Animal Liberation: Pathways to Politics[1]

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Abstract: After making its appearance in analytic moral philosophy at the beginning the 1970s, the animal cause in its modern form – that is, as a challenge to human supremacism and as a defense of interspecies egalitarianism – is recently undergoing a profound change thanks to the advent of new political approaches. Politics now dominates the intellectual scene in at least three main forms: as the devising of new social arrangements, as a critique of the prevailing order, and as an emancipatory project. It will lie with the contemporary animal liberation movement to explore these alternatives in order to definitely assert itself on the social terrain.

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The animal cause in its modern form – that is, not as a pleading for better treatment of animals, but as a challenge to human supremacism and as a defense of interspecies egalitarianism – made its first appearance in analytic moral philosophy at the beginning the 1970s, during the last period of the emancipation of rational ethics not only from religion but also from large scale metaphysical appeals.[2] Crucial as it was for its radicalism,[3] however, and despite the envisaged association with contemporary progressive causes, the inaugural discourse on animals tended to be relegated to the realm of the so-called practical ethics, where the issue of nonhuman treatment was apt to be seen as a matter of individual choice rather than of structural change, while analytic authors were not generally prone to articulate a political critique of the established order. On the other hand, as observed by the editors of the journal *Politics and Animals,* notwithstanding the fact that work within various disciplines has for quite a while been pointing at a re-politicization of many naturalized dimensions of the human-animal relationship, political theorists kept devoting little attention to the animal question (Boyer et al.).

Recently, however, some concurring phenomena have altered the landscape. First, we are currently witnessing a 'political turn' in animal ethics, within which – assuming that our main ethical responsibilities to animals are a legitimate matter for public regulation and state law – liberal philosophers have started using concepts from political theory to improve accounts of animal ethics and to advance proposals for new institutional designs.[4] Second, for some time now, Critical Animal Studies – a field of research which expanded the initial philosophical discourse to include disciplines stretching from socioanalysis to ecocriticism to critical race and gender theory – promoted a transition from the apolitical emphasis on personal conversions to questions of political transformation by adopting a leftist approach characterized by an institutional focus and by a critique of interrelated oppressions under late capitalism. And third, within this new context, an experiment has been attempted in which authors with different outlooks, proceeding from the antagonistic, rather than the regulative, dimension of the political,[5] conjointly probe the transformative potential of a philosophically-informed political praxis, and explore its possible implications for strategy and tactics.

i. Politics as the devising of new social arrangements

The onset of the political turn, and the rise of the new field in which liberal political philosophy entered the discussion and in which the introduction of nonhumans as political participants determined a revision of many traditional theoretical tools, was mainly prompted by the work of Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, and by their envisaging of a future Zoopolis in which fair and equal treatment impels with respect to animals not only a policy of basic non-interference, but also positive obligations tied to the relational aspects of human-nonhuman coexistence (*Zoopolis*). According to Donaldson and Kymlicka, the granting to animals of fundamental human rights is not sufficient. What nonhuman beings need is political recognition: citizenship if they live among us, sovereignty if they live in their own territories, and a form of denizenship or partial citizenship if their communities overlap with human communities. Nonhuman citizens, whose fundamental negative rights should be legally enforced and who should be politically represented via various forms of dependent agency, should assimilate the responsibilities binding on members of society. Sovereign animal communities, that can shape collective responses to the challenges they encounter and can offer a social environment in which their members may thrive, should obtain a secure space safeguarding their autonomy against foreign threats. Lastly, animal denizens, who have adapted to live in human neighbourhoods, should be granted the right to safe residency in urban environments, where their interests would be taken into consideration, and their right to anti-stigma provisions would be fully protected by the law.

The formulation of such an objective, whose utopian component offers important regulative ideas, in addition to opening a new theoretical path, provides a lesson in universality and consistency. Unfortunately, most further contributions to the political turn have not followed such a course. Indeed, while reiterating their determination to refute the idea that liberalism lacks any viable strategy for radical change, Donaldson and Kymlicka themselves are critical of some of them, stressing that, though rightly focusing on the political subjection of animals through formal state functions and though advocating the inclusion of nonhuman interests in political decision-making, they are often too modest in their aims, settling for a limited reform that is premised on humans treating animals humanely, but not as equals (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 'Make it So' 108).

