desire being congruent with a person's belief that *'the purpose of life is to control ones environment,'* viz-a-viz exercise control, and bring order to being.

This exercising of discipline and use of our intelligence to overcome our emotions in the controlling of our environment, negating separation and fragmentation, enables one to go beyond. These distinctions are encouraging and enable the seeker to continue with some optimism, while his consideration for each of us as we struggle is demonstrated with the delightfully simple yet profound phrase *"Be absolutely aware, and Make no effort"*.

If we pursue this further and extrapolate the control of one's environment into the control of the whole of nature by a collective consciousness, then the 'conquering of nature' can be seen as the

expression of the universal desire for control. The philosopher Alan Watts (Ref.4) comments that, 'taking therefore a longer and wider view of things, the entire project of "conquering nature" appears more and more of a mirage—an increase in the pace of living without fundamental change of position'.

His comments were made some decades ago and are understandable in relation to an extended view, where the human domain is a small speck of dust in a huge cosmos, but the onset of the Anthropocene era on earth is now taking shape as a significant event for our little planet.

Many problems we identify in the social order today are well and truly founded in the neglect and half-baked ideas of the past. In both media and daily experience, we are continually presented with the disparity between people in responsible positions, and the quality of the decisions over which they preside, the disparity between human suffering and the rights of the elite to vend their wares. We need to remind ourselves that there is hope, as we know the ability to differentiate and co-operate, rather than control, can be a learnt process. While lifestyle and business coaches confirm a need to distinguish and disrupt complacency as if it is a panacea, we also need rest and relaxation.

Neuroscience studies (Ref.5), indicate our minds provide an emotional preference to random information, and where there is perception of fear, rejection of new information can result as our brain defaults to our beliefs, rather than an acceptance of a possible new 'truth'; and conversely, in the pursuit of pleasure, when our reward centres are stimulated, our tendency is to go there; the rush of dopamine affirms our beliefs, rather than acceptance of contrary random information.

Where does vegaculture figure in this tale? Well, this functioning of the mind for action based on preferential beliefs has many outlets, one of which is to do with attitudes to eating animals, and is mentioned elsewhere by the example of people who, when about to eat animals, allow the desire for satisfaction to override the sense of denial of another's consciousness. Even though our brain is programmed, by bringing attention to the process of thought, it is possible to change, to deconstruct or reprogram the brain to overcome tendencies.

Elsewhere, we readily identify the pillaging of the environment as being physical abuse, yet all the while it is also suffering from psychological abuse, the personally unperceived lack of psychological maturity in decision-making processes at the helm, allows environmental resources to be expended, the deconstruction of nature's unique evolutionary legacy, an expansive stage for every activity, the

very foundation of life for a unique, sustainable like, co-dependant partnership.

Finally, the rise of the industrial age and massive population increase, and faulty lifestyles; the whittling away by human ignorance, greed and violence; the fate of the planet can be deciphered in those few words, *'the purpose of life is to control one's environment.'*

Traditional living methods have been scrapped in the last few centuries, while self-deception has plagued and delayed compassionate outcomes over millennia. A few animals in a village setting have become billions of animals eating the world's resources, with a disturbed and foreign lifestyle. We reap what we sow, most certainly we do that, with some 50% of food resources being dedicated to the taste buds of the selected few.

Apparently the philosopher Foucault argued for a distinction between understandings of the present, as opposed to explanations of the past; for an 'emphasis on descent, rather than origin' (Ref.6).

We may try to mimic traditional lifestyles as an attempt at sustainable living for instance, but values and techniques, which may previously have been important and self evident, inherent in the community in previous eras, can remain silent if we are prepared to accept the values of our present scientific knowledge. Decision making can and does polarise through the emotional-mental divide, and is but another opportunity for dissolving our differences through the process of emergence.

The anthropologist Sansom (Ref.7) writes that Aboriginal people 'distinguish between inner truths and outside appearances in all aspects of being' (Ref.7), and he also quotes the anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner, that "Dreamings populate an everywhen-all the instants of being, whether completed or to come"; what a wonderfully descriptive word is everywhen. Shedding light on the numerous facets of these observations is no easy task, and again we are plunged into the deepest of contemplations; to a reflection of our own limited belief systems, which inevitably lead us back to the universal enquiry, "Who am I".

According to the Indian sage Ramana Maharshi (Ref.8), until we can discover whom this 'I' is, every other thought we generate is illusory; the original illusion is then not that we ignore the ever-changing moment, but *"that we believe we are the doer of our actions"*. As a self-contained person navigating the world, we have to accept the level of reality we inhabit, but it is also incumbent upon the truth seeker, to retain an open mind, to grapple with the larger questions of existence, and discover harmony both within and without.

Empathy

*"What part of myself am I pushing away?"---
Canela Meyers*

Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another being (a human or non-human animal) is experiencing from within the other being's frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position.

Just as compassion can be learnt, so too can empathy, and the author Roman Krznaric presents a commentary on life enhancing habits in a book entitled 'Empathy: Why It Matters, and How to Get It' (Ref.9); this instruction on how to connect with others to make the world a better place comes through the application of our empathetic responses, not just from the realisation of our connectedness. We learn to empathise with others, by learning to listen to our selves, to be in the now; just repeating what another person says can be a 50% movement in the measurement of empathic action. The author suggests this movement from conversation to experience, to try to move into someone else's life, can help us cross the divide of generations.

Where a personal caring relationship is developed between individual people and animals, the opportunities for empathy are considerable, and so this relationship which is fostered in many walks of life, whether it be with domesticated animals, the return of wildlife back to a natural environment, or the study and enquiry to gain an extended understanding of fellow creatures; where this relationship is formed and maintained as respectful of welfare and rights, and equanimous to both the humans and animals, a degree of empathy exists which if exercised with compassion and kindness, may enhance the lives of those involved.

Unfortunately this empathy is not always available in all the relationships that are commenced, and this observation is relevant to the means by which we perpetrate the conditions that allow exploitation and cruelty to occur. No matter how loving we think we are, and how caring, if we know that the chook is going to be sitting on the dinner table six months from now, we are really deceiving ourselves if we believe we are fully engaging with the rights and welfare of that animal. Are we fooling ourselves or just the animal, perhaps it is both?

The gorgeous puppy can quickly outgrow the small flat we inhabit, and our provision of time and dedication to walking and attention may have been ill conceived, or circumstances change; so while house pets are great mates, they are very reliant on our stability and vigilance and care and empathy for their welfare. Our desire for company

is not necessarily the best reason to be adopting pets, we need to deeply consider our personal responsibility for caring, as the implication here is that we are looking outside of our self for enjoyment, and employing a pet to share our burden may be fickle, selfish, or both, rather than empathetic.

Language

"Our being is not reliant on language, in the 'being mind' words and sentences and expressions arise, this is the natural response in a conversation"---Norio Kushi

Language is the cornerstone of communication and has roots in the body, mind and spirit, and while a knowing of the 'being mind' may apply in an awakened state of awareness, we usually express body language through movement or stillness; and in speech as a 'coherent assembly of words used to identify and transmit our thoughts for sharing'. The process of speech (Ref.10) has been described as words 'arising from an enquiry into abstract knowledge, whence arises the ego, leading to thought, and thought to the spoken word; when seeking finishes, silence is the most potent form of work'.

Language is used for training the mind in beliefs and concepts, the mind conceives of a bank of memories from language, and we construct a personality, we talk to our selves with self-talk, and become doers, responding from learnt experience. We are unsure of how decisions actually come about, the mind seems to make itself up; we can presume our actions are the results of our rational thinking, although many actions become and are, automatic and habitual. Words become 'loaded' with our experience, memories and preconceptions, but are not essential for work to be done.

Feelings and emotions come from a sensitivity in the body, our being mind is not reliant on language training, we can respond and act and not say anything, neither verbalise out loud, nor self-talk; we use the language of action or inaction which arises, seemingly not from the thinking mind; this source of language responses is non apparent, and psychology may be utilised in an attempt to rationalise our actions. The energy of truth can be a felt experience.

The history of happenings and thoughts becomes our story, confirmed through language reinforcement and the never-ending circular suggestions of cause and effect, the writing of the script of the cosmic joke. While lamenting the recent generational loss of 50% of the some six - thousand world languages (Ref.11), the anthropologist Wade Davis describes language as

the 'flash of human spirit', while it's importance is that of 'an old growth forest of the mind'. Daily experience indicates we move readily between these variations in language; the clichés and the habits of the doing mind, the being mind where words arise as a natural response, the language springs from whichever realm we inhabit.

The process of integrating vegan thought and action within the old social and cultural stereotypes was the subject of a workshop I attended at the Brazil International Vegan Festival (IVF) in 2009, which included input from practicing sociologists and ethicists who had sought to identify the most effective ways that veganism might best be served. In identifying the need to reframe the existing social paradigm, the discussion concluded that a totally new way of languaging was needed, even the incorporation of new words, to assist with dissemination of the vegan message.

These comments highlighted the fact that deeply perceived stereotypes often require resourcing of education to be effective, re- affirming the need to provide additional early learning opportunities for teaching of empathy and compassion, and also offered further encouragement for this vegaculture narrative. These observations are critical to discussions and writings where there is a desire to expose a wider audience to the variety of aspects of true nature.

Communication is so very dependent on the definitions and nuances of commonly used words with numerous interpretations; whichever spiritual term we use to attempt to express the inexpressible, or to describe the indescribable, whether it be the capital 'I', true nature, oneness, God, universal love, being human, awareness, consciousness, infinite reality, presence, knowingness, etc., the affirmation of the importance of language is ultimately confirmed by our own understanding.

Languaging a way forward exposes a progression, a process of transition through the relative mind, and Amoda Maa, a contemporary teacher and author within the spiritual community, confirmed this experience in a recent interview (Ref.12), when she pointed to the adjuncts of our ego that are attached to the Self. She suggested 'the essential human condition is ...*the spiritual* that has a lot of baggage'; and she continued by confirming the message that "*all beliefs have to be surrendered.....so spirituality can be thrown away to open to the experience of the being human.....as a benevolent universe has to be lived by love*".

The suggestion to discard the label of spirituality for human beingness has been made, and another

doorway opens to our understanding of the process of letting go; a fine example of the value that stems from the direct experience of traversing the simultaneous true levels of reality. These few words make a very powerful statement and a significant contribution to the basket of language that has the capacity to promote healing, particularly in the spiritual-secular divide. This suggestion to surrender all beliefs and 'to open to the experience of being human', is another demonstration of the emergence of consciousness in daily life, and descriptive of the intention of this foray into the languaging of Vegaculture.

The pointing to language also invokes the significance of the need to question 'loaded terms' and the misuse of the word compassion has its own parallels with the spirituality term, and the baggage of entrenched personal and community stereotypes in various global cultural social settings can easily restrict successful outcomes. Our beingness is typically suppressed due to our own reluctance for self-expression, which can be exacerbated by lack of opportunity, or a dumbing - down, or just simply due to limited access to like-minds.

We are limited by our own beliefs, and the sentiment was earlier expressed in the U.G. Krishnamurti quote, 'we wear names and eat ideas'. The value of definition and understanding nuance in language is very much a necessity, and although I may sense a closer-ness on the transcendent journey, I would like to believe that my *being human* not only helps me to digest some of the ideas of Oneness, but also prompts my participation in the distribution of a fair share; even if it is only the practice of self-talk!

18. CARING

"Set limits and redistribute surplus; we are provided with times of abundance which enables us to share with other"---permaculture principles.com

SOCIETY

Society is a relationship between people, traversing the spectrum of social and unsocial animals, and although there are many individuals who go to make up society, it is not separate from me; we are part of a collective consciousness. Sensing happiness, our tendency is to respond and rejoice, but we also suffer on behalf of others as well as ourselves.

The closer one gets to realising one's own truth, improving self awareness and self worth, the better we understand ourselves, which leads to caring,

help and support for each other. Even if I have previously felt helpless and estranged, my personal input has inherent value when I understand my relationship to society is real, I can see that my actions or indeed inactions are effective reinforcing the positive contributions we all can provide to society as a whole.

Doing Our Best

"A stupid man needs special, a conscious man makes everything special"---Rudi

Adopting a 'veggie-culture' would be a convergence of traditions, a marriage of vegetarian food choices, with a nature-based lifestyle; of holistic individual preference, with community and social responsibility.

However, if we try to do our best, by minimising animal cruelty and exploitation, the circumstances mandate a solution inclusive of a higher order of awareness, the exclusion of all animal products, hence we arrive at a compassionate lifestyle, with a vegan dietary; the application of vegaculture is representative of this stage in our social evolution.

Vegaculture offers a place of real stability in a world where lifestyle and dietary choices are undergoing rapid change; just when we think we have reached a place of respite, we can suddenly find the world more confusing.

The relationship between animal farming and environment degradation is well documented, as evidenced by the simple example of resource sharing in bio-food security, where a plant-food dietary leads to a drop in energy usage, and the more efficient food production will lead to savings in water consumption.

Practicing What We Preach

"You are a karmic wind-up toy let loose in a world of infinite possibility"---David R. Hawkins

The Vegetarian ethic is a documented tradition enshrined in many cultures and religions, while Permaculture draws its tradition over similar time frames and in all cultures, as a collection of practical knowledge and design expertise on the path to sustainable living. Both traditions identify and maintain ethical guidelines for living together as communities with mutual respect, with emphasis on different facets of daily life.

What is common here is the word tradition, which is a belief or behaviour passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. This tradition has provided a foundation, a place of significance, a fall-back position, to which we can refer with some confidence, a place of relative safety and re-

assurance in a world known to exhibit fear and suffering.

History shows, and we recognise from our own experience, that the social and cultural milieu we inhabit today proposes a myriad of lifestyle choices previously unobtainable. By accessing these, we often need to let go of tradition, and in so doing our support processes may fall away. Vegaculture is offered as a new base line for support in a relative world, one that recognises fear and suffering, and which deliberately embraces compassion in daily life, expanding the opportunities in the present to build on the legacies of previous traditions.

Evaluating our practices is essential and requires more than a smidgen of self-reflection as the mind has a tendency to accept mental closure without waiting for feedback and confirmation from the physical experience; an essential act if we are to know our knowing in ourselves. The talk of traditions and cultural momentum are mental concepts, memories of other people's experience not as a result of our own actions; false notions and fake news would suffer the wrath of truth if we were to 'preach what we practice', rather than 'practice what we preach'. If I was a punter, I would be betting on a rise in garden club membership, rather than an increase in apprentice butchers; out of sight is very much out of mind.

Moving the conversation back to common knowledge, we find that 'every man and his dog' is aware of a plethora of social and political injustices that surround and inhabit our civilian institutions whose job it is to administer and distribute the wealth of nations. A fair share is a good idea, which has an incredible depth and resilience in our social transactions and like the concept of sustainable living, is a work in progress. Rather than examining the outside appearances of human behaviour, which has had it's own fair share of attention, a shift in consciousness is needed to the focus of one's own truth; the current global popularity in meditation and mindfulness training being an excellent example of increased community awareness and a willingness to do the practice, not just the preaching!

As a social movement, permaculture has great experience and value in the exploration of lifestyles, because its base is a system which has self-reliance and self-critical appraisal; and that provides a segue to the Buddhist tradition, where we find extensive reasoning and guidelines to assist with compassion, and its expressions in daily life. The dietary rules of Buddhism (Ref.13) are similar to a vegan dietary, to prevent the killing of any sentient being, and not to use animal products,

however, we are again met by the paradox of simultaneous truths, as the cuisines of all the predominantly Buddhist populations feature meat.

A vegetarian dietary may well be considered to be suitable by its proponents, but this does not suggest one should rest on their laurels, and an even fairer share may be likely. One can theoretically extend this attitude of advancing awareness in the evolution of diet all the way to the Breatharian regime if we wished. From this perspective, where human nourishment arises from various prana (breathing) practices, rather than our digestion system, then the vegan stage is also just another rung on the ladder, albeit a timely and achievable rung for most people in today's environment.

The renaissance in disseminated thought and culture has been enormously instructive in this internet era, but reasoning as a basis for decision making cannot truthfully claim 'tradition' as the over riding tenet, for actions which continue to perpetrate fear and suffering in the wider community; and in this instance, in the provision and continuation of exploitation of people, cruelty to animals and damage to the earth. The only fair share here is the universality of a distribution of suffering.

When one observes the continuing and ritualised abuse and outcomes of wide-scale complacency with dietary sources, including the continued reliance on animals for food, the limits of all the traditions need to be explored and, if necessary, expanded to incorporate our increasing understanding and awareness of the connectedness and consciousness in all life. The moral reasoning and health benefits of a vegan dietary should be distributed widely, without restrictions. The catch phrase, 'do no harm,' which is specifically cautioned in all religions, is actually the primary ethical basis for a vegan dietary recommendation.

Common sense would dictate our support and adherence to cultures that negate misleading information, and advocate support for sustainability as a way forward. Permaculture has rested in this place; the vegetarian ethic has been a stepping-stone to peace over the millennia, and Buddhism remains a shining light for kindness and compassion with an increasing number of adherents. There is always a place for change and movement, and while many aspects of life creep into decision-making processes, the rights to life are a significant factor in all that we do, and recognising change in a changing world is consistent with principles of sustainability.

These statements are not meant to suggest that compassionate acts are only related to a vegan diet or a Buddhist persuasion, or that priority of action

should be outsourced to well-meaning others, or that the human condition cannot but help to create compassionate acts in many forms, as this is our natural state; but the consideration of the results of modern enquiry, which point to healthier lifestyle and dietary need to be disseminated if we are serious about holistic sustainable living, and the examples chosen have many partners.

The conditions that spawned the various traditions are still available and lived and enjoyed and suffered every day by numerous billions of people, and one may empathise with the perceived difficulties and reluctance to change. Scale is a significant factor in these discussions, and debates about animal welfare in a home setting are magnified when commercial farming is involved. The connection between people and their cared animals always has the potential for sharing, but as the distance increases, between responsibility and authority, between contracted staff and personal attendance, between compounds and cages and natural foraging or grazing, so also does the gap increase between un-natural and natural order.

In the dominant social order, with the continuing displacement of humans and other animals from their natural habitat some centuries ago, to the cities and penitentiaries of the 21st century, comes the responsibility for revisiting the base line conditions of living. Raising the bar opens the way to the process of letting go of habits and traditions, and has to be experienced to be effective. Transformation is inevitable; the removal of past habits and tendencies is in the doing, with removal of the veil. If we are happy where we are, and don't see the need for change, then we won't change, a very simple truism.

Vegaculture can be practiced by anyone, and is based in humanism, with its roots in a compassionate application of social design principles, to maintain the care and promote the rights of animals, as well as the care and welfare of people, the earth, and a fair share.

Limitations

"Control means to confine something within certain limits. Don't control your mind – liberate it"---Sadhguru

The taught and learnt experiences of being who we are, is reinforced in the dominant culture, now mostly capitalist based, with clever (sic) marketing, where a fair share has now morphed into a 'fare share'. We live so readily in our own dreams and fantasies, making and pursuing goals and documenting our memories, for this is the human experience for most of us at some stage, if not for all of our life, the desires and wants taking precedence over just being; who could wish for more?

Actually this question is quite serious, because regular feedback from the community indicates very few of us would truthfully wish for more, in fact it is more than likely we may really be wishing for less (Ref.14). Both life and lifestyle changes are being driven to react more and at a faster pace, due to factors such as population growth, changes in our daily interactions with the introduction of technology, the demise of restrictions to freedom from establishments such as church and religion and family structures, an increasing awareness of impending alarm due to media saturation, and the competition for regular work and employment.

We try to make time for natural play and meaningful human endeavour, but these basic tendencies are already considered a bonus among large numbers of people leading a busy lifestyle. Wow, who wants that? So finding a way out becomes very important, especially as we often don't realise we have been responsible for finding our way in. OK, we can concede it is not all our own doing, and that we have been tutored lovingly to the best of our parents and carers' responsibilities, but none the less, when we end up in a place of reservation, we really need to take responsibility if we booked the seats!

There is a myriad of unsustainable and unsatisfactory current practice and planning, and a wide spectrum of social discontent, even a sense of miserable failure and despair is upon us; a reflection of the lack of leadership and political will to distance politics from business, and move agendas back to citizens welfare. In fact hope and despair may be the only things that get close to being sustainable; reaffirmed, from our knowledge of history and experience, as suffering continues unabated. The faces change but the lines of despair become deeply ingrained in each new generation.

This deeper impression, an introspection of suffering, leads one to realise that the gathering of personal experience of suffering, is interspersed with cycles of happiness also; in the broadest sense, what has been meant by the continuation of suffering, is not only that of the individual, but the collective suffering of the collective

consciousness, the human condition; which by its manifestation leads to a vaster extrapolation, the suffering of animals and the environment and the decimation and destruction of natural habitats for all species.

The social and cultural paradigms are immensely instructive, but one can also say immensely invasive of our psychological make up; the hard-wiring of dominant pathways needs to be disentangled, the web of neurons need a gentle massage, a softening up and separation from their favourite mates. While we are limited, we are in bondage, which is the opposite of liberation, and yet it is through liberation of past habits and mistakes that we free ourselves, and then less becomes more.

Sustainability

"Sustainability has four elements: environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability. So when we talk about the idea of sustainable communities, we are talking about communities which exist without degrading the natural environment, which provide for ongoing economic resilience and which nurture healthy, creative and culturally diverse societies"---CAFNEC

Sustainability is defined in various ways depending on the focus, however, I have chosen the statement above at random; it is a definition from a local group called CAFNEC, the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (Ref.15). A comprehensive statement that appears reasonable, and should be adequate to explore the topic if we understand all life and sentience is inclusive in the referenced communities, and so without degradation and with ongoing resilience and nurture, we have a measure of outcomes for all.

But the crux of the definition is really that *'we talk about the idea of sustainable communities,'* but realising sustainability, and finding consensus for that realisation is impossible, so we are left with a best guess through trial and error with refinement from expert knowledge and wisdom.

All life is change, not only is it impossible to monitor all life, we can't even identify its direction or intent, if indeed there is any, and we certainly can't legislate it. Neither can we identify a timeframe for a response that is not immediately obvious, one never knows, until after the event, what latent or momentous outcomes will manifest. If we want order and sustainable outcomes they will not be found in the repetition of unsustainable practices, that have led us here in the first place, we have to put our own house in order, only then do we have a chance, to allow the creative urge space to move.

The issue of sustainability is firmly established in social dialogue, and has been given a high status as a measuring tool for the success of current and future civilisation. From a vegaculture perspective, it is blatantly obvious that reliance on animals for food and nutrition has to have an end date in sight if one is to be serious about holistic sustainability; the exploitation and cruelty of any being does not meet any befitting description of what it means to be sustainable.

The term *holistic sustainability* reminds us of our wholeness, and can be used to further enhance the intent of the vegaculture message in reference to sustainable outcomes in the modern era, and the need to be more compliant with moral and ethical motives and perspective if the journey is to be successful.

