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Zoolondopolis

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Abstract

Imagine a future in which animals had fundamental rights to political participation and voting. What would our towns and cities look like? What kind of infrastructure would we need? And what kind of zodemocracy would we, animals, co-author? As counterintuitive as it might seem, sometimes what is needed is not a minimal agenda. Animal rights theorists and the animal rights movement more generally have focused for decades on abolishing the farming of animals and on one-issue campaigns such as the abolition of the animal fur trade. These are noble and important pursuits, but what if the driving force to produce meaningful change did not reside in looking at the horrors of factory farming, but rather in envisaging beautiful and joyful futures? What if what we needed was to provide imaginaries full of possibilities, opened to create new relationships and communities; futures that we might long for and might be willing to strive for? In this speculative article, I imagine a realistic and fictional zodemocracy after the devastating effects of climate change hit Earth and Earth's inhabitants with full force. The reader should imagine that the scenario portrayed in this article is situated in the 2180s and after many catastrophic events had happened. Location-wise, the article portrays different historical moments in which London, England, transitions from a human-centric polis and democracy to a zoopolis and zodemocracy.

Keywords

zodemocratic theory; animal politics; animal imaginaries; multispecies political communities; animal political philosophy

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Abstract: Imagine a future in which animals had fundamental rights to political participation and voting. What would our towns and cities look like? What kind of infrastructure would we need? And what kind of zodemocracy would we, animals, co-author? As counterintuitive as it might seem, sometimes what is needed is not a minimal agenda. Animal rights theorists and the animal rights movement more generally have focused for decades on abolishing the farming of animals and on one-issue campaigns such as the abolition of the animal fur trade. These are noble and important pursuits, but what if the driving force to produce meaningful change did not reside in looking at the horrors of factory farming, but rather in envisaging beautiful and joyful futures? What if what we needed was to provide imaginaries full of possibilities, opened to create new relationships and communities; futures that we might long for and might be willing to strive for? In this speculative article, I imagine a realistic and fictional zodemocracy after the devastating effects of climate change hit Earth and Earth's inhabitants with full force. The reader should imagine that the scenario portrayed in this article is situated in the 2180s and after many catastrophic events had happened. Location-wise, the article portrays different historical moments in which London, England, transitions from a human-centric polis and democracy to a zoopolis and zodemocracy.

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How do we move from [animals'] experience . . . and shared experiencing and start to translate that into more systemic terms, more communal terms? That's the real challenge of animal politics and doing democracy with animals.
Sue Donaldson 'Political Multispecies Communities'

Imagine a future in which animals' political agency was recognised. Imagine a future in which animals had fundamental rights to political participation and voting. What would our towns and cities look like? What kind of infrastructure would we need? And what kind of zodemocracy would we, coanimals, author?¹ It is crucial to image a future in which human and nonhuman animals flourish together. Some readers might be surprised by the latter assertion: Why should we care about such questions now if animals do not even have a fundamental legal right not to be harmed by humans? As counterintuitive as it might seem, sometimes what is needed is not a minimal agenda. Animal rights theorists and the animal rights movement more generally have focused for decades on abolishing the farming of animals and one-issue campaigns such as the abolition of the animal fur trade.² These are noble and important pursuits, but what if the driving force to produce meaningful change did not reside in looking at the horrors of factory farming, but rather in envisaging beautiful and joyful futures; what if what we needed was to provide imaginaries full of possibilities, opened to create new relationships and communities; futures that we might long for and might be willing to strive for? Animal studies literature has traditionally focused on present concerns, such as the existing violence, oppression, and exploitation experienced by nonhumans.

Authors from different traditions have provided utopic political imaginaries that seek to rupture the established ethico-political order.³ While this tendency was rare in traditional animal ethics literature, there is a growing future-oriented literature in the field of animal studies that addresses what our coanimal society, and political and legal systems should look like.⁴ This speculative article aims at making a contribution to this tendency by imagining better and more zodemocratic futures for all animals.

