

BETWEEN THE SPECIES

Interspecies Political Agency in the Total Liberation Movement

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we examine the possibility of interspecies political agency at the level of social movements. We ask to what extent animals and humans can be co-participants in one another's liberation from oppression. To do so, we assess arguments for and against including animals in the 'total liberation package,' taken as the liberation from oppressive societal structures. These are not pragmatic-political arguments, but conceptual-philosophical arguments that have been put before animal liberationists attempting to 'piggy-back' on human liberation movements. In discrediting these philosophical arguments, we argue that animals have capacities for self-liberation that humans can facilitate and that animals, in turn, can facilitate human liberation. As such, we defend the coherence of a total liberation package linking all oppression and all liberation, animal and human. We further argue that the rhetoric of total animal/human liberation performs a vital function in creating unity and solidarity between otherwise disparate and fragmented social justice movements.

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Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the concept of *total liberation* (Best 2014, Pellow 2014) has emerged as the theoretical foundation for radical earth and animal liberation movements. This posits the conceptual linkage or interconnection of all oppressions and all liberations. In this respect, it makes a claim that is not merely historical and sociological: that diverse forms of oppression have similar historical origins and depend on a particular “logic of domination” (Kalof *et al.* 2004, p. 239). Instead, it claims an inherent interconnectedness (Cochrane 2016, Noske 1997) of all oppressions and liberations such that each logically intersects with the others to form a totality (Krinsky 2013). Indeed, this notion of logical interconnectedness serves strategic purposes for radical earth and animal liberation movements who unite under a shared semantic or a ‘constitutive master frame’ for injustices (Mooney & Hunt 1996).

Such a “shared language of connection” (Barker *et al.* 2013, p. 29) may unite diverse movements today. Nevertheless, the alliance sometimes obscures disparities between separated streams of activists based on their degree of radicalism, *modus operandi* or particular cause (cf. Mertes 2004, on the intrapolitics of social movements). This fragmentation of social movements, all advocating for total liberation, frequently results from an effort by other actors – particularly the state – to atomize movements and sever linkages in order to contain or neutralize them (Galtung 1990). However, advocates of those progressive social movements with which it seeks alliances sometimes also criticize the total liberation frame for being excessively broad. They criticize it for ignoring significant conceptual and moral differences between the cases of oppression it seeks to link. Linkages represent desperate attempts to “... jiggly-back on other social justice causes” (Brisman 2010). In-

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deed, some animal rights activists criticize the total liberation frame for fundamentally misusing the language of liberation as applicable only to normal adult humans (Cochrane 2009). These criticisms result in the continued fragmentation of animal and human liberation movements and the reproduction of an animal/human divide. At best, critics declare such inclusive movements attempt to “do too much,” bewildering the landscape of justice (Choudry & Shragge 2011).

In this paper, we examine but reject the more cutting *conceptual* criticisms directed toward the total animal/human liberation package by diverse social justice and animal rights advocates from across the political spectrum. Indeed, we combine animal and human liberation in a conceptually coherent package. Its coherence is grounded, in part, in animal studies arguing for moral equivalency across human and animal injustices (Pellow 2014) as well as in the under-acknowledged agency of animals in protesting, breaking free, or even liberating other animals (Hribal 2013). Nevertheless, we argue that it is also grounded in the political literature’s stretching of the boundaries around what constitutes an act of resistance/liberation (Hollander & Einwohner 2004), thus inviting examples of animal liberations in which humans and non-human animals are both active *co-participants* and animals are *co-dependents*: in interdependent liberation agency. All of this leads us to declare that partitioning the total liberation package into irreconcilable or morally non-equivalent compartmentalized struggles across different species is an unhelpful and incorrect discrimination to perpetrate today (cf. Hadley 2017). We write our essay in the intersections of social movement studies, human-animal studies and political theory, aiming to contribute to new ways of conceptualizing the rising field of radical animal rights

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activism and direct-action animal abolitionists, as well as its potential alliances on the social movement landscape.

Our essay is an entry to the growing field of political animal studies, spurred by a ‘political turn’ in animal rights (Kymlicka 2017). We focus on the question of animal rather than earth liberation for practical reasons. We assume that the conceptual problems with incorporating non-human animals into a total liberation package will also extend to incorporating plants and ecosystems into such a package, given these ostensibly all lack agency comparable to humans. However, we do not make that argument here. Instead, we are concerned specifically with evaluating the purported conceptual linkages or interconnections between the oppression and liberation of non-human and human animals. These are, after all, united in the common experience of sentience and are different only in degree and not kind (Petulla 1989).