Actually, the leading liberal authors in question more or less openly surrender the project of interspecies egalitarianism which distinguishes the animal liberation movement from other forms of animal advocacy. For instance, Siobhan O'Sullivan deliberately sets aside what she calls the 'external inconsistency' between treating humans one way and nonhumans another, in order to highlight the 'internal inconsistency' of our treatment of different animals (O'Sullivan. *Animals, Equality and Democracy* 10ff). More precisely, albeit correctly challenging the double standards implied by the unequal treatment of companion animals and of the most unfortunate but not less deserving nonhumans hidden from the public in laboratories and slaughterhouses, when it comes to the double standard toward all nonhuman animals implied by human supremacism, O'Sullivan alleges that though logically and morally sound, arguments against such external inconsistency are 'problematic from a pragmatic political perspective' since they have a long way to go before becoming mainstream, and should therefore be set aside (23; O'Sullivan, 'Animals and the Politics' 51-68). Thus, in spite of her challenge to the incoherent and inequitable treatment of animals in modern societies, and her vindication of a range of forms of determined activism, including civil disobedience, aimed at the defense of the most abused among the abused animals, what she actually settles for are institutional policies which incorporate, rather than reject, the present discrimination based on species membership.

Along different but somewhat parallel lines, Robert Garner, who holds that, since animals have moral standing and we have direct duties to them, it is mandatory to frame these obligations in a language that entails legal compulsion (Garner, *A Theory of Justice* 3, 59), also offers a conservative version of the political turn. For, after developing his theory of justice by presenting two non-egalitarian views – an 'ideal' view on which animals have a right not to suffer and their lives have some value, and a 'nonideal' view which forbids the infliction of suffering on animals, but not their killing – he ends up adopting the more permissive view, claiming that it is more practical to pursue it, and that 'it may not be unrealistic to get a majority of the public to accept it' (139; Garner, 'Animals, Politics and Democracy' 115). Once again, then, what an academic 'sophisticated methodology' (Ahlhaus and Niesen 21) produces is a renunciatory position according to which the political attempts to reform the present unjust institutions should focus on limiting animal suffering – a position that, notwithstanding any reaffirmed centrality of a '*constructive* focus' on justice (Garner et al. *passim*), merely extends and refines the traditional protectionist approach.

More complex is the perspective of another pioneer of the political turn, Alasdair Cochrane, who, after starting from a moderate position, apparently espoused a more progressive view. In earlier work, though stating that there are duties to animals that the state can legitimately make individuals comply with (Cochrane, *Animal Rights without Liberation* 207), he nonetheless argued that since (most) nonhumans lack that capacity for autonomy which, in his view, underpins the interest in liberty, the recognition of some animal rights is consistent with the maintenance of their property status, so that the very project of animal *liberation* must be abandoned. Moreover, as has been noticed (Smulewicz-Zucker 255) he further tempered his argument by affirming that to institutionalize animal rights immediately and in their totality may have 'a worrying implication in terms of democratic procedures' (Cochrane, *Animal Rights without Liberation* 15). More recently, however, his efforts turned to take up again the zoopolitical project of elaborating the theory of a political system devoted to the protection of the equal 'worth and rights' not only of humans but of all sentient beings. Such a theory which, in contrast to Garner's one, is defined as 'ideal' in the sense of offering utopian prescriptions which might nonetheless guide individuals (Cochrane, *Sentientist Politics* 119), outlines the future institutions of an 'impartial and cosmopolitan justice' in which animals would be politically represented as members of the community. Troublesome aspects remain, however. First, no mention is made of the question of animals as property, and the right to liberty is still excluded from the 'most fundamental rights that all sentient creatures possess' (28). And second, this abstract revolutionary future takes on concrete welfarist overtones with the introduction of such doxastic elements as the claim that '*human* persons' [emphasis added] have a stronger right to life than non-persons, or as the acceptance of subsistence hunting of 'animal members' of the political community (118, 102, 108-109).[6]

All in all, unlike those neo-Marxists who, unmindful of the children or disability rights movements, claim that since the oppressed can become free only by developing their own political project, it is wrong and paternalistic to fight on behalf of animals (Hardt 44-45), the involved liberal thinkers definitely frame the animal question as a political issue. The emerging picture, however, is ambiguous. For on the one hand some positions revolve around assertion and qualification: the other animals are initially included into the realm of politics, but subsequently their treatment is differentiated from that of humans,[7] with the consequence of blurring some of the fundamental lines drawn by the original ethical discourse. And, on the

other, new endeavours are started which are on the threshold between the espousal of a visionary messianism and the preservation of problematic elements directly derived from the current social paradigm.

ii. Politics as a critique of the prevailing order

Unlike authors in the liberal area, scholars of Critical Animal Studies aren't an informal group whose members engage in mutual conversation, but have equipped themselves with a permanent structure revolving around a journal,[8] an institute, and a series of conferences and public lectures enlisting numerous and disparate authors.