Hence, I offer a feasible vision of what a zodemocratic political and legal system could look like in the context of capitalism and nation-state-based liberalism. This is not to say that I endorse the precepts of our current system. However, considering the effects of climate change, the oppression experienced by human and nonhuman animals, and the failure of traditional animal rights theory in imagining feasible futures that affirm a radically different system, it seems necessary to provide imaginaries that can be implemented now. Having said that, this article is situated in opposition to colonialism (Fanon; Said; Spivak), racism (Crenshaw; Kim; Ko and Ko), and ableism (Taylor; Kittay), and seeks to open our imagination towards a future in which different ways of experiencing one's gender, body, and life are celebrated (Butler; Taylor). My intention is to draw the contours of a political and legal system 'that no longer rotate[s] around the human' (Calarco 'Thinking Through Animals' 65), that is, a system that does not assume humans' right to dominate and decide over animals' lives (Jones; Wadiwel 'The War Against Animals'). The zodemocracy I envisage here is further structured by the ecofeminist insight that human and nonhuman animals' individualities emerge through, and are constituted by, entanglements and relationships of affective dependency (Gruen 'Just Say No' 20-21).

Before continuing I would like to address an important concern that a reviewer raised. This is the question of whether this article is contradictory because it draws on transformative ideas that are inconsistent with capitalism and liberalism. First, the feminist notion of entanglement I take from Lori Gruen's work could be considered antithetical to liberalism. Second, Dinesh Wadiwel's deconstruction of capitalism demonstrates that criticising the commodification and exploitation of animals is not consistent with capitalism. So it could be argued that one cannot draw on the abovementioned theory and simultaneously operate within a liberal and capitalist framework – even if the intention is to imagine the legal, political, and structural preconditions that could enable coanimals to move beyond such frameworks. While I agree with this reading of Wadiwel and Gruen's work, I disagree with the idea that one has to choose between working within liberal and capitalist premises for strategic reasons, or drawing on the abovementioned literature.

In this article, the works of authors like Gruen and Wadiwel serve as what one might call normative poles. The reader can think of their ideas as magnetic fields that orient the imaginaries developed below towards Gruen and Wadiwel's normative, ontological, and epistemological commitments. Imagination requires a moral compass. In some respects, this article is close in its method and intent to Maneesha Deckha's recent book *Animals as Legal Beings*, which draws on the very same literature this article is grounded on, while also strategically operating within the constraints of liberalism and capitalism. Lastly, it might be worth mentioning that some nation states and international organisations currently recognise that humans are vulnerable subjects (Deckha), and that different peoples have a right to 'to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such' (UNDRIP). The point is that while justice is very likely to be unattainable under a liberal and capitalist order, it might be possible to create the structural preconditions to enable a more radical transformation. If the latter is a possibility, and I believe it is, it is imperative to draw on the works of those who have studied both the limits of our system and the entangled nature of our political existence so that we can better approximate the ideal of justice for coanimals.

Thus, to this end, I imagine a realistic and fictional zoodemocracy in a post-climate-change future. By 'post-climate-change future' I mean to say a time after the devastating effects of climate change hit Earth and Earth's inhabitants with full force. Human activities have already had a profoundly harmful impact on Earth and earthlings⁵ and will continue to do so in the coming decades: many places on Earth that are habitable for human and nonhuman animals will become uninhabitable (see for example Lustgarten), and many wild animals, domesticated animals (DAs) and humans will die due to harmful human activities (Urban).⁶ The reader should imagine that the speculative scenario portrayed in this article is situated in the 2180s and after many catastrophic events, and that it is narrated in the 2250s. Location-wise, the article portrays different historical moments in which London, England, transitions from a human-centric polis and democracy to a zoopolis and zoodemocracy. I have decided to focus on London's geography and political context because I am intimately acquainted with it.

1. Towards a Zoodemocratic England

As the harmful consequences of human activities, climate change, and industrial farming reached their peak, humans' epistemological and ontological positioning changed. For centuries many social and intellectual movements had been crying that humans were earthlings like any other animals, that we needed to assimilate this ethico-political fact, and that we should see our-selves as existing *within* nature, that is, as animal mortals who are vulnerable, dependent, and entangled.⁷ This anti-Cartesian and anti-rationalist worldview had become popular all over the world in the years post-hit.⁸ Many organisations from different countries, popularly known as animal and/or earth organisations, advocated for the immediate abolition of industrial farming, animal testing, mining, recreational activities such as hunting and fishing, and a paradigmatic shift in our transport and energy production systems.