We proceed as follows. First, we sketch the program for total liberation as it has emerged from the radical earth and animal liberation movements. Second, we narrow our focus on animal liberation in the context of the total liberation package, laying out and evaluating arguments against the conceptual interrelatedness of animal and human liberation. Third, we reevaluate the concept of total liberation in light of these criticisms.

What is Total Liberation?

The Earth Liberation Front first stated the total liberation concept in 2001 as follows:

We want to be clear that all oppression is linked, just as we are all linked, and we believe in a diversity of tactics to stop earth rape and end all domination.

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Together we can destroy this patriarchal nightmare, which is currently in the form of techno-industrial global *capitalism*.

Responding to this statement, Pellow (2014) proposes that total liberation comprises four pillars:

1. ethics of justice and anti-oppression inclusive of humans, nonhuman animals, and ecosystems;
2. anarchism;
3. anti-capitalism;
4. embrace of direct-action tactic (p. 4).

Here, we take it that 1) it is a neutral restatement concerning the linkage of all oppressions. By itself, this need not entail commitments to 2) - 4). After all, ‘an ethic of justice and anti-oppression inclusive of humans and nonhumans could, in principle, be embraced by those who accept the legitimate authority of the state and who deny capitalism is necessarily opposed to the demands of morality and justice. Nevertheless, Pellow specifically ties total liberation to anarchism and anti-capitalism. Best (2014) does the same. Both explain this tie to anarchism and anti-capitalism in light of the frustration of radical earth and animal activists with “the elitism, racism, and tactical reformism of mainstream animal rights and environmental movements” (Pellow 2014, p. 4). Indeed, to them, *mainstream* ecological and animal rights movements, like Greenpeace, “lack awareness of and commitment to anti-oppression politics” and embrace “state-centric and market oriented solutions” (Ibid), leading to their co-optation by the system and the erosion of their integrity (Johansen & Martin 2008).

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To radical animal liberationists, these insider tactics are insufficient to address the present ecological crisis or respond to the gross injustices and exploitation suffered by non-human animals. On this view, there are no effective market-oriented solutions. Markets are structured by the hierarchical state dominated by the profit-motives of powerful corporate elites. Indeed, a common theme in the total liberation literature is that representative democracy is a myth (Best 2014) and that the state and markets are ultimately unresponsive to alternative ideas and values. At most, market solutions pay lip service to ecological ideas and values, while continuing with business as usual. Consequently, deep skepticism about the state and markets motivates tying total liberation to anarchism and anti-capitalism.

What, however, about anti-capitalism and the aspiration of total liberationists to ‘destroy the *patriarchal* nightmare’ that is capitalism? Total liberation is influenced deeply by eco-feminist thought and the central role it assigns to patriarchy in explaining diverse oppressions. According to eco-feminism, patriarchy is the core not only of women’s oppression but also of animals and general nature (Adams 1993). (Gruen 2007) articulates the concept of total liberation from an eco-feminist perspective when she writes:

Women, people of color, queers, non-human animals are all thought to be lower in the hierarchy than white, heterosexual, able-bodied men. The conceptual tools and institutional structures that maintain the status of these men are employed against women and animals. Oppression of any of these groups is thus linked, and if one is opposed to sexism, racism, and heterosexism, etc. she should also oppose speciesism (p. 336).

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Here, the primary conceptual tool of patriarchy in “post-Medieval Western male psychology” (Donovan 2007, p. 65) is the idea that reason can and indeed should dominate nature. Closer to nature, women -- like non-human animals -- should thus be the objects of domination by men. However, the preeminent expression of this patriarchal male psychology of domination through reason is the efficient capitalist exploitation of the earth’s resources, including those trillions of animals harvested for human consumption each year in factory farms that are effectively an Eternal Treblinka for animals (Patterson 2002). As the ultimate expression of patriarchal domination, the institutional structures of capitalism, such as factory farms that answer only to the profit motive of elite corporations, must be destroyed rather than reformed.