In order to give unity to the initiative, Steven Best, Lisa Kemmerer, Anthony Nocella and other initiators of the group drew up a sort of manifesto, where stress is laid on a politics characterized by the rejection of conservative positions and by the pursuit of anti-capitalist policies (Best et al.). Critical Animal Studies is presented as an interdisciplinary field aimed at linking theory to practice in the critique of the status quo, at advancing a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, and at seeking to dismantle structures of exploitation in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society.

Within the spectrum of involved topics, whose diversity includes rather peripheral issues, two approaches are prominent. One is plainly critical, and, in its pursuit of a demystification of social phenomena or apparatuses, offers important cultural tools to animal advocates. For example, adopting a social constructionist approach, John Sorenson, whose main focus is on representations, offers a sociological analysis of how animal activists are portrayed in media and corporate propaganda, and of how state security forces act to attack a movement whose message, as a threat to the existing system, must be marginalized and silenced (Sorenson); and social scientist Richard Twine explores the structure and functioning of what has come to be known as the animal industrial complex, which, through the scientific production of bodies capable to survive under extreme conditions, marks the apogee of that mode of enframing in which living beings are used as raw material to be unrestrainedly tampered with (Twine).

What the other main approach adds to this critical facet is an overtly normative element, which focuses on the question of dominionism in human-nonhuman relations and on the idea of 'total liberation'. This orientation is best exemplified by Anthony Nocella and Steven Best, whose long-term cooperation ceased when the latter left the Critical Animal Studies group accusing it of relapsing into the traditional, abstract intellectual attitude (Best, 'The Rise'). Nocella's outlook is avowedly anarchic, and centers on the opposition to systems of domination and authoritarianism and on intersectionality as a perspective weaving different radical causes together with the ambitious, all-embracing goal of 'the liberation of all life' ('Healing Our Cuts' 187; 'Unmasking the Animal Liberation Front' 7). On this view, global opposition by multiple social justice movements to intertwined forms of oppression must privilege critical pedagogy and a praxis generated 'by learning from reflection, combining it with theory, then taking action for change' (Nocella et al., *The Intersectionality of Critical Animal*, xxi). Despite the sharpness of its critique of what exists, and despite the claim that 'anarchism as a theoretical and political philosophy is concerned about means and ends' (Amster et al. 5), however, Nocella's brand of anarchism is not as definite in its pars construens as its major historical antecedents. As for the end, the envisaged society is generically described as a 'humane, democratic, peaceful, and sustainable world' (Nocella et al. Presentation of the Book Series), rather than being defined in its structure and functioning, so that one might ask along Žižekian lines what form the complex network of material, legal, and institutional conditions needed to combine the manifold interests involved could take (Žižek). And, as for the means to that end, the strategy seems to vaguely rely on the establishment of relational communities and on a politics of solidarity around multifaceted oppression (Nocella et al., *Anarchism and Animal Liberation* 10), recurring to such generic tactics as 'protesting, engaging in civil disobedience, and conducting sit-ins' (Kaltefleiter et al. 213).

Analogous criticisms are in fact raised by Steven Best, who, after the mentioned split with the group, accused Critical Animal Studies of having become too amorphous and too inclined to pander to everyone and everything, lamenting its absorption into 'regnant academic paradigms' (Best, 'The Rise' 31). What does Best propose in lieu of this? Reinterpreting the notion of total liberation as the 'theoretical process of holistically understanding movements in relation to one another, and the political process of synthetically forming alliances' amongst them (Best, Presentation at the 2nd International Meeting), he advocates the invention of new

