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# Journal for Critical Animal Studies



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## **Issue Introduction: Religious Practice Informing Critical Animal Studies**

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## **Religious Practice Informing Critical Animal Studies**

In the literal and symbolic thread of several religions, themes of justice and moral responsibility toward others can help guide ethical behavior. Religions are often cited during times of war and peace because their symbolism gives meaning to the actions and thoughts of the people. During times of peace, religion has served as a useful tool for enabling justice, kindness, and fairness for humans. However, can the same be said for nonhuman animals? We know that religion can play an influential role in not only shaping ideas of social justice but also in responding to perceptions of injustice. For instance, instead of passively accepting the suffering of animals as the will of God, one might actively oppose this perspective. If a religion does not value nonhuman animals as worthy of moral respect and political agency, then it is likely the archetypes of that religion match this perspective. Thus, we are left wondering how can we

combat the powerful images that perpetuate nonhuman injustice within religiousness. How can we uphold the strength of any given religion, while simultaneously transcending the limitations of that religion? Is there a difference between the power of religious and secular approaches to liberating nonhumans? The question of whether religious practice can summon ideological support and provide the critical social justice tools needed to liberate nonhuman animals is complicated.

In the essay for this issue, “Religion, Critical Animal Studies, and the Political Turn: Nonhuman Animal Belonging and Participation from Secular and Religious Perspectives” authors Michael Allen and Erica von Essen suggest that belief in equal belonging is a principle that appeals not only to secularists interested in animal liberation but those who are pious as well. The authors explore whether the ideology of equal belonging can unite secularists and devotees in the struggle to improve our interspecies community. Readers are encouraged to accept that nonhuman animals have political agency and are equal partners in actively shaping the rules of interspecies cooperation.

Allen and von Essen explore whether it is possible to achieve devotional support for Donaldson and Kymlicka’s (2015) discussion of the 3P model of animal rights in Judeo-Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The authors surmise that some religions have the potential of providing alternatives to the secular basis of support already supplied by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015b), but some gaps need tending if we wish to uphold the shared secular and devotional premise of equal belonging. We are given some insights into how we might cooperate and be more inclusive rather than colonize and invade one another. The essay places questions about nonhuman liberation into a broader framework that encourages political consensus among religions and demonstrates the transforming effect of what we can do

as scholar-activists. To achieve a liberated society, we must help religious devotees understand that their support of speciesist practices and thoughts, whether consciously or unconsciously, contributes to nonhuman animal injustice. Animal liberation efforts are enhanced when religious devotees affirm the religious doctrines that are righteous while modifying those that are immoral. Uniting those whose ethical and religious foundations share a universal standard of justice and a commitment to liberating nonhumans is a powerful way of resisting nonhuman oppression.

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**Religion, Critical Animal Studies, and the Political Turn: Nonhuman Animal Belonging and Participation from Secular and Religious Perspectives**

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**Abstract**

All religions are associated in one way or another with the oppression and domination of animals. In this paper, however, we ask whether religions contain ideological resources to challenge the oppression and domination of nonhuman animals. We do not ask whether religions ground devotional support for animal liberation in their particular doctrines or rituals. Instead, we ask about the possibility of political consensus overlapping diverse devotional, as well as secular, perspectives. We argue that animal advocates best motivate such support through the insights of critical animal studies into the linked character of all oppressions, animal and human.

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<sup>2</sup> As a researcher in Environmental Communication, Erica von Essen's published body of work has addressed various manifestations of human-wildlife relations: from conflicts, poaching and resistance to discourses in modernity and among hunters.

Nevertheless, we align these insights with the political turn in animal rights, emphasizing not just animal protection and welfare provision, but also animal participation in creating a just mixed community. Indeed, this political turn emphasis in the 3Ps -- protection, provision, and participation -- identifies a principle of equal interspecies social belonging. Equal belonging provides the basis of a political consensus among diverse religious devotees. By contributing to such a consensus, the world's religions potentially make a vital contribution to the linked projects of animal and human emancipation.

*Keywords:* participation, belonging, critical animal studies, political turn, religion

## **Religion, Critical Animal Studies, and the Political Turn: Nonhuman Animal Belonging and Participation from Secular and Religious Perspectives**

### **Introduction**

All religions are associated in one way or another with the oppression and domination of animals (Aidaros, 2014). Not only Christianity and Judaism, but also Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are implicated in their exploitation and use, maintaining a hierarchy of humans over non-humans. As a result, most animal rights literature has painted religions as an impediment to progress and secular political theorists more often than not see religion as the enemy of animals (Dickman, Johnson, van Kesteren, & Macdonald, 2015; Sideris, 2014). In this paper, however, we ask whether religions contain ideological resources to challenge the oppression and domination of animals. By itself, this is not an original question. Indeed, perhaps in response to criticism from secular theorists (Peek et al., 1997), scholars and activists have begun to look to religions as a source of emancipation for the vulnerable and oppressed, including animals (cf. Phelps, 2002, 2004).

