

In Defense of Aristotle's Animal Politics: Trans-Species Philia and the Turn to Animals in Contemporary Political Theory

I. Introduction. Nonhuman animals have been conspicuously absent from most of the history of political theory, a history of exclusion which is commonly taken to run from Aristotle through Descartes, Kant, and Rawls. Within the last few decades, however, contemporary political theorists have begun to look at an “animal politics” beyond the human.¹ This “turn” to animals in political theory is important for the simple reason that animals have had little to no treatment in canonical political theory. I will argue, however, that some of the liberal and egalitarian currents in contemporary political theory are ill-suited to think about the ethical and political aspects of human-animal relations, and that revisiting Aristotle's animal politics provides an innovative but feasible and conceptually coherent way to think about human-animal relations.

What follows here presents the core of a dissertation chapter in progress responding to Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson's claim that we should reject the Aristotelian legacy when thinking about political theory and animals. After presenting the basic outline of their argument, I respond first by outlining the conventional understanding of Aristotle's politics, ethics, and biology and then by sketching out a sympathetic set of modifications to Aristotelian *eudaimonism* that can make sense of a “posthuman” and interspecies Aristotle, an Aristotle updated to account for the insights of different

1 While 20th century political science was also mostly quiet on the issue of animal politics, the new century and particularly the new decade bring with them a diverse range of political theories about human-animal relations: the pragmatic (McKenna and Light 2004); the citizen-oriented (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011); the liberal and interest-based (Cochrane 2012, Smith 2012); the virtue ethical (MacIntyre 1999, Nussbaum 2007, 2013) the sentientist (Garner 2005, 2013); and of course the utilitarian and deontological of Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Other approaches of note are instead Marxist, ecological, or feminist. Cochrane's *An Introduction to Animals and Political Theory* (2010) provides an overview of most of the above. See my dissertation prospectus (available at academia.edu) for more.

social and natural scientific disciplines over the intervening millennia. So updated, Aristotelian foundations for thinking about animal perspectivalism and the ethics and politics of human-animal relations should not be rejected, but instead can present a picture of human-animal relations that both shares a good deal with Kymlicka and Donaldson's approach and which can make up for some of its own shortcomings. To telescope, I will argue that cultivating virtues of interspecies friendship between unequals is preferable to the extension of liberal egalitarian citizenship rights to nonhuman animals, that we should look to *trans-species philia* in an *interspecies oikos* rather than to relations of full political justice between cocitizens.

Explaining why is the case requires a significant detour, however: an overview of the parts of the dissertation project not discussed here. For the purposes of this presentation, a central aim of the larger dissertation project is to caution political theorists against extending the liberal humanist project to nonhuman animals without first attending to insights from other disciplines which have more thoroughly engaged with and digested the “animal” and “ontological” turns, such as anthropology (about which more below) and geography (Wolch 1995, 2002).

II. Interlude: overview of dissertation project. In addition to Aristotle's animal politics and the contemporary political theory of animals, the broader dissertation project also draws on ongoing work in anthropology and semiotics on symbolism and multispecies ethnography with the overall goal of understanding how different animals live in and perceive the world, and how they relate to each other both within and between species lines. As I put it in the prospectus, it is an attempt to *come to know, respect, and live well* with other animals in the “posthuman anthropocene;” that is, in a world that is at once, on the one hand, “beyond” or “after” humanism as the exclusive normative base of our moral and ethical theorizing, and, on the other, also subject to the ever-increasing physical and biological encroachments of human impacts on the rest of of life on our planet.

The larger dissertation project is complicated, in part because of its interdisciplinarity and our inherited conceptual baggage when speaking about “animals” or even “politics,” but also because it is inquiring after some of the oldest questions in philosophy: how ethics relates both to politics and basic questions of being, becoming, and knowledge—that is, of ontology and epistemology. Again in part because of inherited beliefs about the nature of humans and other animals, we fail to accurately come to know other animals; we are led to ask the wrong questions, and we see the wrong animals as a result.

Most relevant here, and among the most pernicious of these inherited beliefs, are Cartesian human-animal and human-nature binaries. Such binaries, Val Plumwood (2012) argued, both take humans out of nature, on the one hand, and animals out of ethics, on the other.² A central normative aim of this dissertation project follows Plumwood in her call to *expand the mixed community* between humans and other animals, although I argue below that this is defensible also on Aristotelian grounds. Making sense of how this normative aim relates both to empirical findings and to politics requires a heterogeneous research agenda and literature review that is drawn not only from political theory and philosophy but also from ethology, cognitive science, and, as I will argue, aspects of dynamic systems theory and an emerging philosophy of biology called “biosemiotics.”

This mixed community needn't be emancipatory or solely protective of other animals, necessarily; by living together we live better, and living together between unequals with a spirit of friendship and cultivated dispositions of generosity and humility may require some forms of legitimate paternalism. The mixed community is coevolved and codomesticated; it requires that animals have power over us as well as power over or with us just as we have power over or with them. Specifically

2 In her words: “Human/nature dualism is a double-sided affair, destroying the bridge between the human and the non-human from both ends, as it were, for just as the essentially human is disembodied, disembedded and discontinuous from the rest of nature, so nature and animals are seen as mindless bodies, excluded from the realms of ethics and culture. Re-envisaging ourselves as ecologically embedded beings akin to , rather than superior to, other animals is a major challenge for Western culture, as is recognizing the elements of mind and culture present in animals and the non-human world. The double-sided character of human-nature dualism gives rise to two tasks that must be integrated. These are the tasks of situating human life in ecological terms and situating non-human life in ethical terms.” (Plumwood 2012, 16)

regarding the contemporary political theory of animals, however, I am skeptical that existing frameworks of human-animal relations are capable of making sense of this “mixed community.” Liberal politics concerns itself with equals, or at least with potential equals. Human-animal relations, however, are instead characterized by inequality and asymmetric power relations, relations that can turn to forms of domination all too easily, even under the guide of affectionate relations (see Tuan 1986).

Take the case of language as an illustrative case, also because it is central to Kymlicka and Donaldson's critique. Critically important for almost any account of politics, especially Aristotle's, is the fact that the human is a speech-endowed (*logon echon*) symbolic species. While human-enculturated chimps, bonobos, and African gray parrots can be trained using lexical keyboards and other methods to have access to a limited vocabulary and varying degrees of syntactical structure, none approach the explosion of abstraction afforded by full symbolic language, or of what Umberto Eco calls the encyclopaedic ways of net-like reference that it affords. At the individual level, this provides access to abilities of abstraction that allow for concept formation, mental time travel, and episodic memory. At the group level, it opens the door to a system of cultural description, representation, and ritualization that paves the way for symbolic systems and the emergence of political institutions. In Jakob von Uexküll's terminology (Uexküll 2013), language radically changes our *umwelt*, the perspectival bubbles we call our world.