kinds of struggle and new social movements, and calls for forms of dialogue and strategic alliances currently still uncommon. The goal of this struggle 'on behalf of humanity, nonhuman animals, and the earth' (Best, *The Politics of Total Liberation*,158) is a sane, rational, and viable future society harmonized with nature and biodiversity (Best, 'Total Liberation'). And, against this background, Best urges the Left to overcome speciesist prejudices, and the animal liberation movement to situate the struggle for animal liberation in the larger context of global capitalism ('Rethinking Revolution'). Since, however, as Best himself stresses, on the one hand what is needed is revolution at all levels, economic, political, legal, technological, moral, and conceptual, and on the other articulating connections with the various Leftist, green, feminist, or indigenous movements still imbued with anthropocentric views is very difficult, challenging as it may be, the scenery he depicts remains questionable. For apparently, what it substitutes for a purportedly moderate approach is a perspective that not only is utopian in its goals, but that, more problematically, is utopian in its political program of action[9] – a plan that, rather than embarking on the patient construction of specific convergences, essentially relies on the hope of persuading humanist movements that it is in their interest to embrace the animal cause.[10]

In the light of all this, and apart from the abstractness of a cultural apparatus that is far from a social realization of its potential analogous to the theory effect – the capacity to transform the world by transforming its representation – which promoted the social construction of classes (Bourdieu 133), the political impact of the normative facet of Critical Animal Studies and of their heretics seems undermined by a specific lacuna: the lack of a powerful and structured grid parallel to the one offered by rational ethics or by the liberal doctrine. For behind Critical Animal Studies' approach apparently lies a tradition – that of the great Twentieth century's Leftist galaxy – whose long process of gradual cleavage hasn't so far made room for a real substitute.

iii. Politics as an emancipatory project

Philosophy has obviously played a role in the life of movements at the level of the regulative or interpretive frames adopted. It has also, however, offered guidance in matters related to political praxis, orienting reformers on how to concretely act. It is on this latter aspect that the

mentioned experiment of a political discussion on strategies focuses, looking for theoretical keys to the planning of a transformative project, while also exploring past political struggles in search of schemes from which to draw inspiration (Cavalieri, *Philosophy and the Politics*).

In spite of their different backgrounds, all the main theoretical stances involved – Donaldson and Kymlicka's form of Left liberalism, articulating a path towards Zoopolis through incremental reforms ('Make it So'); Smulewicz-Zucker's radical theory focusing on the revaluation, against any anti-political drifts, of a progressive role for the state (Smulewicz-Zucker); Wadiwel's biopolitical approach, opposing political sovereignty as an integrated interspecies oppressive system (Wadiwel, 'Counter-conduct and Truce'); and the critico-dialectical perspective I favor, aiming at sorting out society's internal dialectics to identify tendencies that might lead beyond the existing conditions (Cavalieri, 'Animal Liberation: A Political Perspective') – obviously share the idea, central to all the new political discourses, that the movement should shift from the traditional focus on personal ethical choices to a politics of reckoning with social structures, since opposing violence towards animals requires strategies to challenge the established order, and transformative change requires institutionalization across a range of social, political and economic locations. And, given that for the animal liberation movement the moral baseline tends to be a vegan lifestyle, the initial critique concentrates on the widespread, and often unique, relevance granted to the vegan outreach strategy.[11]

Obviously, spreading veganism can contribute to fostering new lived environments, supporting different ways of being in relation to animals (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 'Make it So' 75 ff) and the practice of veganism can even become a Foucauldian mechanism for disrupting systemic violence and for generating active counter cultures (Wadiwel, 'Counter-conduct and Truce' 212). Vegan outreach cannot, however, provide a substitute for the fundamental task of addressing, and altering, social institutions and legal norms. Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker squarely confronts this problem when, after criticizing the traditional course of convincing citizens in a deliberative forum, he advances his argument for a policy of applying direct pressure on the state – the only actor having the power to bestow, and enforce compliance with, legal rights – through the building of a strong social formation supported by intellectuals engaging in a critical confrontation with asymmetrical power relations. Implying that it is the law which can drive the rhythm of social progress, and referring to the juridical achievements of the labor

movement (Smulewicz-Zucker 263), Smulewicz-Zucker emphasizes the importance of bringing legal cases on behalf of animals which may even engage issues like the abolition of their property-status. He also suggests following in the tracks of the American Civil Liberties Union by creating a legal organization whose members, rather than pursuing a politics of moral education in the public sphere, straightforwardly convey their arguments to the state (267).