On the path of evolution, the history of human interaction of changes to the environment is visible and well recorded with disturbance of the earth through mining and extraction processes, disturbance of the shape and proportions of the landscape, dams have been added and river courses altered, plant and animal life has been changed, fostered, modified and become extinct due to human preference and interference; and in the realm of fluid movement, we have polluted the waters and gases of the world we inhabit; all sorts of changes have been instigated by the presence of humans.

The history of the effects of human activity and current practice indicates a failure to meet sustainable criteria, and the integration of many of these barbarous expressions of human activity may be so common as to be considered 'the way of the world,' but when considered in the context of unnecessary harm, we realise the correspondence with other forms of violence; the need for behavioural change and the introduction of a vegaculture view is axiomatic. The materialist nightmare is a degenerative experience, practicing growth at the expense of the world's resources is not sustainable; nature offers a path, ever beckoning; the infrastructure for life is regenerative, inherently self-healing, in nature and of itself.

Vegaculture asks each of us to respect the variety of aspects of universal spirit, the identity of life within each and every form that appears, whether it is that annoying mosquito, or the recipient of the most heart wrenching abuses that human actions proliferate. Consideration of the results of our prior actions provides excellent examples for change, and may guide reasoning that would suggest we do nothing; leave things as they are, or as the environmentalists state, 'take only photographs, and leave only footprints'!

Numerous forms of assistance are available for people wishing to make lifestyle and dietary changes, while the resolve to foster compassionate outcomes invokes positive feedback as we familiarise ourselves with new ways and information. There is a creative journey just waiting for personal growth and enrichment; by identifying, committing and acting on the greater good we can approach sustainable solutions. The much-hackneyed phrases, follow your heart, err on the side of life, and the best things in life are free, all converge as simple good advice when we align ourselves with the greater good.

Moral Imperative

*"The mind is societies garbage bin. Everyone who passes by stuffs something into It"---
Sadhguru*

At this stage one may revert to the classics, to the lessons from the past, not that we have always learned from the past, but this is the usual avenue, once having identified discontent, we act to overcome the problem. However, humans of the present era have seldom undergone a test for survival such as presented by climate change.

We may have in our genes the memory of past climate events which were survived, but we cannot cognise and react to nature as before, because we have largely removed ourselves from it, and continue to remove nature from ourselves, we have civilised (sic) both! Human migration may have to occur due to climate change, however habitable land mass and local resources provide limits on supervised population movement.

We are faced with a dilemma, the scale or magnitude of which is enormous. If one were consciously striving for the idea of sustainability, which has been at the forefront of the minds of some, and at the back of many more, this outcome would be inconceivable; but we as a society have not been striving enough, we still even today persist with self gratification and business as usual.

What sort of disconnect is there, which can so overwhelm the human psyche that allows one to deny our offspring, and the offspring of numerous other species the birthright we purport to cherish. In the recent era of slogans, war was declared on terrorism, and it is more than likely someone is going to declare a war on climate change. But what does that mean and how will it help? If a war on climate change meant a revolution in human priorities with an urgency which often only comes with a catastrophic or wartime setting, then that might be useful.

One might conclude that as a collective we are incapable of understanding. The organism's

survival has been honed on facing adversity when it occurs, living in the now and acting from natural instinct and cunning. Procrastinating is integral with our development as a species, and we have also been deniers. The media and communication networks, which service public opinion, are disjointed; fragmenting citizen responses enjoys privilege.

Assessments of public interest and the intellectual capacity to act has been researched, and we need to recognise not everyone has a mindset available to assist, and that on some estimates there is at the most a possible 30% of people who are actually likely to have a capacity to act (Ref.16). In a book published in 2000, some 25% of adult Americans were called the 'Cultural Creatives,' based on their influential capacity within the society at large (Ref.17); one would expect similar outcomes in other countries, and it is here that one looks for leadership and vision, and here also where empathy for a vegaculture view is most likely to arise.

The world currently demonstrates its lack of sustainability, however, at least now the event of climate change is being measured, the *idea of sustainability* and the effects of action on climate change can also now be legitimately considered, we know the direction and we know the intent, we have to act now, this is the time; the adversity is real.

Australian philosopher Robert Manne writes how the crisis in morality of climate change has stripped us bare, and in this excerpt from his review of environmentalist Naomi Kline's recent book (Ref.18):

"Like all those engaged in this struggle, Klein admits that she cannot free herself entirely from the threat of "inertia or even despair." Neither she nor I nor anyone else knows whether humankind will rise to the challenge of climate change; or, if we do, whether it will be too late; or, if it is not too late, what the new, non-fossil fuel energy mix will be; or how this new mix will be transferred from the developed to the less developed world; or what the world that has transcended neoliberalism and unfettered capitalism will look like.

Of only one thing can we be sure. None of this will happen without a revolution in the way we think about our relations with the Earth and with our fellow human beings".

The moral significance has been raised and it appears we have to now go inside! Our moral compass continues to navigate the journey each of us takes, and we need to foster the importance of this compass in determining who we really are, by practicing our truth and not by procrastinating, but

by looking inside and allowing the answer to our question, for the moral solution.

The morality suggested must contain the finest response we can acknowledge, and it is this response which is needed from each and everyone of us; for climate change is really asking us all to reconsider what we take for granted, and to peer deep into our soul and spiritual connection with mother Earth. The response will unfold, manifest eventually, even without our help it arrives from the depths of our being, our mind makes itself up, and we need then to summon the courage to act!

The movement from a personal morality towards a functioning social ethic will touch all aspects of culture. When this happens, we truly will have a revolution in thinking and acting, a movement for compassionate living seeking integration within the world collective, displacing confusion and coalescing the disparate collection of fragmented response. We can approach from a position of recognition, but whether we do or not, the momentum that has been unleashed has a tsunami potential, and the need for self-aware compassion for people, animals and the earth is in big demand and rising rapidly.

Germination

"To be sincere means: whatever you do, act with your heart and mind 100 percent"---Lama Dondrup Dorje

It is wonderful to contemplate a world without harm or discontent, where wars give way to universal love and compassion; this is a guiding light. However, just realising freedom exists without acting on the knowledge leads to very different outcomes. Head and hands, thought and action, being and doing, the play of life is in the dance. These are universal pairs, part of the relative world; overcoming fear is, for most of us the limiting factor in our lives; choosing freedom is the essential creative act.

The dawning of a new century, a new age and a new generation reminds us that we can also renew our selves; the plasticity of the brain confirmed by neuroscience has an aspect of freedom that is compelling. A rejuvenation in perception and re-connection to a tangible sense of freedom and happiness, a reminder of who we are; and as the errors of past activity are further revealed, the search for meaning and truth is enhanced, until the truth becomes paramount.

As a global community we have the means to rapidly progress sustainable processes and outcomes, the seeds of change are apparent but the germination rate is far too small. As individuals we are responsible for our own adoption of numerous effective sustainable practices and

models within our reach. Planting the seed of vegaculture has real value only if it germinates, and while the momentum of existing cultures is massive, the waves of recognition for social and cultural change to a more holistic lifestyle is seeding the vegan message more widely than ever before. From a practical point of view we can be optimistic as our individual vegan choices are congruent with the provision of a fair share.

19. SOCIAL NUTRITION

"Deep within the human constitution lie written laws of nature that should guide man in the conduct of his life"--Herbert Shelton

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Common sense suggests that the environment will be undergoing further suffering along with our movement into obesity, which has become the major, human health issue of our time. An outcome that is not surprising really, as our personal relationship to growing our own food diminishes, our reliance on processed and 'non-foods' increases, and active physical participation in self-sufficiency also declines.

I researched and reviewed the scientific literature in 2004, to make an assessment of the consumer options for decreasing and minimising environmental impact. Updated scrutiny is obviously necessary to verify the current situation, but the results were valid then, and are reproduced below to demonstrate the type of research involved in these issues, and to highlight the complexity and methodology in making a scientific determination. The academic approach demands conformity in social justification, and it's dryness is in stark contrast to individual self-expression in the social domain.

Eating an apple from your apple tree for instance is a simple act of personal choice; now let us see what one needs to do, if they had to justify that choice, through the presentation model of peer reviewed literature.

Food Choices and the Environment

An insight into the diversity and complexity of consumer food choice options, and their relationship to environmental impact, is presented. Identification and discussion of these options, both qualitatively and quantitatively, provides a forum for application of pragmatic decisions, on the path toward sustainability. Food choice options available to the consumer in the home, while shopping, in the community, and in policy are scrutinised. Food choices for citizens and

consumers within the western social community are integrally linked, both directly and indirectly with environmental consequences (Ref.19).

As further globalisation of the food system continues, these choices are increasingly applicable to consumers elsewhere (Ref.20). An informed choice is central to the outcome of our decisions, and dependent on time, place and quality of information. People who make healthy food choices assist with decreasing environmental impacts by avoiding resource use, and maintaining a greater potential for positive contributions to the community (Ref.21, 22).

We are empowered by our choices, and ultimately our deeds are determined by the results of our actions.

DECREASED IMPACT OPTIONS

Home

The commencement and development of food choice begins in the home, a foundation for dietary preference, education, family and community activity. The home is where we can gain and practice skills in food selection, planning, sourcing, preparation and safety. We also learn about nutritional value and decision-making and form attitudes and habits. One survey of adolescents' perspectives in USA, found about 83% of students said they cooked food at home. (Ref.21). In the general population though, home food preparation and cooking skills appear to be waning, this being viewed by educators as a crisis (Ref.22).

Some concerned citizens are addressing these issues, for example the Chefs Collaborative in the US. This body represents restaurateurs who are encouraging children to learn the impact of their food choice on themselves, their culture and their environment, setting an example by pursuing and promote an environmentally friendly agenda in their own businesses, by offering consumers a positive choice when they do eat out (Ref.23).

Eating home-grown and local produce is claimed to be healthier, with decreased environmental impact, as food can be fresher, less likely to perish, and does not have as far to travel (Ref.22). Increasing urbanization is allied with an increase in meat-eating, which could be up to double present consumption by 2020 in developing countries with a 25% projected increase in the west. As cereals are used for livestock feed, requiring 7kg to yield 1kg beef, 4kg for 1kg pork and 2kg for 1kg poultry, the consideration of vegetarian choices becomes more and more relevant (Ref.24).

Plant-based diets and other foods, which appear lower on the food chain, can decrease environmental impact. A study in Holland concluded the average vegetarian meal, where meat was replaced with soy-based protein, had roughly a 1.5 to 2 times environmental advantage over an average Dutch conventional meal (Ref.25). The American Dietetic Association also suggests appropriately planned vegetarian diets offer health benefits in the treatment and prevention of some diseases (Ref.26).

Shopping

Food Origin

In the west, 'free markets' dominate the range of food options available to the consumer. The autonomy of consumer food choice to promote a decrease in environmental impact is paramount in wealthy countries, because the paradigm of corporate free-trade policy works actively against democratic control, promoting values such as individualism rather than community (Ref.19). The environmental imbalance, due to dependence on growing food for export and importing food to eat, will remain unabated until consumers exercise their choice for local produce (Ref.22).

With a projected 84% increase in world population growth, by 2050, expected to be in present day developing countries, the need for industrialized countries to become less reliant on overseas trade is likely to lead to a more sustainable agriculture (Ref.24). Certainly, the provision of an environmentally sustainable food supply will require people to eat locally produced food (Ref.27).

Consumer attitudes are complex, at times ambivalent. The Bissonnette and Contento study (Ref.21) also found 80% suggesting food grown nearby was unimportant to them, yet over 66% declared people should have more locally grown foods available. About half of the same group sample said it was not their personal responsibility to purchase local (or organic) foods, thereby increasing demand, in order to improve environmental health. This suggests the need for a deeper understanding of consumer motivation and commitment. Again, further education of the relationships between food choice, energy demands and greenhouse gas emissions is also warranted if consumer food choice is to be effective in decreasing environmental impact.

Food Production

Environmental debate about alternatives to conventional agriculture focuses on two main issues presently; genetically engineered crops (GE), and organically grown food. Advocates of

GE-crops want to legislate for 'substantial equivalence' to conventional crops, whilst the 'organically grown' lobby want to legislate organic foods for 'substantial difference' from conventional foods. While the irony of this situation may leave the conventional farmer bemused, it may also leave consumers confused.

A 1993 FAO report stated *"Emerging biotechnologies have considerable potential to enhance food and agricultural production in the developing world, but they could also add to existing inequities by displacing traditional agricultural products, accelerating genetic erosion and introducing new environmental hazards"* (Ref.28). Some 30,000 processed foods already contain GE-crop products, mainly from soybeans, canola and cottonseed oils. A few fresh GE-crops such as corn, tomatoes and potatoes are available in North America presently (Ref.29). Other production alternatives, such as marketing low-pesticide conventional crops, appear to be overwhelmed by the above debate. The US FDA has tested foods for pesticide content and information to enable consumer choice is available from various websites.

A survey in the U.K. found organic production on average, was a low priority when compared to health, animal welfare and the environment (Ref.30). In the U.S. organically grown food is now one of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture. Key motivation for choosing organically grown is the avoidance of potentially damaging herbicides and pesticides, and purchasing foods that have a known environmental impact (Ref.31, 32).

To achieve these goals, some consumers are expressing a willingness to pay extra, with continued food quality mentioned as implicit for continuity of consumer support (Ref.33, 34). There are limits to how far consumers will support environmentally friendly products. A U.K. survey of consumers showed 25% in urban and 30% in rural areas would be willing to pay up to 5% and 10% more respectively, for locally produced foods. However, price support above 10% was minimal (Ref.30).

Labelling

Product labelling is an essential component of informed food choice. Nutritional and education labels are aimed at providing understandable, usable and consistent information to enable consumers to select healthier foods. Although some information is available, consumer response appears mixed. Nayga (Ref.35) indicates varied success with nutrition labels, leading to only a small improvement in diet quality, and the ability

of U.S. consumers to understand label content without further education, is questioned.

'Eco-friendly' labels are being added to environmentally friendly products, but some companies have used this as a gimmick. The role of NGO's for eco-labelling, certification and monitoring also needs further clarification. (Ref.36). Over 25 countries have national eco-labels applying to a variety of goods. However in Australia, labels and approvals such as National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) stem from industry and self-regulatory authorities.

The 'Blue Angel' label in Germany, introduced in 1977 to promote resource conservation, limit pollution and raise environmental awareness has been successful. It is recognized by over 60% of German consumers, with certification of more than 3,700 products by 2002 (Ref.37). Adoption by other industrialized countries, of environmentally friendly food labelling, would provide a focus for the large numbers of consumers who are willing to assist with decreasing the environmental impact of their food choices.

Community

Gussow (Ref.22), suggests that helping small farmers survive by a greater recognition of their role, appears to be a prerequisite for a decrease in environmental impact. Farmers need a year-round market, as the move toward farm conglomerates to satisfy the dominant supermarket paradigm isolates small producers. Even poor countries are increasingly reliant on food imports. As the author succinctly states, *"everyone can't import, someone has to grow"*.

Community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, farm door sales, and pick-your-own foods are all methods of marketing which can be inclusive of environmentally sound food choices. Farmers markets are being re-introduced in the UK, while the number of CSA's is growing in USA. (Ref.38,39). The LETS (Local Energy Trading System), which uses alternative currency, operates in some Australian regions, with community support for swapping of local produce amongst members (Ref.40).

Since the rates of childhood obesity have become apparent in the West, the need to introduce school health programs, to support and educate children about proper nutrition and the importance of physical activity, is receiving much community attention. Coordinated nutrition services, with access to child health and sequential nutrition programs, support in school environments, and family, community and health-services partnerships are being proposed by dieticians

(Ref.41). A 'life-long' commitment is a central feature of any program, if gains towards a decreased environmental impact are to remain.

Policy

Facilitating food safety and security, through a safe and secure environment, is an obvious policy initiative for all governments (Ref.42). Implicit in the discussion and formulation of these policies are the needs of citizens, whose fundamental means of expression is via food purchase. Sustainable agriculture has explicit support from just two nations; these are Cuba and Switzerland.

Although in general agreement about recognition of the need to decrease environmental impacts, government support and incentives with reforms in policy and new regulations have been only partially effective (Ref.24). Policy initiatives need to recognize the interconnectedness between various elements: public health, agriculture, nutrition and disease, the food system, economics and environmental impacts; interacting together as well as individually (Ref.43).

Henson (Ref.44), highlights the dichotomy of opinion between consumer and corporate desires, when he proposes the strategy of regulatory and administrative law has resulted in the licensing of an unacceptable and unsustainable level of cultural and ecological destruction, marginalizing the most fundamental democratic concerns.

Corporations readily operate in a framework, which does not fully address issues of environmental impact, whilst consumers and protagonists battle harmful situations, on a one-by-one basis. He suggests the central issue is about private, corporate decision-making versus public, democratic decision-making on issues of food and agriculture.

Conner (Ref.45), makes similar claims by proposing that process standards, in their current form are inadequate. Consumers, who wish to protect the organic and GE – free status, are unable to do so under present USA policy and property rights regime. Product standards, which protect the right to consume 'pure' foods, are deemed to be necessary.

MINIMAL IMPACT CHOICES

Personal Growth

Home-based food choices are central to minimizing environmental impact, the consumer is empowered directly to control their own input on a regular basis, with the potential to influence and educate family and friends by example. A review of personal behaviour reveals options for supplementing family diets by growing some of

our own food, assessing food-choice impact on refrigeration needs and cooking methods, attention to food storage, diet modification, making home meals and preserving seasonal foods. We know non-renewable resources-especially energy-are best conserved when fruit and vegetables are consumed in the regions where grown (Ref.22).

Parental influence of adolescents and mutual experiential learning, with visits to farmers, farmers markets and shopping expeditions is recommended to strengthen their decision-making processes. Parents figured strongly in a survey of sources of influence, with 43% being the main information source for food, whilst TV with 44% of respondents was the main source for the environmental information (Ref.20, 46).

To be of use in solving environmental problems, it is crucial to know which behaviours should be assumed to be ecologically advantageous and which make a difference regarding resource use (Ref.47). A consumer could easily assume an advantage by denying food-choice support for products from U.S. factory farms, whose animal waste production in 1996 was 130 times that of humans (Ref.48). However, while eating low on the food chain can be efficient, Reijnders and Soret (Ref.49), suggest the environmental burden of deep frozen vegetables use may exceed the primary production impact of organic meat.

A detailed Swedish comparison by Carlsson-Kanyama (Ref.50) highlights the complexities of analysis by examining the effect of food choices for both fossil fuel and greenhouse gas emissions. Mostly a complete vegetarian meal was favourable, but at other times a domestic animal and vegetable meal appeared advantageous.

The conclusion is significant, as the author suggests food consumption patterns then current were likely to contribute 4 times more than a sustainable greenhouse gas emission, with even a 'purely' vegetarian meal being unsustainable.

The above studies reinforce the need for discussions and activity, to be considered on a case-by-case basis for reduction/minimisation of individual environmental impacts, rather than solely seeking a 'sustainable food system' as the principal criteria.

Shopping and Marketplace

McKenzie (Ref.51) identified a plateau of consumption, with foods now competing against one another. Trends in behaviour and consumption are important. Researchers in USA have recently identified one of the significant consumption patterns, confirming that eating is a reflection of character. This ingredient, in

consumer culture, has been termed 'true naturals' and 'new green mainstream' in The Hartman Report (Ref.52); whilst 'cultural creatives' is the term used by Ray & Anderson (Ref.53) to describe a similar consumer group. Environmental stewardship and ethical eating are common denominators in food choices by these groups, who are thought to represent over 25% of the American public.

Market research has shown that within organic food shoppers, the environment rated fourth behind health/nutrition, taste, and food safety, ahead of only availability in reasons for motivation (Ref.43). So while the environment may not be the prime factor, all shoppers who choose organic foods ultimately assist with minimising environmental impacts.

Closer attention is needed if messages are to be properly relayed, as the National Consumer Council in U.K. reports that logos on labels, rather than inform, are likely to mislead (Ref.54). Increased awareness of local foods, which have to be available and have adequate nutrition, will minimise impact as a precursor to sustainability. Gussow (Ref.22) maintains this will only occur if food is financially supported and has an initial commitment, as influencing people to eat seasonal food may be achievable sometimes, but local eating all the time is seen as impossible, unlikely and maybe even unhealthy.

With continued import/export activity, support for fair trade items becomes increasingly important, to minimise environmental impact by ensuring a living wage for marginalized farmers and a more stable market. Consumer demand led to a 37% increase in 'Fair Trade' products in 2003, for the North America and the Pacific Rim region, but food is limited presently to bananas, pineapples and other tropical fruit, chocolate and coffee (Ref.55).

Community Groups and Education

Friends of the Earth (FOE) Melbourne, is a good example of how a local urban community project can assist with decreasing environmental impacts. A food co-operative is operated and staffed by volunteers to reduce wages, which allows affordable prices and quality produce. Consumers, both members and non-members, can select from a wide range of food supplies, with preference from local sources in bulk quantities, all produce is vegetarian and much of it grown by biodynamic or organic means, with opportunities for recycling and re-using packaging. Trade links with similar organizations when purchasing overseas supports the ethic for a decrease in environmental impact.

The Food Co-op challenges food consumer habits, working towards fundamental change offering a central informative community resource for consumer and public education (Ref. 56). Community campaigns, including genetic engineering, transport, water quality and safety, provide an opportunity for consumers to demonstrate the links which food choice has with environmental protection issues.

In Australia, the link between healthy eating habits, and concern for the environment through minimum packaging and eating fresh food, has been measured. Economic imperative and conventional farming factors may still be predominant in the food choice mix, however various elements of consumer awareness are compounding. The potential for local community food systems to nurture microeconomic climates is evident (Ref.57).

Promotion and success of farmers markets and open farm days is part of the solution. Opportunities for feedback complement the desire for eco-friendly trade between producers and consumers, extending the personal goodwill into the community (Ref.58,59).

A survey of sustainable agriculture in developing countries indicates a greater continuity and increased likelihood for adoption and persistence of innovative technologies, when social learning is advanced (Ref.24). Likewise, the environmental advantages of well-informed western consumers are dependent on continuing social support for recognition of beneficial changes in their own countries.

The realisation of common environmental goals is reinforced by global communication at a community level. Robinson & Smith (Ref.60), perceive a role for nutrition educators to 'bridge the gap' between agriculture and health.

By assisting both marketers and educators, with raising awareness of the issues such as consumer attitude, intention, purchase history and confidence in ability to select sustainably produced foods, benefits for minimising environmental impact are identified.

Policy and Legislation

Total onus for sustainability is too great a burden for individual consumers. Rather than clasp at technological straws and mandating hasty legislation, sharing the burden by enactment of policy with due conservatism through precautionary principles seems appropriate. (Ref.61). As noted by Waltner-Toews & Lang (Ref.43) progress in public health has occurred through public co-operation and investment in

infrastructure such as housing, employment, food and water supply, not through medical technology.