Building on this scholarship, we claim that religion may contain resources for not just negative, but also positive animal rights. That is, we show the world's religions can support not only negative animal rights against cruelty, but also positive animal right to participate in shaping the norms and terms of the mixed community. Our article is original to the extent that it explores animal participation rights in the context of different religions as well as secular political philosophy (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011). However, it is also original in that we explore the emancipatory potential of religions for animals by bringing together the concerns of two distinct branches of animal rights. On the one hand, we appeal to critical animal studies concerned with

animal liberation from oppression by humans who would use and exploit them for their own ends, while also stressing the intersectionality of all oppression, animal and human (for example, Pellow, 2014; Best, 2014). On the other hand, we appeal to the recent political turn in animal rights concerned with animals as *political agents*, realizing their freedom through participation in co-designing the rules of cooperation with humans (S Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011; Sue Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2015a; Milligan, 2015).

In particular, we ask how animal advocates and scholars might engage religious devotees in accepting political agency for animals and explore what we owe to nonhuman animals. This requires asking religious devotees to think about why animals are owed freedom from oppressive relationships with humans and why animals are owed a “voice” in shaping the contours of the community either with or apart from humans. It should be noted that our primary interest in exploring these topics is political rather than religious. We are interested in determining whether the world’s religions ought to form an overlapping political consensus (Smith, 2012; Rawls, 2005) about animal rights and cooperation for the interspecies political community. However, we are aware that such a consensus could impact the ideological structures of religions. Indeed, reaching a political consensus on the participation rights of animals may require devotees of different religions to reinterpret or reassess established doctrine or ritual. Thus, we have determined that it necessary to ask religious devotees to think about animals as more than the deserving subjects of liberation from oppression and exploitation. We thought it necessary to educate religious devotees about viewing nonhuman animals as *co-equal partners* in actively shaping the rules of inter-species cooperation.

Critical animal studies shows us that humans cannot liberate themselves from oppressive relations, based on prejudices of race, class, sex, gender, and disability, without also liberating

animals from prejudice based on species (Pellow, 2014; Best, 2014). All oppressive relations are ultimately based on hierarchy: the supremacy of white over black or brown, rich over poor, male over female, 'straight' over a pluralism of gender identities, abled over disabled, and so on (Sue Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2015a; Gruen, 2007; MacKinnon, 2004). The oppression of animals likewise derives from hierarchy and the supremacy of human over non-human animals. Indeed, liberation thus entails replacing all forms of hierarchy with an inclusive ethic of equality.

The political turn, however, shows us that the replacement of hierarchy also requires co-equal participation in rule making. This is the insight Sue Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015b) bring to animal ethics from the human disability movement. Without participation in shaping the rules of cooperation, people with disabilities necessarily remain second-class citizens, or wards of the state, their life prospects determined for them by people who are able-bodied/able-minded. Consequently, the disability movement insists on a 3P model to realize freedom for people with disabilities. This entails not just *protection* against overt abuse and *provision* of material resources, but also *participation* in rule making. Indeed, without the third 'P' participation, the first two 'Ps' protection and provision remain embedded in an oppressive hierarchy, protecting not those who are vulnerable but rather their abusers and providing the wrong resources. In short, *there is no real prospect for liberation without participation*.

To be sure, animals may avoid oppressive relations with humans by removing themselves from the mixed community (Warren, 2011). This is a form of political agency (Allen and von Essen, 2018 forthcoming) as self-liberation that ought to be respected by both religious devotees and secularists. Nevertheless, those animals seeking ongoing community with humans remain at risk of oppression insofar as mixed-species relations remain hierarchical, positing human supremacy over animals. Hence, the only effective way to challenge hierarchy and end oppression

is by humans embracing animals as political participants in co-designing the rules of interspecies social cooperation. In the mixed community, human and animal liberation are copacetic.

That said, however, we are left with the question of whether there are indeed ideological resources within the world's religions for this inclusive emancipatory task. In this respect, we argue for a correspondence between the premise of the political turn, as underwriting animal participation, and the cosmogonic visions of diverse world religions. As articulated by Sue Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015b), the political turn highlighting animal participation in rule making is grounded in a *principle of equal belonging*. Although for Donaldson and Kymlicka, this is a secular principle of membership in the mixed community, we argue equal belonging is also fundamental to all religious cosmogonies, as concerned not simply with non-oppressive relations in particular sovereign communities, but rather the entire order or chain of beings. No beings are extraneous to this divine or heavenly order: *all rightfully belong*. This inevitably raises a question for religious devotees about whether hierarchal relations of human over human and human over animal are consistent with their cosmogonic visions of equal belonging. If they are serious about the equal belonging of all beings in the cosmogonic order, then devotees should respect the political agency of animals in removing themselves from the mixed community or participating as co-equals in rule-making and shared governance.

