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Political Communication with Animals

Introduction. The view that non-human animals[1] cannot be political actors because they cannot speak is common in both philosophical tradition and political practice. This view seems to be false in two respects. It refers to a flawed conception of political agency and, second, it ignores the fact that animals clearly do communicate, with each other and with humans. Seeing animals as mute does not simply reflect a misunderstanding of their capacities: it is interconnected with the way humans have defined language and politics[2] and has led to rendering animals silent as a political group. In *Zoopolis*, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka develop a political theory of animal rights in which animals are seen as political actors. This is an important step forward in thinking about animals and animal rights, and it challenges how humans usually see animals and their (political) relationships with them. Donaldson and Kymlicka focus on political relationships of groups of animals to human societies and institutions and argue we should see these different groups of animals as citizens, denizens, and sovereign communities. Although Donaldson and Kymlicka describe various human-animal interactions and relationships, they do not offer a theory of political communication, which, I argue, leads to conceptual and practical problems.

In this paper I will sketch the outlines of a theory of human-animal communication, based on concepts that I borrow from Ludwig Wittgenstein's later work, in particular his notion of language-games. Viewing language as a collection of language-games is a good starting point for thinking about animal languages and shared human-animal communication because it can capture and reflect the multitude of (linguistic) interactions that exist between animals and humans. It is also a way to bring out similarities that are concealed by the fact that, usually, animals do not use human words. This theory of communication can function as a basis for thinking about political communication[3] and thus can be seen as a supplement to Donaldson and Kymlicka's theory, but it is also directed towards the next step. Through political communication with humans, animals can exercise influence on the terms and conditions of interaction, which challenges the limits of existing liberal democratic models of politics. A theory of political human-animal communication that is based on the multitude of human-animal interactions that exist can function as a starting point for thinking about new forms of democratic interaction with animals.

I begin with a discussion of Donaldson and Kymlicka's political theory, on the basis of which I argue it is necessary to think about political human-animal communication. Following this I explore how the idea of language-games can shed light on human-animal communication and animal languages, and what the implications of studying human-animal language-games are for existing concepts and for language in general. Building on the idea of human-animal language-games and conversations, I then sketch the outlines of an account of political conversations in which animals can exercise direct political agency in contact with humans, and introduce the figure of a (human or non-human animal) interpreter who can assist political human-animal communication. In the final section I discuss the limits of using a human liberal democratic framework to conceptualize political animal-human communication and political animal agency. I argue that concepts such as rights can offer a starting point for thinking about animals in democracy, but that their meaning will change when the political constellation changes, in interaction with animals. I conclude by arguing that taking animals seriously as political actors means not only that we need to study their behavior and extend existing concepts and institutions to include them, but also that we need to reconsider the meaning of these concepts and institutions and, where necessary, invent new ones in collaboration with animals.

I. Zoopolis. In political philosophy, the ability to speak is usually considered a necessary condition for being a political actor and a member of the political community. Speaking is seen as a human enterprise clearly distinct from the way other animals express themselves and use their voices. In *The Beast and the Sovereign (Volume I)*, Jacques Derrida discusses Aristotle's *Politics*, which he sees as a foundational text in the construction of this idea (347-9). In *The Politics*, Aristotle describes the connection between speaking and being a member of the political community, as he explains why it is the natural destiny of men to live in political communities:

> And so the reason is clear why man is a political being more than any others, bees or gregarious animals. As we maintain, indeed, nature does nothing in vain; now alone among animals man has speech. No doubt the sounds of the voice express pain and pleasure, and so they are found in all animals: their nature allows them only to feel pain and pleasure and to manifest them among themselves. But speech, for its part, is made to express the useful and the harmful and consequently the just and the unjust. This is, indeed, the distinctive character of mankind compared to

all the other animals: he alone perceives good and evil, the just and the unjust, and the other values; now it is the common possession of these values that makes family and city. (*The Politics*, 1253a 10-18, as cited by Derrida Vol 1: 347-8)

Aristotle distinguishes between speech, as informed by reason, and all other emissions of sound. As Derrida shows, this distinction is essential for establishing the borders of the political community. But it not only defines the borders of the political community: it also defines speech (and language). Within the definition of man as a political being, we find a definition of speech as belonging to men. Other animals can express themselves through sounds, so they are not completely mute, but they do not speak and so they are destined to be silent in political matters. Most contemporary political philosophers still think that being able to speak, in this understanding of the capacity, is necessary to be a political actor. This may be because speaking is seen as necessary for rational deliberation (Habermas), or to participate in a social contract (Rawls), or for democratic action (Rancière), and so on. Until now, political philosophy has largely been absent in thinking about other animals.[4]