Eventually, all countries in the world signed a treaty, the Animals and Earth Charter, that banned fossil fuel energy production systems, factory farms, and commercial fishing. Some argued that this shift had happened because it was a moral imperative, but most animal and earth organisations thought that states had been forced to radically change their policies and politics because water was scarce, an animal-based diet required up to 55% more water (Vanham et al. 2018), and the rate of extinction and wildlife loss had been staggering (Urban 571).

The signatories of the Charter were bound to use the least possible water and land uninhabited by humans for agricultural purposes and energy production. In other words, national and local governments were obliged to use spaces in cities and towns to produce energy and food. In this way, nonhuman animals were able to reclaim some of the lands that humans had colonised, and nature started a process of self-healing. In London, for example, the local assembly decided that, among other things, all the roofs of houses and blocks of flats had to be used to plant vegetables and fruit trees such as potatoes, carrots, peach trees, and so on. Further, buildings' walls had to be as covered as possible by climbing plants and trees such as runner beans, grape vines, and so on.

It became a legal duty for many citizens to farm their own buildings. In some cases, however, (for example for the most vulnerable elderly and those people with disabilities who

could not farm their buildings), the local government provided state employees. This policy had the collateral effect of strengthening communities' ties. Before the 'roofs policy' – as it was known at the time – was implemented, interactions were sporadic; but now, they cooperated and did some of the farming activities together. For many people farming was new, and so neighbours would teach and give advice to each other. This had the long-term consequence of farmers (almost all human citizens) assisting each other; and in some cases collectives of neighbours emerged and decided to farm their lands in a communal manner.

While the Animals and Earth Charter did not recognise animals' fundamental rights (such as rights to political participation and self-determination), many animal movements had advocated for the inclusion of fundamental animal rights in the charter. For instance, the England Representative Animal Office (ERAO henceforth)⁹ had long advocated for the recognition of fundamental legal rights for animals in England and campaigned for the inclusion of animal rights in the Animals and Earth Charter.

1.1. Legal Animalhood: A Shared Legal Status for All Animals

When the Animals and Earth Charter was passed, a significant number of English citizens felt uncomfortable with the legal status of both animals and humans. The great legal divide between humans (legal persons entitled with rights) and animals (legal property without any rights) that had been in place for thousands of years remained (Francione 'Animals, Property and the Law'; Wise 'Drawing the Line' 31-34). While some English citizens were anchored in the Enlightenment belief that humans are exceptionally gifted with reason, most English citizens thought that there was a pressing need to recognise the ethico-political fact that humans are animals.

In this context, academics, activists, and policy makers were commissioned by the ERAO to produce a report on how to legally recognise the fundamental rights of animals and effectively enforce the rights of nonhuman animals to political representation before political stakeholders, and governmental and inter-governmental bodies. Among other things, the report suggested that the legal status of animals should change but that, in contrast to what many legal

scholars and philosophers had suggested (Francione ‘Animals, Property and the Law’; Wise ‘Drawing the Line’; Kurki ‘A Theory of Legal Personhood’; Andrews et al. ‘Chimpanzee Rights’), it would be strategically unsound to focus on granting animals legal personhood (Deckha 92). The main reason was that legal personhood was an anthropocentric legal category because it had been historically produced in the image of a white and rational paradigmatic human person who was meant to be independent, able bodied and ‘civilised’ (Deckha 79-97).¹⁰ The concepts of the paradigmatic human person and *the* animal still structured humans’ subjectivities and society in some fundamental ways. As a matter of fact, way into the 21st century some humans with cognitive disabilities and indigenous peoples were still legally discriminated against and disallowed from voting in some countries. For example, a study from 2012 showed that out of 92 ‘democratic’ states investigated, only 16 did not place restrictions on the right to vote of people with cognitive disabilities, while the remaining 76 states restricted the right to vote in several ways (Beckman 225). In other words, 82% of the countries studied discriminated against people with cognitive disabilities because their intellectual abilities are different, that is, they are not rational like the paradigmatic human person.¹¹

