

**TITLE: The Wonders of the Ugly Bug Ball: taking another look at bugs and pollinators**

**Paragraph One: Introduction - Law & Society as a Source of Study for Ecology and Political Behavior**

1. It is conceivable to imagine that under different circumstances humans may come to have a deep appreciation, perhaps feelings of love, for the many bugs that keep our world spinning.
2. For instance, a stunning image of our much-desired but often feared pollinating friends, bees, can stir up emotions of romance and inspiration.
3. Yet most humans today, under our particular circumstances in the modern age, have a great disgust, an almost fetishized visceral reaction to bugs, as evidenced in popular culture books, films, and even music; Not only is this misguided fear or disgust dangerous to the planet as an ecological system, it also serves as a barrier for the human quest to make meaning of itself and its surroundings.
4. In this essay, I will present historical, popular arguments for the appreciation of bugs to argue that our feelings and habits toward bugs are products of bounded rationality reinforced by the systems around us.

**Paragraph Two: Reconsidering Bugs - the wonders of the ugly bug ball**

1. The study of law, society, and justice claims that law, legal practices, and legal institutions can be understood only by seeing and explaining them within social contexts through [the] systematic comparison between theory and data while offering critical judgment<sup>1</sup>.
2. Local, state, and federal laws and regulations are intended to reduce or eliminate pesticide risks and place the primary responsibility and liability for pesticides on the user and persons under the supervision of the user.<sup>2</sup>
3. This emphasis puts a tremendous information and intellectual (reflective) burden on individual human decision-makers; a burden that often reinforces more ideological beliefs and positions against the bug, and not the chemical or approach to co-exist with the ecology around us.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Silbey, "Law and Society Movement," 2001 (Legal Systems of the World: A Political, Social and Cultural Encyclopedia (Kritzer), Volume II: E-L, Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, pp. 860-863

<sup>2</sup> "Purdue Pesticide Programs", <http://www.ppp.purdue.edu/Pubs/ppp-36.pdf>, accessed 9.21.2013

4. However, when certain ideologies are tested, as in Disney's adaptation of the book, "Mother Carey's Chickens, by Dorothy McGuire, Summer Magic original song, "[The Ugly Bug Ball](#)<sup>3</sup>," not only do we as humans reconsider our relationship with bugs (and other ecological life), we re-program our perspectives regarding our relationships to each other.

### **Paragraph Three: Social Beings - bees, butterflies, ants, and humans (Darwin)**

1. This "culture shock" is hardly surprising when considering naturalist/scientist Charles Darwin's observations on the relationships of bugs and their relevance to our own social relationships and systems.

2. "... the brilliant colors and elegant patterns of butterflies, and of some moths, are arranged and exhibited as if for display... and not for the sake of protection... and can discover flowers by color. We know that ants and certain beetles are capable of feeling an attachment for each other, and that ants recognize their fellows after an interval of several months," (Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 661).

3. If you have ever struggled to place a name but can always remember faces, or if you just can't seem to get over that certain ex, or find yourself terribly drawn to a particular love despite your best, rational efforts, you can not only empathize with insects, you are driven by the same biological systems.

4. So much so, that Darwin introduces a fascinating thought experiment: "If, for instance, men were raised under precisely the same conditions as hive bees, there can hardly be any doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it their sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering. Nevertheless, the bee, or any other social animal, would gain in our supposed case, as it appears to me, some feeling of right or wrong, or a conscience... so that there would often be a struggle as to which impulse should be followed, and the other ought not... in this case an inward monitor would tell the animal that it would have been better to have followed the one impulse rather than the other... one would have been right and the other wrong," (Darwin, *Ibid*, 473).

### **Paragraph Four: Bounded Rationality - systems of thought, action, and reproduction (Jones)**

1. For most people most of the time, the task environment is specified by formal institutions: school, work, church, synagogue, mosque, government, (Jones, *Politics and the Architecture of Choice*, 206).

2. In a modern society, we tend to "routinize" our values into habits and disregard the decision-making process altogether; for example, my choice of where to sit on the subway is often pre-

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<sup>3</sup> In the pertinent scene, the little boy is unsure of his "position" in the social order in the rural environment, coming from an urban environment where his role was more or less fixed; it is interesting to note that every urban character must go through a "metamorphosis" to adapt to their new environment, socially.

determined by the availability of seats, the number of elderly, pregnant, and children passengers, the cleanliness of the seats, and the duration of the trip.

3. Institutions help to clarify the task environment, hence they are great aids to human adaptability. But they also act to limit the time allocated (prioritizing) to any given task; in the name of neutral efficiency, formal organizations routinize many of their tasks under the general assumption that the task performed is related to the goals of the organization, (Jones, 206).
4. For human decision makers whose routines are more or less defined by the institutions that form their habits, simple alternative reasoning is difficult as the task performed is related to an unrelated goal. How human decision makers respond to this incongruence plays a huge role in which solutions even seem possible, (Jones, 206).
5. Thus, deniability of climate change is not only rational, it is necessary. For accepting the reality of a changing climate, and interdependence on a constantly adapting eco-system, requires human adaptations to day to day behavior, thought, and ultimately institutions.
6. Similarly, the institutionalization of routines involving pesticides and “bug aversion” predetermine our views toward bugs specifically limiting reflection on our own biological reliance and similarities as social beings.

#### **Paragraph Five: Law, Society, and Justice and Human Choice (Carson)**

1. The relationship between the task environment and human purposeful behavior is strongest under two conditions: the time available for adaptation is generous and the task environment - the goals, constraints, and general relationship between strategies and goals- are clear, (Jones, 206); However, our legal and regulatory frameworks do not seek to enhance this process through a systemic or even individual level - it simply reflects our own ideological position against nature.
2. Were we able to change our task environment, often by leaving the urban routine for the rural chaos, we would have no choice but to redefine and ultimately clarify our goals as we co-exist with bugs, and other co-inhabitants in our planet’s eco-system for our own social adaptation and at a biological level, survival and health.
3. The “control of nature” is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man. It is our alarming misfortune that so primitive a science has armed itself with the most modern and terrible weapons, and that in turning them against the insects it has also turned them against the earth. The current (and now almost permanent) vogue for poisons has failed utterly to take into account old and new, imaginative, and creative approaches to the problem of sharing our earth with other creatures there runs a constant theme, the awareness that we are dealing with life- with living populations and all their pressures and counter-pressures, their surges and recessions, (Carson, *Silent Spring*, 296-7).

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by Jason Leggett

4. It isn't difficult to note that while we are "controlling" nature through laws, regulations, and our institutions, nature is adapting to *our* poorly defined goals, unexamined prejudices, and general stupidity toward the very thing that theoretically separates us from other beings, our ability to imagine (abstract thought) and choose (free will/decision making) a different path, as evidenced beautifully, in the "Ugly Bug Ball."