It is often argued, following Galtung (1990), that animals must be liberated from such conditions because they ultimately experience violence in the same dimensions and by many of the same mechanisms of injustice as humans: direct, structural and cultural. These denote immediate harm to their physical well-being, such as slaughter, hunting and abuse; structural harms from displacement or loss of habitat following industrial development or climate change; and cultural harm on the level of societal discourses blinding us to the violence we inflict upon animals. In an example of the latter, capitalism and a commodity logic condition us on a level of language to think of pigs as ‘pork,’ calf as ‘veal,’ chicken as ‘poultry,’ and more (Adams 1993). Even if not all animals can approximate the full range of suffering from such harm as humans (a pig does not suffer psychologically if it is termed pork), they manifestly experience the effects of violence that such schemes enable. This leads scholars to declare that human and animal predicaments

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under capitalism are comparable in terms of harm and that liberation for both is required.

What about Pellow's fourth pillar, direct action? Why should total liberation be tied to this as opposed, say, to civil disobedience or armed rebellion against the state and the capitalist mode of production? Earth and animal liberationists are willing to engage in direct acts of trespass, theft, sabotage, and confrontation or intimidation, but they repudiate *physical violence against persons* (Pellow 2014). Unlike nonviolent civil disobedience, they do not affirm the legitimacy of the state principle of the rule of law (Rawls 1971). Unlike armed rebels, they do not seek the replacement of one form of the state with another. To this extent, their goal is to create a better world, but *not through reforming or replacing* the state. They take direct action to do the right thing when the state fails to deliver justice.

This explains the strikingly *negative* orientation of the original 2001 statement of the total liberation project. Rather than offering a future utopian blueprint (Pellow 2014; Best 2014), total liberation is, above all, a commitment to physically 'stopping' injustice and to doing so *now* through direct action, when necessary. Indeed, we shall return to this point in the third section of this paper, discussing an alternative *positive* orientation to total liberation. Having laid out the total liberation program, we turn next to criticisms of its logical coherence focusing specifically on the inclusion of animal liberation in the total liberation package.

Arguments against including Animals in a Total Liberation Package

Not all arguments against including animal liberation in the total liberation package are concerned with the question of logical or conceptual coherence. Indeed, some arguments are pragmatic. For example, time and resources devoted to animal liberation come at the expense of time and resources devoted to human liberation – say, the struggles against racism or sexism. Likewise, championing the cause of animal liberation will diminish the currency of justice, eroding the seriousness with which human injustices are treated (Arluke 2002). There is also a substantial body of scholarship and movement observations that critique the relatively privileged socioeconomic status of many animal rights activists—who are overwhelmingly white middle-class—as compared to human liberationists who come from diverse backgrounds (Emel & Wolch 1998, Guither 1998).

That said, however, we address not empirical but rather conceptual arguments concerning the coherence of including animals in a total liberation package from the perspective of both the non-anarchist left and mainstream and bourgeois political thought. We divide our discussion into three categories. These concern (1) the status of animal liberation with a project of opposing the systemic interconnectedness of oppression; (2) the purported absence of logical connections between the oppression of animals and of humans based on morally significant species differences; and (3) the purported absence of logical connections between animals having rights and their being the *subjects*, as opposed to objects, of liberation.

We begin then with a basic criticism of radical animal liberationist from the non-anarchist left, challenging its status as a component of any total, anti-systemic liberation campaign.

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Indeed, we distinguish between the ‘non-anarchist’ left committed to system-replacement in 1) and 2) and mainstream or bourgeois theorists committed to system reform in 3). As anarchists, radical animal liberationists oppose both the non-anarchist left and the bourgeois mainstream.

Animal Liberation is not an Anti-systemic Movement

Given its emphasis on the interconnectedness of all oppression, total liberation might seem to be an anti-systemic movement in Wallerstein (2002)’s sense. That is, rather than a single-issue movement, it seems to address the interconnected system of oppression and exploitation: race, ethnicity, sex, gender, class, age, and species. However, critics of the animal liberation movement’s claim to solidarity with human liberation suggest that this is misleading. Appearances to the contrary, they posit that animal liberation is not part of an anti-systemic or total liberation movement, but instead remains a single-issue movement.

Indeed, according to Fotopoulos and Sargis (2006), animal liberationists resorting to direct action target “crucial political and economic institutions of the system” (2006, p.1). Nevertheless, that “does not by itself render this single-issue movement into an anti-systemic one” (Ibid). Indeed, animal liberation is not anti-systemic unless it aims to become an organic part of “a universal project to *replace the present system*” (Ibid; our italics), in light of some utopian blueprint. As we have seen, however, earth and animal liberationists claiming to function as part of a total liberation movement do not have this aim or aspiration; they rather disrupt daily practices. Indeed, animal liberation is described as a “stop-gap measure” (Liszt 1990, p.