In C.S. Peirce's terminology, while many animals have iconic and some indexical systems of meaning-making and communication, it is likely that only humans have access to symbolism in any robust sense of the term. To define these terms: icons, indices, and symbols operate each at an increasing level of abstraction between signifier and signified. Icons directly reference the thing signified in some aspect of their material composition. Indices do not contain the signified within themselves, but instead directly correlate to a particular signified, and symbols are only abstractly correlated with one or more meanings. Peircean semiotics is “triadic” rather than dyadic in that an

interpretant mediates between the signifier and the signified. As Terrence Deacon (1997) illustrates it: the mottling of a moth's wings are *iconic* because they directly signify "bark" to the bird that scans its environment and sees 'bark-bark-bark' instead of 'bark-not bark-bark.' The smell of smoke is *indexical* to fire for both the deer and the human in the forest. Symbols, such as those for male and female, are instead only linked to the thing referenced by some or another process of conceptual abstraction.

As a symbolic species, we thus see as humans but can imagine, and must acknowledge, other ways of seeing. Like the extinct *hominidae* and the other great apes, on the one hand, we are vision-dominant primates. Like other mammals, we have social organization and the kinds of moral emotions required to care for our comparatively few and vulnerable young. Like other multicellular animals our organismic unity is comprised of levels upon levels of intercellular communication and cooperation. And so on, at each different stage, each different punctuation, of our shared living lineage.

On the other hand, we have symbolic language, gestural flexibility, and complex social organization. A number of other animals, of course, have their own complex systems of communication, their own kinds of gestural flexibility, and their own forms of complex social organization. The other apes, for example, all have flexible shoulder, elbow, and wrist joints, like we do, and like we do, they too have large gestural repertoires. But nowhere else than in our species do these traits appear result in our kind of explosion of cumulative learning, abstraction, and robustly narrative sense of self. Orcas *do* possess some kind of culture, some intergenerational transfer of knowledge, but they don't organize and attend productions of Shakespeare. Songbirds, like cetaceans, *do* sing songs, *do* make music, and *do* in many cases change those songs in apparently spontaneous and creative ways, but they don't write Mahler symphonies or have their favorite songs digitally at hand via technological prosthesis.

It would be an arrogant hubris to take our human way of being in the world as the measure of all things. We can as little inhabit the dolphin's three-dimensional aquatic space as we can the time-

dilated space of bird song as heard by other birds or the *sped* lived reality of the hummingbird. But while we cannot *inhabit* these other perspectival worlds, we *can* imagine them, both with scientific and other forms of inquiry and with the particularly plastic cognition for which our particular kind of being allows. It would thus be *falsely* humble to deny these striking differences, just as it would be falsely humble for a star basketball player to deny his or her particular excellence. In other words, ontological humility about the perspectival worlds of other beings is perfectly compatible with a given being's proper self-worth and understanding.

Acknowledging that other animals live in these different kinds of perspectival worlds, it follows from what I am tentatively calling humility and anthropocentrism properly understood that there are things we share with all other animals and things that only we can do, but *also* things a given animal can do that we cannot. Questions of superiority and inferiority are in this way often context-dependent or should be framed in terms of familiarity or unfamiliarity instead. But on the other hand, some behavioral or cognitive repertoires simply *are* more complex or flexible than others, and as a result create a more open decision space or set of semiotic possibilities. A cockle is no doubt my “superior” when it comes to saltwater filtration, for instance, but it is also a much simpler animal than any mammal or even any vertebrate, let alone a human or another socially and gesturally complex primate. To speak in platitudes like “all animals are equal” is in this case to push the bounds of credulity beyond breaking.

While our kind of animal is a vision-dominant primate,³ such a sensorium would be as unfamiliar to many other animals as electrical or ultrasound perception are to us. This requires that we acknowledge both the relative *poverty* of the human sensorium as well as our conceptual riches. To think of how an elephant can “hear with its feet” or how an octopus can “see with its body,” to take two

3 E. O. Wilson writes in *The* (not-so-humbly titled!) *Meaning of Human Existence* that “Animals live within their own slivers of continua. Below four hundred nanometers, for example, butterflies find pollen and nectar in flowers by the patterns of ultraviolet light reflected off the petals—patterns and colors unseen by us. Where we see a yellow or red blossom, the insect sees an array of spots and concentric circles in light and dark.”

examples, confounds our common-sense human way of being in the world. But if we wish to build bridges between the worlds of humans and animals, we are required to take the effort to understand such foreign ways of being.

Take the cases of time sense and color perception. For time-sense: human time-sense is no more or less natural than that of any other animal; time as we understand it in our everyday lives is a *human* concept. Many animals, however, don't live on human time. We have to *slow down* to be on elephant time, for instance, or get “cranked” to understand Capuchin time or the musical tempo of bird song. This problematizes the very idea of a “normal” time. Birds are literally hearing different songs than we are.

Like time-sense, the case of color perception requires ontological inquiry into the status of “actual things in the world.” Rather than being such an “actual thing” out in the world that corresponds to something “in here” in one's embodied perception, it may be that color is instead best described “adverbially” (see Chirimuuta 2015). That is, we can only *fully* say what it means to “see-as” a certain being, in our case a trichromat of a certain kind. This brief foray should again caution us to be ontologically humble, even as we acknowledge the explanatory power of a given framework.

This extended sketch requires not only an understanding of kinds and degrees of similarity and difference between distinct living systems, but that these properties are emergent and relationally coevolved. We not only relate to other beings like us, the humans with whom we co-constitute familial, social, and political entities, but also to the other beings with whom and which we have coevolved, such as the dog, the ear of corn or, borrowing from Michael Pollan's *Botany of Desire*, even the marijuana plant. Human nature, as Anna Tsing says, is an interspecies relationship. To live well rather than just live together with animals, we need to reevaluate our ethics and politics, *even if* only limiting our scope to the importance of animals for *human* virtue.

Turning finally to the anthropological work of a former student of Terry Deacon⁴ can help provide a way to think about how to build bridges between these diverse perspectival worlds, between what the anthropological subfield of multispecies ethnography calls familiar and unfamiliar sensoriums (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). Eduardo Kohn's *How Forests Think* suggests a language type metaphor for this purpose, 'trans-species pidgins'. Pidgins are simplified languages that develop between two groups who both speak different languages and do not have one in common. Pidgins are also distinct from languages, dialects, and creoles. Creoles, often wrongly confused with pidgins or dialects, are full languages developed by children growing up in places where two languages are common (often places where the adults communicate by pidgin) and where a complex syntax and vocabulary develops at the intersection of these two parent languages. Maybe at some point in the future one could speak meaningfully of trans-species *creoles*, then, but not yet.

This is an apt metaphor; it captures the idea that there are two worlds meeting here, and the best we can hope for is some kind of meaningful two-way communication between worlds. The two worlds, however, remain distinct and in some ways mutually unintelligible, and this is so of necessity. In special cases such as those of co-domestication in human-dog herding relationships, such pidgins can even enrich both of the worlds it touches, so long as they takes each world seriously and bridge the worlds appropriately.