Animal rights theories that argue for taking animals into account in our moral decisions and in legal frameworks have also not really focused on challenging this view of political actors and political communities. They have primarily been advanced by moral philosophers and scientists of animal behavior and cognition, and traditionally focus on intrinsic capacities of animals and their interests, and the moral status and moral rights to which these give rise (see, for example, Bekoff, Regan, Singer). Progress in these fields of study has led to a better understanding of animals and their moral rights, and to more attention for animals in public debate and legislation. It has also led, however, to a conception of animals as moral objects to be studied, instead of subjects who have their own ideas about how they want to live their lives, and to an emphasis on negative rights. According to Donaldson and Kymlicka, this has obscured the question of how to obtain (political) justice for animals. They argue political philosophy is pre-eminently appropriate to address questions about animals because it can provide the conceptual tools to translate moral insights to an institutional framework, in which concepts such as democracy and citizenship can play a key role.

With their political theory of animal rights, Donaldson and Kymlicka challenge existing ideas about political actors and political communities. They argue we should view animals as political actors and, in the case of domesticated animals, as members of democratic human-animal communities, in which humans and animals communicate.

They adopt the idea of universal negative rights for animals, as conceptualized in existing animal rights theories, and argue that negative rights, such as the rights not to be killed, tortured, or enslaved, are important. They propose to extend the idea of universal human rights to include non-human animals. However, although universal negative rights are important, they are not enough, because it is impossible to end all forms of human-animal interaction, since humans and animals are cohabitants of the same planet. Furthermore, it is unnecessary, since respectful human-animal relationships are possible and already exist. Donaldson and Kymlicka show that the lives of humans and animals are interconnected in many ways, historically, culturally, and geographically, which leads to various relationships, rights, and responsibilities on both sides. In the human situation, universal rights hold for everyone, but in addition to those humans have rights and duties towards specific others, based on their moral and political relationships. Donaldson and Kymlicka use the ways in which human communities relate to each other politically as a starting point for thinking about political relationships with animals. They argue domesticated animals should be seen as co-citizens, wild animals as sovereign communities, and liminal animals, who live amongst humans but are not domesticated, as denizens.[5] Humans have different rights and duties with regard to these groups of animals, and animals in these groups have different rights and duties towards humans.

Donaldson and Kymlicka discuss the political agency of domesticated animals in most detail and argue they are capable of exercising democratic political agency as co-citizens.[6] They distinguish three necessary features of exercising political democratic agency, which in their opinion also apply to domesticated animals: the possibility of having and expressing a subjective good, the capacity to comply with social norms through relationships, and the capacity to participate in shaping the terms of interaction (104). To further conceptualize this, they turn to recent work in disability theory (Francis and Silvers; Kittay), in particular theories that discuss how humans with severe mental disabilities can exercise agency through relationships that are based on trust, so-called "dependent agency" (104-8). Exercising dependent agency would, in the case of domesticated animals, mean that they communicate their standpoints to humans they know well and trust (and who know them well), who then communicate these to other humans. Domesticated animals also have a right to be represented politically through this form of interaction.[7] In contrast, the political acts of wild and liminal animals are directed towards keeping a distance from human communities (through acts of protest and dissent, see also Hribal, or voting with their feet). It is important to note that

because we have not yet started to see animals as citizens, denizens, or sovereign communities, the exact range and shape of the ways in which they (can) exercise political agency is unknown. We often do not know animals' capability or what they want. In engaging with them, humans therefore need to look for agency and should encourage animals to express themselves. It is unclear how relationships (in a safer world for animals) will evolve.

Communication and Institutions. Donaldson and Kymlicka's political theory of animal rights is important because it enables us to see animals differently, as political actors, and because it offers a new conceptual framework to explore questions about animals and human-animal relationships. However, although Donaldson and Kymlicka's political theory is promising, it raises questions concerning political animal agency and human-animal communication, and concerning extending human liberal democratic concepts and institutions to include other animals.

