Thinking Critically

At this point, the concepts of ethos, logos, and pathos come back into play. From the analysis you have done so far, you should be well-prepared to analyze the logic and support of the arguments, the character and intentions of the author, and the emotional effects of the language and the details on the reader.

Logical questions

1. Locate major claims and assertions you have identified in your previous analysis and ask, "Do I agree with Rifkin's claim that. . ?"

2. Look at support for major claims and ask "Is there any claim that appears to be weak or unsupported? Which one and why?"

3. Can you think of counter-arguments that the author doesn't deal with?

4. Do you think Rifkin has left something out on purpose? Why or why not?

Ethical questions

1. Who is Jeremy Rifkin? What is his profession? What does he usually write about? Does everybody agree with him? Do the facts about his life, his credentials, and his interests that you found make him more credible to you, or less?

2. Pick one of the studies that Rifkin mentions and try to find out more. Is Rifkin's description of the study accurate?

3. Does Rifkin have the right background to speak with authority on this subject?

4. What does the author's style and language tell you about him or her?

5. Do you trust this author? Do you think this author is deceptive? Why or why not?

Questions about emotional effects

1. Rifkin says that Germany is encouraging farmers to give pigs human contact and toys. Does this fact have an emotional impact on the reader? If so, what triggers it? What are some other passages that have an emotional effect?

2. Rifkin calls his essay "A Change of Heart about Animals." Does this imply that the scientific discoveries that he summarizes here should change how we feel about animals?

3. Does this piece affect you emotionally? What parts?

4. Do you think Rifkin is frying to manipulate your emotions? How?

5. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments? In what ways?