The first task we accomplish in this essay is to briefly sketch Donaldson and Kymlicka's (2015b) argument for the 3P model of animal rights: Protection, Provision, and *Participation*. Here, we emphasize that co-equal participation in designing the rules of cooperation is a condition of *liberation from paternalism and wardship* in the administration of measures designed to protect and provide for the vulnerable. Second, we consider the prospects for obtaining devotional support for all three Ps in Judeo-Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Third, we

sketch a political path to supporting the full 3P model, including domesticated animal participation, appealing to the ideological resources of diverse world religions. Here, we do not ground devotional support for the 3Ps and animal participation in the doctrines or ritual, but rather the possibility of political consensus overlapping diverse devotional as well as secular perspectives. Finally, we consider issues of privilege and colonialism along with the costs of adopting the 3P model, while emphasizing the considerable moral and political gains to which the world's religious are potential contributors.

### **The 3P Model, Equal Belonging, and Animal Participation**

In this section, we will lay out the basic premises of the political turn in animal ethics and more specifically the 3P model of animal rights endorsed by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015b). The political turn builds upon the emphasis in animal rights theory on equal moral considerability and species egalitarianism (Singer, 1975), along with the basic rights of all sentient, self-conscious animals as subjects of a life (Regan, 2003). Indeed, Donaldson and Kymlicka build on this foundation by turning to positive relational obligations of animals derived from their preferences to remain separate from us or to live alongside us as members of mixed, interspecies political communities. Animal rights has always been political as evident from its strong emphasis on liberation and the abolition of all oppressive relations between animals and humans (Francione & Charlton, 2015). The turn, however, is a distinctive contribution in highlighting liberation from human oppression through animal participation in co-designing the rules of cooperation along with humans. This is a turn away from a primary emphasis on protecting the negative rights of animals to exploring their capacities for political agency as members of the mixed community (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011). In this respect, it refuses to see political agency as a uniquely human capacity. As noted in our introduction, this aligns the turn profoundly with critical animal studies and its

concerns with the intersectionality of all oppressions and liberations. Human and animal liberation intersect through interspecies politics.

The 3P model of liberation through agency and participation derives from children's rights movements and human disability rights movements (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2015b: 331-333). These movements emerged in reaction against the older 2P model of protection and provision. The core motivation for this reaction was that protection and provision without participation resulted in the problems of excessive paternalism and oppression (Flanders, 2014). Indeed, the 2P model entailed reducing children and people with disabilities to "wards of the state." Wardship or guardianship meant that officials of the state would make important decisions about the lives of children and people with disabilities without consultation about their interests or consent. This was unjust since children and even severely cognitively disabled humans are capable of communicating their basic interests and preferences to official decision makers (Francis & Silvers, 2007). Indeed, according to Donaldson and Kymlicka, the injustice consisted in a violation of the principle of *equal belonging* of these marginal citizens: viz. that society belongs equally to all of its members and not just those with the most advanced cognitive and linguistic capabilities. Unless it consults with them about their interests and preferences, the state treats children and people with disabilities as if the society does not equally belong to them.

Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that the same analysis of injustice applies to domesticated animals (DAs). As living alongside us, they are as much members of society as humans and society belongs to them as much as it does to humans. Moreover, DAs are capable of communicating their basic interests and preferences (Meijer, 2013). Nevertheless, we typically treat DAs either as "wards" of their owners or "wards of the state," resulting in the same problems of excessive paternalism and oppression. Hence, we violate the principle of equal belonging when we fail to

communicate with them about their interests and preferences in ways that are meaningful to them (Eckersley, 1999). By analogy with the children's and disability rights movements, the animal rights movement thus calls for a shift in cultural attitudes towards DAs whereby we come to see them as equally social members with whom we have communicative obligations. These obligations require us fundamentally to reconceive our institutional practices of relating to DAs (Garner, 2013; Smith, 2012). Society owes it to DAs to create appropriate "spaces" and "mechanisms" through which they can be consulted about how they want to relate to humans, their own and other species. Here, Donaldson and Kymlicka appeal to social experiments in liberal-democracies with city dog parks (2011) and farmed animal sanctuaries (Sue Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2015a) as well as exploring the possibilities for animal representation in traditional spaces for public deliberation and decision-making by human ombudsmen or advocates (2011, 2015b). In this respect, they advocate experiments in giving DAs a participatory voice and make proposals for their formal political representation, as derived from the existing culture and practices of liberal democracies (2011, 2015a).