Another example was found in the Australian Constitution. In 2021, section 25 of the Constitution on ‘provision as to races disqualified from voting’ stated: ‘If by the law of any State all persons of any race are disqualified from voting at elections for the more numerous House of the Parliament of the State, then . . . persons of that race resident in that State shall not be counted’. This meant, as Elisa Arcioni argued, that section 25 allowed for the racial exclusion of Aboriginal people from ‘the people’ of Australia (Arcioni 287). In the 20th century and beginning of 21st century, postcolonial authors (for example, Spivak 1988) showed that to be white and ‘civil’ was a prerequisite to be seen as a legal person under the ‘Western’ law. In a similar vein, Syl Ko (‘An Interview’) contended that colonisation required an epistemological order against which the colonised could be enslaved and displaced. At the heart of that epistemology was, what one might call, the proper white man (Mbembe ‘On the Postcolony’). By constructing a solid concept of the white civilised man, and associating humanity with whiteness, those who were not white could then be regarded as subhuman (read: animal) (Ko ‘An Interview’ 9-14).¹² Importantly, the law was not, and is not, impermeable to Ko’s nuanced

social and philosophical analysis. Hence Maneesha Deckha's perceptive question: 'how can animals be legally represented through a legal category [(read: legal personhood)] that has traditionally repelled them and constituted itself against them?' (93).

All considered, the ERAO decided to create a think tank with the aim of answering the following questions: considering that legal personhood is a strategically unsound category to recognise animals' fundamental legal rights, what should the legal status of animals be? How could it be implemented? And what should the content of the status be? The think tank concluded that the best option was to create a new legal status: 'Legal Animalhood'. Legal animalhood was a good choice, the think tank argued, because it sidestepped the cognitive (Derrida 'The Animal that Therefore I am') and legal dissonance (Gear; Deckha) that 'person-animal' caused, i.e., paradigmatic human person=legal person, animal=non-legal person, and because it captured discursively the group of beings that the category was meant to encompass: animals.¹³

On the substantive side, the think tank suggested that legal animalhood should serve the purpose of being a shared legal status for humans and animals that would recognise certain fundamental legal rights for all animals such as legal standing, a right to flourish, liberty, and not to be harmed by humans. The think tank also proposed that once legal animalhood had been established, the ERAO should form a common front with multiple pro-animal organisations and push for citizenship recognition for many animals living in towns and cities. This would entail the recognition of animals' rights to political participation and self-determination.¹⁴ They also suggested that there should be human representatives of animals whose main task would consist in listening to animals' voices so that they could be translated into concrete policies.¹⁵ Finally, the think tank proposed: 'if animals were granted citizenship status, the ERAO should consider proposing a change of cities' names.' This proposal, were it to be implemented, intended to be a symbolic act that would mark the turning point from an anthropocentric polis and democracy to a zoopolis and zodemocracy.

The ERAO’s members agreed that the proposals were sound and adopted them soon after the think tank’s conclusions were published. As the report was made public, the people of England supported both proposals (legal animalhood and citizenship for animals) so overwhelmingly that the English government decided to ask both questions on a referendum.

The questions read as follows:

BALLOT PAPER	<i>[Official Mark]</i>
Vote (x) ONLY ONCE	
Should humans and animals have the shared legal status of animalhood? ¹⁶	
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

BALLOT PAPER	[Official Mark]
Vote (x) ONLY ONCE	
Should many animals living in cities have English citizenship? ¹⁷	
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. The Birth of Zoolondopolis

As soon as the new legal status for human and nonhuman animals was passed, and animals living in cities were granted citizenship, there were many proposals to change London's transport system, name, and the implementation of animals' right to liberty and political participation. The concern with infrastructure was central: what kind of infrastructural changes were necessary to turn London into a space that accommodated the rhythms, sound thresholds and ways of living of all its coanimal citizens? While there is no space here to explain all the changes that took place in London and England, I will outline a few of them.