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164) or as “cessation” (Magel 1988, p.205). Consequently, they are not genuinely *anti-systemic, total* liberationists.

What should we make of this argument? One might object that it works only by definitional fiat. If total, anti-system liberation entails replacing the present system, then animal liberationists who subscribe the Pellow’s four pillars cannot also be total liberationists. Nevertheless, it appears arbitrary to insist that total liberation must entail replacing the system rather than acting *independently* of it or sometimes with or through it. The anarchist pillar expresses deep skepticism about any state-managed system – capitalist or socialist – delivering justice. Given this anti-statist assumption, the best hope for delivering justice to the victims of interlinked oppression does not lie in replacing one state system with another. Consequently, those subscribing to the four pillars might insist they are genuinely anti-systemic because they do not merely oppose the present system, but rather *all state-managed systems*.

Absence of any Logical Connection between Animal and Human Liberation

The second line of argumentation against including animals in a total liberation package questions the coherence of treating animal and human liberation as morally equivalent. Indeed, animal liberation is motivated primarily through the idea that our present treatment of animals is based on speciesism. As for discrimination in favor of the human species over all other species, speciesism is equivalent to racism as discrimination in favor of one’s race over other races or sexism as discrimination in favor of one’s gender over the other, and so on (Horta 2010). Discrimination based on race, sex, and species thus results in *linked oppressions* insofar as they entail an equivalent moral

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error. This, of course, presupposes that discrimination violates some principle of moral equivalency applicable to the totality of linked oppressions. In this respect, animal liberationists typically appeal to a principle of equal consideration based on sentience or selfhood. Hence, different races, sexes, and different species are all entitled to equal consideration due to their equal capacities for suffering or self-consciousness (Pluhar 1988). Nevertheless, many leftist and mainstream theorists contest this claim to equal consideration.

In both cases, an appeal is made to the higher-level cognitive capacities of humans as a morally relevant *difference*. Above the level of sentience and self-consciousness, these are capabilities for linguistic communication, abstract reasoning, long-term planning, and entering into moral agreements (Scruton 2000). Indeed, these are all capabilities for *political agency* or active political participation. In other words, they are prerequisites for *participation in a liberation struggle*. Leftist critics of animal liberation assign considerable importance to distinctively human capabilities for political agency. From a leftist perspective, liberation struggles are crucial undertakings by the oppressed to liberate themselves (Fotopoulos & Sargis 2006, Staudenmaier 2003). This is not to say that dissident members of an oppressor class or race do not also play a role in liberating the oppressed (Vanderheiden 2005). Nevertheless, the latter should not attempt to co-opt or direct the movement, but rather defer to the actual subjects of oppression as political agents in their own right. That, however, is impossible in the case of animal liberation, who cannot lead such movements autonomously.

On this argument, animals are never the “subjects” of a liberation movement: instead, “they can only be its objects”

(Fotopoulos and Sargis 2006, p. 4). Here, the rank impossibility of animals becoming political agents and subjects of their own liberation undermines the moral equivalency of speciesism with racism and sexism. Racist and sexist societies are examples of heteronomous societies denying the autonomy of humans based on race and sex. Indeed, to the extent that all humans possess capabilities for autonomy and political agency regardless of race and sex, these are heteronomous societies that could be autonomous or liberated societies. However, the same cannot be said about a purportedly ‘speciesist’ society. Animals necessarily remain heteronomous in their relations to us: these are not heteronomous relations that could be autonomous. Consequently, speciesism is not morally equivalent to racism and sexism. The political order of society is *necessarily anthropocentric*, but that does not mean animals are therefore the subject of an arbitrary bias or prejudice on the part of humans. This is not to deny that there are “legitimate reasons to abstain from eating meat or to oppose cruelty to animals” (Staudenmaier 2003). It is to assert the “incommensurability” of animal and human liberation paradigms (Ibid; Fotopoulos and Sargis 2006). Based on considerations of autonomy and political agency, the defense of anthropocentrism is also stressed by mainstream or bourgeois critics of animal liberation: while they are certainly owed kindness and even certain rights, horses cannot vote (Evans 2005, Fjellstrom 2002, Scruton 2000).