III. Responding to Donaldson and Kymlicka's "Animals and Political Theory." In Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson's *Zoopolis*, they use the language of citizenship to argue for partial and modified forms of sovereign protection and immunity for "pets" or companion animals, "liminal" animals that share human habitat (such as squirrels and pigeons), and free-roaming or "wild" animals that deserve sovereign autonomy rather than the custodial citizenship granted to companion animals.

4 Of whom I am a current student—Deacon is on my dissertation committee.

While Aristotle is conspicuously absent from *Zoopolis*, in a more recent work-in-progress, “Animals in Political Theory,”⁵ they present an overview of how political theory and animal ethics have engaged with each other to date, and why a political theory of animals can help to overcome some of the limitations of each set of approaches. After outlining their argument and pointing out the many things they are doing right, this section critiques their rejection of Aristotle and what appears to be their collapse, on ethical grounds, of the political into the social.

I look at Kymlicka and Donaldson's work for two different kinds of reasons. First, because I think they are wrong to call for a rejection of Aristotelian thinking about animals, and in particular to sever the connection between politics and language. As they note, this is part of a continuing trend towards critical analysis of language and its relation to politics and animality (see Suen 2015 and the works of Eva Meijer, among others), particularly in the so-called continental tradition. While aspects of this critique are a welcome break from unthinking anthropocentrism, to sever this relation completely is to go too far. It is not by virtue of sociality that one automatically merits political justice, but it is instead because of the political kinds of beings that we are as humans that we should extend some approximation of politics to at least some human-animal relations.

But there is also a second reason for engaging with their work; compared to other works in the political theory of animals it is getting comparatively more attention by political theorists not already working in this specialized niche. This is likely true because their argument is innovative and provocative, and because Kymlicka was already well known in the field before turning his attention to animals. Whatever the reason, the prominence of their theory is evidenced both by responses from others in the field (Cochrane 2013, among others) and by an extended discussion of their book in a recent issue of the *Journal of Political Philosophy*.

Kymlicka and Donaldson begin their discussion by pointing out how absent politics is from

⁵ Intended for forthcoming publication in the *Oxford Handbook of Animal Studies* (and available on their academia.edu page, as of 3/13/2016).

animal ethics,⁶ and animal ethics from political theory. This absence, they rightly point out, is surprising, “since politics is often described as the study of the exercise of coercive power,” but makes more sense if politics is really about legitimacy and if animals can only be *used* rather than *governed* (citing Smith 2012). Kymlicka and Donaldson argue that opening up the possibility that this toolbox of specifically political concepts—such as democracy, citizenship, membership, sovereignty, the public good, and above all *justice*—can be applied to other animals, and that doing so overcomes the limitations of existing approaches in both animal ethics and political theory.

This linkage is especially helpful, they argue, in overcoming the divide between the hands-off approach of animal abolitionists, on the one hand, and what they see as the tendency in most existing relational approaches to allow for continued animal exploitation, on the other. As they put it,

[I]n the animal case, we have richly elaborated theories of universal animal rights based on intrinsic moral status, but no comparable theories of membership rights. We have good theories about what we owe to both wolves and dogs alike, in virtue of their intrinsic capacities, but few theories about what we owe specifically to dogs in virtue of the way they have been incorporated into our societies.

[. . .]

What has been largely absent is any serious attempt to explore the vast territory in-between these two extremes, a territory in which animals would be seen as co-authors of their relations with humans, whether as co-members of a shared society, in which cooperative activities would be as responsive to their interests and purposes as ours, or as members of separate societies working out the terms of peaceful co-existence with us. And it is here, above all, that political theory is valuable. Political theory is committed to a picture of society that belongs to all its members, and whose ground rules are jointly shaped by all its members, and so provides a vital resource for re-imagining our relations within and between inter-species communities.

There are many things that this approach is doing right. They are right to be skeptical of the empirical feasibility of the hands-off approach, and to instead present a *positive* program for ways that humans and animals can flourish together. This domain is, as they say, ripe for acknowledging existing domains of mutual co-creation and for imagining potential new ones. They are right to be attentive to the different meanings of different kinds of human-animal relations, and acknowledge the interesting and

6 As they put it, “the aim of most animal advocacy. . .has not been to include animals in the polis, but rather to sever political from moral status.”

important work that is being done in cognitive science, ethology, multispecies ethnography, and animal geography. And they are right to acknowledge, like Plumwood, that animals are agents in their own right, that human-animal interactions require mutuality, and that binary categories like domestic/wild are too rigid and should allow for intermediary types such as the “liminal” raccoons, pigeons, and so forth that live at the boundaries and interstices of the built human environment.

Their treatment of Aristotle, however, is problematically simplistic. They present and critique the Aristotelian legacy in politics as follows. Aristotle's view of politics, for Kymlicka and Donaldson, is “the exercise of a uniquely human capacity to deliberate collectively about the goals and purposes of government.” Their chosen model is explicitly “a decisive repudiation, even reversal, of the Aristotelian vision of politics and citizenship” and of its loosely derivative forms, such as Nussbaum's capabilities approach. This is clearest when they write that “justice requires political inclusion of all members of society, regardless of their linguistic/rational capacities.”

Some relevant passages deserve citation at length to illustrate the progression of their argument on these points and the critique they see developing in the field:

Aristotle in effect makes two claims about animals: (i) that their lack of linguistic agency excludes them from being members of a polis; (ii) that their lack of linguistic agency makes them by nature slaves, to be used for the needs of others. Contemporary animal advocates typically challenge the second claim, but leave untouched the first.

[. . .]

Aristotle may be right that animals are ineligible for political status due to their lack of linguistic agency, but he is wrong to infer that humans are therefore morally entitled to enslave animals. Animals have moral rights that are independent of political status. On this view, the animals who live amongst us will always be aliens and subjects rather than citizens, politically speaking, since they lack linguistic agency.

[. . .]

Recently, however, various authors have challenged the exclusion of animals from political theory, arguing that animals must be situated within our theories of citizenship, democracy and sovereignty. According to these authors, we need to challenge the Aristotelian legacy at a deeper level, questioning his initial premise that only humans qualify as political animals. Human-animal relations can be understood as forms of political association, and the basic concepts and categories of political theory can illuminate normative issues of human-animal relations, helping us to identify relevant

forms of injustice, and appropriate remedies for them.

[. . .]

for Aristotle, individuals deserved to be recognized as members of a political association because they possessed the capacity to participate through linguistic agency. But this is backwards. Individuals have the right to participate because they are members of society: membership is the morally primary notion, and enabling participation (insofar as possible) is one of the duties we owe to all those who are members of a shared social world.

There is a lot at work here, much of which will be addressed in the section on Aristotle below, but most important is their “reversal” of Aristotle's legacy on politics, which replaces the attributes of language and deliberation with social membership as the necessary criterion for consideration in political associations.