Consideration of consumer wariness for adoption of GE-foods, which may risk jeopardising the developed food chain, is a pivotal test of consumer choice and a further acknowledgement of the present state of democracy in industrialised countries.

Genuine alternatives to public policy may emerge. An increasing number of agricultural firms may be persuaded to practice business environment management (BEM), due to growing consumer demands. By controlling pollution, practicing environmental protection and setting voluntary environmental targets, rewards by capital markets for their superior environmental performance are expected by companies that adopt BEM (Ref. 47).

Consumer representatives have to be vigilant, create alternatives and work to dismantle the mechanisms of corporate rule if food choices are to become more democratic and representative of consumer interests (Ref.44). Environmentally damaging food can be minimised presently by promoting public policies that need to identify the real costs associated with production. Assessment using life-cycle analysis techniques, which expose hidden subsidies, are important (Ref.49).

Support by consumers and their representatives for various NGO campaigns, for example the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), in their efforts to prevent animal grazing in National Parks, extends the influence of consumer food choice options into other organisations, perhaps influencing policy formulation and eventual enactment.

CONCLUSION

In industrialized countries, citizens in the role of 'consumer' are swamped by choice. Our actions as food purchasers and eaters are being mapped to gain a deeper understanding of consumer motivation and commitment. This review of consumer food choice options reinforces the need for autonomy of personal, community, and policy activity and discussions; with options considered on a case-by-case basis, if adverse environmental impacts are to be minimised. There appears to be scope within each of the groups investigated for consumers to exercise food choices, which will have a beneficial and meaningful impact on the environment.

Many consumers are already choosing options, which purport to be environmentally friendly, even though, the information to confirm benefits maybe inconclusive. Some people are even prepared to pay for the privilege. Popular options currently

being canvassed include eating local, seasonal foods, organically grown or with minimum pesticide use, lower on the food chain and possibly vegetarian.

Consumers who make these food choices may not only effect a personal contribution by lowering their environmental impact, they are also likely to achieve benefits from a healthy lifestyle, with opportunities for education, the practice of democracy with social participation, and community support. People need personal and social support for change.

A grander agenda may also be perceived in the literature to support food choices, which minimise environmental impact. The concept of 'life-long' global vigilance for environmental health and safety is reflected in the recognition of a global community, and a need for consideration of citizens in other countries. With continued import and export activity, support for fair-trade items becomes increasingly important, especially as world population increases.

The seeds of change toward a new food culture, which has a greater affinity for minimal environmental impacts through food choice, are apparent. This culture becomes more achievable when the quality of the information which consumers have available to them, and the processes for decision- making, are instigated by democratic means on behalf of citizens. Promotion and adoption of these options by individuals at home, within the workplace and in government and regulatory authorities, will lead to a greater awareness and potential towards sustainable outcomes.

WAYS FORWARD

20. TRANSITION

21. IMMERSION

22. INTEGRATION

23. SCENARIOS

24. EMERGENCE

20. TRANSITION

"A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it"---Max Planck-Father of Quantum Physics

PREPARATION

Documented personal experiences demonstrate that one's sensitivity and awareness to the plight of animals is heightened as we come closer to realising the vegan view, independent of the original orientation, which is commonly either a health or ethical position. An holistic view, one consistent with mind, body and spirit, introduces a harmony into discussion and decision making, with rounded outcomes; we resonate with the approach, but often find a dominance or lack of one of these factors during self-reflection.

What occurs to me is a sense of dissociation arising from the dominance of the mind. Our feelings express our hearts' desires, and the mind gives value to the thoughts, while a practical or physical grounding of our notions and actions may remain elusive. Vegan Views is the name of a grass roots magazine, which started in U.K. in 1975, and is still being published. Articles (Ref.1), dating from that era are available on-line, and so it is possible to trace the recent passage of the collective vegan journey, and get an inkling of the unfolding of the great wealth of knowledge and experience that exists within the vegan community.

If we examine the roots of permaculture, what we find is a strongly expressed physical grounding of the human condition in the soil, the earth; the physical basis for existence, the place we cycle from, and to which we return. This relationship is fundamental to our grounding, we realise and value our contact with the ground, digging our hands in the soil, walking barefoot; experiencing the natural world is an invigorating and enriching activity.

Our physicality is expressed in many ways, but it is important to note that our views are only views, just that, they maybe sincerely held, worthwhile, spoken or unspoken, platitudes, beliefs, half-baked, influential or a load of old rubbish, which we regret having espoused. Familiarising the vegan view within our culture is essential, particularly so at the grass roots level where permaculture operates so successfully as a model for integration of landscape and people; the placement and acceptance of vegan views within the roots of permaculture, will offer an expression

of vegaculture which can provide a basis for further harmony and a grounded middle way.

Ramblings

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man"--- George Bernard Shaw (Man and Superman)

The comment is rather cynical, but a useful observation not unknown in our own experience; as relevant today as it was nearly a century ago, enough to prompt the question, "how have we advanced"? Until we can contain the deeper realisation that we, each of us, is the reasonable AND the unreasonable man, that there is no distinction between the 'I', the me, the little self and the rest of humanity, the all pervading consciousness, we will continue with Self-harm, ignorant to our plight of corruption and destruction. I am reminded of a gross popular saying that circulated in the 1960's, 'We shit in our bed and kick it out with our feet.'

In western societies in the 21st century and increasingly elsewhere, where are the experiences, the daily stories of the stalking and the hunting and the danger and the romance of the capture and the gruesome slaughter and carrying of the carcass back to camp? Where are the relationships, formed by sharing together the practice of cutting, skinning and de-boning, and carving and tasting, and saving and preserving? Where are the skills, and the preparation and planning, the place to set the fire and coals, where in the hazy sky is the moon to remind us of the time of sacrifice, for rain or security, or vitality of another meal and sustenance?

The answer for the urban dweller is in projection or memory, not reality for they have moved on; all of us have had an experience where the apparent meal options are restricted to a supermarket or fast food outlet, and a cappuccino in a polythene cup. The pangs for tradition arise and eventually subside in the knowledge that change is inevitable. We give our world meaning, we feed the energy into our dreams and fantasies and mental constructs as if they were real and not a cloud of thought processes, forever changing and mostly forgotten. It is necessary to reframe our entire thinking processes, if we are to seriously discuss the vegan issues, for this practice necessitates discovering aspects of one's true self.

I AM, I AM, I AM, that is all; the rest, well we reinforce the construct continuously, some strive really hard to maintain the image, the ego, the social position, the worthiness of our journey here on earth. Eventually there is enough history of our

thoughts and activities, which automatically manifest the "Shape of Ourselves," we strive to be different and arrive as both a reasonable and an unreasonable person, we encapsulate both aspects in our personality and spend an inordinate amount of time and effort dodging the fallacies within our own compilation! This process emerges from the depths of our living experience and seemingly, inevitably consumes us. Is this our destiny, what is termed 'karma'?

And yet we are still only at the beginning, the first glimpses of some greater glorious path that lies before us all, or so history, philosophy, and an increasing number of realised souls would have us believe. A few glasses of red or a joint may bring a glimmer of satisfaction that is necessary for us to continue the struggle for survival of our individual egos, the little me trying, needing, wanting to emerge and yet forced to be subservient to the daily events of life and seemingly random occurrences of fate and circumstance. I WANT TO DECIDE, I WANT TO BE MASTER of my own universe.

I WANT, I WANT, I WANT, forever we are wanting; and this in addition to OUR NEEDING. So the need arises and the 'want' fulfils the rational manifestation of our desires. And we consume. Just observe how we consume animals when we eat! This is a consumer attitude, the great cliché of a consumer society; but until we see the light and let go of the illusion that inhibits the recognition of freedom and justice, the manifestation of our own truth remains latent and what continue are the cultural and social orders, a random collection of activities; these are the building blocks we mostly work with daily, moment by moment.

Pointing

"Those who tell the stories rule society"---Plato

The clarity of our pointing and the medium for transfer are both important for the successful passage of the vegaculture message, and while there are opportunities to refine and hone an effective delivery, finding ways forward is just as dependant on the willingness and ability of the recipient; am I, are we, they, ready and able to receive? Fortunately, the content of the vegaculture message will often engage people at a deep level of personal enquiry, which motivates attention and leads to a considered response.

Intransigence is an unwillingness to let go, and even when a higher truth may resonate deeply with our true self mentally, emotionally and energetically, and the sensible reaction would be to just surrender and move on accepting of change, transitioning ignites our greatest resistance.

A measure of the art of pointing lies with identifying a path of least resistance, a place of acceptance where the recipient can open to his or her own truth. When vegan views are truly spoken by pointing to compassion and sentience, an alignment occurs that is demanding and unmistakable, the pointing becomes palpable as the power of transmission enters the life stream, and the truth of the pointing is projected.

The transmission may be accurate and the pointing received but it may also lie dormant, for as much as one might like to progress the speed of transitioning, we each grow at our own pace. Transformation can be difficult and embracing change often happens grudgingly, however the vegan message has universal appeal and is forever ready for acceptance.

Barriers to realisation are all too apparent, the mind hides behind the facade of existing norms, the personality takes charge and the facade of 'me' continues to grow and prosper in a world of its own making, personality it seems is a precursor of wisdom and truth, a blind to shade the reality of our deeper self, for this is the process of life, a knowingness of truth waiting to be uncovered. Pointing is fundamental to teaching and a lesson in learning.

Surrender

"Activity is just a movement of the universe"---Joan Tollifson

Transitioning is a process of moving from one state to another and in a vegaculture context inevitably involves personal surrender associated with food preferences and lifestyle options, leading to a re-allocation of time, effort, habits and preconceptions, and likely a revisiting of a range of embedded opinions. Competing thoughts bring clarity to our decision-making and that leads to personal growth and maturity; while a considered decision to transition requires a value judgement to justify the effort, this is often accompanied by a strong desire to express one's true feelings and resolve issues that have previously been sidelined.

Freedom is a basic right synonymous with happiness and until it is threatened or lost, is often taken for granted. We cannot deny the sense of our own loss of freedom, both collective and personal and yet this right of freedom is commonly denied to other animals. This denial manifests as a lack of empathy in community attitudes toward animals raised as part of the human food chain, especially noticeable in modern farming methods, and in urgent need of reform. The use of containment has been and still is the universal punishment for crime in the human domain, which begs the question, what crime have animals

committed that requires them to have their basic freedom restricted?

The harm and suffering being perpetrated on innocent animals, as victims of a cruel system of enshrined injustices is immeasurable. By overlooking this crime, we narrow our capacity for kindness; our treatment of animals as objects rather than fellow subjects in nature, belies our own capacity for freedom and justice, demonstrating neglect and a shallow understanding of basic rights that can readily be extended to all sentience if one so desires.

Discussion should not stagnate with debate of anthropomorphic attitudes, we have to embrace and re-evaluate our assumptions; simple observation and common sense recognises the natural movements, behaviours and freedoms which have evolved in the functioning of all creatures; that we need to revisit our own values and grant this basic right of freedom to correct the present wrong is indisputable. Studies indicate that we do not like thinking of animals we eat as having possessed minds, and that our behaviour deliberately changes prior to eating meat, we disconnect our belief from our behaviour (Ref.2).

The ongoing generations of billions of animals, (and we need to contemplate this statement to realise that this is not a static number, these billions are continually being renewed by more billions as the human race kill, eat, share and dissect untold numbers of animals), will continue to endure a lifetime of injustice and harm in containment with inhibition of natural freedoms unless we change. Denial of freedom is a reflection; a direct consequence of the denial of our own true self, and this failure both individually and collectively could hardly be more obvious than in our response to the various plights of farmed animals.

We need to do this for ourselves, just as much as for the animals we seek or allow to be diminished. Our whole humanity is found wanting and we need to respond to these cries for mercy with compassion not indifference. We need to re-educate ourselves to secure actual justice in the minds of the lawmakers, and compassion in the hearts of the practitioners.

The impediments to compassion have been well explored and the principles for correction are available. An article in the journal *Current Sociology* (Ref.3), on Compassion, Suffering and the Self explores these notions and concludes that the virtue of compassion is a *"crucial component of the struggle for social justice and human flourishing"*. The solution requires our very best response; a vegan choice is a voice for freedom from suffering for the voiceless.

21. IMMERSION

"We are as we are, because we were as we were"---Rupert Sheldrake

ENTANGLEMENT

The content of entanglement in general usage refers to the mixing or entangling of things and it also references barriers. Confusion is a form of disintegration, an entanglement of ideas and beliefs, and being confused denigrates the value and purpose of our intentions. Confusion is restrictive, a barrier to the flow of truth that needs to be received in a pristine state; as the methods for transmission are numerous, so is the possibility of confusion through entanglement. We often get 'mixed-messages' and spend an inordinate amount of time and effort deciphering the intentions from the contents. The old adage 'never ask a question you don't know the answer to,' has merit. In the era of fake news, this may be very good advice!

During the transition phase, as vegaculture disperses into the social order, one can expect an overload of shallow information, but as people refine their path and become immersed in the health and ethical and social advantages of a vegan way, the vegaculture message will be spreading into the nooks and crannies of all facets of social interaction, and growing in cultural significance. This transformation brings integration with it, the ability to separate fact from fiction, of worthy from unworthy, a new way of being arises and satisfaction is gained through the knowledge that personal growth and confidence in our beliefs and choices comes from determination and practice; disentangling and releasing the cultural and social conditioning of our own prior experiences to uncover the diamonds that were present all along.

The mind is capable of great clarity at times, and in these moments symbolism, myth and metaphor seem to converge; a sense of knowingness arises with access to subtle patterns of related events. One of those moments is now, as I contemplate the deliberate avoidance and lack of recognition of animal sentience, the obvious limitations and deficiencies within our social justice system, the knots of entanglement that manage to strangle and discard any skerrick of humanity in a world that oversees and suffers human genocide, and the continued fostering of the arms trade, with outbreaks of violence and aggression in it's many forms. One might wonder why simple common sense does not connect the pools of blood of one species with another!

The difference which arises between the suggested vegaculture view and current farming practice lies in the premise that direct recognition for voiceless animals is needed, to include the fullest expression of animal behaviour, by allocating and practicing animal rights in the decision making processes; vegan permaculture, or 'vegaculture' would disentangle the confusion and have intentional benefits based on 'Care for People *and Animals* and the Earth'.

As vegans we need to express our internal truth clearly for all to see, the value of vegan awareness as an attentive tool for action is validated for there is always a place for it to manifest, the degree of truth of the vegan message confirms the probability that a vegan culture will continue growing; finally, we must be ever vigilant with the intent and clarity of its delivery.

Exploitation

"The more a thing tends to be permanent, the more it tends to be lifeless"---Alan W. Watts

One aspect of human relationships that could be revisited here is the subject of the current emphasis on the Paleolithic era, but rather than narrowing the history of species survival to one period, we can zoom out to a longer time frame and giving credit to both current scientific and empirical knowledge, a different picture emerges. A fascinating article entitled 'Three Leaps in Human Evolution' (Ref.4) relates the evolution of bipedalism in primates some 6-7mya with increased skull capacity; hence brain capacity and the growth of mental threshold in humans. This suggested connection has been discussed in the world of paleoanthropology, and also has early primates seeking out aquatic plant foods for millions of years, while partially immersed in water.

Tradition though has long focused and mingled the 'hunter-gatherer' status with 'a predominant dietary,' although the activity of hunting is just one aspect of a wide range of developed survival skills for satisfying hunger, together with foraging, tending and gathering. Myths and images of humans as a hunter are not only utilised as a landmark example in discussions relating to dietary food sources, they are deliberately promoted as excuses for behaviour in attempts to justify and manipulate attitudes to violence and further exploitation in our social relationships.

While there is indeed a need to scrutinise the transitional Paleo phase of human evolution it is a substantial distraction from our relatively recent lifestyle transition since the start of the agrarian period, and if the topic of interest is to be dietary, then the rapid leap into uncharted territory in the

late 20th and early 21st centuries, with its focus on fast food and a highly processed flexitarian dietary is at least as important as adopted clichés, and the fact that our forebears exercised free will with dietary choices and ate animals.

We know from the studies and dating of tools and implements that gathering of tubers, fruits, nuts and plant-based foods was a predominant factor in the history of peoples. There is no 'traditional diet' as such, there were many dietary inputs that varied over generations and eras, and prior to the modern era of centralised farming, and research indicates a selection from a wide range of content in varying proportions, dependent on location and availability. It seems likely the seeds of the agrarian revolution were developing over tens of thousands of years (Ref.5) pre-dating previous estimates, as evidenced by relics of grinding and using grains. All the while, the human capacity to evolve and grow and refine the art and techniques of food security are evident.

Where survival is the issue, as well it might be if we consider brain size and sperm counts, both of which are decreasing (Ref.6,7), then lifestyle and dietary choices need revisiting, and if this is to be pursued under the heading of 'exploitation', so be it. Some may call it advertising or marketing skills, and some will genuinely believe there to be a special significance to a particular era; a conservative view of the weight of these opinions needs to be balanced by a movement away from reminiscing on hunter-gatherer activity as a tool for exploitation in the marketplace, and to consider the disservice it may be doing in modelling the perpetration of violence as an acceptable natural hereditary characteristic applicable to modern living.

While early survival of animal and plant species needed to be tough and hardy and prickly, pioneering today in urban cultures can proceed through functions such as connectedness and co-operation, not just protection or aggression and violence. Keeping farm animals in feedlots and cages and shopping in supermarkets is very different from embarking on a weeklong hunting trip to find some wild game for the starving family. Notice how obvious this truth is; what lies behind (no pun intended), is a tradition, a tradition of "Animal Sacrifice", except it is not called that, the suggestions are much more nuanced and subtle. Stepping into the picture next, is 'man the hunter', our archetypal hero, who saved the day and kept the human race alive during its worst periods, due to the fact that he and his fellows could hunt and bring home the bacon, or bison, or whatever else was the easiest prey. We need to realise the hogs and bison of old have become the Higgs-boson of today!

Right now in 2018, a vegan diet or 100% plant-food dietary is considered as a perfectly appropriate method for gaining nutrition and the adequacy has been affirmed by all of the leading nutritional advisers and institutions and health organisations around the world. In other words, where there is a choice of nutritious plant foods available, animal products are an unnecessary addition to the menu. If that is so, and it is, then there is no need to commit any further violence against animals where the circumstances for alternatives exist. Therefore, any action against any animal in any situation, which is independent of the survival instinct, is an act of violence, and any support for the feasting on the carcasses is an accessory after the fact, it is as simple as that.

Now, enter entanglement; the congruence of survival stories from a particular era, the availability of animal products at all locations, the social acceptance of a feeding habit, an indifference to food sources; advertising and marketing from the meat industry and the glory of a Paleo diet that 'saved mankind', with slogans suggestions that some how, without a scrap of scientific proof to connects these events, our brains got bigger and we learnt to speak and suddenly discovered how to light a fire, all emanating from the fact that early humans took it upon themselves to eat animals. Oh yeah!

Condoning violence does not make sense, it is not rational, and no matter how useful the concept of killing an animal for food may be in manipulating opinions, the argument has neglected one disturbing fact: most people today don't actually want to kill animals. Although a majority of the present population still eat animals, does that confirm one's status as a hunter; have you ever hunted for your food, and if so can you honestly say you enjoy it, and if you do, do you know why; what values and beliefs are worth the cost of a life?

An assessment in Australia indicates some indigenous diets varied from one extreme to another, but may often only have included 20% of animal product at various times, with plant foods making up to 80% of the diet in desert areas, and up to 40% in coastal regions (Ref.8). Flexitarian, Nutritarian, or Adaptive Frugivore are all terms that correctly express the capacity for adaptive dietary intake that allowed the human organism to survive during these early periods. The assessments of animal content, both traditionally and currently have been alluded to, and one could summarise this message by repeating that the THL for humans is currently 2.21 indicating a nominal 79% plant-food diet as the averaged socially evolved biological human status, so far!

Human dietary history incorporates the importance of survival strategies in all periods, and while the Paleolithic era is a significant time in homo sapiens' development, where hunting and gathering supported life, the broader perspective supports and accepts the role of an evolutionary balance, where throughout history species survival is in a partnership with the availability of particular foods, and the cycle of birth and rebirth.

We hear time and again a statement of respect for the sacrifice of animals enshrined in the traditional culture, and some indigenous cultures still celebrate the practice of animal exploitation as an icon of a failing or lost tradition. Killing may have evolved to satisfy a gustatory meal for taste and aesthetic and community ritual, as it has continued to do so today, but killing animals is an exploitative tool based on the need for the early primate's and subsequent human survival; a response in keeping with pragmatism and states of awareness that were then available to the developing mind, and able to be experienced in those eras.

Settled societies today provide severe penalties for human sacrifice; killing or even attempted killing, are clearly held as unacceptable with the notable exceptions of self defence, or in the dire circumstances of fighting for one's own survival. The ritual of sacrifice also remains enshrined in religious fundamentalism however; and just today in a perverse twist of events, Indian journalists confirmed that Moslems living in Northern India are being targeted if they carry meat, with some people having been lynched and murdered by Hindu fundamentalists; violence begets violence, it does not take sides.

A universal being, culturally adept in a global world, knows there are more humane paths to protecting freedom and celebrating the values of tradition as a living entity, than resorting to outmoded practices of animal sacrifice; why not celebrate life with life, rather than life with death at the cost of another life; sacrificing generations of rich cultural heritage, all for the sake of a morsel of dead meat? If we are seeking permanence in our culture, it is already dead; we must think as 21st century beings, not only as our ancestors may have acted.

Habit is history, awareness is alive and growing; surely the basis for a permanent culture is to express man's natural relationship to the environment and to embrace the most beneficial longer-term decisions, with the effective use of existing resources. It seems reasonable to predict that if one were to invite the majority of the population to hunt animals for their daily food source, the challenge would mostly only ever be

taken up if the conditions surrounding the situation were to do with issues of survival.

Vegaculture attempts to distinguish between necessity and preference, and a myopic view of 'man as the hunter' may be much too simple a description of the capacity of character and psychology of our forebears and is a disservice to our own experience of the world, itself a consequence of time and place. Another alternative term might be 'man the survivor', the fighter for survival who has been forced to take a life, so that he and his progeny can survive. This is nature, as most people would know it; the provision of food for oneself and family is common to all creatures and part of the greater story of evolution.

As for the practice of shooting and killing wild animals (game) for so-called sport or through indifference, this is plain misrepresentation, a huge distortion of our sacred instincts, and it is hard to imagine a more directly exploitative activity; in its own way, perhaps on a par with the killing fields of ethnic cleansing and 'deaths by drone'. The classic 'blind Freddie' must surely see the exploitative connections here, between violence in all its manifestations, and the degradation of human potential and reversion to the dark side.

Honing one's skills in regular target shooting with a bow and arrow is a much more practical sport if you are pre-occupied with the past, and intent on the retention of skills used in ancient hunting practices. Fear is universally evident, a fact of life; and if the human species and all those that rely on us are to survive the challenges of the 21st century in a culture that reinforces and markets fear, we need to say 'NO MORE'; I can, you can, we can; we can all reinforce the sacredness of life for all creatures, and avoid the exploitative practices of peddling fear, havoc and violence; go save a life, not take one!