As a point of clarification, we stress that participation is *political participation in co-designing rules*. Animal participation may raise a red flag for animal advocates equating animal participation with *forced participation*, exploiting them, for instance, as workers. Indeed, *if* animal labor is justifiable at all, experiments with particular animals must determine their negative and positive work preferences (2015a). For example, animal-assisted therapy (ATT) helping humans cope with traumatic experiences or illness often involves coercive training geared to human needs. Nevertheless, it could also provide some animals with stimulating experiences, rewarding relationships, and opportunities for learning, provided they be engaged as participants in shaping the terms of their work. This would require humans to work with therapy dogs, ponies, monkeys,

or pigs, for instance, to find an appropriate mix of routine and variety, preferred activities, environments, and companions. Indeed, with sufficient care and attention given to co-designing the rules of cooperation, the nonhumans are positively empowered to realize their freedom through complex interactions with humans. Likewise, the humans they assist are empowered to realize their freedom from trauma and anxieties, leading richer lives through these relationships with the animals. In short, properly designed to engage animals as agents and co-participants, ATT could *positively co-liberate* the nonhumans and those who are experiencing trauma or disability. Consistent with Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015b), then, our point is that *political* participation and agency by DAs determines whether all other forms of animal participation in the mixed community, including animal labor, count as oppressive or emancipatory.

Nevertheless, Donaldson and Kymlicka's discussion of the 3P model of animal rights is clearly an extrapolation from the secular premises of equal social membership and belonging. What, though, are the prospects for gaining devotional support for all three Ps in Judeo-Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism? Do they contain ideological resources that could provide alternative routes to the 3Ps, as an intersectional emancipatory project? In the following section, we consider the prospects of devotional support for the 3P model in the major world religions, as potential alternatives to the secular basis of support already supplied by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015b). Consistent with our introduction, we do so by emphasizing the shared secular and devotional premise of equal belonging.

### **Prospects for Devotional Endorsements of DA Participation**

#### *Judeo Christianity*

Kymlicka and Donaldson (2014) decry the "Abrahamic religions" for asserting that "only humans were made in God's image and that animals were put on earth to serve human beings" (p.

117). Indeed, this is a familiar refrain from within the Western animal rights movement: divinely sanctioned human dominion over the animals legitimizes their cruel treatment. However, this equation of Abrahamic dominion with animal cruelty is much too hasty. In the context of Judeo-Christianity, Peek, Konty, and Frazier (1997) point out that the complete set of scriptures “also depicts a covenant with God that includes animals” (p. 431). Moreover, they stress that the New Testament contains “an imagery encouraging people to care for animals as God cares for people” (Ibid): for example, “Look at the birds in the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barn, and yet your heavenly father feeds them” (Matthew 23:37; also see Phelps 2002). In this respect, however, the Abrahamic religions appeal to a cosmogenic principle of equal belonging, consistent with Donaldson and Kymlicka’s secularism: people should care for animals as God cares for people (Phelps 2002).

What, though, are the prospects here for support of *all three Ps*? One might see Judeo-Christianity as endorsing the second P: caring for DAs through providing for their welfare and material needs. Nevertheless, the Abrahamic covenant views non-cruelty and welfare as consistent with raising animals for butchery. Consequently, DAs are not protected in their basic right to life. Animal advocates, however, could justifiably contend that this is a contradiction. DAs do not equally belong to society and society does not equally belong to them, if their lives are forfeit for human use. As for the third P, Judeo-Christianity appears to be silent. Indeed, the Abrahamic covenant says nothing explicitly about animal political participation and agency.

### *Islam*

Islam is likewise an Abrahamic, covenantal religion. Islam and Islam (2015) emphasize that the Koran “prescribes a set of rules aimed to reduce the pain and distress of animals” (p. 100). These rules prohibit Muslims from killing animals “just for sports” and “guide humankind to treat

animals with the utmost kindness” (Ibid). In this covenant, God or Allah assigns to humans the role of stewards or vice-regents on earth with profound responsibilities of care for animals. Consequently, Islam offer a cosmogony in which “animals are viewed as a part of nature and thus a part of God” (Peek et al., 1997, p. 431). Indeed, all equally belong in its cosmogenic schema. This supplies the “philosophical roots” of animal rights (Islam and Islam, 2015, p. 98; also see Phelps, 2002 & Keshani, 2010).

Nevertheless, Islam is in essentially the same position as Judeo-Christianity regarding all three 3Ps. It endorses caring and welfare over protecting the right to life of DAs, and it offers no explicit endorsement of animal participation and agency.

### *Confucianism*

Consistent with Judeo-Christianity and Islam, Confucianism also offers a cosmogonic grounding for the equal belonging of all beings. Nevertheless, it does so by grounding the universal interrelatedness of humans and animals in an ethic of “differentiated love toward different objects” (Fan, 2010, p. 79 ). The various objects of love -- parents, people, and animal -- are united in a heavenly order. Nevertheless, differential duties of love are owed to each object as a social participant: “devotional love” to parents, “benevolent love” to people, and “sympathetic love” to animals (p. 81). In this holistic account of intersecting duties to human and animal participants, such duties are a function not of imagery or obedience to covenantal rules, but moral propriety expressed through the performance of rituals. To this extent, the basis of legitimacy for custom and behavior is *rites* rather than *rights* as embodied in covenantal law (Ames, 1988; Sim, 2007).