On these grounds, then, they say that “we need to ask what kinds of relationships [animals] want to have with us (if any), and create the circumstances for them to explore different options, express preferences, and exert meaningful control over their lives.” They summarize their argument as follows:

(1) that animals not only have intrinsic moral status but also morally significant relationships and memberships that generate distinctive rights and obligations; (2) that we cannot avoid the exercise of power by “letting them be,” but need to acknowledge the inevitability of asymmetric power and hold that power accountable; and (3) that justice requires not only reducing suffering but also supporting animal agency.

I will argue that almost all of this is in fact compatible with at least a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical reading of human-animal relations, with the exception of the focus on rights and the source of political associations.

Kymlicka and Donaldson are centrally concerned, finally, with transforming “caste hierarchies” into relationships of “full and equal membership” using the “3P model” of protection, provision, and participation.⁷ These UN Declarations were developed to provide full and equal protection for

⁷ They ask: “How do we transform caste hierarchy into relations of justice? As in human cases of caste hierarchy, justice requires recognizing the full and equal membership of subordinated groups, and citizenship is the tool we use to convert relations of caste hierarchy into relations of equal membership. Domesticated animals should be recognized as full members and co-citizens of society, sharing in the same rights to protection (basic rights to life and liberty), provision (social rights) and participation (the right to have a say in how society is structured) as human citizens.”

vulnerable human populations—children, the disabled, the elderly, and so forth—but they argue for the extension of this model to all sentient life. Focusing in on their treatment of companion animals helps to illustrate the weaknesses that can be addressed precisely, and ironically, by looking to Aristotle.

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Domesticated animals, in this reading, are “full and equal members” with “the same rights to protection...provision...and participation as human citizens.” This move is mistaken; it is because of *our* political natures that we should conceptualize other animals in political terms and account for their interests.

To justify their adoption of the “3P” model, they write that

we are already committed as a society to building new models and relations of citizenship that are inclusive of the full range of human diversity, beyond linguistic agency, and there is no conceptual obstacle to extending this commitment to our animal co-citizens as well. Models of trusteeship, interpretation, “dependent agency” and supported decision-making are being developed to promote this vision of citizenship for domesticated animals, drawing in part on comparable experiences with promoting citizenship for humans who lack linguistic agency. While not capable of propositional speech, it is important not to underestimate domesticated animals’ capacities for communication, cooperation and agency. Domestication is only possible for animals capable of entering into relations of trust, reflexive communication, and norm sensitivity with humans. We cannot have this sort of shared sociability with many animals on the planet, but we can with domesticated animals. Indeed, some of the most interesting work in animal studies in recent years has focused on this intricate web of inter-species sociability that links humans and domesticated animals. Thus, domestication not only makes the extension of cocitizenship morally necessary, but also possible.

While this passage illustrates the innovative nature of their thinking, to leap from companion animal guardianship (“petkeeping”) to “cocitizenship”—and from the inclusion of disabled or speech-impaired humans in UN Declaration to the argument that nonhuman animals should be included in the same way—is to misunderstand the distinction between the social and the political, the proper relation between

relational and intrinsic attributes, and the purpose of these declarations.

First, they appear to argue that political obligations follow immediately from the fact of social existence. This is to collapse politics into ethics, to misunderstand precisely what makes humans political animals, and to confuse the proper role of hierarchy in social versus political systems. Kymlicka and Donaldson may respond that this is just another critique of anthropomorphism, of using words like “worker, teacher, friend, parent, soldier, colleague, ally, rebel, leader, or more simply person” to describe one or another nonhuman animal, to which they respond that “If our goal is to ensure that our relations with animals are response to their subjective good, then we need concepts and categories that compel us to attend to their subjective good. And that is precisely what the concepts of citizenship and sovereignty do.”

But this is exactly the problem; politics isn't just whatever went at it to be, a tool to be used by ethics whenever convenient. Humans instead became political animals as we became symbolic animals capable of abstraction that then formed social and political institutions.⁸ Kymlicka and Donaldson instead are only making an *ethical* case for the extension of politics to animals,⁹ saying that human-animal relations are political because animals would benefit from consideration under “relations of justice” instead of “caste hierarchy.” As an ethical argument, this is a strong one, for it is true that that direct and indirect harms inflicted on humans against other animals are enormous almost beyond contemplation. But as a *political* argument it misread the kinds of power relations at play.

Second, their argument shares with other animal rights approaches too much of a focus on intrinsic rights shared by all sentient life, an approach which fails to adequately explain why we only

⁸ This idea will be developed in another proposed dissertation chapter, building centrally on the works of committee members Marcel Hénaff and Terrence Deacon. Deacon's account builds on C.S. Peirce's triadic semiotics, for which other animals have iconic and indexical forms of representation but symbolism proper is the domain of humans. For Hénaff, symbolism and recognition distinguish the political from the social bond. This occurs in pre-political societies through the public recognition of reciprocal exogamic alliances with third parties as organized by shared public rules, a process then institutionalized via systems of law.

⁹ They say, for instance, that “If progress is to be made, it seems that new strategies and new visions may be required. And since ideas of citizenship and sovereignty have galvanized powerful social justice movements around the globe, it is natural to ask whether these ideas can be deployed in defense of animals.”

have obligations to animals with whom we have the relevant relations of domestication.¹⁰ Under this understanding of ethics, in other words, it's not clear why the problem of predation, completely independent of human relations, should not present a serious moral problem of the kind that influenced Schopenhauer to become a nihilist. Because a proper discussion of this topic would require introducing a new and complicated set of works, however, this issue is bracketed here.

Third and finally, then, their use of the 3P model misreads the purpose of the relevant UN declarations. They are right, of course, to point out that “the historical exclusion of animals from politics has often gone hand-in-hand with the exclusion of humans perceived as deficient in linguistic agency.” But to use these UN Declarations as a springboard for arguing that shared sociality is a sufficient condition for political membership is to misunderstand the very purposes of the 3P model; Kymlicka and Donaldson are of course welcome to use this model for their own purposes, but the inclusion of non-speaking and other marginalized human groups in these Declarations are precisely *humanist*; in Aristotle's (pre-humanist) terminology, they are linked to the potentiality of the species *telos*.

Much more could be said both to present and critique Kymlicka and Donaldson's piece here, but given the topic of the panel it's past time to turning now to Aristotle to show that they have presented a simplistic understanding of Aristotle's concepts that fails to account for the innovative potentials of his own approach. They in fact acknowledge, importantly for the purposes of this paper, that “care ethics, ecofeminism, capability ethics, virtue ethics, [and] posthumanist ethics” all agree with some of these points, which they take to be central to the move from animal ethics to politics. But none of these approaches, they say, “believe[s] that this requires according a new political status to animals” and all as a result allow for continued domination and exploitation of other animals by humans. Turning to Aristotle helps to show why all of these claims are only partially true at best.

¹⁰ This is a larger and more complicated question in the history of animal and environmental ethics than I can get into properly here.