Collaboration

"As the bee takes honey from the flower, Leaving its colour and fragrance unharmed, so let the monk go about the village"---Dhammapada 49

Identifying and securing the best relationship outcomes, finding consensus and a fair share is dependent on the wisdom and belief systems of all of the protagonists or parties involved in a co-operative venture, and needs recognise the various approaches at that time. Guidelines and principle need to be practiced, not just envisaged, and this transition to greater compassionate outcomes, is where the value of education and wisdom flourish. The following extract relates to the injunction above, and is taken from a teaching on the Clear-vision website (Ref.9).

"We can therefore get a much broader, more universal meaning from this verse by replacing the line 'so let the monk move about the village' with 'so let the wise person live in the world'. In this way, what appears to be an injunction restricted to those who are at least technically monks becomes applicable to everybody who lives in the world. It is important that it does so because it establishes a fundamental principle of the ethical and spiritual life, which is that, the wise person does not exploit anyone or anything. This may seem very simple to understand, but if it were to be thoroughly and systematically put into practice, the effects would be far-reaching indeed".

As suggested, the application in daily life of this simple message would have profound effects, and a vegaculture view resonates strongly with the principles expounded. Harmony and clarity are required on the circuitous path of relationship building, to avoid the play of forces and interests in the realm of exploitation. Revisiting and reframing our history is essential to arrive at an understanding of the breadth of distinction necessary in search of a middle way. The very premise of vegaculture promotes collaborative relationships to help rebalance, expand and strengthen our culture, while continuing to expose exploitation.

Farm Sanctuaries

"We must be the change we wish to see"---Mahatma Gandhi

The increasing number of farmed animal refuges and sanctuaries can be considered an iconic statement that addresses the need to disentangle the confusion within the farming industry that has managed to manoeuvre intensive factory farming into a position of a legally acceptable behaviour in the 21st century. The entanglement of greed, confusion, indifference and public acceptance that enables the retention of these death camps prolongs the evolution of humanity from expressing it's higher consciousness, and reaps it's particular havoc on the billions of sentient creatures caught in their own world of suffering.

Vegaculture models of various scales, similar to 'Hobby farm settings' are the most likely path for seeding transition; the setting fostering a place where 'companion farm animals' will be able to exist in a mutual interest relationship with carers, as the move from animal production to plant based agriculture grows; and transition through farm animal welfare and refuges become normalised for protection after release from intensive farming systems.

The speed of change is of course greatly significant, and during the transition large numbers

of cattle, sheep and goats will possibly need to be re-housed or relocated, pigs that are intensively farmed presently will likely decrease in numbers, and perhaps some other stall or free-range life may await them. Free-range land grazing of hundreds of millions of hens will be a longer-term strategy for food producers, and given the investment in intensive farming practices, it is difficult to see a decrease anytime soon. Smaller animals will surely still be part of the food supply chain into the foreseeable future on an on-going basis, and these animals are the most likely to be hobby farmed in small businesses for profits, rather than the long-distance free-range grazers.

Factory farming causes suffering to the largest number of animals in Australia – nearly 700 million sentient beings every year (Ref.10). The egg industry alone is responsible for more than 25 million hens, with an egg supply of over 434 million dozen or 5.2 billion eggs (Ref.11). The current rate of deliberate birthing, raising and slaughter each year includes 5 million pigs, of which nine (9) out of ten (10) pigs are kept in factory farms; and in 2014/15 there were 1.74 million dairy cows in Australia (Ref.12,13,14).

Australia still supports a significant amount of free grazing for larger animals and so conditions for animals raised here can be expected to be 'industry best practice' in terms of opportunity for welfare; unlike the hell-holes which are prevalent here and elsewhere in the world with factory and intensive farms, accompanied by various levels of ingrained cultural denial of basic animal welfare knowledge and practice. This is important looking ahead, because the Asian and particularly Chinese markets for animal foods is increasing at alarming rates, scheduled to double exports from Australia in the next 2 years (Ref.15).

There are definitely opportunities to house rescued animals in a garden setting, and to make available a free-range area, which works without exploitation, as part of an acceptable vegaculture practice. Animal liberation exponents have for many years managed to provide short term housing for rescued factory hens and abused dogs, and even a sheep or two I notice on a quarter acre block in suburban Melbourne. In this instance, recycling on-site of the animal waste seemed to make common sense, with disposal of eggs to the local community.

Edgar's Mission (Ref.16) is set on 153 acres near Melbourne and operates as a 'not-for-profit Farm Sanctuary that seeks to create a humane and just world for humans and non-humans'. The mission has gradually developed, and is now a template for assistance with rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming of farm animals. The centre is open to the public

with a focus on education, advocacy and empowerment, and caters to both individuals and groups, while their website provides images of the animals and details about volunteering and assistance.

The Little Oak Sanctuary, near Canberra is a 308-acre property that caters to around 100 animals and is also developing resources including an educational infrastructure for guests on site. A discussion with the caretakers revealed an existing backlog of demand for space, and mention was made that their facility would likely be full within a month if they took all requests for housing.

Liberation Sanctuary in Victoria is a project founded by Patty Mark of Animal Liberation Victoria when she relocated from the city and made a home for a variety of over 70 rescued animals on her forty plus acre country Victorian property, and there are an estimated 20 to 30 other farm sanctuaries either existing or under development in Australia, and an increasing amount operating world-wide (Ref.17).

Farm sanctuaries highlight the need for a long-term commitment by carers, and have strict criteria around placement of animals in new surroundings. Where a garden or farm is specifically designed for pet and hobby animals such as a horse or goat or a few cows or sheep to help with maintenance and offer a companion animal for the family, which due to space requirements probably means a rural setting, there is the opportunity for mutual respect in the relationship.

In this instance the carers have both authority and responsibility for the actions of adopting, housing, feeding and waste disposal. If a vegaculture design focused on the integration of the wellbeing and natural wealth of an animal *for the animal's sake*, the decision to employ poultry, chooks, ducks or geese in the garden as an integrated companion garden animal may have mutual benefits.

Rehoming is essential for liberation and provides a practical solution for many animals, and an opportunity for community education, where people can directly relate to the facts of food choice. The question remains, is it possible to adjust our behaviour, and surrender habitual patterns of living so as to appreciate families of domesticated animals for their own sake, without the need to continue a process of institutionalised breeding and reaping of animal lives for one's food source?

Hopefully the answer is 'Yes', so rehoming as a rescue remedy can be effective in transition, and not become a nursing home for chronic failure of the system to correct itself; community education

and individual awareness of animal liberation must continue to grow.

22. INTEGRATION

"Action should reflect integration rather than disintegration"---Sri M

MOVING FORWARD

Cultural diversity and global stability are both desirable, and both are enhanced by clarity of purpose and truthful introspection. Replanting of forests, rationalising water distribution, halting nuclear proliferation, minimising climate change, harmonious personal relations, religious unity and peaceful co-existence, we can keep adding to the list of issues requiring attention.

By addressing one tiny aspect of the whole, something each of us is capable of now in this moment, we can immediately secure a more sustainable base: for independence, for compassion, for recognition of the voiceless, a way of kindness leading to tolerance and freedom.

The same sentiment may be claimed wherever there is a reluctance to act on truth, whether in the realm of justice or denial; what is exceptional with vegaculture is the ease of change and the embedded support, which now exists for those brave souls willing to try.

Change is at the core of world movement, the visible expression of life, the vitality of consciousness within, all aspects are of the interconnected whole; individually we can grow together or grow apart, we can substantiate and we can negate.

For humans to reach our full potential, we need to understand the whole world comes with us, we are the totality of all that is moving and we are not fully healed until we are fully surrendered. Can there be a place where there is no more to do, can the world ever reach its full potential as a sustainable human environment, in harmony with all the inhabitants?

The answer lies with ourselves; we are different expressions but we are not separate from the world, we are the world; it is in us just as we are in it, we are that expression; and it is the totality of all that is moving, as J. Krishnamurti (Ref.18) points out *"learning becomes the movement, not from the movement"*.

Self In Daily Life

"We are here to awaken from our illusion of separateness"---Thich Nhat Hanh

We gather insight into self expression in daily life through a process of reflection, a deepening of our search for reason, to free oneself from the limits of our individual reality and recognise our differences, but at the same time, to attend to what is really important; a 'static movement' develops as we surrender our personal desires; we come back to being, and enhance opportunities for peaceful co-existence as separation diminishes.

We are faced with balancing needs and responsibilities, finding happiness in allotted tasks, and directing our daily activities to be responsive and open to personal growth, establishing ourselves, with or without a preferred structure; either way desires drive our actions and we identify a personal lifestyle and function according to our interests and circumstances, living Lila, the dance of life.

While time and place, family and society, ageing and interaction determine our cultural selves, the relative self in daily life forms habits, and with the habits of the past (memories) we develop ideas about the future, all the while living in the constraints of the now.

Few of us live entirely in the now, fully in touch with our senses, we are captured by the mind, and so the task of freeing one self from the ego, and exercising our free will, reduces into escapism; neglect of the true self.

The separation between science and humanities may only date from the last few centuries, but the separation of builder from architect, technical college from university, indigenous people from their lands, gun laws from common sense, factory farms from open pasture, thinking from action, violence from compassion, are indicative of the disconnect of our powers of reason; the guilt is too hard to bear so *'we have to get on with life'*!

I recollect picking up a postcard at the Fair Trade shop in Reading U.K., that had the message, *"My left brain has nothing right, and my right brain has nothing left."* Whenever we are brought into the moment there is a spark of energy and sense of freedom that accompanies the movement away from our habitual patterns, humour does this through the intersection of obtuse thoughts, it happens when we travel overseas for the first time, or it can arise with expectation and excitement.

As I examine my relationship to the world now, I observe empathy for silence and self, and a deliberate simplification of lifestyle, a resting in my own simple understanding of truth.

Self-Improvement

"Realising the self is the greatest help that can be given to humanity"---Sri Ramana Maharshi

Self-realisation presents many directions and depths for discovery but in essence what needs to be examined here is the quest for self-improvement, in the relationship each of us has as individuals with ourselves, and eventually between the individual and the collective. We can usually respond readily to events, as we grow and gather personal experience with the demands of living, we adopt customs and habits, often through acceptance, sometimes through deep thought as a result of pain and suffering.

Family and cultural influences are also integrated, sometimes with little questioning, while play and travel extend our knowledge of the great variety of lifestyles and views; and help to identify the array of social interactions; particularly now through social media sites that have transformed the dominant social paradigm. Our reliance on outside influences has generated the smart phone, a device that is often consulted well over 100 times a day!

A quick look in April 2018 confirms over 1 billion active Facebook users, (Ref. 19), with 4.4 million Australians between ages 25-34 years old, which represents a huge social connection infrastructure. For me, the other *staggering statistic* is the speed of information gathering; my recent search took only 0.46 seconds and indexed over 527 million results! If only one of these results was important to me, I would need a pretty useful filter. When we attempt to extend ourselves we rely on the quality of our decision-making, the search for balance and meaning; this is inevitably enhanced by knowledge of ones' own truth.

Half of the world population is under the age of 25 years old, and half of this half, are under 15 years old. Given that historic cultural relationships are both diverse and highly developed, there is indeed a challenge for numerous youngsters who need to navigate a path through what is a multi-dimensional maze with conflicting rules. Similar issues are present when indigenous people try to retain traditional ways, and wherever, via freedom or necessity, one's journey exposes the mix of majority and minority cultural influence.

I am attempting to elucidate some of the complexity that is apparent in our daily lives, and the potential difficulty there can be, in identifying both the self that wants to be illuminated, and a place for oneself in the social fabric. The information pathway is infinite, and refinement of those places for interaction with the collective are learnt from trial and error. Each of us has the sense of enquiry firmly embedded in the mind, however knowing comes from experiencing, and the opportunity to address fully and completely the issues of personal realisation are limited by

competition within the individual for competing attention.

One can suggest education is a process of gathering of experience; the accrual of the benefits of practice during ageing, which when combined with the maturity of introspection informs our actions. Our capacity for discernment though may be being dumbed down by education systems perpetrating the message by wrote-learning acceptance of knowledge, rather than personal experience, in a formal teacher-student relationship; and by cultural obedience. The production of deliberate misinformation is also rife, as anyone with an email account will testify.

I have heard people say, that they don't know what they believe, until they say it. This is a first step but we know from psychology, before an issue can be resolved, we not only need to hear what is said, we need to know that we have been heard. Seeking our inner self, the honest expression of one's values, finding words for those thoughts and feelings, and then consolidating the outcome and knowing our personal truth, that is the fullest expression of ones self, is not a straightforward process. The mind can be a tribe of monkeys, not just a monkey mind.

Reflection can resolve conflict, however, the strength of our own conviction, knowing that we know, this is something greater. When we come to this place, where self- realisation is paramount, we can experience glimpses of the connectedness and intricacies of life, leading to an understanding of who we are; we discover there are limits to our self-deception, we look truth in the eye.

Philosophy

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it is has to be lived forwards"---Kierkegaard

How do we understand the competing beliefs that people adopt? We have to delve into our own experience and find the level of TRUTH that we can hold as individuals in the way in which we act. From there it is easier to see if one is being honest with one's self. The world we see is based on our beliefs and preferences, and so limitations are numerous.

Philosophy has a lot to offer, and the philosopher and academic Ken Wilber discusses the limitations in approach, in his analysis of the Integral Operating System (Ref.20), where a plateau of awareness provides a limit to one's understanding, even though glimpses of other states may be possible, they may hardly ever be encountered or acted upon. He also demonstrates the relationship between consciousness, awareness and exposure to education of the individual (Ref.21), providing

clarity and a framework for understanding, which act as a guide for consensus by identifying the boundaries of misconception; but we should not use philosophy as an alibi, a substitute for experience.

The greatest strength of permaculture has for me been its recognition of universality in content, and the ability to look afresh at a problem and to 'fit between the lines,' finding a place of agreement through functional designs; as a philosophy it professes to work with nature, rather than against nature; it also conjures up a humanist view, which has been beneficial to its acceptance. The thrust of the vegaculture premise that becomes evident to me is really one of embracing and expanding the existing permaculture concepts, rather than any rejection of the perceived philosophy.

Traditional moral philosophy based on conceptual analysis has now been joined by research on social behaviour in neuroscience to determine moral status, and so scrutiny of the mind-body interface is growing, although the exact mechanism of decision-making is as yet unraveled. An article entitled *The Impact of Neuroscience on Philosophy* (Ref.22), suggests that both individual and collective moral problems are 'constraint-based' decisions. A system of checks and balances is unique to each person, but in the social context, behavioural science suggests multiple inputs necessarily include the input due to our biological connections; this default concept explains one source of our connectedness, but whether we are really any closer to the discovery and acceptance of a Oneness or collective consciousness is indeterminate.

An overview of the terms secularism and spirituality, demonstrates a range of nuance and intent of their meanings and usage, both historically and as they appear now in Western and Indian contexts (Ref.23), and highlights the difficulties of presenting a precise philosophical stance. This text simply refers to secular to designate separation of church and State, while spirituality relates to spirit, as the vital essence in living beings. Now that neuroscience and philosophy are uncovering parallel outcomes to long-held spiritual positions, perhaps the definitive secular humanist position will be revisited, even fine-tuned, to realign with the major scientific debates around the lack of integration of 'consciousness' in scientific thought, and the black-hole of materialism to which it has led.

My own experiences leads me more towards a 'spiritual humanist' view, or what I would prefer to call a 'beingness', and so I come to this text from a place of contemplation where both, secular and religious humanist views are considered lacking in

resonance, both personally and within the perceived current social ethic. This distinction in humanism approaches is well explained in a recent paper called *'The Hidden History of Humanism'* (Ref.24) with ready parallels in any discussion that might address the vegaculture-permaculture divide. An 'authoritative' selection of critical periods of history reveals the influence of neglected deeper spiritual roots on secular humanism, which the authors suggest may be useful if they are reclaimed in the 21st century context.

Advocates of the secular humanist view may also have many reasons for Veganism based on a scientific and moral perspective, no less than that identified in a short statement on the Richard Dawkins Foundation website entitled *"The argument-for-veganism-from-a-scientific-and-moral-perspective-rather-than-from-beliefs"* (Ref.25), which prompted some 'spirited' response as well, with over 120 comments and opinions regarding the content; certainly enough to introduce a beginner to the breadth of the subject.

Spirituality

"Don't judge someone's spiritual process by their behavior. The spiritual process is beyond the ways of body and mind"---Sadhguru

These few comments form a context for the use of the term spirituality and are not intended as a support or recommendation for any particular faith or path, but to garner tolerance for those who think or act differently from us. While secular humanism may seem to be contradictory to spiritual humanism, the truth can unfold in numerous ways; the discovery and contact with truth is claimed in both journeys. Thus spirituality is used here as a common usage sense rather than as a particular definition, and spiritual aspects are universal, well beyond the allegiance to just one religion.

Spirituality references the unknown and spiritual traditions record the various paths that have been meaningful in forming a more intimate relationship with our true selves; this collection of experiential learning manifesting through our desire to know ourselves, is integral with all aspects of our being and culture, and gained through contact with religion, mystical experiences, human philosophy and aspiration, seeking, contemplation and taboos.

The transition from matriarchal to patriarchal relationships and religions heralded a movement away from 'mother earth' as the primary source of contact and relationship, and so it is mostly only in the East that Hinduism and Buddhism have continued to accept and retain the knowledge of other realms. One's personal relationship to the

divine mother provides a ground for our actions, and it seems this aspect of human behaviour, the respect for the earth as our self, has been gradually whittled away over the last few millennia.

In Western society where mind has seemingly become dominant, the commitment to animal rights has been structured around the lesser demands of animal welfare, and perhaps this behaviour mirrors our own emotional disconnection, which has responded to the constant battering from the projected competitive and shallow lifestyle; striving for life affirming creative endeavours, but forced to operate in life-support mode, as greed, corruption and social inequality take their toll.

The collection and transmission of spiritual principals and guidance through mystical experiences and relationships form a larger part of the glue that has held countries and civilisations together for untold millennia; as a result of fundamentalist claims for religious domination, our recorded history of institutionalised religions suggests the opposite.

Spiritual humanism is an emotively charged term that can induce massive sentiment and devotion in some people, and just as readily it can evoke anger and frustration by those who oppose it; a perfunctory view from secular humanism can result in spiritual humanism being simply dismissed out of hand, but this approach to a very broad topic would seem to be both short sighted and immature. If we cannot get beyond our own rejection of the world, we most certainly will not be in a position to help save it, we will merely be spreading the poison that led us to this time and place in history.

The proliferation and variety of beliefs that have been generated under the auspices of a spiritual banner is enormous and continues to this day. People obviously find immense personal value in the belief systems that have been perceived and new advocates will no doubt agree. A significant number of people who adopt the vegan way do so as a result of the formation and growth of their own spiritual nature, and so vegaculture recognises the contribution of spiritual humanism in the corridors of social and cultural awareness, and the dependence on ethical and moral decision-making processes to achieve *holistic sustainable* outcomes.

The header statement by the Indian yogi, Sadhguru, that the spiritual process is beyond the ways of the body and the mind, confirms that the process of an evolving spirit may be unaccompanied by an interest in worldly affairs, and so spiritual growth is a work in progress, and definitely does not appear to translate into a blanket awakening to our true potential in all of its

facets, even though an awakening or a sustained epiphany in awareness can highlight a sense of connected beingness, and bring a major alteration in a person's psyche.

A similar conclusion is reached by Ken Wilber (Ref.26), who has researched, co-coordinated and analysed numerous studies for his work towards integrating the multiplicity of aspects of the human psyche; we are capable of developing capacities in one area of intelligence, while others can remain almost benign; being spiritual, being vegan and being intelligent are not necessarily related outcomes, each may evolve and act independently of other facets.

Cultural Evolution

"We need to listen and value outsiders, but telling them things is not very useful"---Kwame Anthony Appiah

During just 2 months in 2016, we saw the Paris Talks on Climate Change, the WHO issued a memoranda on the health effects of eating animal products, the UK raised the effects of farm animal inputs in the climate change debate, and columnists in local media were canvassing the same subjects, with feedback suggesting various ways to reduce meat, dairy and egg consumption in the public's personal dietary to assist with minimising global warming.

The concept of 'Peak Animals' has been floated, and while the validity of the 'Kuznets curve' that suggested peak events is being queried, the sense of a growing awareness to address the imbalances is coming alive in the global community (Ref.27). What I believe we are seeing here is the start of an accelerated unfoldment of the issues surrounding global pollution that is leading to climate change, with the dots finally being connected to our food choices.

This is a very significant moment in social history for a major dominant paradigm of cultural practice is being brought into question in the public arena, at a time and in a place for global debate. In addition to the potential positive outcomes for animals and the environment, hence all species, is the widening of the debate, the adoption of a view which is prepared to look at a cultural taboo, the use of animals, or should I state, 'the non-use of animals' in the conventional diet. This is a win-win position in so many ways.

Animal farming is a major cause of CO2 and methane production in particular, and if a rapid reduction in farming were promoted, a short term advantage can be gained over the next 5 to 10 years, to minimise the tipping points for global warming prior to carbon storage in tree planting becoming more effective, and expected to be

meaningfully accessed by 2020; whereas shifting farming from one animal to another, from beef to other animals does not really help much, because CO₂ emitted by animals is similar based on 2w/kg energy needs, and only shows slight variations (Ref.28); that is swapping beef for chicken is not effective.

A vegetarian campaign started as a Meat-Free day in some International cities in Europe around 2009-10, trialed initially once a year, and then at various intervals. It is now gaining acceptance in practice once a week, or at various mealtimes; and even today, the Australian media are reporting on the benefits of Vegetarian Mondays on national media (Ref.29). The movement from a targeted campaign by activists to influence public opinion and to raise the issues surrounding the farming of animal foods, has matured to a localised commentary on how people may improve their health by re-arranging their personal eating regime, to assist with minimising their animal intake.

This massive swing in awareness is a credit to the collective; while the question of morality and ethics in food choices, which is intimately connected with our health practices gathers exposure in the media then we as a community are able to make proper, responsive adjustments, by lifting the veil of self-interested corporations and lobby groups, and acting accordingly. This change in opinion is a living example of vegaculture in action.

A review of comments to media articles shows a variety of solutions, no-meat meals, no meat days, creative meal choices etc. so the outcomes are not to adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet, but to modify the existing diet with less animal foods. The expressions presently gathering credence are 'part time vegetarian,' 'meat-avoiders' and 'meat-reducers', with a U.K. survey showing up to 23% of the population identify with these terms (Ref.30,31).