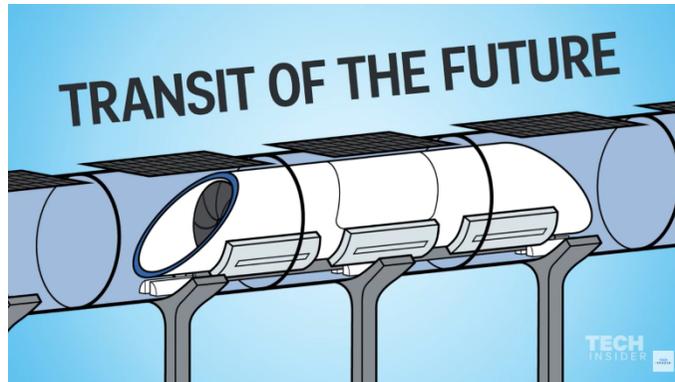
Before proceeding, however, it is worth mentioning that when London's first coanimal Assembly was formed, that is, when humans and human representatives of animals voted for the first time in a local election, a structuring piece of legislation was passed in the spirit of early 21st

century philosophers Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka's work. The preamble asserted that the intent of the following quote should lead future zoopolices:

If cars are dangerous, they [children] say, restrict the cars, not us. If the outdoors is polluted, clean it up – don't restrict our right to explore. If you're worried that crowds of urban youth will vandalize adult-oriented public spaces, then invest in spaces which respond to, and respect, our interests – don't impose curfews. A common political agenda for children and domesticated animals would not just halt the century-long ascendancy of car culture and its impact on urban design. It would re-prioritize the design of public space around creatures who like to walk, run, bike, skateboard, hop on and off public transportation, play, hang out, disrupt, and explore. It would reimagine public space, and the outdoors, as places where 'feral children' [and DAs] feel at home ... rather than feeling like barely tolerated interlopers (Donaldson and Kymlicka 'Children and Animals' 289)

This spirit was shared by a majority of English human citizens who wanted to somehow keep London's name for identity reasons while acknowledging that London was the hometown of all zoocitizens. For this reason, a referendum was called to change London's name. Of all the options, the most voted one was Zoolondopolis.

Given that animals were granted a fundamental legal right to liberty and freedom of association, one of the first laws passed in Zoolondopolis was the banning of electric cars, motorcycles, and trucks, among others. There was an interim increase in old public transport services to ensure human citizens could move freely in the city, while builders simultaneously constructed Hyperloop trains ten metres over ground level. Hyperloop trains were powered by electromagnetic motors, which substantially decreased friction, increasing speed and decreasing noise levels. Solar panels and wind turbines were the energy sources to power the trains, and tubes with a layer of acoustic insulation materials were constructed around the trains so that birds and insects were not killed by train collisions and noise did not disturb coanimals.



Retrieved from Tech Insider 2015

The aim of building Hyperloop trains ten metres over ground level was two-fold. First, all political stakeholders had unanimously agreed that enabling the agency of DAs, children, people with disabilities, and wild animals living in cities required building a landscape as easily to roam around as possible (there would be no need for wildlife overpasses or tunnels). Secondly, changing the main transport system altogether was a great opportunity to depave roads and plant all kinds of trees on the ‘roads’, enhancing further the politics of letting wildlife reclaim Earth and allow Earth to heal itself. The trees were varied: from orange and cherry trees to almond and olive trees. These kinds of trees had usually thrived in Mediterranean countries, but the increase in temperature had made the South of England an ideal country for this kind of agriculture.¹⁸