IV. A partial defense of Aristotle's animal politics. This section will argue that Aristotle's views on politics, ethics, biology, and metaphysics are in fact not only amenable to innovative thinking about politics between animals and humans, but that one can even think oneself to something quite similar to Kymlicka and Donaldson's proposed position. In part this is unsurprising, as they themselves acknowledge the similarities between virtue ethics and their own approach. But I will argue, first by looking at the conventional understanding of Aristotle's views on these matters and then by “updating” Aristotle to the realities of the “posthuman anthropocene,” that at least some human-animal relations should be described not through interspecies relations of political justice as such, but instead through the cultivation of virtuous interspecies dispositions of *trans-species philia* in an *interspecies oikos*.

There are, of course, limits to how far one can take Aristotle's world view and apply it today, as even a cursory look at his treatment of slavery, women, and non-citizens reveals. As some have indeed taken his views on these matters as bad enough to disqualify the value of his thinking as a whole, so Kymlicka and Donaldson take his fusion of politics and language to disqualify the value of Aristotle's animal politics or ethics.

This would be a mistake. Even without changing (or what I will call “updating”) one or another aspect of Aristotle's philosophical system, his view of the world offers a great deal of room to think about the ethics and politics of human-animal relations. I would even venture to say that his philosophical system is more amenable to thinking about these questions than is that of any major subsequent figure in the canon of Western political theory at least until the twentieth century. As I explain below, it is *not* the case for Aristotle, as it is for Kant and as it often is in common usage today, that “all politics are anthropopolitics” (as Ferguson 2014, pointing out that this fails to account for our own hominid forebears, puts it). But the most important reason this rejection would be a mistake is that the very idea of “biophilia” is an essentially Aristotelian notion; it would take the founder of a branch

of zoology out of the “Zoopolis” (for which see Leroi 2014)! Aristotle, finally, is one of the few political philosophers who looks with wonder (*thauma*) at the living world and acknowledges that different animals have their own goods particular to their own natures.

It is in this spirit that returning to Aristotle reveals a deep irony in the canonical treatment of other animals in political theory. It is a commonplace in the literature to mark the animal exclusion from politics with Aristotle’s dictum, “man is by nature a political animal” (*zoon politikon*). But focusing only on references to animals in Aristotle’s *Politics*¹¹ has led many readers astray. This is because Aristotle was looking in the *Politics* at a particular aspect of the *human* species being, the being “neither beast nor god.” He was not looking there at the essence of the animal soul, but has elsewhere done quite systematically, and what he finds there is likely to surprise anyone who views Aristotle as some kind of blinkered human chauvinist.

IV. A. Conventional exegesis: the traditional view of Aristotle's politics, ethics, and biology.

Before moving on to respond to Kymlicka and Donaldson about the Aristotelian legacy, then, I begin with a primer on some essential Aristotelian concepts and their relation to each other: purposive explanations and teleology; the “soul” (*psūchê*); the animal imagination (*phantasia*) and animal “agency;” politics; the different kinds of *philia* and their relation to living well; the nature of Aristotle’s animal perspectivalism; and the relation of *phronesis* to *sophia*. Because of what appears to be a widespread ignorance concerning Aristotle’s biological works, showing how these concepts are all interrelated—even in a “conventional” reading of Aristotle—is necessary before I can proceed to any deeper analysis or any attempt at innovative critique or reconstruction.

First, on *teleology*. In a famous passage from the *Parts of Animals* (639b12-18), Aristotle

11 Most critics (whether “pro-animal” or those dismissing animals) cite this passage from book I of the *Politics*: “after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all, at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments.” (1256b15-20)

distinguishes between the cause “*for the sake of which* the thing is formed, and the Cause to which *the beginning of the motion* is due.” Only the first, for Aristotle, is “the *logos* of the thing,” its aim; the second is its beneficiary. To know the aim, the *telos*, of a thing requires knowledge of its “enmattered form”¹² (its *hylomorphic* relation between matter and form) in its completed state, the excellence constituted by—and native to—its particular kind of thing.

And on the “soul” (*psūchē*), which Aristotle defines as “form in a body.” in *De Anima*, Aristotle's conception of “soul” is distinct from any modern—and especially any religious—conceptions thereof. For Aristotle, the “soul” of a living being “has the principle of motion and rest within itself” (412b16-17). Although any systematic engagement with Aristotle's understanding of motion, being, or universality as presented in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* is beyond the scope of this paper,¹³ taking this account of the living soul seriously itself has radically perspectival implications for how one understands “the good” for different kinds of organisms (about which more below).

This understanding of the soul is also the centerpiece of his conceptions of potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*) as they come together in his *entelekheia*. The animal “soul,” imagination or appearances (*phantasia*),¹⁴ and desire (*orexis*)¹⁵ are all ubiquitous in the animal world, and they combine to act as a source of motion. Imagination (*phantasia*) then “prepares” desire (*orexis*), and can come either from sense-perception or from thinking (*MA* 702a17-20). Most animal “action,” in this account, is grounded in appetite formed by desire (*orexis*) and imagination (*phantasia*), even by a certain kind of thinking, but not, according to the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*, by action (*praxis*) (1178b24-30) or choice (1225b-25-30) and the reasoned deliberation that comes from voice

12 Aristotle writes in *De Anima* that “matter and the process of formation must come first in time, but logically the real essence and the Form of the thing comes first. This is clear if we state the *logos* of such a process. For example, the *logos* of the process of building includes the *logos* of a house, but that of a house does not include that of the process of building.” (*DA* 646b2-6)

13 See especially *Metaphysics XII.10* and his account of *epagoge* in the *Physics* (at 184a), in which “the universal resides within the material confines of the individual sense data.”

14 Nussbaum discusses *phantasia* at length in both *Aristotle's de Motu Animalium* and *The Fragility of Goodness* (see the next section, below).

15 An Aristotelian neologism, as Nussbaum discusses at length in *The Fragility of Goodness* (275).

(*phônê*) (420b26-30).

This begins to clarify why Aristotle is commonly understood to view appetite as common to all life, perception (understood here as bound up with imagination and desire in their relation to sense-perception) as common to all animals, and rationality as common to the human animal (414b). The human animal has the same perceptual faculties as other animals, but it also has the conceptual faculties and the theoretical (*theoria*) and practical (*phronesis*) wisdom afforded by speech (*logos*, or articulate voice) where other animals only have sound (*psophos*) or voice (*phônê*, or a meaningful sound created by some animal with imagination).¹⁶ There are thus three kinds of soul in Aristotle's account: the vegetative, the animal, and the intellective.

Animals can be classified, for Aristotle, either by their “manner of life, their activities, their dispositions, [or] their parts.” (*HA* 1.1, 487a10, via Pellegrin 2015) Some animals are gregarious, some are solitary (*monadika*), and some are “dualizers” that partake of both manners of life (488a1). Social animals “have some one common activity,” and include “man, bees, wasps, ants, cranes (488a8-12). And in books I and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle famously distinguishes between three different ways of life: the life of pleasure, the life of political virtue (the *vita activa*), and the life of contemplation (the *vita contemplativa*). (An aside before moving on: even if only the life of pleasure and pain is available to other animals, as most reasonable readings of Aristotle hold, it should be noted that an account of human-animal relations structured around this view would require radical restructuring of existing relations and animal use.)