Although not a coventantal religion like Judeo-Christianity and Islam, Confucianism otherwise replicates the standpoint of the Abrahamic religions regarding the 3Ps. That is, it endorses caring or sympathetic love for DAs, without also protecting their right to life, or acknowledging any role for

them as agents and participants in shaping rules of cooperation with humans. Indeed, serving animal meat to parents and guests is a way to cultivate virtue through ritual. Nevertheless, there is clearly no necessary connection between meat eating and virtue. It is only through ritual that the connection is established. Surely, then, custom can find different expressions, as long as Confucians are willing to revise their rituals expressing reverence for humanity. Indeed, Kongzi himself was willing to undertake such revisions (Ibid). After all, it would be inconsistent with Confucianism's appeal to the contextual and concrete over the universal to deny that "rules governing rituals ... should never be violated or revised" (pp. 82-83).

### *Hinduism*

Hinduism's record on the ethical treatment of animals is complex and mixed. Historically, sacred bovines have been the objects of both ritual slaughter and protection against such divinely mandated killings (Burgat, 2004). Nevertheless, the ancient Laws of Manu reveal a sophisticated view of the unity, order, and interrelatedness of all life, human and animal, even plant. Framarin (2014) reconstructs this sacred order as follows. All life is attributed direct moral standing based on sentience. Actions produce merit and demerits, causing pleasure and pain respectively. Nevertheless, the values of pleasure and pain are "at least partly intrinsic" (p. 192) rather than instrumental to the production of any further values. Indeed, on Framarin's reconstruction, humans should not refrain from harming or killing animals simply to avoid the consequence of having them "take revenge" in future lives (Ibid). Instead, they should refrain from causing harms to animals because sentience establishes a basis of equal moral consideration between the species.

Contrary to Judeo-Christianity, Islam, and Confucianism, the Hindu Laws of Manu already ground first P protections for animal life. Moreover, establishing a basis of equal moral consideration, they ground animal welfare provisions. Nevertheless, it likewise remains for

Hindus, Judeo-Christians, Islamists, and Confusions alike to establish a route to the third P, participation. Indeed, in this latter respect, Hinduism appears to do no more than the other devotional perspectives considered so far.

### *Buddhism*

For its part, Buddhism shares Hinduism's vision of the intrinsic moral standing of all life based on sentience—or being a living thing or *satto* (Waldau, 2003). Nevertheless, historical Buddhist texts are often contradictory in their attitude towards animals. On the one hand, some texts appear to endorse an abolitionist or strictly first P position only, applying the precept “Do not kill” equally to animals and humans (Phelps, 2004), but otherwise eschewing animal use or social interactivity and cooperation with animals. Hence, Buddhists should not hunt animals or engage in animal husbandry; neither should they use animals for entertainment nor even seek their companionship. Moreover, captive animals should be released or ‘liberated’ to reduce their suffering (Szucs, Geers, Jezierski, Sossidou, & Broom, 2012).

On the other hand, however, some historical Buddhist texts appear openly speciesistic, regarding animals as the proper subjects of instrumental use by humans and creating hierarchical distinctions between animals based on their use by humans and relative tameness (Waldau, 2003). For example, humans may use tame elephants not only for hunting and war (contrary to the prohibition against killing humans and animal alike), but also for capturing wild elephants to be trained for these same purposes (Waldau, 2003). Then, the abolitionist orientation to Buddhism is not absolute and domestic animals participate in society, indeed forming subjects “to the same laws and conditions in this world” (Ibid, p. 138). Indeed, it was and remains controversial in Buddhism whether animals are fully within the scope of moral concern and whether its devotees should be vegetarians (Finnigan, 2017). Nevertheless, at least some contemporary Western Buddhists explicitly reject hierarchical

distinctions between humans and animals, tame animals and wild animals, seeing DAs as social members to whom they owe not just protections for continued life and welfare the provision, and possibly also a participatory “voice” (Wright, 2017).

In summary, all of the religious perspectives we sketched offer some level of support for the first two Ps. At any rate, Judeo-Christianity, Islam, and Confucianism prescribe caring for animals and refraining from treating them cruelly. However, protecting them against cruelty, and providing for their welfare, does not mean protecting their rights to life. Further, the first two Ps remain fixed in a hierarchal order of human/animal relations, underwriting their continued use for human purposes. As for Hinduism and Buddhism, their records on animal use and meat eating are mixed, offering inconsistent prescriptions on whether their devotees should be vegetarian. Nevertheless, barring the recent work in Buddhism by Wright (2017), none of the religious perspectives we considered embrace the third P, participation.