As reforms unfolded and London was transformed from an infrastructural point of view, human representatives of animals, English animal and earth organisations, council officials, and politicians considered how to enable animals’ rights to self-determination, liberty, and freedom of association. This was especially urgent because many nonhuman animals living with humans had made clear their intention to spend more time outside home. As this was a common concern in England, the discussion occurred at the national level. Many households had already installed animal doors so that nonhumans could come and go as they pleased (Kerasote ‘Merle’s Door’ 104-105). Unfortunately, some of them had got lost for days, and so a number of human representatives of animals were concerned

about moving too quickly. There were disagreements about how quickly nonhuman animals should be able to exercise fully their right to freedom of movement (Donaldson and Kymlicka 'Rethinking Membership'), but everyone agreed that all households should eventually have animal doors. All considered, Westminster passed legislation to that effect but with the qualification that doors for nonhumans should be installed in all households in a period of two years. The Secretary of State for Animals explained at a press conference that two years should be more than enough time for nonhuman animals to learn their way around their respective hometowns and neighbourhoods, and that human representatives should actively enable animals' agencies to that end, unless nonhumans made clear they preferred to spend time at home.

A journalist at the *Daily Mail* asked, however, whether it was desirable for nonhumans to have such freedom. The journalist said that self-determination and freedom could be interpreted in many ways. Children also had a right to liberty, but we adults took care of them. Similarly, it had always been humans' job to act as stewards of animals and make sure that they were safe and well taken care of. The Secretary reiterated, as this was a recurrent question those days, that while the journalist was correct to say that the hegemonic way to treat nonhumans in the modern west had traditionally been paternalistic, it was mistaken to assume that all humans had seen and treated nonhuman animals in the paternalistic way the journalist suggested. For some Indigenous people, coanimals had always been siblings.¹⁹ Further, the job of human representatives and the Government consisted in enabling nonhuman animal's agencies, and enacting animals' right to voting and to leading self-determined lives. The aim, the Secretary said, 'was not to produce a stewardship based political system. We are co-constructing a zoodemocracy. The people of this country decided that our very understanding of 'the people' had to change and that coanimals residing in the cities and towns of England should be full citizens.' Visibly heated, the Secretary concluded: 'stewardship does not only belong to a different century, it belongs to a different age'.

Many other policies were quickly implemented in Zoolondopolis, for instance: [1] it became compulsory for all windows to have a light net a few centimetres from the windows to prevent birds from crashing. Progressively, all windows were made of fritted glass;²⁰ [2] ponds

and pools were built in many local parks to deal with an increase in temperature and humidity. The policy was most welcomed by all zoocitizens who enjoyed refreshing themselves in the water and playing in it; [3] the depavement of roads entailed that animals' paws and humans' shoes were full of mud constantly.²¹ This meant that cafes and restaurants, to which animals were able to access as any other zoocitizen, got dirty quite quickly, which annoyed some humans who were struggling to get accustomed to the new coanimal way of life. The representatives of animals' association responded by suggesting that the councils build solar/rainwater outdoor shower complexes (Donaldson 'Animal Agora' 729) so that humans could clean their shoes and feet, and the animals who wished to access the cafes and restaurants could also be washed. As a result, restaurants and cafes assigned some workers to washing those nonhuman animals that were willing to access the facilities. Most animals welcomed the policy, especially in the spring and summer months, as evidenced by the fact that they started to go more often to the cafes and restaurants; and [4] as animals gained independence, some of them decided to reside in nonhuman households (such as abandoned buildings, parks, and underneath bridges). While this presented no problem in the spring and summer months, some nonhumans felt very cold in winter. For this reason, the local assembly of Zoolondopolis decided to build shelters of all kinds and sizes with heating installed. Animals welcomed the policy as they would choose intra-species and multispecies shelters of their preference (Blattner et al. 6-7), and stay in at night and in especially cold days.

3. A First Closure . . .

As human and animal zoocitizens became accustomed to living in Zoolondopolis, an ecopolitical feeling started to emerge. To explain by way of an example, a usual scene in Russell Square and Woburn Place²² was humans harvesting and farming the land, chicken sleeping in trees, cows grazing, pigeons and seagulls flying around, dogs and pigs playing and taking Hyperloop trains, and humans, pigs and dogs splashing water in the new Russell Square ponds. This way of living and existing had made coanimals living in Bloomsbury feel that they were part of a new multispecies political community (Blattner et al. 2), *and* that they were the ecology of the polis

in itself (Calarco 'The Three Ethologies'). The transformation of London into Zoolondopolis, and the new zoopractices and infrastructural changes were not only something external to coanimals' beings, these changes were not only something that had happened out there in the world, they had transformed the very beings of human and nonhuman animals. Coanimals and the city as an ecology were becoming in many ways one. Earth and coanimals seem to be somehow constituting each other: a Zooterrapolis was emerging.