While undertaking to offer a non-utopian route towards a utopian end-state, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka turn their attention instead to a different historical precedent – Child labour reform within liberal democracies, with its gradual enshrinement of a set of children's rights (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 'Make it So' 81 ff). Defending the idea that liberal democratic rights are vital political tools in the struggles of dominated groups, they also argue for a reform policy implemented by a movement that, adopting the influential intra-human model of community building,[12] may engage in cooperation with other progressive causes in a process of institutional change. Such a process would include the creation of interspecific commons where everyone – human and nonhuman – has shelter and food security, and, more generally, the fostering of local, animal-friendly economies that, resisting neoliberal policies, might eventually lead to fundamental shifts in power relations and to the creation of a global interspecies political community (96ff).

Notwithstanding his different reference points – a biopolitical analytics that sees sovereign power as an incessant mechanism of subjugation, and an anti-anthropocentric perspective that frames human violence towards nonhumans as a real *war* – Dinesh Wadiwel subscribes to the relevance of community building. The communities he has in mind, however, are primarily counter-communities which, working against multiple relations of power, manifest forms of resistance echoing those activated in the Middle Ages against that pastoral power which required the continual submission of its subjects. To this, borrowing from the Marxian tradition, he adds the confrontational proposal of an alliance between animal advocates and labour groups in order to realize, through the protest form of a general strike, the project of a one day truce, one day when the slaughterhouses would shut down (Wadiwel, 'Counter-conduct and Truce' 212 ff).[13] And, though aware of the difficulty of cooperating with the weaker section of the global exploitative system – a cooperation some preliminary instances of which can nonetheless be claimed[14] – he contends that such a strategy has the merit of

symbolically and practically moving to the institutional level via its focus on the production process of killing.

Finally, the critico-dialectical approach I defend concentrates not so much on previous political experiences as on theoretical guides to effective praxis. Seeing institutions as part of a system which mostly supports the agendas of the dominant, and acknowledging the difficulties of displacing them, this perspective seeks ways to alter the status quo through a calculated strategy and finds them in the radical Leftist strand in philosophical sociology. In particular, it points to Reflexive sociology's thesis that at the level of doxastic values dissenters are not unarmed as culture is a dimension which is accessible even to the politically disadvantaged, and to the Frankfurtian idea that radicalism can gain from 'legitimate' political activity, provided that it makes a reasoned use of the democratic resources secured by past struggles. In this light, for one thing the dismantling of the humanistic paradigm might undermine the public acceptance of the practices that subjugate nonhumans, while simultaneously evoking formerly silenced forms of resistance (Cavalieri, 'Animal Liberation: A Political Perspective' 31). And, for another, initiatives such as the attempts to grant the status of persons to some specific nonhuman beings,[15] which capitalize on current ethical and legal contradictions and on the energies liberated by concurrent crises,[16] might achieve a first extension of basic equality which could create a mechanism for further extensions, as well as for a destabilization of the human-nonhuman dichotomy (29).[17]

Prominent within this multiplicity of proposals are two areas of overlapping consensus – one concerning the stress laid on the present capitalist mode of production, driven by an impersonal logic of commodification and exacerbated by predatory global trade, and the other revolving around the idea that animal liberation must identify a major area of intervention in the realm of culture, understood in the philosophical sense of the intellectual discourse whose justifications of discrimination must be dismantled – the 'established culture' which bars social change (Marcuse 23) – and in the anthropological sense of patterns of learned behaviour that must be altered.[18] There is also, however, an important divergence, related to the critical problem of alliance building. Granted that, unquestionably, the egalitarian stance of animal liberation objectively positions it on the side of all those who are exploited and discriminated against, should or should not the envisaged movement subjectively and actively look for alliances

with progressive human causes? The Left liberal and the biopolitical approach respond affirmatively, the former arguing that, to be successful, the animal liberation movement should act as a full member of the family of social justice struggles, and the latter stressing that in the battle against institutional violence it is essential to avoid policies that might substitute one hierarchy for another. On the other side, one finds instead radical theory's emphasis on the building of a strong movement establishing an autonomous presence both in the political arena and in the electoral process, and the critico-dialectical approach's thesis that, as humanism leads the worse-off to cling to their humanity to the detriment of nonhumans, leaving animal defenders 'barely inside the door, with hat in hand', the movement should make itself self-sufficient and self-reliant.[19]

Is this divergence, coupled with the variety of suggestions, a serious problem for an emerging political force? Though disagreements are present in all collective actors struggling to assert themselves on the social scene – as Smulewicz-Zucker points out, any movement must face such birth pangs (255) – the fact remains that considerable work is still to be done if this kind of discussion is to become effective and consequential.

