

ANIMAL ABOLITIONISM: A CONCISE ANALYSIS OF THEORETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

*Abolicionismo animal: uma análise concisa de teorias e perspectivas
educacionais*

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ABSTRACT: This article provides a very succinct analysis of some of the main animal ethics theories, aiming to construct a foundation upon which an animal abolitionist education and legislation might flourish. The discussion encompasses a brief review of the concept of speciesism, its different modalities and moral unfoldings, and a critical analysis of the role of our dominant formal education in perpetuating speciesist values. Although isolated forms of education as public lectures, short courses and local events, are important ways to fight speciesism, the conclusion is that there is an urge for formal education to be abolitionist as a whole. This is the only way to promote a robust and genuine shift of paradigm and erect a foundation upon which an abolitionist legislation may prosper. Because future lawyers, attorneys and public defenders should keep law *pari passu* with new scientific evidences and new comprehensions of both justice and morality, the area of Law Studies is one of the most important targets of the present discussion.

KEYWORDS: Animal Ethics; Instrumental Rationality; Speciesism; Education; Legislation.

SUMMARY: Introduction; Speciesism: Morality And Modalities; A Kaleidoscope Of Theories To Address Speciesism: A Very Brief Analysis; Conclusion: Fighting Speciesism Through An Animal Abolitionist Education And Legislation; References.

INTRODUCTION

We live in the era of the utter commodification of life. Nature has become a mere set of instruments for the human species, an abstract and artificial nature which is the aftermath of the organization of space, society and natural resources by a single technical model used by the hegemonic actors of economics, culture, and politics (SANTOS, 1994, p. 18-32; 42-43). In this scenario – which emerged historically as an unfolding of the hegemonic scientific rationality – the size and scale of the human enterprise have grown exponentially. Environmental problems are so grim that there is currently a warning appeal to humanity, subscribed by circa 15,000 scientists (RIPPLE et al, 2017), calling on political, nongovernmental and business leaders to take action before life on Earth, as we know, attain a tipping point.

Humans have already pushed four planetary systems beyond the limit of their safe operating space. Extinction rate, which is one facet of this whole, appears as the most grave: species populations of vertebrate animals have decreased in abundance by 58% between 1970 e 2012 (WWF, 2016). Furthermore, there has been a major shift from a world dominated by wild animals to one largely composed of humans and their livestock. One study, which focuses on mammalian biomass, point to dire consequences of this deleterious shift, including alterations in biogeochemical cycling, as carbon sequestration, among others. In a holistic perspective, the consequences may be rather disastrous because of the degree of incertitude of unforeseen, intertwined events that may arise from this context (SMITH et al, 2016).

As a possible set of quick fixes for the nature's bankruptcy, market solutions are often proposed. Nevertheless, the financialization of nature pose many dilemmas (SILVERTOWN, 2015). The idea of "markets for environmental services" is only a reflection of a cultural trait that lies at the basis of the relationship we have built with nature, always underscoring its instrumental value. The historical construction of the hegemonic science and modern technology is inextricably linked, in the Western culture, to our relationship of domination of nature¹. We live in a one-dimensional prison of thought and behavior where the enslavement, the subjugation of nature, encompasses many other forms of physical, psychological, cultural and spiritual incarcerations. The search for solutions must then go well beyond the scientific and technological perspectives: we have to question the ethical and epistemological dimensions which lie at the bottom of this hegemonic paradigm.

Many are the preconceived ideas and prejudices that are solidly weaved into this paradigm. One can mention racism, sexism, misguided ideas about poverty and wealth, development, or sustainability, for instance. To the purposes of this discussion the concept of speciesism is a crucial one, especially considering that the apocalyptic picture mentioned before was very much deflagrated by one aspect of our huge ecological footprint of consumption: our speciesist diet (BRÜGGER et al, 2016).

SPECIESISM: MORALITY AND MODALITIES

The term "speciesism" was originally coined by the British psychologist Richard Ryder, in the 1970s, in an analogy to racism and sexism which are also prejudices based on morally irrelevant differences. Ryder (2005) argues that all animal species can feel pain and distress and that we should extend our concern for the pain and distress to any 'painient' creature, regardless of his or her sex, class, race, religion, nationality or species. Although moral principles and ideals like justice, freedom, equality and inherent value have been suggested, painience, to him, is the only convincing basis for attributing rights or interests to others. He also argues that value cannot exist in the absence of consciousness or potential

consciousness: “What really matters in morality is not consciousness generally but the consciousness of *pain*; and such painience, being of special evolutionary value, is highly likely to be widespread in nature. Painience is no respecter of species” (RYDER, 2011, p.40).