For the human animal, politics is part of our manner of life. Aristotle classifies the human as a *zoon politikon*, a political animal, and this is as much a definition of man as of politics. This is in fact what the word politics, *politikos*, means—relating to citizens (*polites*), in the city (*polis*), with a constitution (*politeia*). Politics in the *polis* views citizens as having a share in giving judgment and

¹⁶ On human speech and politics, see Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.1253a1-18. On animal sound, see again Aristotle, *De Anima*, 2.420b26-30.

exercising office, as both ruling and being ruled (1.1259b2). This is what it means to be a *zoon politikon* rather “merely” a *zoon koinonikon* (roughly, a social being) or *oikonomikon* (a household, or “economic,” being), a speech-endowed being that can deliberate on matters of good and evil, justice and injustice. Central to Aristotle's conception of politics is the idea of a common function (a *koinon ergon*), a collective activity towards joint and worthy ends (1281a2). This is the collective project through which we live well together and attain *autarkeia*, or self-sufficiency.

To provide an illustration: there is evidence that some social herd animals such as water buffaloes “vote” by orienting their bodies towards directions the group could choose to move (Conradt and List 2009). This entails the making of collective decisions for reasons, but the ends in question are straightforward (“do we go this way or that way?”) in comparison to the ends of some human kinds of votes (“do we appoint a body of disinterested retired judges to rezone our electoral districts?”) While Aristotle thinks we are thus *more* political than the other animals, at least the other social animals have something of the political insofar as they have something of collective action towards joint ends.

Also relevant¹⁷ here is what Lloyd (1996) termed Aristotle's “fuzzy natures,” in which intermediaries and “dualizers” flow between categories, a view that nuances the more traditional reading of Aristotle's conception of species (*eidos*) and genus (*genos*) fixity. Aristotle mentions the “in-between” status of the apes, between “upright” man and the quadruped mammals. He writes that “the Ape is, in form, intermediate between the two, man and quadruped, and belongs to neither, or to both.” (*MA* 690a) This is all he wrote on the topic—at least in his extant writings—but it follows from this some other animals may have at least some of the “human” faculties that result in political behaviors; or, rather, that these should be understood not as *human* faculties and thus political, but as *political* faculties in which humans participate. Thus could we begin to speak, for example, of “Bonobo

¹⁷ While interesting and worthy of further discussion, I do not engage here with the case of insects—the only social animals without the hierarchical organization that comes with “multilevel selection” and which therefore have no leader, no *hegemon*.

phronesis,” which Aristotle acknowledges, or animal *praxis*.¹⁸ which he denies.

To be fully human, however—to live well with others as the kind of animal that a human is—for Aristotle also requires *philia* (often translated either as friendship or love). *Philia* requires mutuality and independence, as well as openness and receptivity. In other words, as Martha Nussbaum glosses book VIII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it must be a two-way relation between beings each with their own separate good. While he writes in the *History of Animals* (book IX) that other animals can have relations of *philia* with each other, the best kinds of *philia* are, for Aristotle, permanent and stable relations between equals, where both members can derive benefit, pleasure, and respect (1156b6-8). In his discussion of friendship between unequals, Aristotle emphasizes that different kinds of beings merit different kinds of treatment, and indeed differential benefit, according to their type (1158b12-1159a13).

For the good, in Aristotle's cosmology, is “different for the human and the fish” (*NE*, 1141a23), and “things are called good in as many senses as they are said to exist.” (*Metaphysics*, 1096a23) Or more clearly still, also from *NI VI*, “the good is not single for all animals, but different in the case of each.” This follows from the observation that “the virtue of a thing is related to its proper function” (1139a15), and because different kinds of things have different kinds of functions. As he puts it in the opening epigram, his “invitation to biology” from the *Parts of Animals*, “inherent in each of [the less elevated animals] there is something natural and beautiful . . . The purpose for which each has come together or come into being, deserves its place among what is beautiful.”

With this framework established, we can begin to understand how a view of anthropocentrism amenable to taking animals seriously coheres with Aristotle's animal perspectivalism. As he writes at the beginning of the *History of Animals*, “[p]eople judge currencies, like everything else, by what is most familiar to them; and human beings are, necessarily, the animal most familiar to us.” (491a20)

Aristotelian ethics in this way has to be anthropocentric, at least in its discussion of ethics “for

¹⁸ As distinct from *theoria* and *poiesis*—practical knowledge guiding action instead of theoretical knowledge guiding truth and poetical knowledge guiding production.

humans,” for members of our kind who perceive and interact with the world in our particular way. But if we are looking at, say, horses, the measure should be appropriate to horses: “In all cases, the measure must be the same as the things measured, so that, if horse is the measure, then it is horses that are measured and, if man is the measure, then it is men that are measured.” (*Meta. Nu*, 1088a)

What it means to be “good,” then, has to be context-relative, as does any particular kind of “virtue” or excellence (*arete*). It also has to account for human emotions and social connections, as well as our rational faculties. Hence the title of Nussbaum's early book, *The Fragility of Goodness*, which in humans depends for its fulfilment *both* on things 'in relation to others' (*pros heteron*) and on things 'in relation to oneself' (*pros hauton*). We are deeply vulnerable to luck and the whims of others; we are not “gods,” not self-sufficient, never truly autonomous in this world.

But neither are we “beasts,” for Aristotle. We have not only the spirited *thumos* we share with other animals, but also our rational and social natures possessing of *prohairesis*, the ability to deliberate about values;¹⁹ this is the *ergon* (work) of man, our form of “being at work” (*en-ergeia*) that contributes to our “being at completion” (*en-telecheia*), our *telos* as human animals. Without our rational nature we could not reach human excellence, a “a state of character (*hexis*) concerned with choice, lying in a mean, the mean relative to us, this being determined by a *logos*, the one by which the person of practical wisdom would determine it.” (*NE* 1106b36-7a2) But *nor* could we do so, without either our animal or our social natures, the appetitive and other-directed aspects of our being without which we would be neither animals nor have any need of justice.