Vegaculture is not trying to measure success just by the number of converts; it is measuring success by the increasing awareness of the issues, any reduction in farmed animals is a reduction in harm and a movement in the right direction, so part timers being as vegan as possible can be very effective as a transition. The organisation Voiceless (Ref.32) has been quoted similarly, suggesting the focus of Voiceless policy is not to be involved in commenting on correct dietary, but to raise the issue as one of mindfulness of the animals.

It is easy to speculate that future generations will look back in dismay at the proliferation of farm animals during the 20th century and into the 21st

century; and wonder why we did not intervene sooner. Recognition of environmental degradation, the ethical and moral neglect, and a willingness to deny what is at the very essence of stewardship of nature.

Of course, this is not the only issue relating to climate stability, and the same lack of stewardship can be readily identified with a host of other contributors to global warming, which has most definitely progressed to become a chronic ailment, while for decades the acute illnesses has been seen to be festering; our inattention has contributed to them remaining unresolved.

In an effort to understand this dichotomy of action and laissez-faire attitudes, we have to deeply examine the human psyche, as well as the education systems, as well as the social and cultural values; to identify the ways in which this massive disconnect continues in humans; and to continue to refine and resolve our values to be in harmony with the legacy of the natural world, and our own place and expression of ourselves as part of this global oneness.

The vegan community itself is active in disseminating all aspects of an improved lifestyle, while cultural inputs and reframing of the vegan message is prolific with numerous websites and blogs, many food focused and others like 'bitesizevegan.com' exhibit an array of extensively researched, historical and topical educational material (Ref.33). Melbourne in Australia has been awarded the most livable city in the world for the last 7 years, and scrolling through the latest 2018 Vegan Australia event pages I notice reference to 154 advertised vegan events, so it is easy to see why vegans might agree!

The Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature (SHARAN) is a fine example of a functional organisation with a focus on education and training, the grass roots non-profit organisation is slowly building a resource of trained teachers to assist people with the vegan diet and healthy eating; based in South India; their programs extend to numerous cities and the founder, Dr. Nandita Shah, has been recognised by the Indian Prime Minister, who is a vegetarian, for her efforts in actively promoting education for the reduction of diabetes and increasing public health awareness through the adoption of a vegan dietary (Ref.34).

Issues such as nationalism don't help, and there are as many opinions as there are people, and perhaps this is at the heart of the problems society and by inference dependant species face, the human population combined with a greedy lifestyle, has outstripped the earth's resources. We can modify our dominant lifestyle, slow breeding, and make

do with less, and the sooner these become inherent in a political agenda anywhere in the world, the better.

With the lack of progress for long-term human problems such as malaria, malnutrition, and adequate health facilities remaining, and the pressures of overpopulation, stressful living, food and personal security with displaced citizens becoming the norm, novel ideas, rational discussion and a preparedness to think big and act greatly, must be invoked to overcome the big issues of the day.

Thich Nhat Hanh the venerable teacher and well-known pacifist activist is also vegetarian, and he comments this way, *"We cannot be completely nonviolent, but by being vegetarian, we are going in the direction of nonviolence. If we want to head north, we can use the North Star to guide us, but it is impossible to arrive at the North Star. Our effort is only to proceed in that direction"*.

The Australian philosopher Peter Singer is the author of the seminal work, 'Animal Liberation' and he continues to be proactive with animal rights issues with an informative campaign to bring awareness to the plight of fishes. As a leading philosopher and researcher, he is one of a number of people now discussing the notion of 'Effective Altruism' as a wise choice for philanthropists wishing to make a worthwhile contribution to the collective (Ref.35). Vegaculture appears well aligned with this activity, and I trust the messages in this small offering can illuminate a personal path, and further clarify the human condition; as an aside, I even noticed a Crypto-currency called BitVegan (Veg) token was seeking funds to spread the vegan message, and crowd funding vegan projects is a worthy cause!

The British philosopher and cultural theorist, Kwame Anthony Appiah promotes the ethics of Cosmopolitanism (Ref.36), where people belong to a single interest group or community with a shared morality and respect for a variety of different beliefs. These concepts are being examined and discussed, just as the effects of globalisation are being evaluated. He reminds us that in economic terms, a contribution to global equality and ecology through global taxes is impossible without a global government, and yet money transfer between nations represents only 20% of trade currently, *"so there is plenty of room for further discontinuity in globalised sourcing"*!

Unregulated markets invite greed and manipulation as witnessed by the actions of Global conglomerates, who take full advantage of the lack of continuity for collection of company taxes; this unpaid cost is not only a loss to the community where the trade is generated, but a perversion of

wealth distribution to prop up the world's wealthy. The underlying issue of global energy consumption suffers a similar fate, where rich countries are utilising valuable energy resources offshore, to support blatantly unsustainable lifestyles in their own domains, whose measurement is disguised in globalised trade.

These issues are of particular importance to vegaculture, as education that supports recognition of universal moral values is central for the unfoldment of a peaceful world through the adoption of a common ethic, while fragmentation inhibits earth care, people care, and animal care, and the very notion of fair-share may continue to lie dormant, or be further suppressed in the globalised market place. In summary he states that *"Modulating the issue may be all that is being achieved, but allowing the flow of culture to proceed without interruption, can sound like condescension, when we talk about the wider world of unhappiness"*.

In addition to listening and valuing others, truth and justice manifest as a result of our listening to the internal voice; their practice and consistent application, together with the persistent expression of compassion, shape the [r]evolution of our culture; may we continue to seek our truth, think our truth, speak our truth, feel our truth and live our truth.

23. SCENARIOS

"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are"---Anais Nin

PERCEPTIONS

In the traditional realms, assuming that the dominant scientific and anthropological views are correct with respect to human evolution, our life here on earth can be viewed as a big social and cultural growth, a mix with the fruiting dependant on the ingredients, nourishment and time for maturation. Guided by science and governed by social and economic inputs, we track the progress and project the play of dominant forces.

In the esoteric realm, the perspective is from a philosophical and spiritual position, where various views find common ground and open more readily to the full scope of human beingness and practical spiritual experience, with leaders from all persuasions working together to assist and enlighten humanity into the future. As science reframes itself, this cross-culture dialogue can also become more active, expanding the blinkered tradition and institutionalised values of vested

interests and tightly maintained power and influence.

A convergence of paths leading to recognition of a global oneness is essential for continuation of a viable planet, and the recognition of both the values of good science and conscious awareness, and the will to authorise their respective validity is likely needed for success. Vegaculture can play a part in strengthening the vegan view, which must be presented in its best light, as it has a lot to offer.

The Four Scenarios

*"Constant self-critical appraisal and the grounding of working with nature are the only ways I know to maintain the internal balance"---
David Holmgren*

The availability of affordable energy has supported the growth of modern civilisation for centuries, but this situation is rapidly changing due to the increased difficulty and costs of new energy production. The Energy Return on Investment (EROI) is a marker for energy delivered, compared to the energy required to deliver it, and as access to energy resources diminish, the amount of expended energy for extraction increases, leading to higher production costs, and eventually to a decline in overall production. With no foreseeable way of halting the ongoing reductions or sustaining the EROI, an energy descent appears inevitable and societies need to navigate new, less energy intensive lifestyles, like it or not.

In a fascinating analysis entitled 'Future Scenarios' (Ref.37) the co-founder of permaculture, David Holmgren presented a sober reminder of the fragility of society attempting to transition an energy descent when he examined the ramifications for society due to the combined effects of peak oil and climate change. The analysis highlights some of the ramifications of energy descent on the way of living and quality of life of both our own and future generations, as well as the importance of the timing and quality of our decision-making or lack thereof.

He proposes and discusses the relevance of four potential scenarios, these being brown technology, green technology, lifeboats and earth stewards. A projection of each scenario into the future, together with an assessment of their principals and attributes, the results of the follies of waste and greed, and unsustainable living practices, enables him to conjecture various social and cultural indicators and outcomes, and hence postulate the effects on human habitation.

While a reading of the full article is highly recommended, for the sake of brevity, my one-line interpretation of the social and cultural outcomes of the four scenarios, which can also be read as an

historic progression, is presented below for discussion purposes only:

1. Lifeboat: where human habitation is largely forest dwellers, hunters and gatherers.
2. Earth Steward: the permaculture model of agrarian farmers and sustainable villages.
3. Brown Technology: the current dilemma, crazy growth and technology for its own sake.
4. Green Technology: greening the Brown, common sense technology on a razor's edge.

Of primary interest here is the initial choice of these four scenarios, each competing for dominance and our response to them with the arrival of the age of the Anthropocene, which signifies a challenging time for sustainable activity due to the stress on Gaia from large human populations and human lifestyles that are using energy and resources to feed the increased demands of technology. These scenarios will play out, and all the scenarios are inclusive of 'lifestyles', which have existed and are continuing, or able to be retrieved with varying degrees of scale and difficulty.

If one were in a position to select a preferred scenario as a landscape for living, I presume there is little interest in returning to the Lifeboat model where modern society has collapsed, and if the Paris Climate Change Accord can be taken as a consensus of world opinion, the Brown Technology has grossly overrun it's used-by date and needs phasing out. These omissions leave just Earth Steward and Green Technology as preferred options toward sustainability and likely dependent on the total numbers of the population and the rural-urban mix.

The world's population in 2008 was almost evenly split between urban and rural areas, with less developed countries having a more balanced population of 44% urban residents, while in developed countries that figure is around 74 percent urban (Ref.38); by 2017, in just one decade, the overall degree of urbanisation had grown to around 54%, and is predicted to rise to 70% by 2050 (Ref.39). Thus the tipping point from rural to urban living has been reached, leading to a dominance of urban social and cultural lifestyles; meanwhile the total size of the world's poverty gap has been reduced over the last few decades (Ref.40).

The Cosmopolitan idea that we all belong to one single community has merit, and although inter-generational feedback is expected to further normalise the preference for urban living at the expense of migration away from the land, while the current populations are still measured in billions, there exists a strong supportive base for

both the remaining scenarios; the Earth Steward as a continuation of rural village living, and the Green Technology revolution subservient to demands of growth, but capable of limited support from a growing cohort of city or urban dwellers.

The Australian national example has proponents of Brown technology holding the balance of power, and has included failed attempts at decentralisation, absorption of smaller farms with a large proportion of overseas farm labourers, and a preference for 'Fly In Fly Out' (FIFO) skilled labour to rural areas. Rather than building new country towns with permanent housing to create a base for diversified community living, the situation demonstrates a gross lack of political and social commitment to rural living, and relentless support for overseas investment for growth, even though urban housing and living costs have superseded the budgets of an increasing proportion of Australian families.

The 'Future Scenario' website update (Ref.41), confirmed as recently as 2016 that the Brown technology scenario continues to be the most likely. What do these predictions tell us about our existing human values and humanity? What does this demonstrate about the path of civilisation we have trod for the last 5000 years of effort and combined will? Goodwill is manifest in our cultural human landscape with go(o)dly qualities; are we to ditch our heritage completely?

The question arises, is our perception of potential for human growth to be devoid of making space for another way; is there another avenue, a scenario which is not represented or has not been fully explored that can offer universal assistance? Not surprisingly, the answer is a guarded yes, and that activity is at the source of all action and has a dominant influence in the mix of factors that determine our social destiny.

The essential elements were alluded to in the original analysis, when David wrote: *"Developing some of the harder and longer term ecological and modest technological adaptations to ongoing and relentless energy descent will take decades to have widespread impacts (as do all high energy, high-tech centralised approaches) but radical and rapid human behavioural change is possible and even likely (given the right psycho-social conditions). The emerging energy and economic crisis will make these reductions a reality with or without a planned and creative response"*.

Human behavioural change and the right psychosocial conditions are indeed possible and becoming more likely; suppression of our higher self can no longer be tolerated if we are to continue to strive to co-exist in a sustainable, peaceful community. Something will happen, what it is,

what it means to us, and how we consider it, is a function of our states and stages of awareness. The essential elements of Vegaculture are consistent with this suggestion for self-improvement, which is aided by the letting go and surrender of unworthy aspects that divide and threaten our individual and collective wholeness.

The inherent values of wholeness expressed as enlightened wisdom through kindness and a compassionate lifestyle can be confirmed in all scenarios; these attributes help clear the path to holistic sustainable outcomes, and if maintained along with acceptable stages of technology, will support respect for the environment and a basis for peaceful living for our extended human and animal family! Although the pace of life does appear to grow faster, we can still choose to be involved in meaningful activity, reinforcing our sense of harmony and balance, peace and happiness, and in that process of seeking, our true selves unfold.

The fifth scenario is fundamentally the combined social and cultural response to our own self-acceptance; a summation of the moment by moment reflection of our individual relationships with the world through our actions; the simplicity of the solution cannot be over estimated, we have only to do our best; relinquishing the bonds of separation.

The Fifth Scenario

"The possession of knowledge does not kill the sense of wonder and mystery. There is always more mystery"---[Anaïs Nin](#)

The drafting and scope of the four existing scenarios provides a powerful model for commentary and measurement, and so any serious attempt to make a contribution demands one to be bold with the prediction; at the same time it would be foolish to expect that it has any real value, other than what we give it. Also, the introduction of a fifth scenario needs to be self-evident if it is going to be a suitable contender, and powerful enough to replicate the inherent value and well being of our own true nature.

In the past I have argued for recognition of an esoteric view, as a means of representing the underlying values of the mystery traditions in the presentation and make up of our dominant culture, and this gives one a clue that the basis for the fifth scenario has to be the source of common sense and wholistic knowledge that we have alluded to throughout the text, and that is consciousness itself.

The need for a further 'awakening and emerging of consciousness to itself' is the key to a coherent future, where-in the emergence of awareness, is accompanied by a surety and willingness to act; to

identify and retain values of tradition that can be sustained in the 21st century, and at the same time surrender the unjust and inept social and cultural values that maintain separation.

There is a certain futility that accompanies predictions for the future, and this selection may seem rather dry and academic, but in naming the fifth scenario the term '*Emergence*' seems like a good fit; a recent definition being "*the arising of novel and coherent structures, patterns and properties during the process of [self-organization](#) in complex systems*" (Ref.42). Emergence has roots as a proper term in nature, biology, philosophy and science; with qualities of radical novelty, coherence and wholeness, and it is dynamic and perceivable. A one-line prescription for the fifth scenario as a radical and coherent method of bonding would read as:

5. Emergence: the evolutionary glue of self-organisation in our time of need.

Acceptance of our differences is an important factor if an Emergence Scenario is to be fostered, and while the success and direction of emergence is unknown, everyone can access the glue of wholeness; it is perceptible in the irreducible faith in one's self, and reflected in the co-operative nature of the human organism.

It may not be incorrect to state that the origin of ethics is in either transcendental input or human reasoning, but both sources are desirable, as moral reasoning and judgement leading to social justice are universal in their impact, not only effective in the domains of human and animal rights; and the issues can be settled independently of origins if there is respect for all views. Spontaneous order is evident in social practices and if we really are to be masters of our own universe, there is no time like the present for demonstrating the finer capacities of our human beingness.

One is tempted to idealise the potential for change by redefining the problem, adding a few handfuls of wishful thinking, and then shaking it around until it disappears. Some philosophies even support this technique, and although some people may express the sentiment that the world is perfect as it is, there are many people whose relative experience would not be expressed this way; essentially, we have to change our behaviour, for the world is a reflection of the totality of our actions; the spectrum is vast indeed and necessarily includes both the dark and the light sides of life.

Human history has shown that the expectations from attempts at a moral revolution are unreliable, as good intentions are easily hijacked by fundamentalist attitudes and wars and suffering

continue; and while a modern revolution in both moral and conscious thinking and application is essential, the efficacy of revolutionary ideals, the selected qualities and our perseverance and timing, will only be reflected by the emergence of successful social outcomes.

The concepts of public conscience and consciousness are necessarily more vital with the impacts of connectedness through technology, and so the present is an ideal time for a global re-assessment, to help fill the void that has appeared like a giant sinkhole in the social and cultural fabric of cosmopolitan expression due to the waning of institutionalised religion, an indifference to the mystery pursuits, the popular disruption in democratic political choices, the growth of corporate power, and of course, the manifest denial to investigate our own true nature.

In the Lifeboat Scenario, the social cohesion that is necessary to introduce a wide scale moral revolution has largely been dismantled, seeds fall on barren ground with the resurrection of the spectre of the 'Hunter' again in a competition for survival at all costs, where the means of existence and personal protection sap our internal resources as we eke out a living from remnant urban habitation and scraps of natural wilderness; the rule of the strong over the weak, the aggressive over the mild. Of all the scenarios, the need and presence of fundamental values of morality would be manifest here in their most raw state.

The Brown Technology scenario needs all the help we can give, not to prop it up, but to transform it, and there is plenty of scope for further introduction and improvements to ethical and moral conduct in business, commercial and domestic social relationships and infrastructures; rather this than continue in denial in a polluted atmosphere of fear, where reluctance and apprehension proliferate as the means for a sensible transition slip even further away.

The Green Technology Scenario gives credence to human ingenuity with purposeful technologies that are finely balanced with the best scientific endeavour, alternative energies and technology identified with minimising harm to the environment and supporting sustainable lifestyles. This attempt, however small and slow to start in comparison to the scale of the global efforts required, the global Total Primary Energy Supply (TEPS) in 2015 showed around 13% input from renewables (Ref.43), confirms the viability of the seeds of Green Technology as the first leap of awareness, so why not another leap, a leap in conscious awareness, a change in behaviour?

Earth Stewardship is clearly resonant with all that we might envisage if we are going to survive as a

species in tune with the historic concept of a natural world. We suspect the rural village lifestyle, with thousands of years of refinement and adaptation is still retrievable globally, and has the ability to support a sustainable lifestyle, and while this attempt at survival is a living reality for around half the world's population, another 50% of us experience our attempts in a more complex and urbanised version within a highly reconfigured landscape, which must now become the primary focus for regeneration.

One cannot over emphasise the need for a consciousness revolution, its lack has been the prominent feature in the annals of human activity that have deposited the current state of depletion in nature, in every scenario! While information and knowledge appear infinitely trafficable, with unlimited opportunities for the gathering of experience; as a collective, we can feel confident of our combined capacity to define a 'stairway to heaven', but the steps still need to be climbed.

Aspects of enlightened thought and action abound, and their influence and weight will be collectively measured and tested by this fifth scenario, that of *Emergence*.

24. EMERGENCE

"The real problem of humanity is the following: we have paleolithic emotions; medieval institutions; and god-like technology"---E. O. Wilson

INFLUENCES

This section introduces aspects and influences that underlie components involved in the construction of an Emergence scenario, and while these components are integral with the other four, a revisiting and reframing of their importance in the current social and cultural context enables a fresh perspective. The mix of personal emotions, social structural reform, and changing technology spawns numerous attempts to 'right the wrongs' of the past, and perhaps the speed of technological change has contributed to our inability to grasp the significance of the global transition that is now taking place, in particular, the emergence of a Consciousness Revolution.

It is not my wish to prescribe Emergence as a panacea, or to try and justify it's value in any way, for I view emergence as the process of unfolding, not a thing in itself, but the instant summation of all that is and is not expressed; the totality of both dormant and manifest activity that can be realised. If we are to pursue knowledge of consciousness knowing itself in this relative realm, one suspects

it will be revealed through emergence. It will arise in our attention in the moment, and I rest my description here with a statement that was made in the previous section *"Acceptance of our differences is an important factor if an Emergence Scenario is to be fostered, and while the success and direction of emergence is unknown, everyone can access the glue of wholeness; it is perceptible in the irreducible faith in one's self, and reflected in the co-operative nature of the human organism."*

Major influences such as Buddhism have successfully persisted with the introduction of human compassion as a design objective in worldly interaction, similarly the philosophy and practice of yoga has a background within the sciences of spirituality; there are others, but these two common examples of the human moral compass, influence and support investigation, knowledge and experience of unity within all people and all nations, indeed all sentience and consciousness, and at the same time support our differences, in the common ground of a universal humanity; they are partners with the mystery practices of all cultures.

Our memory of a past event includes our experience of thoughts and feelings, and the term 'embodied cognition' has been used to describe the record of our biological, psychological and cultural context at previous times. This notion is relevant to the discussion of the various scenarios, and is instrumental in the acceptance of any new approach, especially one with the potential to influence current affairs. The pointing here is to the historic genetic connection to the esoteric realms within all traditions of human experience and in all realms at all times; by definition, the fifth scenario of Emergence caters for complexity and has space for these ongoing elements of universal appraisal and general acceptance; we humans must continue to practice doing our best.

Intuition is a human resource, however science suggests the increasing complexity of the world we commonly understand to be inhabiting, has extended the need to delve much deeper into the extensive body of scientific knowledge now available if we are to inform ourselves properly, and often outcomes are counter-intuitive; truth remains resonant with simplicity though, and instead of reverting to the three R's, we can identify features of a fifth scenario with a combination of the four C's: convergence, confluence, congruence and compassion.

Convergence

"The universe is a single atom: the convergence of science and spirituality"---Dalai Lama

Convergence in common usage is the process or state of converging, as in 'the convergence of lines in the distance'; while in biology it is 'the tendency of unrelated animals and plants to evolve superficially similar characteristics under similar environmental conditions'.

Emergence would include both of these aspects, firstly the diversity of historic lines of evolution and growth in social and cultural traditions; and through the support for species survival through human care and effort, to retain the disappearing qualities of pristine environments in nature that exist as a foundation for mutually beneficial tendencies, of 'superficially unrelated' animals and plants. We don't need to be separate to appreciate our differences; sustainable living is a very suitable outcome for all species and all traditions.

The need to differentiate the common human condition into partial elements, such as 50% rural and 50% urban readily dissipates under the weight of common authority, that of consciousness itself, ever present; and this collapse of the currency of separation, the old cliché's of the 'two cultures', the left brain and right brain, the them and us, the black and white, the diads of division, can then be recognised as different aspects of a oneness.

Progress will be made through progressive thinking, the application of the fullest spectrum of human values is needed, and recognition of those values is paramount and access must be embraced, lest we allow our highest potential to wane, and unnecessary suffering be endured. An enlightened energetic or spiritual outcome is dependent on the convergence of mind, body and spirit, the grounding of wisdom and heart, the connecting of science and personal experience, and in the social realm, these connections must also find expression if we are to proceed with a the multiplicity of preferable social and cultural platforms we purport to value.

Congruence

***"Be congruent, be authentic, be your true self"---
Mahatma Ghandi***

Congruence means to meet together, to be in agreement and in harmony; and can be expressed as being in accord with the finding of compatible solutions through consensus. We are all familiar with the term as it is integrated into our very nature, not only in every person, but also in the realm of all sentience, in the fabric of relationships, in the matrix of social interaction, and in the expressions of Gaia itself. There is certainly an esoteric position, one that by definition is small enough to be almost imperceptible; but a view none the less that the adjectives we use to refine a 'humanist' position,

whether they be secular, spiritual or universal, need be based on growth and stability of an evolving awareness, and an acceptance and merging of our scientific and spiritual roots and knowledge.