iv. A preliminary assessment

As Matthew Calarco notices, the reflection on the animal question is now in a moment when argumentative strategies are 'reinscribed within a larger … project that allows for a multiplicity of ways of writing about, thinking about, and reorienting our practices in regard to animals and our relations with them' (137). Manifestly, the transition from ethics to politics is a momentous one for a movement, as it marks the passage from the mere defense and diffusion of some theoretical principles to the attempt to universalize and institutionalize such principles. And of course, in making this passage, attention must be paid to the devising of projects which are radical – that is, able to 'already create, if possible, a little of that future freedom'[20] that is the goal of an emancipatory movement – and at the same time pragmatic – that is, politically feasible and able to offer a cogent perspective.

Both horns of the dilemma loom in the present landscape. The question of the abandonment of the movement's ideological core clearly emerges when, as is the case with the

representatives of the liberal political turn who envision a merely reformed, as contrasted with totally reformulated, future political end-state, one finds a theoretical 'constraining of conceptions of human/animal equality' (Milligan, 6) whose consequence is the formulation of a watered-down political programme – a programme, by the way, whose practical implementation is nearly as difficult as the realization of more radical goals.

On the other hand, the problem of feasibility tends to surface to a greater or lesser extent in all the approaches sticking to basic ideas of interspecies equality. On the liberal side, this horn of the problem appears in the most utopian facets of the future societies envisioned within the radical trend, where proposals are sometimes advanced that by far outrun existing policies even with respect to the present members of the political community, namely, human beings. As for Critical Animal Studies, a serious obstacle to effective action lies in the very breadth of a challenge to the existing order which not only urges the mobilization of too varied political actors often incompatible as to their ideologies, but also sets up too many goals to achieve at the same time. And it can be argued that, though avowedly pragmatic in its intent, the concerted reflection on the development of schemes of strategic planning is somewhat undermined by the fact that, being an initial undertaking, it cannot as yet forge from the confrontation between different views the outline of a systematic, comprehensive project.

What will be the future of all such fresh developments? Around the island of this intellectual inquiry lies the sea of a variegated and committed social reality of which the animal liberation project is only a part. And while such a global enterprise, unlike many intra-human political organizations that waver under the blows of the economic crisis and of the barbarisation of politics, is currently thriving, gaining ever more visibility and extending its basic struggle in defense of animals to a planetary scale,[21] the animal liberation movement specifically tries to confer the objectivity of public theory to a perspective on the world tendentially relegated to the state of confused experience (Bourdieu 127), and to emerge as a relevant political force in order to thoroughly challenge the global speciesist order. Insofar as such a movement rethinks the nexus of philosophy and politics with the aim of transforming social practices and political institutions, it is on its choices, not on an academic clash of opinion, that the fate of the main theoretical currents will depend. Also in the face of many recent forms of militant action, one can trust that in the end these choices, far from accepting a retreat, will empower and amplify the most radical among the political ideas arisen from the inaugural ethical challenge to human supremacism.

Notes

[1] This essay was subject to an 'Open Peer Commentary' process. This involved sending this essay in identified form to two high-standing scholars in the field for their feedback on suitability for publication, and for their short commentaries which would be published alongside this essay (in this issue see Donaldson and Calarco). This approach was undertaken with the consent of the author and peer reviewers. The Guest Editors, with the consent of the Chief Editor of the *Animal Studies Journal*, pursued this approach because of the high probability that the essay would be identifiable to reviewers in the conventional double blind review process, particularly as the author responds to and builds on their own theoretical work. In addition, the guest editors were attracted to emerging open models of peer review which put an emphasis on public debate, an approach that was deemed relevant for this special issue.

[2] On this process see for example Mary Warnock, 105 ff.

[3] To have an idea of this radicalism – of the willingness, that is, to go to the root (*radix* in Latin) of the problems – it is enough to browse the contents of such pioneering journals as *Ethics & Animals* or *Between the Species*.

[4] See on this Kymlicka, especially 176. See also Ahlhaus and Niesen.

[5] For the distinction between the dimensions of the political, see Mouffe, 'Introduction', *On the Political*.

[6] One might also notice the blunt dismissal of the complexity of animal societies, by now universally acknowledged (81, 86). For a particularly instructive example see Goldenberg et al.

[7] This comment echoes an observation made by Edward Johnson with reference to the utilitarian tradition. See Johnson, 340.