19 Garver writes that being a beast (*therion*) or god “is very different from saying that without a polis people are either masters or slaves. It is wild beasts—not the domesticated animals with which he compares slaves—and gods, not despots, who can and must naturally live outside cities. Beasts and gods are perfect exemplars of their kinds, unlike masters and slaves, who are incomplete human beings.” (Garver 2011, 21) And “While slaves lack deliberative capacity to *bouletikon*...and consequently, Aristotle says, lack full intellectual (*danoetike*) as well as moral virtue, their deficiency is not fundamentally a cognitive one. Since many animals have *thumos* but not *logos*, it is easy to assume that slaves, as intermediate between animal and people, must therefore be deficient in *logos*, but that is not the case. Slaves fail to be complete human beings, but not by reverting to some more animal nature; the slavish Asians who have *logos* and craft also conveniently lack *thumos* and therefore are willing to take orders. Praxis, doing as opposed to making, takes *thumos* as well as intelligence.” (Garver 2011, 30)

In this way Kymlicka and Donaldson are at least partially right to be skeptical of the Aristotelian legacy with relation to politics and animals. Most importantly for animal *phronesis*, agency, even possibly *sophia*, Aristotle follows up the passage from *NE* book VI above by right away asserting that “the brutes have sensation, but no share in action” (1139a20). And without this kind of activity, without *praxis*, other animals cannot partake in *eudaimonia* as Aristotle conceives of it: *praxis* in accordance with virtue or excellence (*arete*), where the highest such virtue is *theoria* (contemplation for its own sake) (*NE* 1, 1094a, 1097a-b)

Even without the exclusion of animals from *praxis* and morality—and with the caveats mentioned elsewhere about intermediary types—Aristotle's conception of politics is explicitly concerned with coming together to attain self-sufficiency and live well, to rule and be ruled, *as equals*. Too much deviation from equality and the polity turns to its corrupt types, to “a state not of free men but of slaves and masters, the former full of envy, the latter of contempt. Nothing could be farther removed from friendship or from partnership in a state.” (1295b12-27, excerpt) Only by maintaining this abstract equality can politics “continue in being to secure the *good* life,” even if it came into being “as a means of securing life itself” (1252b28, see also 1290b33-6).

This creates a challenge for conceptualizing any kind of interspecies ethics or politics on Aristotelian grounds, a challenge that Kymlicka and Donaldson say is reason enough to reject the Aristotelian legacy wholesale. But this would, again, be too hasty. To make sense of this puzzle, it helps to take a closer look at the central pillar of Aristotle's moral philosophy: *eudaimonia* and its cultivation through virtuous dispositions by those with *sophia*. Aristotle denies that other animals can be theoretically rather than practically wise—that they have *sophia* rather than *phronesis*, which for him is the most finished form of knowledge (1141a17). But then, in *NE* VI, he says this:

[I]t is extraordinary that anyone should regard political science or prudence as most important, unless man is the highest being in the world. But if what is wholesome or good is different for human beings and for fish, whereas what is white or straight is always the

same, so too everyone would mean the same by wise, but something different by prudent; for every kind of creature accepts as prudent, and will commit itself to, that which studies its good. This is why some even of the brutes are said to be prudent, that is, those that can be seen to have the ability to provide for their own survival . . . there is no one wisdom that is concerned with the good of all animals, but a different kind for each species . . . To object that man is the highest animal makes no difference; because there are other beings far more divine in nature than man, the most evident examples being those bodies of which the heaven is composed.” (1141a20-7, and 32-3)

Here he explicitly endorses a conception of animal *phronesis*, but then closes the door before *sophia*, before *human* wisdom, while acknowledging “a different kind [of wisdom] for each species,” a practical rather than theoretical wisdom entailed in *phronesis*. And this is no small door, if only human-type “wisdom,” and not its phronetic animal variants, “produces happiness” (1144a3). And not only happiness, but even virtue and merit, or at least the highest virtue, insofar as virtue requires intelligence (1144b7-16) and the *episteme* which allows for knowledge pursued for its own sake (*theoria*) as versus the phronetic knowledge applied to content or the knowledge applied to production in *techne* (100b, in the *Posterior Analytics*, II).

But then at the end of this passage Aristotle reminds us that humans are *not* at the axiological top of the mountain in the Hellenic cosmology; the gods and heavens were, just as God and the angels would be in the Thomistic Great Chain. Again we see here hints of a proper anthropocentrism and disposition of humility properly understood, a disposition that today requires a new kind of humility and a new kind of generosity, political dispositions of restrained reciprocity between species and ethical dispositions of eudaimonistic *philia* that seek the good in all its diverse and complementary forms.

Before turning to “updating,” an additional set of methodological options exists at the boundary between what I am calling the conventional and updated understandings of Aristotle's corpus. This includes, first, to again point out that his account of politics explicitly allows for intermediaries and approximations, and second, to argue that Aristotle isn't being consistent with his own method in one or another domain, and that such inconsistency violates the principles of his own philosophy.

On the first case, he writes that

Political justice obtains between those who share a life for the satisfaction of their needs as persons free and equal, either arithmetically or proportionately. Hence in associations where these conditions are not present there is no political justice between the members, but only a sort of approximation to justice. (*NE*, 1134a26-30)

As with the “dualizers” and “fuzzy natures” above, this suggests that politics for Aristotle is not a binary category that is either on or off, but instead allows of approximations and increments. Rather than the *full* political citizenship Kymlicka and Donaldson propose, which would either leave one scratching one's head (how does my dog fulfil his political duties and obligations, exactly?) or frankly incredulous, there is no immediately apparent reason why at least some aspects of Aristotle's existing framework can't support partial or intermediary citizenship provisions for other animals.

And on the second case, one can appeal to what Monte Johnson calls Aristotle's “architectonics,”²⁰ or to the relations of subordination between his productive, practical, and theoretical sciences. Johnson argues that productive sciences are subordinate to the practical, and the practical to the theoretical, and that the domain-specificity of different kinds of sciences prohibits kind-crossing unless the same issue applies in both relevant domains. “Political science,” in this understanding, has theoretical, practical, as well as productive elements.

Under this view, it can be straightforwardly argued that one or another aspect of practical or productive science should be changed to correspond to a superordinate level, in this case a theoretical science. This is comparable, for instance, to what Frank (2015) argues with regard to Aristotle's account of slavery; that it is inconsistent and incoherent. Similar inconsistencies or misaligned architectonics may attend to his treatment of other animals, as well. And, if this is the case, they should be modified accordingly.

IV.B. Constructive hermeneutics: Aristotle in the Anthropocene? Having thus reached the limits of orthodox interpretation with regard to animals and political theory, the remainder of this

20 In “Aristotle's Architectonic Sciences,” Johnson discusses the relation between Aristotle's productive, practical and theoretical domains.

section turns from exegesis to hermeneutics, or from an interpretation of Aristotle's actual work in his own sociohistorical context to an exploratory view of what one might make of “Aristotle in the anthropocene.” This is to move from an interpretation of Aristotle that should be familiar to scholars of his work—or at least to those whose Aristotle is not limited to the *Politics* and the *Ethics*—to less charted but, for our contemporary purposes, arguably more relevant territory (see Roochnik 2013 for something comparable).

At a certain point, in any case, it becomes just silly to try to shoehorn some kind of posthuman interspecies eudaimonism into a conventional reading of Aristotle's works. Aristotle did, after all, write in the *Politics* that “a state exists for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only: if life were the object, slaves and brute animals might form a state, but they cannot, for they have no share in happiness or in a life based on choice.” (1280b35) Not very open to interpretation, this.