Nevertheless, these arguments do not explicitly *deny* that animals could be liberated. At most, they establish that there is no *conceptual interdependency* between animal and human liberation *at the level of political agency*. Even if they are not subjects of their own liberation as autonomous political agents, animals might still be liberated by humans from cruel treat-

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ment at the hands of other humans. In this respect, “the liberation of humans is a **precondition** for the liberation of animals,” but “not vice versa” (Fotopoulos and Sargis 2006, pp. 2-3; their emphasis). Nevertheless, the oppression and liberation of animals remain *linked* to human liberation, albeit through a relation of *dependency* rather than equality. This does not undermine the concept of total liberation from all oppressions as much as cause us to reconceive the links between animal and human liberation in terms of priority and dependency relations. This line of argument is also not unique to animals; Liszt (1990) makes the important point that liberation is a response to structural violence and that objects of structural violence – be they human or non-human – “can be persuaded to notice nothing at all” as part of this violence (p. 164). This implies that victims of oppression do not need to internalize their injustice, as someone may recognize it on their behalf, which is demonstrably the case with animal liberation.

Animal Rights and Liberation can be De-coupled

The third and final argument against including animals in the total liberation package comes from an influential argument from Cochrane (2009). This is not an argument from the non-anarchist left concerned with the priority of human over animal liberation, but rather mainstream bourgeois ethics concerned primarily with the value of autonomy for individual human persons. While he does not specifically address the total liberation program, Cochrane’s argument is potentially devastating because it purports to refute the intelligibility of ‘liberating’ non-autonomous animals. They obviously cannot be incorporated into a package of total liberation if they cannot be liberated. Cochrane’s argument proceeds by denying that rights-holders must have any complex cognitive capacities

for moral and rational agency. To this extent, he effectively de-couples having a right from individual autonomy. He then argues non-autonomous rights-holders -- including most (if not all) animals -- have no intrinsic interest in liberty and, as such, any movement or struggle for their liberation. Indeed, the concept of liberation applies *only* to autonomous agents with higher-order capacities for rationality.

Hence, it is intelligible to say that a human slave can be liberated from the condition of slavery because she can be liberated to exercise her capabilities of autonomy free from the arbitrary interference of a master. However, it is unintelligible to talk about liberating non-autonomous domesticated animals. Whether they realize it or not (Feinberg 1974) such animals have interests in remaining under the care of human owners as long as they are treated humanely. Such dependency relations under the care of humans are a distinct improvement over the suffering they would otherwise experience if they were returned to the wild and exposed to hostile nature (Cochrane 2009, Giroux 2016). In sum, according to Cochrane, animals have rights to humane treatment, but this has nothing to do with liberating them to live lives that they choose freely just like emancipated slaves or emancipated women. On the contrary, *liberty and liberation are of no interest to non-autonomous animals* as opposed to autonomous humans.

Animal and Human Liberation Realigned

We argue now for three interrelated claims: (1) that animals are agents in their own liberation; (2) that autonomy over-determines the concept of liberation such that it is meaningful to talk about liberation without autonomy; (3) that animal liberation is consistent with non-paternalistic relations of dependency on humans to help or assist in an inter-species liberation

struggle. If we are successful, then we will have made significant progress towards a coherent total animal and human total liberation package.

Regarding (1), we stress some animal rights scholars have argued that animals can be active agents in their own liberation, given they display preferences for freedom through exit signals like ‘voting with their feet’ (Hribal 2013, Meijer 2013, Warren 2011). Indeed, they contend that construing resistance in terms of a human-led political liberation misses the species-specific styles of communication that animals use to assert protest (Driessen 2014). This is noted by scholars studying plural expressions of human protest, direct action, and liberation forms. They argue there is a need to consider the full array of ‘voice’ employed by individuals, especially those with few political resources, of which animals seem a prime example (Tsai 2012). In this view, voice may be non-verbal and non-linguistic. It is enough, for example, that one’s direct action liberation speaks for itself, insofar as it emits a “silent signal that exit generates” (Warren 2011, p. 693) and that escape is very much a key strategy of resistance that has political meaning (Hardt 1992). Insofar as some concede liberty may be less important to animals than to humans, they note this cannot be an across-the-board assertion; it is true that to a dog, a condition of benevolent domination may be preferable to release, but for wild animals autonomy, liberty and sovereignty appear critical to their species flourishing (Donaldson & Kymlicka 2011, Palmer 2010).