Ryder (2011, p.40-43) quotes eight definitions of speciesism, from philosophers (including himself) to dictionaries and analyses four dimensions of speciesism: whether it is used to describe a belief or a practice; whether the agent is said to be human or nonhuman; to relate discrimination against nonhumans or against humans; or to outline positive or negative discrimination. He questions if this term is only applicable to humans and says that sometimes speciesism is used to describe a positive discrimination, such as situations where dolphins are alleged to have rescued humans from danger while ignoring other species in peril. Notwithstanding, he inquires the appropriateness of talking of speciesism in any species other than humankind. For most purposes, he concludes, it is probably expedient to use this term as a description of negative human discrimination or exploitation against members of other species.

However, independently of the reasons or contexts where speciesism might or does in fact occur, one must bear in mind that morality isn't born in humans (BEKOFF, 2007; BALCOMBE, 2010). Assuming that there is an evolutionary *continuum* between us and other animal species, it is possible that something like a “protospeciesism” might exist in nonhuman animals. Consequently, in the absence of a total dichotomy between humans and the “rest” of the animal kingdom, as proposed by Darwin, another dichotomy becomes blurred: that of “moral agents” and “moral patients”. Words are an emblematic expression of our fragmented mode of thinking. In fact, they are much more than a mere form of expression: they lead us to the very essence of the thought that originated a specific discourse; they are inextricably linked to its cultural, ethical, and historical dimensions (BRÜGGER, 2004, p. 84). Indeed, Cassirer (1992, p.48-49) warns us that all theoretical knowledge starts within a world already shaped by language. Thus, building a new relationship between us and other animals implies thinking, feeling, acting and expressing ourselves differ-

ently about them. We often use the word “animal” to refer to non-human animals, whilst terms like “human animals” and “nonhuman animals” would be more appropriate. But even these terms express a dichotomy and reflect, as Dawkins (1998, p.107-110) states, a discontinuous way of thinking. What if, in evolutionary terms, *Homo sapiens* were classified as a third chimpanzee, as proposes Diamond (1998)? Although the ethical unfolding of this shift of regard remains unclear, it would, at least, express a *continuum* worldview between us and all other animals and between us and the biosphere.

In fact, since Charles Darwin we have known we are human animals related to all the other animals through evolution. According to Bekoff (2007, p.31-33), Darwin described more than twenty different kinds of emotions in nonhuman animals. To Darwin emotions evolved, both in animals and humans, for the purpose of strengthening social bonds and connecting us with the rest of our community and the biosphere. Darwin also believed that even animals without language are capable of reasoning. Bekoff concludes that it is possible to find the roots of our intelligence and emotions in other animals and that it is ‘bad biology’ to argue against the existence of emotions, empathy and moral behavior in animals. He cites countless studies that attest the ability of animals to experience not only elementary emotional states, but also to establish complex rules of social coexistence, and display behaviors related to mourning, honor, empathy and justice. Even in animals that we consider more distant from us, such as fish, there is evidence of their capacity to feel pain and fear, besides bearing cultural traditions (BEKOFF, 2007; BALCOMBE, 2010). To Balcombe (2010, p. p.13;16-17;29), the question today is no longer whether animals think, but what they think. It is therefore essential that we understand that animals are intelligent (and think) to the extent of their needs. Besides, nonhuman animals deal with different stimuli and “tools” like pheromones, echolocation, magnetic fields, etc. Balcombe also subscribes to the thesis that morality did not originate in humans and that the evolution of sentience was a crucial mutation that affected all animals in biological history. The area of studies on animal consciousness has also gained a major boost when a group of prestigious neuroscientists affirmed that “con-

vergent evidence indicates that all mammals, birds and other creatures – as octopuses – have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviours”².