Donaldson and Kymlicka discuss communication and representation most extensively in the case of domesticated animals and argue these animals can exercise (political) agency through close relationships with humans. Although this might work well for some domesticated animals, not all of them will be able (or will want) to communicate with humans in this manner, because of bad experiences or simply because they do not like humans that much, and some animals are at risk of forming adaptive preferences. In addition, we need a theory of political communication with wild and liminal animals. Humans and non-domesticated animals share habitats, travel through each other's territories, cooperate (see Smuts 302) and have conflicts (see Palmer; Wolch); these encounters are not accidental but inherent in the fact that humans and animals share a world. Although Donaldson and Kymlicka give many examples of human-animal relationships and interactions, they do not offer a theory of political communication. If we regard animals as political actors — whether citizens, denizens or members of sovereign communities — we need to think about how they can have a voice in questions that concern them, in contact within and between communities. As Donaldson and Kymlicka repeatedly point out, animals do communicate with humans (and with each other). They are not silent, although they are often represented as such. Through communication, both humans and animals express themselves and learn about the position of the other. In addition to learning about animal languages, we therefore need to think about new, shared languages, based on existing human-animal communication. In some situations this communication will be similar to human (political) communication; in others it will be very different. Sometimes it will be

immediately clear to all parties involved; in other situations it will need interpretation and/or translation.

This is connected to questions about the translation of political animal agency and animal voices, and human-animal interactions, into political institutions. In Donaldson and Kymlicka's theory, the focus is on extending existing human liberal democratic concepts and institutions to other animals. Although they aim to provide theoretical background and do not discuss specific institutions and forms of representation in detail, in the model they sketch humans decide which institutions are just and how animals should be represented. Existing institutions and concepts can offer a starting point for thinking about a new political model, but to be able to respond to the multitude of ways in which animals exercise political agency, it also seems necessary to think about new forms of representation and new institutions. This does not merely mean humans need to develop new forms of interacting in which the animals cooperate: it means animals should take part in determining the forms and contents of these interactions. Existing interactions can provide a starting point and can function as a basis for the formation of new human-animal legal and political institutions.

In what follows I will therefore explore possibilities of shared human-animal languages and communication. I do this by extending Wittgenstein's ideas about language and in particular his notion of language-games to human-animal communication, based on existing interactions. Thinking of language as a collection of language-games is an appropriate starting point. It is flexible and does not discriminate between different types of linguistic acts. This is necessary in thinking about animals and language, because humans and other animals have so many different relationships and encounters and because animals express themselves in so many different ways. In addition, Wittgenstein's ideas about how language-games are related can shed light on similarities and relations in human-animal languages. Using the idea of language-games as a base for human-animal language works two ways. On the one hand it can clarify or explicate human-animal interactions in relation to concepts that already exist. On the other it can lay the foundations for new (interpretations of) (linguistic) encounters.

II. Language-games and Conversations. In the Philosophical Investigations (1958),[8] Wittgenstein argues we cannot give a single definition of language: there are many different ways in which we use language that are related but do not share one

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characteristic, so therefore there is no one way to describe them.[9] Instead of trying to find a definition we should describe and investigate these different uses of language, that he calls language-games. Wittgenstein does not give a clear definition of language-games. He uses the concept to refer to the most primitive forms of language, as well as to the whole of our natural language as comprised of a collection of language-games, but he also uses it to refer to simple examples of language use. Language-games are open-ended, there is always the possibility of the realization of new language-games and there are many language-games we do not even recognize as such.[10] To grasp what language is, we should study language-games, by studying the practices in which they take place.

Some language-games take place only between humans, but there are also language-games that take place between humans and other animals. This becomes clear if we look at the language-games we call "greeting." People greet each other in various ways: we can, for example, say hello, wave, nod, or write hello in an e-mail or text message. We greet strangers on the street in a different way than we greet family or neighbors or lovers. This includes the tone of our voice, gestures, facial expressions, and so on.[11] Humans also greet animals and animals greet humans. Some forms of greeting might only apply to humans, for example when computers are involved (although some non-human animals can, of course, learn to use those); others apply to humans and animals. Humans and animals can say hello, walk towards each other, touch or keep a distance, look the other in the eye or avoid eye contact. How humans and animals greet one another will depend on the animals involved and the context. Greeting rituals evolve. If a human meets a dog she knows well, greeting her or him will be different than when she meets this dog for the first time. The same is true for the dog; she will greet a human she knows well by walking or running towards her or him, wagging her tail, moving around in circles. When the human is a stranger, the dog will usually also go up to make acquaintance, but the bodily movements, sounds and facial expressions will be different. Similarly, the dog will greet new dogs in another manner than dog friends, and a cat neighbor in yet another manner.