### **A Political Path to Devotional Support for the 3P model DA Participation**

This omission might lead one to think that the full 3P model *over-determines* what animal advocates should ask of devotees. Indeed, one might think that priority should be given to telling devotees about the cruelties of industrial meat farming and the imperative of abolishing all institutions by which humans oppress animals (Francione & Charlton, 2015; Giroux & Saucier-Bouffard, 2016), reducing them to a mere object-status. In this respect, animal advocates would talk to religious devotees in essentially the same way they talk to anyone else. That is, advocates would attempt to educate devotees about the scale and pervasiveness of animal cruelty and oppression, which typically goes unseen in our daily lives (S Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011; Sue Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2015a; Francione & Charlton, 2015). To this extent, they would aim to create within the devotees of diverse religious traditions a cognitive dissonance (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2015b) between what they know

about the facts of animal suffering and their religiously motivated commitments to caring and welfare. In principle, this is no different from how animal advocates would talk to secularists committed to an ethic of kindness (Smith, 2012). However, we stress that the primary goal of “real-world” animal advocacy is not changing minds by virtue of philosophical arguments. Instead, it is to motivate people from diverse backgrounds -- both secular and religious -- to reconsider their preexisting commitments to caring and welfare, in light of unassailable facts of animal abuse and oppression, as well as an appreciation that animals are individuals as opposed to fungible units of production and consumption (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2015b).

Alternatively, one might think that priority should be given to telling religious devotees about how animal oppression is linked to human oppression (Best, 2014; Pellow, 2014). This approach aligns much more closely with critical animal studies. Indeed, here the point of advocacy is to increase public awareness of the interlocking character of all oppressions, animal and human. For example, secularists and devotees alike cannot plausibly resolve the cognitive dissonance between their commitments to animal welfare and their preexisting moral commitments to caring for all subjects of moral concern simply by choosing a veggie burger over a hamburger. After all, such “ethical” choices are structured by the capitalist food production industry, which has made it cheaper for poor families -- many of whom are racial or ethnic minorities, single-parent families headed by women, or people with disabilities -- to purchase hamburger as opposed to vegan “meat substitutes” or fresh vegetables. Consequently, advocacy challenges them to reconsider in light of an enlarged understanding of how the exploitation and oppression of animals intersects with a wide range of social justices issues concerning economic, racial, and gender justice. To this extent, the liberation of animals and vulnerable humans come together in a total package of causes, none of which we can advance in isolation from the others. From this critical perspective, animal advocacy already takes a political turn by taking

seriously the idea that DAs are part of a system of cooperation with humans for which the participation rules are unfair to animals and humans alike.

This refocuses the key question asked by turn theorists like Donaldson and Kymlicka: is it a basic requirement of equal social belonging that DAs should be co-participants in shaping the rules of cooperation, along with humans? We have already discussed in the section before last Donaldson and Kymlicka's case for DA participation. By analogy with severely cognitively disabled humans, DAs are subject to excessive paternalism and oppression -- violating equal belonging -- unless they are empowered to participate in co-designing rules of cooperation (2015a). We now consider why participation does *not* over-determine what animal advocates should ask of devotees of the religions discussed in the previous section. It is clearly insufficient for animal advocates to educate them, say, about the cruelties visited upon animals in the meat production industry. After all, the existing two P commitments of devotees to protection against cruelty and provision for welfare offer no guarantee of protection for the basic right to life of animals. To this extent, the devotees of Judeo-Christianity, Islam, and Confucianism might respond that they are not bound to phasing out meat production entirely, but rather reforming industrial farming practices to eliminate cruelties to farmed animals. Hindus and Buddhists might likewise respond by insisting that their texts and traditions offer contradictory advice and prescriptions on meat eating as opposed to vegetarianism. Consequently, abolitionist education must bring devotees to an acceptance that the first P calls for a rejection of meat eating.

One obvious way to do this is by distinguishing between what religions do and do not prescribe. For example, Cochrane (2011 & 2012) notes that Judaism and Islam prescribe rules for the slaughter of animals. Nevertheless, they do not demand that devotees "slaughter animals or eat meat; vegetarianism is perfectly permissible under any plausible reading of either religion" (2012, p. 194). One could make the same distinction regarding the other religions perspectives: meat eating is not

demanded. In Hinduism and Buddhism, devotees could settle the internal religious controversy over vegetarianism on external moral grounds without contradicting their religion. In Confucianism, honored guests might simply refuse meat offerings, making an internal appeal to Kongzi's own willingness to revise the content of ritual. That said, however, there is perhaps limited motivational value in saying to diverse sets of devotees, 'you know your religion does permit you to make this choice to support an abolitionist program of phasing out industrial meat production and transitioning to a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle.' In this respect, we argue the motivational value of animal advocacy is enhanced considerably by focusing on the intersectionality of animal and human oppression. Indeed, the focus on intersectionality begins a process of bringing humans to think about animals differently, breaking down the hierarchal assumptions of the 2P model.