Despite this, our world is submerged in what Ryder (2011) calls an institutionalized widespread speciesism. In this realm, “selective speciesism” is one of them. In this modality – which is a blend of the four dimensions proposed by Ryder – moral value is attributed to some species, but not to others. This is probably the most prevalent and diffused form of speciesism because its moral and cognitive incongruity find a safe place to hide in our everyday practices³. Depending on the species in question, selective speciesists see the very same treatments given to animals as good (or acceptable), or as abhorrent. Such judgments are linked to cultural perceptions and personal tastes, and not to scientific evidence about sentience, affectivity, cognition, or even position in the phylogenetic hierarchy of the animals in question. Pigs (food/statistic number) *versus* dogs and cats (family members), at least in the Western culture, fit very well in this category of speciesism. Some species, apparently, ascend to the status of holders of moral consideration without being companion animals. This is the case of the endangered ones. But the extension of some moral consideration to these animals is mainly due to their potential instrumental value as “genetic banks”, as maintainers of biodiversity as an environmental service. The unlimited instrumentalization of everything also explains what might be called “intraspecific selective speciesism”. Mutts *versus* purebreds is one typical context. Nonetheless, even these manufactured lives are not free from abandonment or ill-treatment. If they lose or do not exhibit the qualities (instrumentalities!) for which they were designed – company, hunting, guarding, etc – or if the interest from the human part ceases, for any reason, they might also be discarded as worthless objects. There are also conflicts of interest that trigger selective speciesist attitudes. Actually, selective speciesists filtrate species, breeds, situations, goals and contexts, all depending on their personal interests or the interests of a particular group. Exclusion regimes, such as Nazism, were founded on similar aberrations.

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF THEORIES TO ADDRESS SPECIESISM: A VERY BRIEF ANALYSIS

Reactions against the exploitation of animals have existed for centuries either under practical, either on theoretical grounds, in many parts of the world. From Pythagoras and Plutarch to twentieth century authors, such as Ruth Harrison, Carol Adams, Tom Regan, Peter Singer and Gary Francione, to name a few, many have raised their voices to argue that nonhuman animals are sensitive and intelligent living beings who should not be exploited or killed (BRÜGGER et al, 2016, p.301).

Ryder (2011, p. 49;56) claims that, in Europe, the eighteenth century was especially fruitful in this sense, the protests coming mainly from writers and intellectuals in the northern Protestant countries. These counterhegemonic thinkers were also the same who fought against slavery and campaigned for child protection, political reforms, etc. He affirms that in the 1960s three ethical positions were eventually developed in opposition to the prejudice of speciesism, based upon Utilitarian, Rights Theory and Painist principles⁴.

It is not the main objective of this text to discuss in depth those theoretical grounds, but it is appropriate to draw some lines on them. Tom Regan (2001, p. 04), for instance – a philosopher who inaugurates an ethics that bases the defense of animals in the category of rights – argues that there are essentially three distinct positions in the human-animal relationship: the abolitionist, the reformist, and the defense of the *status quo*. Supporters of the first, demand the end of the any form of exploitation of animals, either for food, for clothing, in laboratories, in nature, etc. Reformers only aim at improving animal treatment standards, such as larger cages, the use of anesthetics, and so on. And, finally, the defenders of the *status quo* who do not want to change anything.

Speciesism may also be addressed through Utilitarianism. When discussing 'Equality and its implications' and 'Equality for animals?', the utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer (1993) states that, in utilitarian ethics, being susceptible to suffering is the characteristic that differentiates living beings who have interests – which we should consider – from those who do not have them.

According to him, the condition of being 'sentient' is sufficient for living beings, such as animals, to be included within the sphere of equal consideration of interests. He clarifies that the principle of equal consideration of interests does not imply an extension of the same rights to all, including humans⁵. The precept of equality does not require equal treatment either, but to ignore the interests of animals is to be speciesist.

Regan (2001, p. 14-15; 17) criticizes the utilitarian view because it opens the possibility of tolerating animal suffering. This happens because, according to this theory, our duty is to develop actions that bring the best consequences to all those involved in a process. He affirms that this ethical stance allows utilitarians to come to opposing judgments by presenting opposing views about the consequences of certain acts (whether right or wrong). Utilitarians can therefore be abolitionist, reformist or defend the *status quo*, depending on how much they deem animal suffering necessary. Regan argues that the view of "animal rights" originates in Kantian thought and, to Kant⁶, what is right does not depend on the value of the consequences of a particular act, but on the appropriate and respectful treatment of the individual, in particular, of the treatment of individuals as ends and not as means. Regan therefore asserts that the view of "rights" is abolitionist because it requires the end of the exploitation of animals whether on the farm, in the laboratory or in natural environments, meaning that each animal is the subject of a life.