At the same time, human zoocitizens had a mixture of feelings. While humans were closer than ever to their nonhuman animal siblings (Robinson), humans had got to forge friendships with coanimals that had been bred in factory farms, laboratories, and zoos. The weight of their losses, the legacy of extinction and unfathomable suffering that humans had forced animals to experience still felt overwhelming. For many humans, moral remainders persisted, that is, feelings that haunt and trouble us due to the impossibility of resolving certain moral conflicts (Slicer). The memories, feelings, and thinking of these losses blended (Gruen 'Entangled Empathy' 3). What is more, the newly established English zoodemocracy was far from a utopia, some humans broke the law and continued to dominate and oppress animals through strict training (Wadiwel 'Whipping to Win'). Others physically harmed animals, as it had happened before the Animals and Earth Charter (Wadiwel 'The War Against Animals'). The ancient sexist culture of rape (MacKinnon) had not fully gone, nor had racism (Ko and Ko 'Aphro-ism'; Ko 'An Interview') and ableism (Taylor 'Beasts of Burden'; Jenkins et al. 'Disability and Animality').

The world was still a grim place: oppressions remained, resources were scarce for all, many human and nonhuman animals had died and suffered unimaginably over the last decades, and the devastating effects of climate change and industrial farming meant that many places on Earth were uninhabitable for many animal species. There was also joy and hope, however. The fact that humans and animals are siblings, which had been apparent for centuries in Darwin's theory of evolution, indigenous ontologies (Robinson, Dunn) and ecofeminist scholarship (Kheel; Plumwood 'Feminism and the Mastery of Nature'; Haraway 'Staying with the Trouble') had been at last recognised under the law. For the first time, animals had a true say. But few were content and self-assured these days (Calarco, 'Deconstruction is not Vegetarianism' 195,

Gruen ‘Facing Death’ 133; Haraway ‘When Species Meet’ 295). Many people had learnt that disavowal was one of the worst ethico-political mistakes they could commit (Kim 20). With a mixture of hope and sorrow, humans worked with other coanimals to build a zodemocratic political system that at last seemed to be arriving.

Notes

¹ The term ‘coanimal’ attempts to capture human and nonhuman animals’ entangled existences. Whenever I use the terms ‘coanimal’, I refer to both human and nonhuman animals.

The term ‘zodemocracy’, which is inspired by Donaldson and Kymlicka’s work, refers to a paradigmatic shift in our form of governance, and the very content of who constitutes that ‘our’. Our current political and legal system is anthropocentric. This means that only humans are members of the people, ‘we’ equals humans, and for this reason humans are the sole decision-makers and the only ones who have the power, as a matter of law, to author policies and law. By contrast, a zodemocratic form of governance understands that human and nonhuman animals constitute the people, we are all equals under zodemocratic law, and have a fundamental legal right to author the law, policies, what principles govern us all, and the very meaning of zodemocracy.

² Singer ‘Animal Liberation’, Regan ‘The Case for Animal Rights’, Francione.

³ Foucault; Haraway ‘Staying with the Trouble’; Fischer and Mehnert.

⁴ Le Guin; Donaldson and Kymlicka ‘Zoopolis’, Westerlaken; Calarco ‘The Three Ethologies’; Meijer ‘When Animals Speak’; Spannring; Blattner et al.; Deckha; Donaldson, ‘Animal Agora’; Taylor and Fraser.

⁵ For instance, over the last fifty years there has been a ‘68% decrease in population sizes of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish’ (WWF 2016, 6).

⁶ 16% of species are predicted to go extinct in the coming decades if climate policies do not change dramatically (Urban 571), mass mortality events, that is events, in which more than 90% of a population dies, '[results] in the death of more than a billion individuals, or produc[es] 700 million tons of dead biomass in a single event ... are rapidly occurring' (Fey et al. 1083).