I may remind the reader that the term spirit, from the dictionary, means *animating or vital principle in man and animals*, and that the 'spiritual humanist' perspective referred to here, is not a reversion to some outdated romantic notion of wishful thinking, or institutionalised dogma and influence, it is the active component of our very being, it is that ingredient in human endeavour that manifests in action through wisdom, not just on the basis of response to economic or personal imperative for mundane notions of progress, for it recognises the human experience of being life itself, and invokes art and beauty and kindness and wonder, values that resonate with our highest achievements.

Confluence

"Truth lies at the confluence of independent streams of evidence"---Karl Deutsch

The advancement of neuroscience as a tool for discovery, the speculation and contemplation that accompany philosophy, and high technology research into particle physics have all extended the search for greater knowledge into the areas of historical wisdom and spiritual knowledge that have been preserved through millennia within various cultures and traditions. Previously shunned by many scientists in the pursuit of scientific enquiry that underlies our 'acceptable' wealth of knowledge, the revisiting of 'spiritual' tradition is now considered essential as investigation into consciousness itself explodes.

The confluence of these two significant bodies of knowledge, the 'spiritual' and the scientific, is reinvigorating our understanding of ourselves as a species; and their continued merging can be expected to provide useful insights into the functioning and development of the human psyche, and in our social and behavioural relationships. The Science and Non-Duality, (SAND) Conference (Ref.44) held regularly in the U.S.A. is a typical practical example of the merging, whereby a forum is provided for public access to both the latest in scientific research, and the probing of spiritual understanding at the edges of our investigations into consciousness and the mysteries of life; attended by leading thinkers and research scientists, this confluence of common interest is well expressed by the readiness to approach the unknown from a position of trust, where the approach can be "and", NOT "but".

The increasing interest in meditation is a good example of confluence in emergence, as it has been intensively studied and shown to be an effective learning tool in education and also in self-healing, and this knowledge has led to it becoming much more widely practiced. Australian schools have been trialing its introduction into curriculums and in some cases for daily student practice in primary schools. The emergence of these attempts that marry the value of tradition with science is a significant movement in the approach to education, and a foundation for schooling children with a tool for discernment that is appropriate in an age of greater enlightenment.

Compassion

“Our task must be to free ourselves... by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty”---Albert Einstein

Compassion or kindness as an element of the fifth scenario arrives with a mass scaling of the evolutionary ladder, leaning on the finest traditions of human achievement, through the *introduction of a movement towards compassionate living*. Maybe this is going to be the quantum leap in imagination, awareness and focus needed, if we are to retain a semblance of our existing progress with the civilization of the world; to be capable of extracting the civility, the wholeness and goodness of social and cultural advances, while letting go of the dross and unwholesome habits that plague the successful movement to a postmodern world.

If one has any doubts about the veracity of compassion as an integral aspect of emergence, or its potential to be singly capable of carrying the weight of this future scenario into the new world, I suggest a simple re-reading of the aims of MCL presented earlier in the text, will again inspire you with its vision of shared optimism and humanity. This introduction to vegaculture is intended to expose the simplicity of embracing our own self-fulfilling method, for the practice and delivery of universal kindness, to readily supersede the existing predominant anthropocentric view and the suffering that accompanies it. The revolution in consciousness will have at least one more representative; the emergence of some of the successes have been heralded elsewhere; merit is obvious and the potential is unlimited.

While the philosophers are searching for consciousness, we can simply live it.

PROGRESSION

25. DEVELOPMENT

26. MATURATION

25. DEVELOPMENT

"We should consume in such a way that helps to reduce the suffering of living beings. And that way we can preserve compassion in our hearts"---Thich Nhat Hanh

RELATING

Humans demonstrate a strong desire to imitate, fashion or recreate the world from memory, which forms a base for our experiences, education, social interaction, and eventually our behaviour; our learnt responses lead to habits, our actions replicate themselves as transference in relationships, and as performance of ritual in culture. We fashion and engineer sleek designs for numerous objects with knowledge of function and form from the natural world, while computers are managed to document and record on our behalf, every facet of human enquiry from the smallest particle to the outer limits of our universal reach.

Distinguishing the 'truth' of claims in popular culture is a source of great confusion within the community and one of the most difficult tasks in modern living, and while selective memory and disinformation are two very common aspects of human behaviour, giving value to truth is not necessarily the only method for transferring ideas and information; and even if we could discard the deliberate introduction of fake news, and the inherent difficulty of proving the world is not flat without the help of technology or travel, the task of knowing ourselves and relating naturally can be difficult.

Confusion arises and is dominant when our focus continues to be directed externally; the fashionable proliferation of 'selfies' supports the notion of narcissism and highlights the strength of the human ego and its perceived need to fill the role of a subject among fellow subjects, in an environment filled with an unceasing array of disinterested separate objects; apart from the pet dog of course.

The externalised psyche finds solace in various ways; in technology we are reassured that our brains are like computers, in health our food becomes our medicine, in philosophy our free will is illusory as we adopt the guise of biological robots, and in relationships we are increasingly typecast by gender preference. With the imminent large-scale onset of robots, and commercial interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) set to further enhance the evolution of humans away from nature towards manmade tools, the dominance of the mind at the expense of the wholistic natural self, is again expressed. Machines rather than people increasingly trade the world's economy, and the tradition of human-to-human relationship has

expanded to incorporate the human-to-machine, and machine-to-machine interfaces.

Perhaps we will see a surge in spiritual enquiry from the robots; the proponents of "Who Am I" may never have had it so good, a marketing dream come true! There remains a serious side though to this quest as well, for the possibility that humans could unleash AI into the current social and cultural mix, where individual and collective confusion is already dominant, presents an enormous challenge for humanity.

The concentration on this technology appears at a critical juncture in our relationship to the natural world through global pollution, and is potentially the most significant disruptive scientific endeavour since the splitting of the atom, an event that also arrived with caution for use from the scientific community. The research, release and embracing of new global technologies is a glaring example, where separation from the myriad of responsibilities that would usually ensue if products were to be sensitively introduced, and sometimes even not introduced, can compromise existing social protections, and lead to gross violations of the earth's resources, human rights and biological safety, let alone the finer subtleties of our quality of living and co-existence in a sustainable environment. Wise discernment will be put to task as we consider the how, why, when and where, while the need for non-artificial behavioural change becomes ever more urgent; will discretion be the better part of valour?

When society is overwhelmingly supportive and there is a demonstrative dominance of compassion and freedom and happiness, and an agreed reduction of suffering, then perhaps the conditions for further disruptive inputs from small sections of the population have credence, until then it seems prudent to suggest that learning to live together and relate on a razor's edge is difficult enough, without the necessity for third parties to sharpen the razor.

Inspiration

"Your body and mind are just accumulations that you have gathered. What you accumulate can be yours, but it can never be you"---Sadhguru.

Psychology and the Good Life (Ref.1) is the most popular class ever held at Yale University in America, and in 2018 attracted around 25% of all campus students twice weekly to learn about Happiness. Offered by the Psychology Department in response to student demand and the continuing increase in mental health issues among students, advice mostly takes the form of setting personal boundaries, with the course allocating time to experience the benefits of disconnecting

from the external world, and focusing on turning inward to access one's own needs.

The moral revolution alluded to elsewhere is actually well underway, with traditional social and cultural norms being strongly challenged; a deeper moral and ethical questioning of basic human rights is present in many topical issues such as gender politics, protection for minorities, exposure of economic injustice, environmental pollution, social attitudes to refugees and other displaced populations, and finally animal welfare.

Exposition of truth is a work in progress, integral with the study and practice of philosophy, spirituality and the mystery traditions, and through contemplation of our own beliefs or indeed any other issue. While resolution might readily be described as a delightful example of 'kicking an own goal': the path of denial could be aptly portrayed as 'kicking things around until they disappear'. Finding the courage to respect the value of one's own opinion, among the plethora of experts in the field of 'knowing better', is a task for the unwary, and although naivety can unleash creative outcomes, one becomes aware this will not be so in every instance.

Transmission

"If you are listening from openness, you will hear love, if you are listening from concepts, you will hear concepts"---Amoda Maa

Attention to the analysis of cultural influences by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins has spawned the word meme, a shortening of mimeme from Ancient Greek, meaning 'imitated thing', and he 'initially defined a meme as a noun that "conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation"; and further "it could alternatively be thought of as related to "memory" (Ref.2). Usage and meaning have developed, but the value of its introduction here is that the concept cognises ideas and information as self replicating phenomena having a life of their own, the meme 'can replicate, mutate and evolve ideas, similar to the behaviour of human genes'.

A Smithsonian Magazine article (Ref.3) in 2011 asked the question, 'What defines a Meme?' and then quoted Dawkins, "It is staring us in the face. It is still in its infancy, still drifting clumsily about in its primeval soup, but already it is achieving evolutionary change at a rate that leaves the old gene panting far behind;" and then went on to explain, "That "soup" is human culture; the vector of transmission is language, and the spawning ground is the brain". The assessment and pointing to this triumvirate is especially significant for the proposition of emergence, as it identifies the need for both research in neuroscience to further our

understanding of the flow of ideas, while enabling convergence with the wealth of human culture and knowledge gathered for millennia through historical contemplation and the rigours of personal experience.

What I also find intriguing is the statement on Memetics from the Wikipedia entry (Ref.4): "Memetics, involves sidestepping the traditional concern with the truth of ideas and beliefs and instead involving a focus on the success of ideas and beliefs". The intimation that the mind does not always in fact make itself up, but rather, is a host for the carriage of information without censorship for validity, does tally strongly with our experience; at one extreme perhaps gossip, and at the other extreme it may invoke our intuitive desire to deepen enquiry into topics like 'humans as biological robots', and even 'God-given grace'.

Our little introduction to Vegaculture as a concept continues to open doors to a myriad of conceptual interpretations of the human experience, and while future scenarios are a useful tool for assessment and adjustment of preferred outcomes, we are always left with responding to events as they happen. So two sides of the one coin, but this is what makes emergence the driving force for action and response, rather than being a consequential development that is dependent on history and preconception to validate its authenticity.

The actor Michael Caine once responded to a comment in the TV interview series Parkinson, with the poignant reply, 'some people live their life as if it is a dress rehearsal', or words to that effect, which I find a useful metaphor at times, this being one of them. Emergence is happening, it may not be exactly as we envisage in terms of defining qualities; it could be a semblance of Darwinian evolution, or a freak of nature, or an exact replica of our expectations, perhaps all of these, for it is the observer who gives credence to the nature of the experience, our response or lack of it, is what has relevance.

Whether we are seeking our true nature or uncovering a means for improved communication, the potential for the vegaculture message to be transmitted is apparent. As a representative of conscious wholeness in the practice of sustainable living, vegaculture is congruent with information messaging, and as conscious actions increase, its role will be further highlighted.

Commitment

"Can cultural development guide our way to a peaceful world without fully honouring the significance of being?"---the Author

The Internet, popular culture and international travel are three principal elements in the diffusion

of culture within a globalised community, and these are now formative influences in the lives of most people. The growth of allegiance to the concept of a global culture is reinforced by an innate sense that we are born as citizens of the world, and the recent example of Brexit in U.K. highlights the fragility of taking our cultural identity from national boundaries, rather than our common connectedness; cultural allegiance is politically fickle.

Ultimately, our personal alignment with a particular cultural identity is the prerogative of the individual, and while we may speculate and identify social forces as determining factors in the growth and direction of various aspects of the shared cultural experience, the platform for expression is always reliant on the willingness of the individual to identify through their actions.

The time is always ripe for a reassessment of dominant cultural and social values, a review of all facets of interaction, and particularly the fundamentalist attitudes that dominate life choices. One thing is certain, *being prepared* is not the issue, as our being is ever ready, willing and able; all manifestations are acceptable to the beingness, individual egos are the stumbling block to progress. Buddha exposed the futility of the practice of clinging to fundamentalist extremes of human behaviour some 2600 years ago, when he pointed to the middle way.

Culture itself can never be fully developed, for it is continually changing, but an approach to sharing and honouring the values in all traditions is possible, and many people continue to work with respect toward that outcome. The significance of being is ever present, and while valid experiences of spiritual humanism are alive and well in the lives of so many people, they will continue to be questioned by advocates of secular humanism. It seems reasonable to me at least, that the same right of tenure should also apply to the questioning of fundamentalist positions in secular humanism itself.

Advocates of fundamentalist attitudes obviously provide the limits at any moment of the spectrum of fullness of the culture, and the fullest expressions of social justice and sustainability will remain elusive unless we as individuals can come to recognise our own middle way.

No doubt we will feel "self-conscious" at times, when we express the truth, it comes at the cost of expressing itself! Truth is the aim of belief, and in the search for recognition of itself, truth is continuously manifesting through beingness; one popular expression of our beingness is founded in spiritual humanism, and it therefore needs to be recognised for its own sake. While someone else's

opinion poses a threat to us, we have more work to do on ourselves, and that is a practical focus for achievable results.

Gaia has proved itself resilient to a range of conditions that are beyond human capacities, and while humans and Gaia may be co-dependent, and bound to suffer from the same ailments, and although we can manage most acute ailments reasonably well, some ailments have been left to fester, such as nuclear waste material for instance, while the effects of introduced species and lifestyles on indigenous people and country has blurred the balance of nature.

History confirms we cannot heal one without the other, an illness we identify in Gaia is not individual or collective, it is essentially universal, and insoluble without a universal commitment. We continue to deny systemic issues, a 'human trait' through either neglect, or exercise of so called free will, and our reluctance to address repetitive strain injury, inevitably leads to more confusion and a failure in coherence due to chronic fatigue.

Mutual Support

"When people live in accordance with Nature, the song of life becomes sweet"---Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi Devi)

Whether the dissemination of a vegaculture view garners support from within the vegan, vegetarian and permaculture communities is speculative, but its introduction is offered as a place for consideration and guidance; our task is to take this simple step of realisation, to scale the ladder of awareness, even one rung makes a massive difference to our enslaved brethren; to allow the greater goodness to manifest, in other words, get out of the way, and let goodness arise and survive without hindrance; but it has to be grounded in action to be effective.

During my 25 years as a resident in a small vegan facility within an extended permaculture community, I witnessed many kindred spirits who were active building sustainable lifestyles, training and gaining practical skills applicable to their own journey, and happy and willing to share their experiences by assisting others in the local community. The semi-rural setting in country Victoria was also the host of a series of Permaculture Design Courses (PDC). The PDC is a wonderful teaching aid, combining general knowledge about a host of topics, with a hands-on approach to design and problem solving with practice of various aspects of site layout, home gardening and landscaping, with information and skills which are just as relevant and applicable in a vegaculture context.

Feedback reflects the emphasis and quality of teaching, and despite some food challenges that have arisen for vegans; the overall experience nearly always seems to be positive. No doubt vegaculture will resonate with some permaculture adherents too, and in this sense it is good to remember that permaculture ultimately provides a reasoned design intent, which will always underpin the maintenance of existing paths to sustainable living, simply because the act of taking personal responsibility for daily outcomes rests with the persons involved.

Although we are always undergoing change, the social and cultural issues that arise during deliberate transitioning need to be addressed; these include design and planning perspectives, which source reference from stakeholders to identify a responsible community view prior to policy development and review, and before legislation can be enacted and become effective. For the well-meaning vegaculture adherent, this will be a time of great challenge, the striking of balanced methods for selecting time frames and numbers of animals affected, and the social upheaval of sections of the food industry that are implicated.

Well-considered solutions for decreasing livestock numbers and integrating animals into a future environment often remain on the 'back-burner,' due to the pressing work of the day, and plans to achieve this end are imperative if we are to succeed with the significant task of transforming the sources of food supply. Farm sanctuaries are becoming more widespread as the pioneers of animal liberation see the need to introduce practical alternatives to what appears to be a hopeless situation for billions of animals being tortured in factory farms. Providing a face as well as a place for the oppressed is an essential step for liberation; and these early attempts at relationship building set the agenda for a movement away from factory farming practices.

At the grass roots level, in the necessary transition period to a society less dominated by farm animals, the experienced permaculture practitioner provides an essential ingredient in this forward planning as local food sources further flourish. An extensive body of knowledge and experience exists in families and communities close to the land, where local aspects of animal welfare and daily care are already integrated with local environments in a meaningful way, setting an example for the minimum standards which should be adopted, by those newcomers with less experience.

There are some permaculture trainers involved in teaching PDC courses who already advertise Veganic Gardening techniques as an integral aspect in their programs, in fact two courses were

held in Queensland in early 2017, which is encouraging. In any event, there is already a plethora of vegan-culture and veganic gardening information and educational presentations that have been forged with movements towards sustainable living methods; these are synchronous with the advances in social and cultural acceptance and adoption of vegaculture principles.

No surprises there, as the spread of vegan awareness into other domains, with improved access to quality information regarding efficient living practices, and the accelerated rise in general community awareness, stemming from modern networking system, runs parallel with the desire to make 'the future' a better place; this goal already being consistent with the usual 'each new generation' response.

Vegaculture encourages the support of permaculture adherents, and one expects this diverse group will continue to provide strong support for well-considered projects, and help with increasing community realisation of animal rights issues, to identify and help remove cruel farming methods, and minimise restrictions of freedom by supporting natural environments for animal behaviour to take precedence over current industry standards.

There is likely no greater challenge to the farmed animal lobby, than the exposure to the wider public of their practices and influences; the current spate of documentaries and media attention in 2018 in Australia related to animal welfare issues proves that boundaries for tolerance have well and truly been exceeded, and we can expect positive outcomes to ensue.

Continuity

"The heart of consciousness is joy"---Matthew Fox

Cultural history is a history, and is governed by our interpretation of events; our journey as a wave in the ocean of life shows signs of support and signs of resistance. The share market informs us that previous resistance, once bridged becomes support, and conversely, a place where we previously found support, can again become a point of resistance. This is a function of our thinking and points to the necessity for vigilance in our relationship with the world, in this instance, the willingness to participate as best we can in the global efforts to strengthen and stabilise sustainable outcomes through human ingenuity and co operation to provide sustainable outcomes.

There are many faces to human evolution but the psyche and traditions of past cultures have been passed on in the seed line, and while the villages proceeded to grow from their own roots, the

ravaging of the earth over the last few centuries has continued in parallel with rural development. We comment on the fallacy of continuous economic growth as a means for sustainable outcomes, and yet an inventory of our own ecological footprint can display the forces that come to make up this trend.

Science has the capacity to easily clean up a host of acute ailments for the individual, the collective and the environment, but our infrastructure and social and political systems are entrenched in denial, competition and suspicious of change; the arrival of the Anthropocene is an opportunity to undergo a deep healing process, the human resolve is being tested and will remain that way until all thoughts of separation have fallen away.

The understanding, adoption and wider application of concepts for compassionate living, not only enrich our own and other's life experiences but are essential elements for the cohesion that is necessary in the multiplicity of efforts toward sustainable living practices; and the practice of compassionate living provides a solid foundation for the emergence of a peaceful co-operative world culture. As our connectivity expands, opportunities for both the dedicated application of compassionate acts, and random acts of kindness also grow.

The discovery we eventually make, is that repetition of past mistakes will continue unless *we change our behaviour*, and growth of the individual is the pre-eminent cause that determines change, and our common understanding and relationship to the emergence of culture is subsequent to and largely dependent on the individual personal inputs from all the members of the collective.

One of the beauties of a conceptual narrative is that it provides a space for creative solutions, it also demands a sincere trust in one's own experience, but gives the freedom to demonstrate another way; whether the reader can find their own justification is perhaps just as important. I have long suspected the need for compassionate living as an essential catalyst for change, and the vision of vegaculture does incorporate the elements necessary to make a worthwhile contribution, however, as this text progressed, I became ever more conversant with the breadth and depth of the connectedness of our social and cultural preferences, their influence in ordinary life, and the extraordinary diversity of opinion and nuance that underlies human values.

There is a continuity that arises from the merging of wills, but can we see that the healing of just one, our own self, can demonstrate the ability to heal the whole? We are connected; the apparent

separation is an illusion in thinking, which is an illusion in the awareness of our own conscious existence. While it remains one of many models for progress; the vision of vegaculture will unfold as emergence reveals the social and cultural outcomes, we will continue to refine the models, participate in our rituals and seek out mentors.

Patience

"Beauty is the welcoming openness of truth towards us"---Sufi saying

In addition to the presentation of emergence as a scenario, it has also been cast as a process in the strictest sense, for all scenarios play out in the field of emergence, which is another way of saying, 'Que Sera, Sera; whatever will be will be'; even time and space can be embodied in the term emergence, as a definitive aspect of emergence is its continuing relationship to the here and now. So while the balance of persuasion and outcomes for our culture and lifestyle can be assessed and measured against past performance, the whole concept of comparison of changing states is dependent on the choice of the observer.

Emergence is indifferent to the observer; emergence is what happens, a primal expression of consciousness. Having stated this circumstance, the identity of movements such as permaculture that recognise the inherent value of measurement and vigilance, identify a place for observation and witnessing of the cultural and social milieu; vegaculture is similarly inclined, and vegan awareness can thus readily occupy a position in the hierarchy of awareness of events as they unfold, which returns the discussion to the movement of thought in consciousness.

Finding our own state of acceptance, and understanding the differentiation of awareness of other opinions and actions, is the choice we have, so it is incumbent on each of us as individuals to represent our selves to the best of our ability if we are to maximise the effectiveness of preferred outcomes. This input is a driver of emergence, which itself is a reflection of ourselves and in that sense, we can choose how we can best contribute to make a difference, as a response to existing conditions. If we are seeking an outcome, then we will be actively involved in the interpretation of events that suit our intent and purposes.

This is so for all observers and inputs, which is why emergence is unpredictable, because each moment is separate, every moment is a new world and in the instance of cultural preference and outcomes, can be seen to be influenced by the persuasion of the observer; which confirms the need for rigorous scientific enquiry and its efforts to provide an impartial baseline for observation. I

recognise the desire to bring some finality to events, an expectation that emergence will fulfil hopes for preferred outcomes, at the same time I realise that emergence is only ever an opening, not a closing, for life continues; thoughts can be born and therefore the likelihood of closure is inevitable, for what is born will also die, but if I am to be open, I make myself available to life.

26. MATURATION

"This above all; to your own self be true" — William Shakespeare

CHALLENGES

The universe has a way of keeping us occupied with various challenges, and in the process of meeting these challenges, personal maturation leads to wisdom through acceptance. We also learn to identify with and be receptive to the needs of others through our experiences, and eventually we come to recognise our own true nature; a place of service arises from this maturation.

In this time of the early 21st Century we are drawn back to the issue of separation, and while the follies of materialism are considered to be well understood, it is still widely practiced, and so our attention must be focused on finding effective solutions. The earth is reminding us that we have lost our way, and perhaps more than ever before, large percentages of the world's population find their lifestyles further distanced from previously strong and dominant cultural connections that maintained a personal guidance and ritual alliance with sacred earth-based tradition.