The Rights Theory seems the most promising theoretical ground to anchor animal abolitionism. But it should be pointed out that, although utilitarianism is dependent on specific ethical positions about animals, the moral bias present in many utilitarian reflections, as of Peter Singer's work, for instance, is strong enough to lead to abolitionist conclusions and attitudes. Furthermore, the Rights Theory also has its detractors.

Some authors of the early feminist philosophical tradition of "Care Ethics"⁷ asserted that the rights perspective was developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during the so-called age of reason and, thus, ends up reflecting its ideological rationalist roots, based on a mechanistic ontology of territorial atomism. They also argue that the ontology underlying the discourse

of rights requires a society of equal and autonomous subjects or agents, and point out that the earliest rights holders were white men with property. They claim that this perspective requires an assumption of similarity between humans and animals – which is an error or false ground – and that the rights perspective devalues, suppresses or denies emotions. This means not considering love as the largest component of the human-animal relationships.

However, the weakness of the argument based on the power of emotions lies precisely in the fact that this approach offers a more flexible and situational ethics depending on the context, just as utilitarianism, although for different reasons. We, humans, can be very poor judges of ourselves and act unfairly when we base our ethics more on emotions rather than on objective facts like evidence on animal sentience for instance. The “eat pigs” and “love cats” dichotomy is a classical illustration of this context. Many dogs and cats rescuers fit in this category, but there are also more subtle examples such as the possession of other companion animals like horses. Love and compassion are of course essential components in our relationship with nonhuman animals. But love, compassion, and even respect may hide deceptive consequences. Some feminists acknowledge this and agree that care is a necessary complement to justice: “Ethics does not demand that we eliminate personal relationships and partial affections, but it does demand that when we act we assess the moral claims of those affected by our actions independently of our feelings for them” (Peter Singer, quoted by Kheel, 1996, p.24). According to Schopenhauer (2001, p.136), compassion – a feeling quite close to love – is the effective basis of all free justice and genuine charity. The feeling of compassion should be a central element in the construction of this new relationship with nonhuman animals, but this does not mean that one should give up what is provided by reason in the form of moral teachings (TAYLOR, 1981, p.202- 203).

There is no justification to support the dichotomy between reason and emotion, or between morality and feelings. But compassion must be the feeling of those who are capable of putting themselves in someone else’s place and experience – of those who “suffer together” – not the shallow love that characterizes selective speciesists.

Some feminists condemn the idea of similarity between us and animals as proposed in the realm of the Rights Theory. But similarity may be precisely the solution, when it comes to granting rights based on equal or similar interests. What sort of argument can stand against scientific evidences on animal's capacity to suffer, both physically and psychologically, along with the abundant data on the viability of vegan diets⁸? It is hard to imagine how love or compassion could be more effective in pointing to abolitionist laws, for instance.

The idea of similarity can nevertheless pose theoretical problems in other bases of comparison. Paradoxically this can happen in the most elementary context proposed by feminists: the comparison between women and animals when oppression is the subject. Although it is a fair assumption that both women and animals are more prone to be oppressed, because of their inherent physical, biological or historical vulnerabilities, the potential capacity to respond to oppression is different when one compares animals and women. The latter belong to the species *Homo sapiens* and can therefore act as full moral agents, provided historical and social conditions are given, of course. Animals, on the other hand, will be eternally moral patients, in the classical sense, incapable of reclaiming rights or any sort of moral consideration by themselves. Female animals are more massively exploited than males because they have more "products" that are subject to spurious appropriation, such as eggs and milk. The reckless and disrespectful treatment happens in the same way, only varying the types and the brutality of the methods employed⁹. It is therefore not possible to agree with some of the feminists arguments that disqualify the Rights approach, although their theoretical contribution in many grounds has been indeed paramount.