⁷ See, for example, the following insightful ecofeminist works: Kheel; Warren; Plumwood; Robinson; Adams and Gruen; Deckha.

⁸ This term refers to the years after the consequences of harmful human activities were felt the most, which includes: lack of water in many geographies – in 2021, UNICEF had already shown that 'by 2040, almost 1 in 4 children will live in areas of extremely high water stress [i.e. areas of extremely limited water resources]' (UNICEF); starvation of a vast number of nonhumans due to global warming ([Sinervo et al.](#)); and unprecedented floods that had devastating impacts on coanimals' livelihoods, as well as on ecosystems (Speight and Krupska).

⁹ The ERAO was the most popular non-governmental English organisation seeking to get fundamental rights for animals.

¹⁰ Some readers might think that Deckha's argument is unsound because idols, rivers, and especially corporations can be legal persons. Anna Grear has successfully rebutted this challenge by arguing that the so-called 'natural person' is antithetical to 'an embodied, corporeally "thick", flesh and blood human being' (237). This means that the fact that corporations can be legal persons strengthens Deckha's argument. Legal personhood is an anthropocentric category because *the* person of the law is a 'rationalistic disembodied juridical subjectivity', which is exactly what a corporation is and can be (Grear 237). See also Ngaire Naffine, 2009; 2021.

¹¹ For a nuanced discussion on difference and vulnerability, see Taylor 115, 136.

¹² See also Kim. I am indebted to reviewer one for suggesting me to develop how race and the law intersect.

¹³ Maneesha Deckha has recently proposed the category of legal beingness, and Paulina Sieminic the category of animal personhood. I propose legal animalhood instead because its purpose is

substantially different to Deckha's, i.e., Deckha seeks to substitute personhood for another ideal legal category, while legal animalhood is partly a strategic category. Further, in my view, animalhood encapsulates best the idea that animals (as opposed to non-animal beings) should have a status other than personhood and property. In Sieminic's case, for the reasons explained above, I believe that personhood is a strategically unsound category because it is, as Grear and Deckha argue, too bound to the paradigmatic human person.

¹⁴ The think tank suggested that many non-domesticated animals should be granted citizenship because they thought it was anthropocentric not to do so. The think tank questioned why, for example, DAs and wild animals who claimed an abandoned building and formed a nonhuman multispecies community of their own should not have citizenship? Coanimals from a human-animal community that led an almost independent existence from the rest of the city had citizenship, why should it be different in the nonhuman case?

¹⁵ While humans had traditionally thought of animals as voiceless, by the 2080s it was common knowledge that nonhuman animals spoke (Donaldson and Kymlicka 'Zoopolis', Meijer 'When Animals Speak', Donaldson 'Animal Agora'), that is, nonhumans have the ability to deliberate through phonetic utterances and embodied communication. This was one of the reasons that led many animals to gain rights to political participation.

¹⁶ An appendix explaining legal animalhood was added, which included fundamental legal rights to liberty, flourishing, self-determination, freedom of association, and develop as the kind of individuals and communities we are, among others.

¹⁷ An appendix explaining what species were granted what differential rights to political participation, health, security, and shelter, among others, was added. There is no space to discuss this complex subject here. While I do not agree with Donaldson and Kymlicka's view entirely, I direct the reader to *Zoopolis*, where they discuss this issue at length.

¹⁸ According to a recent study in *Nature*, it is likely that temperatures in the UK will increase up to 40°C by the year 2100 (the UK current record temperature is 38.7°C), and that temperatures over 35°C will be common (Christidis et al. 2020)

¹⁹ See, for example Robinson and Dunn. I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting I address this important issue.

²⁰ That is, a material that has ‘closely spaced dots of opaque glass fused on the outer surface [that] makes them highly visible to birds, but [humans] can still see through them’ (The Humane Society, 2021)

²¹ This did not create access issues since flying wheelchairs were already the norm those days.

²² A square and street located in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury, which is in the centre of London between the British Museum and King’s Cross.

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