When we understand the intersectionality of all oppressions, we necessarily come to think about animals from an *equality of suffering* standpoint. Eco-feminists illustrate the point in terms of the rhetoric of oppression. For example, animal names assigned to women -- chick, cow, bitch, and so on -- not only degrade women but also reinforce the lower status of animals (Adams, 1993; MacKinnon, 2004). Consequently, such pejoratives serve to oppress both women and animals. Nevertheless, understanding the intersectionality of all oppressions creates solidarity among diverse oppressed groups, all of whom are the victims of a hierarchically ordered society. In such a social order, oppressed groups -- human and animal -- are relegated to a lower social status: they do not fully belong to society and society does not fully belong to them. Indeed, seeing animals from the standpoint of solidarity (von Essen & Allen, 2017) undermines the first P commitment to protecting them against cruelty *without also* protecting them against ongoing human exploitation or use. At any rate, it does so once we come to see animals as the co-equal victims of interlocking oppressions and the co-equal subjects of liberation.

Further, seeing them as equally the victims of oppression in a total liberation struggle (Pellow, 2014; Best, 2014) points us to the third P for precisely the reason given by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011, 2015a & 2015b). That is, freedom from exploitation and domination by humans, along with the freedom to enjoy stimulating experiences, rewarding relationships, and opportunities for learning through interaction with humans, entails having an appropriate participatory “voice,” as we discussed in the section before last. How, though, does this now bear upon our concern with religious endorsements of the full 3P model? There is nothing in the argument we have presented to the effect that God, Allah, Confucius, Vishnu, or the Buddha prescribes treating animals as political co-participants. Nevertheless, animal advocates offer a stronger motivational basis for devotees to reconsider their commitments to animal caring and welfare than the observation that their divinity or sage do not actually demand they eat animal flesh. Devotees reconsider their cosmogenic visions of the equal belonging of all beings *politically*, in light of linked oppressions and liberations across species lines. Consequently, the motivational basis is solidarity in an interspecies liberation struggle forging a community of equal human and animal belonging.

In political philosophy, the theory of solidarity aims to provide an account of how political community is forged among diverse human populations with different needs, interests, ideological commitments, and identities (Harvey, 2007; Krishnamurthy, 2013; Lenard, Straehle, & Ypi, 2010; Rehg, 1997). Solidarity is partly a function of the proximity of relations and personal affective ties, as when we identify with individuals humans or animals. However, it is also a function of a common conception of justice (Sandel, 1997), as when we make sacrifices for humans or animals we have never actually met on the basis of their equal social belonging. Further, solidarity is a type of action, working with others for a common political aim (Kolers, 2012). Here, it may entail reciprocity, as in our earlier example in which the ATT dog and the disabled human assisted in liberating and empowering one

another as members of the mixed community. Alternatively, it may entail little or no reciprocity, as in the case of humans helping animals to remove themselves from such a community (Warren, 2011; Allen & von Essen, 2018) in order to lead independent, wild sovereign lives (S Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011).

To be sure, political solidarity with animals in interlocking struggles for liberation, across species lines, is not an internal basis of devotional support for the 3Ps; that is, internal to the doctrines or rituals of the different religions we have discussed. This might lead one to object that animal advocates should engage devotees more directly on their own terms. Indeed, advocates should demonstrate to the devotees of each different religion some doctrine or ritual prescribing animal participation. We note, though, that religious ritual has often been dangerous for animals as the subjects of sacrifice or slaughter. Nevertheless, Hinduism, for example, also treats some animals – sacred bovines -- as the subjects of religious veneration. In some interpretations of Hindu thought, the sacred cow symbolizes the integration of all suffering life, animal and human (Juergensmeyer, 1985). In this respect, the sacredness of the cow is consistent with the insights of critical animal studies into the linked character of animal and human oppression. Sacred bovines participate in Hindu society by reminding us of the interconnectedness of all life and all suffering. Consequently, their participation as subjects of sacral veneration contributes to Hinduism's cosmogonic vision ideal of moksha, liberation, for all beings.

Indeed, the sacred role of the cow led Gandhi to propose substantial revisions of national institutions of husbandry to integrate bovines into a post-independence India society *abolishing* industrial meat production (Burgat, 2004). Here, our point is simply to show that animals can participate in ritual or rite in ways that facilitate their solidarity in interspecies co-liberation.

However, we do not rely on such internal devotional considerations of animal participation. For one thing, we believe this would be presumptuous for animal advocates many of whom are avowedly secular (Peek et al., 1997). Not only does such a reliance on internal devotional as opposed to shared political considerations have the potential to result in resentment among devotees over advocates trying to ‘hijack’ their religion for political ends. It is also likely to lead advocates into tangents concerning doctrine and ritual, losing their primary focus on animal suffering, oppression and liberation. Further, it would make a preposterous demand on advocates, requiring them to become religious scholars.

Consequently, we contend it is sufficient that animal advocates should avoid metaphysics instead seeking an overlapping political consensus (Smith, 2012; Rawls, 2005) of secularists and devotees on protection against animal cruelty, animal welfare provision, and appropriate animal participation. Advocates for animals do best leaving internal reasons, grounded in doctrine and ritual, to the devotees of particular religions, building political consensus on appeals to equal belonging and membership (Smith, 2012; Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2015b). Indeed, this approach is consistent with the general orientation of our paper to a political turn that crosses religious perspectives in addressing broad intersectional questions of animal and human justice.