Whatever one's view on the ambiguities of interpretation parsed above, Aristotle clearly did draw a line—present an ontological break—between “beasts” and man.²¹ While other animals may have something of *phronesis*, the contemplative life is the highest life for Aristotle, and of all the animals only man can participate in this life (see *NE VI*). To deny this would be disingenuous, as it would be to force a selective reading of sympathetic aspects of his work with regard to interspecies ethics and politics. The emphasis at this point therefore shifts from orthodox interpretation to critical reevaluation. Such a reevaluation may upend his politics and aspects of his ethics, but I argue that it is in line both with Aristotle's empirical and naturalist spirit as well as with his own “architectonics.”

Before proceeding, it is important to point out that there are two ways to understand how interspecies politics could work in this revised framework. The first is to find ways that different animals are *themselves* political, and if so how, and the second is to say that to live well as *humans* requires the cultivation, by humans, of interspecies political virtues. What follows for the remainder of

21 And it would in fact have been very strange for him, as an Attic Greek man living when he did, to do otherwise.

this paper takes the second tack, but does not foreclose the first. Instead of relations of justice and respect for equal rights, this is to emphasize other relations that affect human virtue, such as cultivated dispositions of friendship and generosity between species—relations which for Aristotle *are* political (at least before the “between species” addendum), especially keeping in mind that the *Nicomachean Ethics* was likely intended as a something of a handbook for politicians.

To understand what such virtues of interspecies politics entail, however, we still need to think through different kinds of interspecies power relations. It is here that it makes sense to speak of *trans-species philia* in an *interspecies oikos* or the approximation to a *polis*. This is to speak, then, not of co-citizens, as Donaldson and Kymlicka would have it, and neither as slaves, but as fellow beings at the boundary between the *oikos* and the *polis*. Living together between unequals with a spirit of friendship and cultivated dispositions of generosity and humility does not constitute political relations between equals (within a *polis*) but instead some forms of legitimate paternalism (as in an *oikos*) while avoiding the domination that obtains between master and slave (as under a *domus*). As Ralph Acampora puts it,²² many kinds of human-animal relations likely ought to be structured by “cultivat[ing] an inter-species *oikos* that is not already (nor becomes) an oppressive *domus*.” (2004)

While this approach places the onus more squarely on *human* political and ethical behavior than Kymlicka and Donaldson with their emphasis on animal agency and a full citizenship that includes responsibilities as well as protections, this is ultimately where the crucial changes with regard to human-animal relations will come from in any case. Acknowledging that this is true this is simply to accept both the realities of the anthropocene and the particular affordances we have as speaking and deliberating animals; it needn't deny animals their own agency, but to the contrary recognizes the responsibility we have to enable other animals' modes of living.

A passage from Eugene Garver's *Aristotle's Politics* provides an illustrative example, albeit

²² He walks through different “modes of presencing” ourselves to, over, and with animals and defends “constructive-co-habitation” as “a mode of being *in relation to others* marked by reciprocal surrender to the dictates of intersubjectivity.”

unintentionally. Garver writes that “Aristotle teaches us [that] mastery is nothing to be proud of. It's like being proud that one is superior to one's livestock. Citizenship, with its restraining reciprocity, is more noble than mastery. Mastery is merely necessary. Mastery is a legitimate activity, it is just not a respectable way of life.” (Garver 2011, 32) For humans living today, I want to argue, recognizing animals and our particular relations to them requires us to look to “restraining reciprocity” rather than simple mastery or domination, with animals as part of our extended *oikos*, and possibly even us as part of theirs.

Turning finally to the idea of friendship between species: while Aristotle's discussion of *philia* centers on relations between humans, Aristotelis Santas (2014) presents an a potentially interesting innovation: a typology of interspecies *philia*.²³ Extending the *Nicomachean Ethics*' discussion of three types of friendship, Santas distinguishes *interspecies* friendships based on usefulness, on pleasure, and on virtue. He calls these *symbiotic*, *hedonistic*, and *kalondistic*. He takes our relation with honeybees as an example of symbiosis,²⁴ emphasizing the importance of *mutuality* for any conception of hedonistic interspecies friendship worthy of the name. On the case of “kalondistic” friendship across species, Santos describes Pelorus Jack, “a porpoise off the coast of New Zealand in the late 19th and early 20th centuries famous for having repeatedly and for many years guided sailors through the perilous waters of Cook Strait,” arguing that in such cases equality and inequality might themselves be context-specific;²⁵ the porpoise, after all, is the superior when it comes to this relationship of co-navigation, just as he or she is the superior in matters of spatiotemporal orientation in three-dimensional oceanic spaces.

23 His account is situated against environmental rather than political theory, particularly Erich Fromm and E.O. Wilson's concept of *biophilia* and its relation to deep ecology and the land ethic.

24 Particularly in regard to their role as pollinators: “as we become more and more clear on what we are receiving, it becomes more and more clear what we owe in return.” (111)

25 He writes: “One might surmise that such a case is kalondistic, that there may be here something analogous to Aristotle's virtuous friendship. One might suggest, that is, that this is *not* a relationship of *inequality*, but one of equals in which one member elects to help the other without regard for what might be offered in return; but I think that this case might also demonstrate that inequality is in fact context-bound, and never simply a matter of the fixed hierarchies or natural kinds posted by traditional philosophy.” (113)

V. Conclusion. This “new” Aristotelian conception of trans-species *philia* and perspectival *eudaimonism* acknowledges the alterity and particularity of different animal worlds but also the necessary and often necessarily hierarchical and asymmetrically organized interspecies shared worlds. It is clear from reading Kymlicka and Donaldson's “Animals in Political Theory” that this shares many of their concerns and overlaps with some of their proposed solutions, particularly with regard to the imperative to ask what different animals want and to work towards expanding shared spaces of interspecies mutuality and reciprocity.

It is also clear, however, that pronounced differences remain, and that the proposed *eudaimonistic* framework *is* more open to the continued use and even killing of particular animals in particular circumstances, as Kymlicka and Donaldson accuse. They are right to reject the master-slave domain of the *domus*, where power relations are ossified and one-way and there is little room for mutuality, reciprocity, and constructive co-creation. But the language of the *oikos*, of a legitimate paternalism where we as political humans with interspecies sensibilities try to discern what a given animal wants and how it wants to relate to us, seems better suited to speak at least to companion animal relations than the language of the polis.

But again, whether within the more conventional reading of Aristotle or without, there is room even to speak of some approximation of political relations between humans and other animals. Political implications *do* follow from an interspecies ethics, albeit not as directly as Kymlicka and Donaldson would have it; this view of human-animal relations would not only call for structural elements to check human power against animals, but also to empower animals in their relations with humans.

Thus does my beagle Rodney rule over me in some ways, and I over him in others; his separation anxiety keeps my wife and myself at home more than we would like, but our yardless and mostly sunless apartment is not as suitable to his preferences as he would like. The distinctions remain,

and they are often distinctions that Aristotle himself acknowledged. Rodney *does* appear to be more motivated by his pains and pleasures than by the *vita activa* or *contemplativa*; I suspect that if I were able to ask him what he wants and really give it to him, he would gorge himself on all that human food he smells cooking in the kitchen every day.

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