[8] *The Journal for Critical Animal Studies,* http://journalforcriticalanimalstudies.org/

[9] While, as mentioned, in spite of Marx and Engels' dismissive judgment that sees utopias as mere escapes from a reality characterized by the absence of the material conditions for

emancipation (Marx and Engels, 30), utopian horizons of expectancy – with their devising of, and aspiration to, an ideal society to come – can play a helpful motivational role in politics, the situation is clearly different with regard to utopian plans for praxis, as in this case the visionary/unrealistic element has obvious hindering effects.

[10] On this crucial question, known as the problem of the 'transfer of power', see for example Hobsbawm 1959, 58

[11] See for example Hall.

[12] Though already well-established, the theoretical model of community building is now going through a moment of revival, especially in the work of the authors concerned with contrasting the Anthropocene disaster, where it tends to be couched in terms of the construction of nodal niches in a decentralized archipelago sharing principles of humanimal justice. See for example Gabardi, 131ff. For a discussion of the merits and drawbacks of such a political tool see Wadiwel 2018, 309 ff.

[13] Wadiwel avowedly borrows the idea of a one-day truce from Andrea Dworkin: see Dworkin. On this see also Wadiwel 2015, 273ff.

[14] See for example Guðrún Helga Sigurðardóttir, 'June General Strike Looms in Iceland,' *The Reykjavik Grapevine*, 27 May 2015, or Gonzalo Villanueva, 'Mainstream Crusade – how the Animal Rights Movement Boomed', *The Conversation*, 7 November 2012, as cited in Wadiwel 2016, 235-236.

[15] For the nonhuman great apes see for example Cavalieri and Singer, Cavalieri 2015 and Andrews et al.; for cetaceans see the 'Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans', https://www.cetaceanrights.org/, D'Amato and Chopra, White and Cavalieri 2012; and for elephants see Cavalieri 2016c, and especially the 'Declaration of the Rights of Elephants', http://fiapo.org/declaration-on-rights-and-dignity-of-elephants-2/, connected to the new, important initiative launched in India which can be found at http://fiapo.org/personhood-for-animals/

[16] Although from a quite different standpoint, the relevance of this kind of political process is brilliantly highlighted by Charlotte Epstein, who, investigating the recent diffusion of a global anti-whaling attitude, shows how an alternative 'discourse of resistance,' coined by activists and deployed from the fringes of politics can succeed in imposing itself as a dominant frame. See Epstein, 90-91.

[17] Some results have already been obtained. One concerns the young chimpanzee Cecilia, the first nonhuman animal freed by a writ of Habeas Corpus anywhere in the world, who was released from Mendoza Zoo in Argentina and transferred to the Great Ape Project's sanctuary in Brazil; see https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/argentina-judge-says-chimpanzee-poor-conditions-has-rights-and-should-be-freed-from-zoo-a7402606.html. Another result is the decision of India's Ministry of Environment to forbid the keeping of dolphins in captivity, accompanied by a reference to dolphins as 'nonhuman persons'; see http://ens-newswire.com/2013/05/20/india-bans-captive-dolphin-shows-as-morally-unacceptable/. Another path of which, along similar, though not identical lines, the movement can take profit of concerns the realm of companion animals, in particular of cats and dogs, who are in several countries variously protected and often even regarded in courts as family members, with the consequence that much pressure is put on their present status of property.

[18] It should be noted that this is mostly envisaged as a top-down process, in sharp contrast with the bottom-up procedure of those political philosophers who start from the anthropological background of the general public and accordingly alter their requests for justice.

[19] The quotation comes from Steve F. Sapontzis, who applies the image to animals, not to animal defenders. See Sapontzis, 64. More generally, however, one can recall Antonio Gramsci's approving mention of Lenin's advice to Italian Communists: 'Separate yourselves from Turati and then form an alliance with him'. Transferred to our context, this can be taken to mean, autonomously assert yourselves, and only then you can hope to catalyze, rather than begging for, the support of differently minded but synergetic groups. See Gramsci, 380.

[20] The phrase comes from Fernando Pessoa. See Pessoa, 97.

[21] Animal protection organizations are being constantly established even in areas traditionally impervious to the problem, from China to Russia to Latin America.

See for example
https://u.osu.edu/mclc/2018/03/07/animal-rights-activism-in-china/,
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-embryonic-animal-rights/25179531.html,
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