In Veganism

"Life is a field of unlimited possibilities"--- Deepak Chopra

A copy of the definition of veganism from The Vegan Society (UK) is repeated here for clarity: *"The word 'veganism' denotes a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude — as far as is possible and practical — all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals".*

The challenges here can be portrayed as *'the individual or first person cultural challenges'*; they arise from the space of veganism itself. The challenges for vegaculture on it's journey of recognition as a valid approach to problem solving

in the cultural domain, include those that have always faced veganism, namely, entrenched social and cultural dietary and farming habits, and the difficulty of introducing a philosophy or lifestyle that is perceived as being founded on restrictive practices.

Existing commercial advantage is well protected in the market place, none the less, yummy vegan offerings are also attractive to merchants, and although the early battles, such as being able to call soy milk a 'milk' have subsided, the dairy sector is still quite aggressive in defence of animal foods; and while the whole animal farming industry is in denial on many fronts, scientific evidence continues to support healthy vegan options in preference to animal foods.

The time of transition for change is potentially instantaneous, in this moment; however, the *'moment..um'* of culture and history, combined with our knowledge of human behaviour and the reluctance to change, suggests a longer term, but the avenue for choice in this matter is closing fast as the visible results of global pollution wreak further havoc, and the economic measures dictate the need for more effective social responses.

Alternate views of history based on a vegan perspective have been few, and are not fully developed and focused, such as toward an integration with childhood education for instance.

The community response to educational campaigns has tended to be reactive, as a resistance to the excesses and travails of the animal-farming lobby, however, deep down we all know the angst of killing is being hidden, and it is encouraging example, to see the strength of public opinion against the live export trade.

Knowledge gained through advances in nutritional science demonstrates that our nutrient source can be completely 100% plant-based and vegan, a fact that now confirms the transition away from animals for food is quite achievable, as well as desirable. The application of this knowledge some decades ago spawned an interest in the design of vegan communities in a village setting, as an alternative to the previous traditions; details of proposed vegan villages are explained further and available from MCL, and known as STAVVS, Self-reliant Tree-based Autonomous Vegan Villages (Ref.4).

Anyone who has visited high human population density urban and urban fringe settings in developing countries will soon realise, or more likely be appalled by the harshness of life and emaciated condition for people and also for many untended home and pet animals in those countries, and together with the denial of human rights and

welfare for working animals, there are plenty of opportunities for improvement. Feral animal populations present a major challenge in Australia with native wildlife consumption, while the farming response has been a continuation of habitual culling programs, this chronic situation is in need of a circuit breaker such as a limit on pet numbers and consideration of wide spread sterilisation programs as a preferred treatment.

Many challenging issues have been canvassed elsewhere in the text. Vegan awareness is naturally practiced and alert to injustice; in response to numerous human and animal welfare campaigns, social justice issues and environment protection and species protection lobbies are well supported, but vigilance is demanding. Also, the fight against animal cruelty is still pursued vigorously at many levels within the social hierarchy, and is definitely not, and nor should it be seen or claimed to be, only a vegan cause; we are all responsible as a community for compassion and kindness to all sentience.

In Permaculture

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others"---George Orwell, Animal Farm

The challenges here can be portrayed as *'the collective or second person cultural challenges'*; they arise from a space, which in part is representative of vegaculture itself. A premise of the permaculture world-view includes the introduction, support and maintenance of a 'sustainable' lifestyle, which is relevant in a rural village setting for perhaps 50% of the world's population; the daily reality for some 3 to 4 billion people whose forbears throughout history have included the use of animals integrated into a system of balancing inputs and outputs. This has inevitably lead to subjugation of animals for economical and practical human benefits in terms of their outputs of labour, and their inputs both alive and as a dead carcass.

If we bring our attention back to the other 50% of the population, many of whom are city dwellers separated from the land, we find an 'unsustainable' city lifestyle, still with the tradition of the subjugation of animals, except they are now integrated into a system of unbalanced inputs and unbalanced outputs, predominately for their use as a food source, which is itself an individual lifestyle choice wholly capable of being satisfied by holistic sustainable plant food practices, rather than unsustainable animal practices. Animal dependence can thus be seen as the common denominator, the currency of interaction between rural and urban lifestyles; the reliance and

integration of animal exploitation appears endemic in both realms.

Some home gardens in farming communities are known to provide more than 40 percent of the total calorific intake of farming communities; and the western permaculture enthusiast is presumably busy at home, trying their best to be sustainable from the products on their own soil. The permaculture hobby farm/home may well contain some animal usage, in fact usually chooks and maybe goats or a small milking cow or herd, but the animal/human interface is a real one. By this I mean there remains a possibility of a functional and genuine level of care and respect for the daily welfare of supervised animals, which is of a 'human and animal scale'; the home situation being in stark contrast to the overwhelming extravagance of commercial production, where nearly all animals are four-legged dollars!

The reluctance for political intervention to preserve our soils and environment from the present ravages is another example of indifference to global pollution, and another reason why market forces with vested interests should not be left to determine the outcomes of community welfare. Organic agriculture has been fostered by permaculture, mimicking natural eco-systems, where the design of sustainable food production system respects the biological security of the soil, and where synthetic pesticides and herbicides are minimised, and a companion planting regime is preferred; consumer choice has moved the organic and local preference from a niche market, and again supported by permaculture to become a preferred source, subject to price differentials.

Christian invaders typically built churches on top of demolished sacred ruins, and this principal is still in operation today with the addition of Wi-Fi transmitters on top of churches. Permaculture is also infiltrating urban streetscapes with edible landscapes and sensible planning, and these new social changes are the seeds of for sustainable growth in populated areas, replacing the centralised global market with local alternatives provides a necessary challenge to reliance on unsustainable global marketing and distribution.

Permaculture has long recognised the decline in net energy as a major contributor to economic instability and continues to prompt urban dwellers to think and act locally; a resurgence of food distribution networks and recycling efforts confirms the value of localisation, and as our personal resourcefulness grows, we rediscover community, a prime example in Australia being a widespread willingness to volunteer in numerous activities.

Lifestyle preferences and contrasts exist between rural villagers and urban city dwellers, however, these should not preclude the potential for home gardening and farming in the urban landscape. Urban gardening and farming has many facets, and permaculture has a major education role to play in promoting edible landscapes into the suburban infrastructures and town planning design. Localising our food resources and integrating them into the home environment and our daily life could be regarded as plain common sense.

Reinventing cities with leafy treed streetscapes providing mulch for the understory nature strip and suburban vegetable plot is advancing urban food production, while a small selection of fruit trees, a large shade tree, a home compost and a garden seat were commonplace in the home garden only a few decades ago. Designing the means to a holistic sustainable city lifestyle on the 550m2 suburban block or a small patch of common land near multistorey apartments is great, but a vegaculture view would likely preclude bringing farm animals or their parts into the urban environment, without recourse to the fullest understanding of the need to breed any animal in captivity.

Educating people to be self-contained and survive without reliance on animals is just as worthy an occupation as harnessing and training animals to do sedentary work for us; we must eventually understand they are not actually volunteering for these duties. Swapping a pet goat for a pet dog may make sense in a western rural setting, and may have some advantages in an urban environment by challenging fixed notions of acceptable lifestyles, but rather than substitute one problem with another, a vegaculture approach would refrain from introducing any further enticement for animals as pets in the urban landscape, nor would it condone exploitation in other ways.

Permaculture continues to expose the historic entrenched approaches to business as usual as just plain nonsense in the 21st C., and extremely demanding in every conceivable way, of us, the animals, and of the earth and its resources; a gross imbalance with wasted inputs, wasted lives and wasted outputs. A challenge for permaculture still exists though, as the necessity for our *reliance* on animals for labour or food, and as a source of materials for manufactured products has largely become outmoded and superseded by compassionate alternatives. We can define our urban city dwelling lifestyle as modern because we are capable of disentangling ourselves from the vortex of animal dependence.

Discussions regarding energy and water conservation, environmental protection, and the

industrialisation, mechanisation and desensitization of animal farming is just as much an issue for permaculture as it is for vegaculture. Neither group wishes to see the warped means of production with all its pitfalls continue. This has driven some farmers to try to legitimise 'organic meat,' and promote it as an acceptable product. This is a marketing ploy on behalf of manufacturers, and not at all in the best interests of the animals. These 'organic meat' producers are just breeding EXTRA animals with all of the associated environmental and ethical and moral issues of animal farming, bred in a different fashion!

Vegaculture would still maintain we need another way, that is the introduction of animals rights, which would likely include a transition using animal welfare education as an essential aspect in the design criteria by which permaculture progresses. This change would provide incentives and examples for less dependence on animal inputs, and see assistance for the growth of vegan organic gardening, the abolition of currently cruel animal farming practices and the "normalisation" of humans and other animals back into a multi-species landscape. If we are to foster and protect the vegan way, we need to provide education which at least considers *the wisdom of compassion as a resource* in the decision making process, by extending the message of equanimity and wholistic thinking into entrenched realms.

In Society

"I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world"---Thich Nhat Hanh

The challenges here can be portrayed as '*the universal or third person cultural challenges*'; they arise from a space, where vegaculture has to be responsible for fully representing itself.

The imposition of political, justice and economic structures to assemble, or resemble, a model for living together, are important formative elements in the success of any civilisation, and while there are many similarities in the way we each conduct our social interactions, there is usually leeway for individual expression, with some people delighting in the opportunity to volunteer, and others preferring a path of anarchy.

Requests for submissions to the Australian Parliament for a petition calling for the Phase-out of Animal Agriculture over the next ten years closed in August 2016, and so debates about the issues surrounding live exporting, factory farming and the environmental and health aspects of animal agriculture are increasingly being considered for legislative input, and although the Vegans

Australia submission was not acted upon, the potential for change should not be underestimated.

The population debate, which is a major factor in the design limitations to do with personal security, food supply and food security, environmental degradation and resource sharing, is a major social issue. It seems we are not going to design our way out of the consequences, and apart from the initial one-child policy experiment and updates in China, little inroads to the human population increase seem possible; however, if there was a wider social commentary and understanding of the existing effects of the pet and farm animal numbers and their projected increases, political will could bring sustainable living a step closer to realisation, with incentives in health and education.

The so-called Health Budget could be more accurately termed a Sickness Budget, and now that the science is in, the community has itself and the politicians who represent us, to account for the impotency in the health outcomes and the messages that promote unhealthy food choices that industry manages to circulate within the community. With a sizeable portion of the health budget going to the support of business as usual, with subservience to the medical model of healing sickness, rather than the support for legislating advice and restrictions in health education to promote healthy living, such as has occurred with the Quit campaign in the prevention of smoking, a reformation in health care is long overdue as a means of addressing systemic issues.

The science of health, nutrition and food production has evolved rapidly over the last few generations, and numerous examples exist to serve the purpose for a proper comparison of the health status of people utilising plant food based vegetarian diets vs. animal based diets, where the results clearly show the plant food selections to be healthier. The video 'What the Health' is a good introduction to issues surrounding dietary education and food choice in the U.S., and clearly demonstrates the pervasive nature of entrenched marketing to support their own interests; and exposes the ways they manage to infiltrate and influence even government sponsored health programs.

Both the State Government Departments such as the Victorian 'Better Health Channel' and the National 'Healthdirect' initiatives bring attention to the health benefits of plant food vegetarian and vegan diets, but sustained education and support for school children and parents would be very beneficial. General agreement could be reached if we were to promote the simple slogan, 'prevention is better than cure'. This approach could substantiate existing programs for supportive

behaviour and be conveyed in conjunction with the teaching of compassionate living, which also needs to be inserted into school curriculums to bring awareness to our everyday decision-making.

Compassion as a preventative health measure is a valid activity, treating our food sources seriously as a place where health begins, is in itself a compassionate act, and the more clarity we bring to messaging at an early educational stage in human development, the greater is the value of that compassionate act throughout the life and lives of the whole community. Access to animals as an education tool and process for human-animal interaction needs to be defined as such, as the slippery slope to a duplicitous relationship can easily develop, especially where there is an opportunity for exploitation as a food source, or profit motives.

A primal and underlying issue is the need to differentiate the power of the dollar and the livelihood of the farmers, from an assessment of what is really an ethical question. A call to action is evident, and the response from the current younger generation, where optimism is a valid response, is encouraging. Vegan culture has become a touchstone for mainstream lifestyles, and acts as a pointer for relationships in general; not only for guidance in animal rights, but as a broader example of a functioning holistic philosophy and approach to daily living, where ethical shopping, marketing and decision making are essential elements in the modern urban lifestyle. As Dr Melanie Joy reminds us, 'sexism and racism are falling away, and so carnism will also do this....' *as vegan values are the common values*'.

Simple methods for improvement in public education and interaction are urgently needed. Some leverage is possible with global campaigners such as AVAAZ with a 44 million-person network that recently launched a donation drive to raise money to assist with influencing the policy makers in government to take environmental situations seriously (Ref.5), citing the release of a petition signed by 15,000 scientists from around the world that cautions the earth having entered a 'sixth mass extinction event' brought on by humans; and a reference to the renowned botanist E.O. Wilson has suggested a 50% retention of the whole world to be retained for nature, due to the rate of species extinction! Currently, mandated protection for the oceans is just over 3% and for landmass 17% protection, both of which are totally inadequate.

Ten years ago in a small town in Germany I noticed the central roundabout had a large real-time digital display of various air quality measurements and other environmental information; this example of a simple effective

device for display of public information on environmental data is notable by its absence in all Australian settings. The EPA in Victoria ceased advertising their daily traffic air quality measurements over 30 years ago, as the results seemed too depressing and hence politically unacceptable. A doomsday clock is perhaps overly reminiscent of the 'grim-reaper advertisements' which alarmed public sentiments during the darker days of the AIDS virus, but surely the introduction of some information in popular locations, perhaps positive messages regarding species protection, reductions in land clearing, reduced CO2 levels, etc. would be useful as a constant reflection of the social conscience, and as a measure of *community progress*.

Numerous land regeneration projects and programs for re-introducing native fauna and flora make regular progress, with limited sponsorship at all levels of government, and support from private individuals through systems such as Landcare help maintain small sections of land and natural resources. Modern technology has enabled accurate and repetitive observation, tracking and measurement of the land and seascapes, and positioning everything in it has become commonplace, so the means for planning and decision-making has improved enormously.

Fencing large tracts of the countryside to restrict and contain animal movements is integral with the principals of land ownership and allocation, and still has currency today. Animal fencing likely started for containment of farmed animals and some have extended over large tracts of land, such as the historic 'rabbit fence', first erected in Western Australia in 1909, and we continue to try to control feral or wild animals such as feral cats, foxes, wild pigs and dogs, kangaroos and crocodiles, to protect native fauna and flora.

Novel ways of focusing attention on a wholistic view of life continue to be explored as each generation brings something of current value to the collective through personal growth, music and the arts and social media, and presently through an increasing emphasis on the plight of the earth and its environment. A good example of the maturation that is essential if we are to succeed was published in a recent article in national media (Ref.6); the report confirmed Australian consumers are becoming more ethically minded, and their concern and purchasing power is influencing businesses who are themselves responding.

The provisioning of alternative economies, and community lifestyles with a focus on localised person to person exchange, may soon see a sudden expansion into mainstream consolidation as a result of the global introduction of blockchain

technology as a software platform for digital assets in the contractual and financial business communities, trading markets and for commodity exchange. Tremendous interest is being generated in secure peer-to-peer payment systems using Crypto-currencies, typified by Bitcoin and other currency platforms, that may complement traditional Banking and financial systems, but avoid the use of paper currency.

Elsewhere various organisations such as The Shift Network (Ref.7) are utilising educational resources to reach out on-line to the global community with quality material and training in personal growth, healing, wellness, spiritual and wholistic pursuits; their advertised reach is some 800,000 people in over 159 countries and the building of a virtual infrastructure, in addition to attending events, is typical of the opportunities that have been generated by the communication expansion over the last few decades, and a sign of maturation and participation in progressive education.

The contemplative spiritual author Mathew Fox (Ref.8) expresses a need for lighter forms of faith in contrast to religious institutions and identifies various avenues for interaction. He cites his book 'Order of the Sacred Earth' as an example of the 'post-modern' spiritual approach, where the way forward is encompassed in the vow *"I promise to be the best lover and the best defender of mother earth"*.

Another example of this sentiment was the introduction of the Supreme Master Television channel a decade ago, which managed to broadcast good news for a number of years with regular programs on 14 satellites; this novel venture was initiated by the Buddhist 'Supreme Master' Ching Hai, and promoted both vegan values and lifestyle.

This response is indicative of the resurgence of interest in combating the results of global pollution in ways that spring from the source of concern, and go much deeper than the placement of faith in external events; a pragmatic personal response that has the aspects of one's own faith and cherished awareness of our relationship to the earth; a mirroring of traditional ways of seeing and being that go far beyond the passive interest and hope that is offered from technological solutions alone.

In Vegaculture

"Vegaculture is both a personal philosophy, and a public statement"---the author

The placement and use of the term vegaculture in the lexicon affords a framework for a compassionate social setting where change and growth occur harmoniously, an umbrella for expressions of human endeavour as evidenced by the culture of veganism in our society.

Recognition of our vegan culture reinforces the values and aspirations that arise on the vegan journey; a reframing of tradition to meet the challenges of compassionate living in the early 21st century so as to enhance the quality of life for all sentient beings. Happiness is the source of love and compassion, and something we all seek no matter what our belief system or sensitivity, and I trust this small contribution can manifest a path to greater happiness.

Birthing enables both physical and psychological separation, a modelling of subject-object relationships that continue to be moulded and reinforced experientially in the social domain. This reflection of the universal experience leads to an expression of both collective and individual aspects; the historical riddle of expressions of growth and influence of cultural identities has been pointed to by true prophets, but also judged by false prophets, thus perpetrating both personal and collective turmoil and confusion.

Vegaculture recognises the need for an increased general understanding that personal differences do not equate to separation, but are a myriad of individual expressions of the one consciousness that is life itself. The lack of separation *is* our actual sameness our consciousness or 'Oneness,' and it is the growth of this recognition that will foster the co-operation necessary for the transition to a world where suffering is minimised, living conditions are improved and harmonious relationships abound.

We can all recognise the commonness of the thread of humanity as just one aspect of a thread of oneness in the whole of life, but its expression is not always clear. Bringing solutions to life is an important and satisfying part of our journey, and a very suitable pursuit for each of us as participants in the current massive expansion of global consciousness. If vegaculture is to be effective and seamlessly integrate into the vernacular it needs to be capable of the fullest expression of worldly values by invoking the inseparable elements of mind, body and spirit that underlie the human condition.

This compilation has sketched an wholistic understanding of vegaculture which I trust will find acceptance as a worthwhile guide for aspirants of social change who seek to practice a pragmatic holistic world view, one that gathers support and expression through the inclusion of all of our inner values, our 'human beingness', as distinct from the malaise that continues as a result of the clinging to a singular secular humanist stance competing for domination with the burden of religion. There is a huge potential for the vegaculture vision to represent and actually expand the growing

sentiment for cultural change that the methodology and practices of permaculture have pioneered, and to manifest as a body of work that broadens the appeal and validation in practical outcomes to minimise suffering.

Vegaculture introduces compassion as a design objective in human interaction, which can only assist in raising the bar of civilised living and is a wonderful recognition of its credentials; it assists with the filling of cultural gaps left in the apparent retreat from organised religion, and it also acknowledges the value that all beings deserve by further entrenching basic freedoms in the cultural norm; we can understand the application of compassion in daily life, but it is most useful when it is practiced.

The usefulness and validity of the message arises from the process of actualisation, and I trust vegaculture does mature through the continued practice of kindness, and flow of compassionate acts in daily life.

The following summary of various statements of intent and practice that have arisen in the text, are ready to be refined by the sense of subtle purpose that resonates with the reader's own life experience, for there are as many expressions of vegaculture as there are individuals. Just as we continue to develop the Internet of Things, so too can we develop the Everything of Vegaculture.

*** Veganism Statement**

Vegaculture is an expression of the cultural effects of veganism in action; arising as a result of interaction and outcomes, through the practice of both individual and collective endeavour, of a vegan way of life.

*** Compassion Statement**

Vegaculture is an expression of the movement to compassionate living, for the benefits of people, animals and the earth; it arises as a cultural outcome from the intentional avoidance of all forms of exploitation and cruelty, is fostered through the practice of compassion in the relief of suffering, and evidenced by the progression of cultural harmony leading toward world peace.

*** Vegan-Permaculture Statement**

Vegaculture is allied with permaculture, recognising a place for the expression of our inner human beingness in daily life, with the provision of food, clothing, shelter and co-operation on the path of holistic sustainable living.

*** Social Statement**

Vegaculture can be simply defined as a self-reflective system of social design principles promoting compassion in daily life through conscious living.

*** Congruence Statement**

Vegaculture is a reservoir of vegan awareness and a source of support for veganism and non-violent action that flows from vegan activity and compassionate living; enabling harmony through co-operation for emergence of world peace.

*** Contemplation Statement**

Vegaculture is a contemplative philosophy promoting non-violence, unity, kindness, and self-reliance based on a simple vegan lifestyle, realised in silence and founded in personal peace, compassion, contentment and co-operation; leading to sentient happiness and evolving as world peace.

*** Vegan Culture Statement**

Vegaculture is an expression of the movement to compassionate living; a recipient of cultural outcomes arising from the adoption of the philosophy, principles and practice of veganism; a collation of activity and description derived from the promotion of exclusion, as far as possible and practical, of all forms of exploitation and cruelty to animals.

*** Personal Philosophy Statement**

Vegaculture has self-proclaimed boundaries, even though enacted with our highest intent where near enough is never good enough, it is a process of selection and refinement of knowledge and preference, from a quagmire of limited experience and partial truth.

*** Public Statement**

Vegaculture is open to public questioning, where the expression of values reap their own reward. If full alignment and adoption by the collective is to ultimately become a mandatory measure of a rational response for universal acceptance, then we are doomed to paradox.

I am therefore drawn to another dictum to elucidate my predicament; a response that is accepting of both/and and neither/nor; the humbleness of not knowing and the acceptance of *what is*.

In The Art of Living

*"My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece"---
Claude Monet*

The concept of vegaculture has an important place in art, because it too is trying to reflect and portray the values of beauty in nature, the expression of our best intentions deserves recognition.

Vegaculture like art is a suggestion, a representation in energy or form, an indication or pointing of another facet of our worldly relationship; invited through enquiry. The convergence of knowledge and understanding of the physical realm and human beingness comes through an ongoing effort to trace our history and examine our presence; the evolution of humankind and the conclusions we reach are a work in progress; each of us is an expression of that energy or form; or if you prefer, each of us is an expression of 'THAT'.

The evolutionary time-scale is mind boggling, and each new discovery provides a challenge to our intellect. The speed of technological change is dramatic, but it is not the only measure of human progress, especially when we are reminded of the passage of millions of years to arrive at our present state and stage of evolution. Innumerable generations of forebears have made contributions to the art of living and paved the way for the opportunities we have available today; uncovering the wisdom of the ages is also representative of a way forward, giving a context for continuity, refinement and inspiration.