### **Conclusion: Privilege, Colonialism, Costs**

Finally, we consider some questions of privilege, colonialism, and costs associated with devotional support for all three Ps. First, one might object that advocacy for all three Ps assumes a position of cultural privilege and colonialism. Animal advocates “enact whiteness” (Kymlicka & Donaldson, 2014) by imposing secular, white, middle class (Peek et al., 1997) values onto ethnic minorities, and indeed any religious worldview contradicting their own (Staudenmaier, 2003). Advocacy for the 3Ps is thus an expression of white colonialism. However, we would point out that

advocacy for the 3Ps is grounded in a conception of total human and animal liberation. It is thus grounded in a conception of resistance to human supremacy, regardless of ethnic and religious differences. Indeed, it is as much resistance to capitalism as a predominantly secular Western phenomenon as it is to minority ethnic and world religious practices concerning animals. To be sure, the 3Ps present a challenge to ethnic and religious minorities, but they are equally a challenge to privileged, secular “whites” whose record on animal cruelty and oppression is arguably much worse than, say, Hindus, Buddhists, or even Confucians. Indeed, capitalism rather than any of the world’s religions is responsible for the Eternal Treblinka or Holocaust (Patterson, 2002) perpetrated upon animals.

That said, however, the costs of adopting all 3Ps should not be diminished. Co-participation with animals in a total liberation struggle necessarily commits us to a radical alteration of our worldviews, and our place in the cosmogenic and social order. Indeed, it asks us to abandon speciesistic privilege in the name of liberation and solidarity and, in particular, it asks religious devotees to abandon any divine or sagely mandate for such privilege. Nevertheless, the gains are considerable. Not only are there spiritual benefits in reconnecting with animals, but also there are political benefits based on the analysis of intersecting oppressions and liberations. On this analysis, when we learn to hear the perspectives of marginalized and oppressed animals, we learn to hear the voices of marginalized and oppressed humans: the moral and political gain is potentially the liberation of all social members, human and animal. To be sure, a casualty of such total liberation is the Eternal Treblinka of capitalism, exploiting animals for profit. Given the extent to which economies depend on maintaining this moral abomination, abolishing industrial meat production may well result in economic disruption, raising questions of interspecies justice in the creation of new economic models to sustain 3P commitments.

There are no easy answers to such questions. Ultimately, however, they must be answered in light of the principle of equal belonging, applied to animals as well as humans. The world's religions are vital, if frequently overlooked, resources in facilitating such a conversation about interlocking oppressions and liberations, affecting all animal life. We have shown how animal advocates can address devotees in a sophisticated political conversation, challenging them to see all oppressions and liberations as linked and to reimagine the meaning of equal belonging from within their respective world religious perspectives.

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### **Editorial Objectives**

The *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* is open to all scholars and activists. The journal was established to foster academic study of critical animal issues in contemporary society. While animal studies is increasingly becoming a field of importance in the academy, much work being done under this moniker takes a reformist or depoliticized approach that fails to mount a more serious critique of underlying issues of political economy and speciesist philosophy. JCAS is an interdisciplinary journal with an emphasis on animal liberation philosophy and policy issues. The journal was designed to build up the common activist's knowledge of animal liberation while at the same time appealing to academic specialists. We encourage and actively pursue a diversity of viewpoints of contributors from the frontlines of activism to academics. We have created the journal to facilitate communication between the many diverse perspectives of the animal liberation movement. Thus, we especially encourage submissions that seek to create new syntheses between differing disputing parties and to explore paradigms not currently examined.

### **Suggested Topics**

Papers are welcomed in any area of animal liberation philosophy from any discipline, and presenters are encouraged to share theses or dissertation chapters. Since a major goal of the Institute for Critical Animal Studies is to foster philosophical, critical, and analytical thinking about animal liberation, papers that contribute to this project will be given priority (especially papers that address critical theory, political philosophy, social movement analysis, tactical analysis, feminism, activism and academia, Continental philosophy, or post-colonial perspectives). We especially encourage contributions that engage animal liberation in disciplines and debates that have received little previous attention.

### **Review Process**

Each paper submitted is initially reviewed for general suitability for publication; suitable submissions will be read by at least two members of the journal's editorial board.

### **Manuscript Requirements**

The manuscript should be in MS Word format and follow APA guidelines. All submissions should be double-spaced and in 12 point Times New Roman. Good quality electronic copies of all figures and tables should also be provided. All manuscripts should conform to American spelling.

As a guide, we ask that regular essays and reviews be between 2000-8000 words and have limited endnotes. In exceptional circumstances, JCAS will consider publishing extended essays. Authors should supply a brief abstract of the paper (of no more than 250 words). A brief autobiographical note should be supplied which includes full names, affiliation, email address, and full contact details.

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