We call the situations in which humans greet animals greeting; we also call the situations in which an animal greets a human greeting. The ways that animals greet humans can be similar to the ways that humans greet other animals, but they can also be different. However, there is no characteristic that all human language-games that we call greeting share and all human-animal language-games lack.

We can explore conversations, a group of language-games usually seen as strictly belonging to humans, in the same way. In contact between humans, some language-games can be seen as conversations. The same is true for human-animal contact. These conversations might not be exactly the same as human conversations, but they can be similar. In the human context, we have many different types of conversations with others. Humans have short conversations with their neighbors about the weather, they tell friends stories to which the friends respond, they use conversations to explain how something happened, to comfort someone, to gain new insights, and for many other reasons. Human-animal conversations also have various shapes. Humans can tell companion animals where they are going and the animals respond, animals can teach humans how they want them to behave in the house or in the park, and so on. In these conversations, oppositions between human/non-human, intentional/non-intentional and speaking/acting are not decisive. A conversation between a human and her general practitioner will be more similar to the conversation between a dog and her vet than to a conversation between two general practitioners who discuss what they had for dinner the night before. When a human visits the general practitioner, she might want to bring someone who knows her well, for support or to help with having the conversation; in the same way a human who accompanies a dog to the vet can participate in the conversation between them.

A clear example of human-animal conversations is Irene Pepperberg's conversations with African Grey Parrot Alex.[12] Parrots speak; they can pronounce human words and use them in interaction with humans, but it is often thought that parrots merely repeat words (the word "parrot" is used as a derogatory term for humans who mindlessly repeat things). Repeating words is a form of contact, a language-game, but it is not a conversation. Alex and Pepperberg show a mutual language between parrots and humans is possible, if both parties are willing to learn to understand each other. Ethologist and philosopher Vinciane Despret therefore calls Pepperberg the psychologist who managed to make parrots speak.

Even though parrots had been using human words for a long time, communication with humans had been limited to the use of a few simple words; parrots and humans have different ideas about language and this made it difficult to have meaningful conversations. For parrots (and birds in general), learning a language is strongly interconnected with acting.[13] To make a conversation with Alex possible, Pepperberg gave him control of his rewards: if he recognized objects he could either have them or

could choose another reward (for example something to eat or going outside for a walk). In this way he not only learned to recognize and describe objects, he also learned to use concepts like "same" or "different," and words to control the behavior of others, such as "come here," "go away" and "I want to go there." In learning these words and concepts, misunderstandings played an important role. Instead of trying to avoid them, Pepperberg used them as a way to create meaning between the researchers and the parrot. If Alex made a sound by accident, trying to find out what it meant could help understanding other sounds.

Despret describes Pepperberg's work as rendering capable, as enabling the animal to speak. Donna Haraway argues that this "rendering capable" is mutual:

> The result is that this parrot and this woman invented an extended conversation that has perplexed professional human linguists more than they enjoy. A specific parrot and woman talked to each other extensively in a language native to neither of them. ... These companion species rendered each other capable of situated knowledges — of situated capacities, whether or not it was in either of their natures before they learned to recognize each other. (Azeredo and Haraway 17)

In addition to the mutuality and situated character of this language, Haraway draws attention to the fact that the language these creatures speak is "native to neither of them" (17); it is new. The words that were used gained meaning in the conversation, in the space between the human and the parrot.

The conversation between Pepperberg and Alex is a clear example of a conversation because both the parrot and the human use human words. This is not always, not even often, the case in human-animal conversations, and it is not necessary for having a conversation. A shared language consists of what is made possible by mutual effort, not by one party imposing a language on the other. Human-animal communication sometimes resembles human language use, but in human-animal communication words, sounds, gestures, body language and degree of eye contact can all be important.

Another example of human-animal communication that resembles a conversation between humans can be found in the recent newspaper coverage of a chimpanzee in the Welsh Mountain Zoo who asked visitors to help to release him using sign language. A visitor of the zoo made a video of the chimpanzee, in which he asks the visitors to unlock the bolt on a door and open the window so that he can leave his cage. The

chimpanzee used sign language to communicate his request to the visitors. These signs resemble human sign language, and his question was immediately clear to the people watching him, who responded to him by making signs, to which the chimpanzee responded. Peter Dickinson, a worker at Welsh Mountain Zoo, had previously observed chimpanzees at the zoo trying to communicate with visitors: "I have watched our animals sign to visitors, asking them to carry out certain behaviors. What is more the visitors react and do exactly what they are told. If a visitor is reproached by a member of staff the excuse is always 'But the chimp asked me to do it!'" Although the chimpanzee in this example did not use human words, and the communication is less complex than that between Alex and Pepperberg, this interaction resembles a simple conversation between humans who use sign language. In this (political) communication, the chimpanzee and the humans understood each other immediately.