Not only feminists criticize the Rights Theory. Ryder (2011, p.59-79) as well, argues that the basis for Regan's ethics is ill-defined. He affirms that Regan's phrases such as 'a life that fares better or worse' are perceived as lacking precision. To him, in Rights Theory there is no way to measure the importance of one right against the other. Ryder says that Painism combines the Utilitarian emphasis on pain and pleasure (and happiness) with the Rights Theory emphasis upon the separateness and inviolability of each

individual experience. He claims that secular moralities fail to address the suffering of victims and affirms that arbitrariness is one of the worrying aspects of Rights Theory, as well as the concept of duties. In the same vein as Jeremy Bentham (an utilitarian), he thinks that social contracts and rights are lofty fictions and that happiness is the ultimate objective, that morality is about helping others. For this reason, he finds that Utilitarianism is the most pertinent of all quoted moral theories, although flawed in the aspect already observed by Regan (the infliction of suffering upon a few may be justifiable to provide convenience to many). Painism, thus, avoids the adding up of pains and pleasures of separate individuals to make big totals which can theoretically lead to the justification of absurd cases such as gang-rape episodes. Nevertheless, cost-benefit analyses between individuals are still possible.

However, can cost-benefit analyses between individuals truly be exempt of rights conflicts? One problem, among others, is grading and measuring pains, sufferings, and pleasures. Ryder (2011, p. 84-86; 144) argues that Painism can be helpful where two or more rights are in conflict and argues that in many cases it is not difficult to see which rights have priority. It is interesting to highlight that he perceives the practical difficulties involving painless (and unfeared) deaths, for example. This poses a serious dilemma to his idea that it is possible to continue to raise the legal and moral status of nonhumans while still allowing some animals to be eaten and that, with proper care, rearing and slaughter can be without fear or distress of any sort. He also says that if a wild animal is killed instantaneously, without causing it any suffering or even to third parties, this wouldn't be wrong (Ryder, 2011, p.55; 87). To him, the argument that death terminates the valuable opportunities that life affords is flawed because, once dead, we are aware of nothing, let alone of missed opportunities.

This reasoning, however, is both fragile and speciesist. Were it not, this premise would be valid for humans too. Francione & Charlton (2015, p. 85; 98; 113) criticize the idea that animals have no interest in continued existence, a position radically different from that of Ryder. They say that welfarists argue that animals don't know what they lose when we kill them and that as long as we provide them a reasonably pleasant life and death, we have

discharged our moral obligations to them. It is totally arbitrary to conceive that only humanlike self-awareness counts for purposes of giving rise to an interest in continued existence, they conclude. In fact, Ryder's position encounters disagreements even in the realm of the flexible utilitarian universe. Although not being categorical about the subject, in his conclusions about taking the life of animals, Singer (1993) states that it is better to reject the slaughter of animals for food purposes, unless it is a question of survival. Singer poses important issues concerning the slaughter of animals for food, even if it were totally painless, as Ryder contends, because this is a way to perceive them as objects to be used as we please.

Consequently, and paradoxically, Painism is not a full antidote to speciesism. Although Ryder argues that one should give priority to whichever conflicting right is strongest in terms of pain-reduction, and recognizes that conflicts of rights can be sorted out with altruism and compassion, measurements of pain and the concepts of altruism and compassion can be tricky, as examined before. And, antithetically, whilst he affirms that his Painism theory is closer to Utilitarianism, he admits that the only way the happiness of minorities can be safeguarded is by the rather haphazard application of a system of rights (Ryder, 2011, p. 135;144)

In this discussion the persistently recurrent precept that animals cannot be property, defended by Gary Francione (2004), is paramount. Furthermore, the subjugation of animals into the category of property, or things, is a facet of the instrumental rationality that dominates our Western culture, as discussed previously. Along with Anna Charlton, Francione argues that to be a property means to be a thing that exists exclusively as a resource for others. This is inconsistent with having moral value. In this sense, is animal *use* and not animal *treatment* the primary problem. To them, all sentient beings have at least two interests: the interest in not suffering and the interest in not dying. Veganism is, thus, a moral imperative. Abolitionists embrace the idea that there is veganism and there is animal exploitation: no third choice is possible. They also affirm that welfare reforms and campaigns do not move animals away from the property paradigm (Francione & Charlton, 2015, p.12; 77; 41-48; 69; 94; italics in the original).