An observation in an article on Paleoart of the Lower Paleolithic (Ref.11) provides a basis for a much broader context for the life of art than one might otherwise expect for it reached the conclusion that 'we have severely misjudged the cognitive and cultural competence of early humans' and that *"almost 3 Ma ago a hominin found the Maka-pansgat cobble sufficiently interesting to carry it around"*. The 260-gram cobble (Ref.12) has been worked into what looks like a crude rendition of a human face, an indication that symbolic thinking necessary for the development of art and language was present in early hominids.

The task for each of us will inevitably invite comparison, but essentially the world we inhabit is a self-portrait, reflecting our self in nature is to identify nature within ourselves, and although symbolic thinking is just as important today as it was three million years ago, all numbers can be symbols; and when proffered in the art of living, we may need to consider the pointing of the spiritual teacher Michael James, who reminds us (Ref.13), 'if we don't know the value of ONE, no other numbers have any real value!'

The debates surrounding human history and the origins of life proceed, and the issues of survival and preference remain a work in progress for each new generation. In a presentation on belief and ritual in world cultures, the anthropologist Wade Davis (Ref.14) reminds us firstly of our individuality, 'all people are cultural options', and

in relationship to the collective, that 'a measure of society is the quality of its aspirations'; and with another observation, 'the tendency to cultural myopia is ever present'. Thus, while the introduction of the concept of vegaculture has credence, we need to remind ourselves that its place 'in the sum total of all the myths' is yet to be determined; lest we forget the numerous 'dynamic living peoples' who continue traditions; and perhaps the most insightful, that these traditions are 'not faulty attempts at being modern'.

Davis also informs us that in addition to the biosphere, the myriad of world cultures can be presented as an ethnosphere, which recognises three aspects of cultural relationship, the first is stewardship, the second intimacy, and the third is partnership. The Referendum Commission (Ref.15) had addressed these three aspects extensively, when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples met, and on 30Jun17, 'called for the establishment of a "First Nations Voice" enshrined in the Constitution'.

The 'ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART' (Appendix One), seeks constitutional reform and invites non-indigenous Australians to join with them in a process of truth-telling about their history. The latest culmination of agenda reiterates claims of sovereignty of the Australian Continent and adjacent Islands. The document states: "This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors."

In the Australian context, it can be argued that justice and self-determination for indigenous people remains the signature measure of collective social and cultural awareness, and political will. If the communal heart is to open more fully, if it can meet the challenge with a positive response to this request by the Nations first peoples, then we can attest to progress in the revolution of consciousness. If patience is a virtue in the art of living, a two hundred and thirty year hiatus of recognition of sovereignty, after sixty thousand years or more of continuous stewardship, intimacy and partnership with the land, must surely be its finest example.

The practice of vegaculture referred earlier to three concepts, valued perception, valued knowledge and valued conduct; and we have now been led to the value of patience. Cultures dominate partly because of the massive momentum that is present, and so it is not surprising that if the fight and plight for the most pressing issues for people are to remain ignored, that animal liberation will also

continue to command patience, as will care of Gaia and equitable rights.

Resonance with the vegaculture view is representative of a stage of awareness that provides a secure platform from which to invite surrender, a platform and path for personal fulfillment and wholistic interaction; our actions are supported by the strength of a deep knowingness, we identify readily with our self in nature, our being is enough, we don't have to do as much anymore, and life can become a natural extension of our belief system; pain and confusion can be released; we feel joy in the dance of life.

The world however, is a reflection of all our thoughts and actions, and so vegaculture is only ever just one of many facets that provide the foundation for recognition of emergence; the further exploration and discovery of what is. As Vegaculture grows and disperses there will be recognition of a multiplicity of ideas and nuances, the spectrum of different approaches each with its own essence, and each a flavour of similarity that could be condensed, back into a common understanding, as representative of the art of life.

EPILOGUE

“Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That’s the problem”---A.A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh

The demands for honesty and clarity of expression in writing have developed and refined my own knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, integrating and strengthening the Vegaculture vision. A time consuming process of contemplation and self-reflection, the foraging and qualifying of truisms with an adequate shelf life, the reinforcing of imagined knowledge and purging of doubt; with the whittling away of our own existence, life can be edited to 'I AM'.

Dissecting the Oneness has become less attractive, the more I tried to categorise text, the further embroiled I became in balancing the physical and the spiritual approaches; the paradox of the expressions in language of the relative and the supra-natural view; I trust the exploration of this conundrum has in some way touched a place in the reader's heart and psyche as well; a place where the miraculous meets the neurons in the dance of Lila, the play of life.

Daily activity proceeds naturally in a relative world of my own making from functional elements, the things that most need doing; life is a joy, not a chore. Interaction with the broader urban community reveals the extremes of human behaviour from the darkest deeds to the shining light of love, however, the pace of life allows me stillness, a spectrum of absorption in the moment, where the unexplained mystery of self has yet to be explored; this is a place of peaceful contentment, and often found in the garden.

I also recognise an increasing abidance in my relationship with the universal nature of life and its expression in the many forms of consciousness, and a connectedness that comes from unknowing, that has revealed emergence as a means of universal expression.

I am presented with a familiar void and in this space the future is both of our own making, and not of our own making. It is with these words that I offer my *vision of vegaculture*, for whatever it is worth to you, I trust you may have found some value; it has already done enough to satisfy me, it has helped just one person.

Adieu, Zalan

APPENDIX

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APPENDIX ONE

Uluru Statement From The Heart

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart: Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago. This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years? With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future. These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness. We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination. We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite

you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. (Ref.A1).

APPENDIX TWO

The Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness

The declaration provides a generally accepted overview on certain aspects of research into conscious experience in both human and non-human animals. A copy of the full text is included here as the statement provides an important baseline for shared discussion and common understanding of a neuroscientific (or neurobiological), view of consciousness.

On this day of July 7, 2012, a prominent international group of cognitive neuroscientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientists gathered at The University of Cambridge to reassess the neurobiological substrates of conscious experience and related behaviors in human and non-human animals. While comparative research on this topic is naturally hampered by the inability of non-human animals, and often humans, to clearly and readily communicate about their internal states, the following observations can be stated unequivocally:

The field of Consciousness research is rapidly evolving. Abundant new techniques and strategies for human and non-human animal research have been developed. Consequently, more data is becoming readily available, and this calls for a periodic reevaluation of previously held preconceptions in this field. Studies of non-human animals have shown that homologous brain circuits correlated with conscious experience and perception can be selectively facilitated and disrupted to assess whether they are in fact necessary for those experiences. Moreover, in humans, new non-invasive techniques are readily available to survey the correlates of consciousness.

The neural substrates of emotions do not appear to be confined to cortical structures. In fact, sub cortical neural networks aroused during affective states in humans are also critically important for generating emotional behaviors in animals. Artificial arousal of the same brain regions generates corresponding behavior and feeling states in both humans and non-human animals. Wherever in the brain one evokes instinctual emotional behaviors in non-human animals, many of the ensuing behaviors are consistent with

experienced feeling states, including those internal states that are rewarding and punishing. Deep brain stimulation of these systems in humans can also generate similar affective states. Systems associated with affect are concentrated in sub cortical regions where neural homologies abound. Young human and nonhuman animals without neocortices retain these brain-mind functions. Furthermore, neural circuits supporting behavioral/electrophysiological states of attentiveness, sleep and decision making appear to have arisen in evolution as early as the invertebrate radiation, being evident in insects and cephalopod mollusks (e.g., octopus).

Birds appear to offer, in their behavior, neurophysiology, and neuroanatomy a striking case of parallel evolution of consciousness. Evidence of near human-like levels of consciousness has been most dramatically observed in African grey parrots. Mammalian and avian emotional networks and cognitive micro circuitries appear to be far more homologous than previously thought. Moreover, certain species of birds have been found to exhibit neural sleep patterns similar to those of mammals, including REM sleep and, as was demonstrated in zebra finches, neurophysiological patterns, previously thought to require a mammalian neocortex. Magpies in particular have been shown to exhibit striking similarities to humans, great apes, dolphins, and elephants in studies of mirror self-recognition.

In humans, the effect of certain hallucinogens appears to be associated with a disruption in cortical feedforward and feedback processing. Pharmacological interventions in non-human animals with compounds known to affect conscious behavior in humans can lead to similar perturbations in behavior in non-human animals. In humans, there is evidence to suggest that awareness is correlated with cortical activity, which does not exclude possible contributions by subcortical or early cortical processing, as in visual awareness. Evidence that human and nonhuman animal emotional feelings arise from homologous subcortical brain networks provides compelling evidence for evolutionarily shared primal affective qualia.

We declare the following:

“The absence of a neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing

affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Nonhuman animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.” (Ref.A2).

APPENDIX THREE

Three Simultaneous - True Levels of Nondual Reality

Level 3 Simultaneous Reality;

"the pragmatic level of mundane reality and conventional experience, involving the "appropriate and inappropriate," "helpful and harmful," "skillful and unskillful," "right and wrong," "justice and injustice," "pleasant and painful" and so forth;"

Level 2 Simultaneous Reality;

"the psychic or "heavenly soul" level of Reality, which yields the realization or epiphany that whatever happens is ultimately "perfect," because whatever occurs is the "exquisite manifestation of Divine Will" for the sake of ALL souls eventually coming Home to God-realization. And, further, here it is realized that all souls have essentially always been immortal, innocent, free and radiant with Divine bliss-love (prior to and beyond their karmic entanglements on earth and in any lower subtle realms); and"

Level 1 Simultaneous Reality:

"the Absolute "level" of Reality, wherein it is realized that whatever happens in the play of manifestation is a dream, so nothing is really happening, there is no fundamental multiplicity, only the nondual singularity of GOD or Pure Infinite Awareness is truly HERE. This Divine Self is absolutely Real as the sole Identity (prior to or beyond all worlds, souls, events, experiences).

These "truth-levels" are all simultaneously true. Level 1 ("only God, only the One Reality") is ABSOLUTELY TRUE, whereas Level 2 and Level 3, both pertaining to the realms of multiplicity, are "relatively true."

(Level 3 pertains to the situation for sentient beings here on earth and lower subtle realms, whereas level 2 pertains to the "highest heaven realms.")

When we don't honor together all three of these "levels" or "aspects" or "dimensions" of Reality as being simultaneously true, we tend to get caught in a constricted viewpoint. So, for instance, if we ignore the conventional level (level 3 in this model), preferring to ONLY see that "everything is perfect" (level 2) or that "nothing is really happening, only God is Real" (level 1), we can easily fail in morality, compassion and empathy, falling into an insensitive apathy, ignoring the rampant forms of injustice that inflict pain on sentient beings.

Furthermore, denying level 3 may lead us to mistakenly believe that being discerning or critical —i.e., critiquing any form of thinking or behavior in the field of politics, spirituality, etc.—is "being negative" or "deluded" or "coming from the head, not the heart." (Actually, a true sage utilizes both head and heart in the context of Awareness.) Yet this is, itself, a negative judgment or a critique. It is a limited position that violates true freedom by constraining us to always only view whatever happens as "perfect" and beyond reproach, or as "nothing really happening." Again, to hold onto such a position is to constrain ourselves to a uni-level or one-dimensional and limited view of the Totality of Reality. (Ref.A3).

APPENDIX FOUR

'Why vegans were right all along. Famine can only be avoided if the rich give up meat, fish and dairy.'

The Christians stole the winter solstice from the pagans, and capitalism stole it from the Christians. But one feature of the celebrations has remained unchanged: the consumption of vast quantities of meat. The practice used to make sense. Livestock slaughtered in the autumn, before the grass ran out, would be about to decay, and fat-starved people would have to survive a further three months. Today we face the opposite problem: we spend the next three months trying to work it off. Our seasonal excesses would be perfectly sustainable, if we weren't doing the same thing every other week of the year. But, because of the rich world's disproportionate purchasing power, many of us can feast every day. And this would also be fine, if we did not live in a finite world.

By comparison to most of the animals we eat, turkeys are relatively efficient converters: they produce about three times as much meat per pound of grain as feedlot cattle. But there are still plenty of reasons to feel uncomfortable about eating them. Most are reared in darkness, so tightly packed that they can scarcely move. Their beaks are removed with a hot knife to prevent them from

hurting each other. As Christmas approaches, they become so heavy that their hips buckle. When you see the inside of a turkey broiler house, you begin to entertain grave doubts about European civilisation. This is one of the reasons why many people have returned to eating red meat at Christmas. Beef cattle appear to be happier animals. But the improvement in animal welfare is offset by the loss in human welfare. The world produces enough food for its people and its livestock, though (largely because they are so poor) some 800 million are malnourished. But as the population rises, structural global famine will be avoided only if the rich start to eat less meat.

The number of farm animals on earth has risen fivefold since 1950: humans are now outnumbered three to one. Livestock already consume half the world's grain, and their numbers are still growing almost exponentially. This is why biotechnology - whose promoters claim that it will feed the world - has been deployed to produce not food but feed: it allows farmers to switch from grains which keep people alive to the production of more lucrative crops for livestock. Within as little as 10 years, the world will be faced with a choice: arable farming either continues to feed the world's animals or it continues to feed the world's people. It cannot do both. The impending crisis will be accelerated by the depletion of both phosphate fertiliser and the water used to grow crops. Every kilogram of beef we consume, according to research by the agronomists David Pimentel and Robert Goodland, requires around 100,000 litres of water. Aquifers are beginning to run dry all over the world, largely because of abstraction by farmers.

Many of those who have begun to understand the finity of global grain production have responded by becoming vegetarians. But vegetarians who continue to consume milk and eggs scarcely reduce their impact on the ecosystem. The conversion efficiency of dairy and egg production is generally better than meat rearing, but even if everyone who now eats beef were to eat cheese instead, this would merely delay the global famine. As both dairy cattle and poultry are often fed with fishmeal (which means that no one can claim to eat cheese but not fish), it might, in one respect, even accelerate it. The shift would be accompanied too by a massive deterioration in animal welfare: with the possible exception of intensively reared broilers and pigs, battery chickens and dairy cows are the farm animals, which appear to suffer most. We could eat pheasants, many of which are dumped in landfill after they've been shot, and whose price, at this time of the year, falls to around 2 pound a bird, but most people would feel uncomfortable about subsidising the bloodlust of

brandy-soaked hoorays. Eating pheasants, which are also fed on grain, is sustainable only up to the point at which demand meets supply. We can eat fish, but only if we are prepared to contribute to the collapse of marine ecosystems and - as the European fleet plunders the seas off West Africa - the starvation of some of the hungriest people on earth.

It's impossible to avoid the conclusion that the only sustainable and socially just option is for the inhabitants of the rich world to become, like most of the earth's people, broadly vegan, eating meat only on special occasions like Christmas. As a meat-eater, I've long found it convenient to categorise veganism as a response to animal suffering or a health fad. But, faced with these figures, it now seems plain that it's the only ethical response to what is arguably the world's most urgent social justice issue. We stuff ourselves, and the poor get stuffed. George Monbiot, Tuesday, Dec 24, 2002. (Ref.A4).

APPENDIX FIVE

Vegan Australia: Submission to Productivity Commission Aug 2016

I'd like to thank the Productivity Commission for allowing me to present Vegan Australia's submission to the inquiry. Our submission mainly addresses the issue of animal welfare. In one sentence, our submission calls for a complete phase out of all animal agriculture over the next 10 years.

We note that the draft report contains the following statement: "There are some Australians who do not consider it appropriate to use animals for commercial purposes. For example, Vegan Australia advocates for animals to be able to live free from human use".

We deal with a number of issues in our submission, but each one of them is based on the idea that animals are not ours to use. They value their own life and body and have an interest in continuing their existence and avoiding suffering. They should be treated with respect and justice and should not to be treated merely as commodities. Further, production of animal products necessarily results in their suffering and death.

In addition, humans have no need for any animal products and in particular are able to live healthily on a vegan diet. In fact, many people who adopt a nutritious vegan diet will enjoy significant health improvements by reducing the risk of major killers such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes and reducing the health care burden from these chronic diseases.

Our submission attempts to show two things. First, that any agricultural system that uses animals will cause suffering to those animals. And second, that humans do not need to consume any animal products, as has been shown by extensive research in nutritional science.

Nearly all Australians believe that we should avoid causing unnecessary suffering to sentient beings as much as possible and our submission gives evidence for this community view.

Given that most people want to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to animals and that animals suffer when used in agriculture and that animal products are unnecessary, the logical conclusion is that we should end the use of animals in agriculture.

Based on this principle, we propose the following:

- * Establish a new independent farmed animal welfare body.
- * The body should represent the interests of farmed animals.
- * The body should recognise the sentience of animals, as is demonstrated by an overwhelming number of scientific studies.
- * The main objective of the new body should be to end animal agriculture in Australia. The reason for this, I repeat, is because animals suffer when used in agriculture and humans do not need to consume animal products.
- * The farmed animal welfare body should plan for the complete phasing out of animal agriculture within ten years.
- * The body should conduct research into how to phase out animal agriculture with the least impact on the economy and employment and the best impact on the environment and human health.
- * The managing board of the body should only include those who represent the interests of animals and should not include representatives of animal agriculture industries.
- * The body should educate the community about animal sentience, animal exploitation in agriculture, and a healthy vegan diet. We note that surveys show that the community is 99% against cruelty to animals and the majority of people believe that vegan diets can be healthy. We believe that given the right information, the public will over time support the complete phasing out of animal agriculture in Australia. (Ref.A5).

APPENDIX SIX

Permaculture Article, by Christina Palfrey

Appalled at the gradual poisoning, pollution and destruction of the earth, its flora and fauna, in the mid 70's, two Australian ecologists, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren began to develop methods to create stable agricultural systems. These culminated in their book, 'Permaculture One' in 1978.

Gradually Permaculture developed from being primarily about the design of agricultural systems to becoming a much wider, all-encompassing, lifestyle. A name was needed for this system and it was formed from a contraction of 'Permanent Agriculture,' which also came to represent the words 'Permanent Culture'.

The mid-80's onwards saw Mollison's and Holmgren's original visions and teachings expand, with the training of many students and the setting up of Permaculture groups, projects and associations to become an increasingly worldwide phenomena.

There are probably as many definitions of the meaning 'Permaculture' as there are practitioners of it, but perhaps the most commonly used is 'The design and creation of sustainable habitats'. Unlike all other methods of farming and gardening, Permaculture is based on actually designing a plan, based on detailed observation.

The system is based on three important ethics, those of Earth Care, People Care and Fair Shares, while the major ethical decision to be taken by any would-be permaculturist is to take responsibility for our own existence and for that of our children.

'Earth Care' encompasses the need to care for what still remains of natural eco-systems, to regenerate areas destroyed by humankind, and to create havens for species, both animal and plant, which are in danger of extinction from our actions. The need to co-operate with nature is stressed, and to provide for all life systems, which should be seen as having intrinsic value, regardless of whether they are 'useful' to humankind or not. Anthropocentrism may be discouraged and human beings seen as part of the 'web of life'.

'People Care' shows that designs must, nevertheless, meet the needs of human beings, while 'Fair Shares' stresses that all people should have their needs met, within the physical limits of the Earth. Limits are suggested to population and consumption, rather than the present situation in which the needs of the Developed World, if taken up by the Developing Nations, would require a planet three and a half times the size of the one we have!

The solution to this apparently insoluble problem is to create eco-systems that will provide high yield, while not exhausting the soil, which will

allow people to survive on as small an area of land as possible, leaving the rest as wilderness.

In addition to the Ethics of Permaculture, there are many Principles too, such as 'There are no problems, only solutions', 'Work with rather than against nature', and others too numerous to quote here. But all are based on common sense, and are meant to act as a guide to the thoughts and intentions of the Permaculturist. Perhaps the most important one to bear in mind is 'Nature Works!'. The design should allow nature to do as much work as possible. Why dig mulch in when worms will do the job for you? Why try to position an acid-loving plant in an alkaline soil, when appropriate positioning of plants will ensure there is no need to add materials to adjust the Ph? Why take plant prunings, dead leaves and grass cuttings to the tip, when they can be used to make your own compost?

Careful observation of the land, and analysis of one's findings are essential to the design process. It is suggested that such observations should ideally continue for four seasons, so the designer knows the land in all its phases. It's essential to be aware of the wind directions, which parts receive the most sun, which are shaded and by what, the type and Ph of the soil, areas which retain moisture and which dry out quickly, any present or potential water on site-the list is endless. But with such information available, the design can then proceed with the greatest likelihood of success.

The first step in the design process is to measure and map the area, marking compass points, existing trees and other plants, fences and walls, and other windbreaks, water sources, existing 'hard landscaping', and so on. Overlays can then be used to add the design features, until a complete picture is drawn up.

An important design feature is the consideration of zoning. There are 6 zones, starting at zone 0, the house, which requires the greatest input of time and energy, through zone 1, containing annuals, herbs and any high use activities, to the final zone 5, which is wilderness, requiring little or no input of time and energy, other than to harvest whatever is abundant. The purpose of these zones is to conserve one's energy and make best use of the planting. Is it likely for example that one will make much use of herbs, if one has to walk to the furthest point of land whenever one needs a bouquet garni? No-site the herbs as near as possible to the kitchen (or even in it!). Like so much of permaculture-just common sense.

Another way of making the best use of the land is to consider the layers of plants-from the high canopy of mature trees, down to the ground and underground levels, and even to those plants which

are climbers. Yet another is the concept of cycling-wastes can become resources, as in the use of non-edible plant material for compost. One should import as little as possible from outside and export as little as possible from the land, aiming to become as self-sufficient as possible.

From this necessarily very brief introduction to the history and some of the principles of Permaculture Design, it can be seen just how fascinating and thought-provoking it can be. If this has whetted your appetite and you would like to learn more, go to www.permaculture.org.uk, buy some of the interesting books obtainable from Permanent Publications or, best of all, enroll in a course and become an expert! (Ref.A6).

APPENDIX SEVEN

Natural Hygiene

*"The hygienic life is a life of joy and pleasure"---
Dr. Herbert Shelton*

Natural Hygiene is a philosophy and a set of principles and practices based on science that leads to a higher level of personal health and happiness. Natural Hygiene holds that physical, mental and emotional health are inseparably linked and that personal, environmental and community health are parts of a whole. Natural Hygiene teaches that optimal wellbeing is achieved by right living; that is a positive attitude, nutrition for optimal needs, regular exercise, appropriate rest, sleep, fresh air, sunshine and stress management.

Nutrition

Natural Hygiene recommends a vegan whole food plant-based diet of mainly uncooked fruit and vegetables, legumes, raw unsalted nuts and seeds modified to individual needs. Also, where indicated, the intelligent reduction of food or abstinence of all food (fasting) except pure water.

Basic Principles

Natural Hygiene is unique in its contention that health is normal and that health and disease are a continuum. The same physiological laws govern the body in sickness and health. Healing is a biological process and the result of actions by the body on its own behalf, except under extraordinary circumstances. (Ref.A7).

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