Further, regarding intentionality, some scholars include animal liberation within the remit of ‘accidental resistance’ (cf. Kumar 2013 for this concept in the human context, Lilja *et al.* 2013). They argue that one primary determinant of an action’s

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political content is, in fact, the societal and political reception it receives from authorities, media or wider publics (Tafon & Saunders 2015). This means that the instigator is not usually the one who has the power to designate their action as a political/anarchist act of liberation; this occurs also through retrospective resolving of events (Hájek *et al.* 2014). They note that it is virtually impossible to access the presemiotic intent of resisters, thus calling for the necessary co-construction of a political meaning for the act (Vinthagen & Johansson 2013). While this should not open up an ‘everything can be resistance’ perspective, it does cast doubt on the Rawlsian prerequisite of rational autonomous political agency necessarily preceding the act. For animals, the implications are clear. They scarcely intend their exits and self-liberation to be political statements. They are not the consequences of ‘moral commitment’ (Kumar 2013). But research shows diverse animals, from apes to octopi, express clearly preferences for freedom, planning escape attempts, and even attempts to break out other animals in the enclosure.

Hence, regarding (2), we contend it is sufficient to say that acts of accidental or non-political resistance are properly self-liberation acts. To be sure, they are not preferences for autonomy *equivalent* to the preferences of oppressed slaves or women. Nevertheless, that is beside the point. As preferences for freedom, animals express desires for their own freedom from conditions they experience as unwanted and constraining; conditions from which they are agents of their liberation. To this extent, we see no compelling reason to restrict the language of liberation to actions intended as political statements and based on moral commitments. We see that as an arbitrary over-determination of what it means for an agent to free herself from a given set of unwanted conditions or circumstances. Indeed, Cochrane (2009) over-determines the concept of liberation by

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arbitrarily insisting that the agent or instigator of her own liberation must also be the societal designator of her action as a liberation action.

Still, actions alone may be insufficient to link them to the political movement of animal liberation, which entails goals that are considerably more abstract. Regarding (3), then, we suggest this is where humans' role in animal liberation appears. Not only do animal activists participate physically in the releases of animals, but they also give meaning to these acts. While often eager to escape, most animals could probably rarely orchestrate their escape attempts alone and thus rely on human-dependent agency. Equally, however, the liberation act would not be complete without the animals; human agency alone is not enough. Consequently, we argue that the action is a function of dependent or *interdependent agency*: animals and humans depend on each other for the action to be realized as a liberation. Dependent agency now represents a recurring and instructive line of argument within animal studies that opens up for new ways to understand animals' expressions, autonomy and interests (Meijer 2013). Here, human assistance is non-paternalistic to the extent that humans take their 'cue' from the animals.

Is such assistance consistent with the idea of interlocking oppressions and liberations crossing the species divide? We say it affects considerable progress in that direction: animal and human agency intertwine in a liberation act. Nevertheless, it might still be objected that we have only shown it meaningful and coherent to say that humans are participants in animal liberation, despite species differences in capabilities for autonomy. We have not shown that animals are participants in the liberation of humans. However, this is not an absurd proposition.

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Psychological research shows that “reducing the status divide between animals and humans” can help “reduce prejudice and strengthen belief in equality between human groups” (Kymlicka & Donaldson 2014, p. 120). Indeed, through our interactions with them (Wright 2017) animals can potentially help humans liberate themselves from their racism, sexism, homophobia, and so on. In other words, humans may depend on the agency of non-autonomous animals for their spiritual liberation as much as animals depend on autonomous humans – albeit for different *sorts* of liberations. This much seems particularly salient in modernity, where nature reconciliation and reconnecting with animals is increasingly championed as a cure for the ‘disease’ of modern society and the systemic shackles of oppression that many believe characterizes our industrial society (Swan 1995).

Conclusions

Our paper reviewed the philosophical arguments sounded by critics for keeping separate animal liberation and human liberation on grounds that they are morally non-equivalent and that it is incoherent to see them as fundamentally interrelated. We then engaged in arguments for keeping them together, examining the capacities of non-autonomous animals for self-liberation and reassessing the meaning of the term liberation without the over-determined requirement of autonomy. Ultimately, we found philosophical support for linking these two movements as champions of the total liberation concept.

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