This is true in many cases, but it is unwise to adopt a manichean point of view by putting all and every so-called welfarist campaign in the same “rubbish bin” (BRÜGGER et al, 2016, p.301). One problem is that nonhuman animals do not have, before the law, the same basic rights granted to humans. Consequently, the analogy between welfare practices and ‘humane’ rape or slavery – repeated *ad nauseam* along their book – has clear limits. Although we can say that speciesism is as abhorrent as racism, rape or slavery¹⁰, these latter are already embedded in our society as morally deplorable besides being criminal practices.

However, when it comes to formal education there is, indeed, no third choice. No modality of welfarism will promote the shift of paradigm that we need. Nonetheless, Francione & Charlton fail to address the indispensable role of formal education. Although they dedicate a fairly large space to what they call nonviolent vegan education, their discussion remains mostly at the sphere of informal, incidental education, one that remains atomized in talking with neighbors, colleagues, family, friends, etc. Unless an animal abolitionist view is weaved into formal education, we won’t move the status of animals from properties to persons: from kindergartens to universities, the dominant Western formal education promote speciesism and animal exploitation openly, extensively, and proudly in practically all fields of knowledge. It should be no surprise that after 200 years of welfarism nothing has substantially changed.

CONCLUSION: FIGHTING SPECIESISM THROUGH AN ANIMAL ABOLITIONIST EDUCATION AND LEGISLATION

Education could promote a revolution of unimaginable proportions disseminating the animal abolitionist ideology. Still, schools and the mass media, especially television, play the role of reproducing and legitimizing dominant worldviews (BRÜGGER, 2004; BRÜGGER, 2018a). Speciesism is no exception to the rule. But if science has already shown that a wide range of animals are sentient beings, animated by a conscience, just like us, wouldn’t this indicate an urge for education to respect and honor these evi-

dences? The same can be argued about legislation and public policies. Wise (2004, p.29) argues that substantive judges could be a starting point because they reject the past as manacle. Law, they believe, should express a community's present sense of justice, not that of another age. Courts should keep law current with public values, prevailing understandings of justice, morality, and new scientific discoveries.

All the theories/authors examined before, even those that do not conduct to abolitionism, have in common one element: sentience. Painist beings are sentient beings (Ryder), are subjects of a life (Regan), should not be properties (Francione), should be morally considered (Singer), and are emotional beings (Ethics of Care).

In this regard, Francione & Charlton (2015, p. 87) postulate a very important idea: they claim that education should be based on moral realism. This is a position where moral facts and moral values exist as objective truths that are independent of our perception, beliefs, or attitudes about them.

Considering that animal sentience is now anchored in scientific evidence, treating them as properties, things, or resources for humans should no longer be a matter of belief or attitude because they have a value in themselves, irrespective of any instrumental value. The immediate ethical unfolding of this is that nonhuman animals should be granted with some of the few consecrated human rights that no one dares to argue against, as the right to life, liberty and freedom of movements, and the right not to be tortured, imprisoned or enslaved. This would be the end of zoos, vivisection, and animal agriculture, to quote a few instances where animals are used in our society. In spite of that, the speciesist, instrumental and anachronic relationship is encouraged and legitimized at all levels in our dominant formal education. The problem is that educational values and paradigms are not something that hover above economic, cultural and political influences and interests. This is probably the reason why even scientific education refuses to incorporate such inconvenient truths, that is, the knowledge which has emerged in its own realm.

We do have a ponderous speciesist heritage. According to Ryder (2011, p. 48-49), Aristotle and Aquinas, both of whom hugely influenced the moral development of Europe from the early Renaissance onwards, can be regarded as leaders of the cult of speciesism as, later, René Descartes who viewed animals as unfeeling machines.

Environmental education, as well as Humane education, could be promising to fight this speciesist legacy. But beyond any problems concerning their epistemological foundations, adjectives such as “environmental” or “humane” are a form of compartmentalizing Education. The latter, furthermore, carries a speciesist element: humane, from “human”, is associated with values and attitudes good *per se*. On the other hand, the pervasive traditional conservationist ethics that dominates the formal Environmental education has little or no affinity with the animal rights question. This happened because the conservationist ethos, ruled by the same instrumental rationality that spreads through all fields of knowledge in the West, was consolidated in a historical period in which studies on animal sentience were anecdotal and incipient. Today, however, the lines that divide the sentient biosphere between “us and them” become progressively blurred, reinforcing the idea of a *continuum*, an intertwined mesh of emotions. Studies that demonstrate the value of sentience and self-consciousness in animals – and their contribution concerning the evolutionary aspect – lead the question beyond the inclusion of animals in our moral community (BEKOFF, 2007; BALCOMBE, 2010; MASSON, 2014). By clarifying the amalgamation of these inherently inseparable facts, the urgency for environmental conservation to sail beyond the pragmatic question of the mere maintenance of biodiversity as an “environmental service” becomes evident. It is, indeed, a paramount challenge to consider each animal as “subject of a life”, a vision rooted in rights, when even under the impersonal category of “fauna”, as guardians of ecological functions, they receive little or no legal protection. But the time has come for ethics to be a fourth dimension of sustainability (BRÜGGER, 2018a, p.99). This new paradigm also incorporates an important dimension lost in the trajectory of modern science: the ethical one; the intrinsic value not only of life, in general, but also of each particular sentient

being.

Last but not least, let's return to the core of this debate which is the relationship between us and the other animal species. The dichotomy "persons" and "animals" is another way in which our language depicts our discontinued way of seeing the world. Fetching one of the possible etymological roots of the word "person" we encounter a quite interesting meaning: *personare*, which means "to sound through". This implies that this is not a static noun, but has its origins in movement, in a verb; and that rather than think of a person as an object – a thing – this specific etymological root points to the sound of a musical instrument being played¹¹. This is only one more aspect in which they may be considered persons¹². Recent studies even indicate that humans recognize acoustic universals in vocalizations across all classes of terrestrial vertebrates (FILIPPI et al, 2017). Wouldn't be this the roar of a fraternity? This reinforces Gordilho's thesis that animals are spiritual beings. This attorney and professor asserts that the notion of spirit has been historically used to distinguish humans from other living beings, contributing to our speciesist legacy, and argues that this dichotomy is inextricably linked to our Western tradition of exerting dominion over nature. In this rich debate, he discusses a series of inconsistencies that point to an exhaustion of this epistemological and cultural frame (GORDILHO, 2012).

Let's reverence the twenty-first century scientific and ethical "truths" through an animal abolitionist education and legislation. But we won't promote a shift of paradigm by creating isolated disciplines, or seasonal schools – as islands of another rationality – within curricula based on speciesism. Although these may serve as "uterus" from which news ideas can sprout, our formal educational system must be abolitionist as a whole. It is no longer admissible maintaining curricula where animal experimentation and the acquisition of skills that reap lives are trivialized, curricula where the suffering of animals are deprecated in terms of efficiency and mere economic growth rates, or curricula which aim at supposedly perfect diets, crystallized in hedonistic, specious, speciesist values.

NOTES

1. See, for instance, Marcuse (1968) and Santos (1994)
2. The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, 2012
3. See also Francione (2000), for the concept of “moral schizophrenia”
4. In addition to these, we can mention the ethics of care (EoC), and other feminist theories and the principle of dignity (see, for instance Bolliger, 2016).
5. Just as it does not make sense to confer the right to vote for animals, there is no point in extending to men the right to have an abortion, for instance.
6. It is worth noting that nor Kant or Darwin were precursors of the animal rights movement. See for instance: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-animal/>>; <<https://makinghistoryatmacquarie.wordpress.com/2011/11/22/animal-rights-and-19th-century-antivivisection-was-charles-darwin-the-catalyst/>>
7. See for instance, Donovan & Adams, 1996.
8. See, for instance, Craig & Mangles (2009).
9. When we contemplate the mass murder of male chicks in the egg industry, the fate of male calves in the dairy industry, or the forced extraction of semen of factory farmed mammals, it turns clear that what matters most is the extortion of nature in all its forms See Brügger, 2018b, p.12-13.
10. These abhorrent cultural traits are, nevertheless, still part of hidden curricula. For the concept of hidden curriculum see Apple (1982).
11. See <https://tosoundthru.wordpress.com/2011/11/11/personare-to-sound-through/>

12. See also Singer (1998, p. 93-118)

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