Redefining Concepts. So far, I have argued that seeing language as a collection of language-games provides a good starting point for thinking about human-animal language and communication. Investigating human-animal language-games also tells us something about language in a more general sense. Humans have defined language in a narrow sense, as strictly human.[14] However, examining existing human-animal language-games brings to light that while communication and use of language between humans and animals might not be the same as communication between humans, there are similarities. (And although not all language-games apply to all non-human animals, many also do not apply to all humans.) Furthermore, it seems to be impossible to draw a clear line between what is language and what is not, or to find one principle that applies to all acts that are seen as language. Sign language between humans is similar to sign language between humans and non-human primates, dogs can learn the names of humans[15] and vice versa, many species of animals sing, greet, chat, joke. The content of these different overlapping language-games is not fixed; when individuals from different species interact new language-games can come into being (see Haraway; Hearne). It is therefore not just difficult but impossible to determine the precise scope of language, and it seems similarly impossible to leave other animals out.

However, to understand and further develop human-animal languages, it is not enough to study human-animal interaction and see whether or not acts resemble human language-games. We also need to reconsider the scope and the meaning of the concepts we use, because they are often defined in an overly narrow sense, which can obscure our interpretation of situations. Although we need to think about new concepts that

include animal acts and that are developed in cooperation with them, existing concepts can offer a framework or can function as a bridge between views.

Both Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance and his views about the public nature of language can be of use in this investigation. Wittgenstein wrote dogs cannot hope (PI, Iixi: 174). This is because he supposes their sense of time and (following) their view of the future is limited. Empirical questions aside, this seems to be problematic with regard to the public nature of language and his emphasis on the close connection between the use and the meaning of words. Raimond Gaita refers to this public character of language in human-animal communities in his discussion of anthropomorphism. He gives the example of "intentions" (60) and argues that we not form the concept of intention first in relation to human behavior and then apply it to animals, but that we learn to use these concepts in response to both humans and animals. Thus a remark about the intentions of a cat or dog would not be anthropomorphic because the intentions of animals are part of what gives the word "intention" meaning (not because it is correct or incorrect in describing the mental states of that cat or dog). Similarly, humans who grow up in a community with humans and other animals learn what "hope" means not just by learning the word as applied to humans, but in a variety of ways, including seeing hopeful animals and reading about animal hope in children's books. The word "hope" might not mean the same for everyone at all times: it will mean different things in different situations – in different language-games that are tied together by the word "hope." Other animals are not passive recipients of the term, but play a role in the shape these words gain, with their behavior and through interaction with humans.

On the one hand, concepts are formed by humans and animals but, on the other, a word, such as hope, can tie a multitude of acts together that resemble each other but have different shapes. In describing the relationship between different games and, based on that, language-games, Wittgenstein introduces the notion of family resemblance. He observes that we find overlapping similarities in different games (in the way members of a family share characteristics with each other), but we cannot find one common feature that applies to all of them.[16] This way of connecting different acts[17] can help us understand how we can broaden concepts to include animals, based on the resemblance and relations of animal acts to human acts. It can also give us direction in further thinking about political animal acts. If we, for example, think about protest, we can think of many different kinds of acts in the human case. If we then consider animal acts of protest, we can (in the absence of one common feature or general definition) look for similarities and differences — this does not give us a blueprint or a complete guide

to interpret all animal acts, but it does give us a direction.[18] Seeing animal acts as political acts might ask for adjustments in the concepts we use, and although existing concepts can offer a guideline, to make progress in understanding other animals we must also be willing to invent new concepts.

III. Political Communication. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue we should extend concepts such as citizenship and sovereignty to animals. This implies both a Gestalt switch — we need to see other animals differently, as political actors — and an extension of human political concepts and institutions. In the first section I argued that even though Donaldson and Kymlicka discuss human-animal communication and political representation in the case of domesticated animals, who should be able to express themselves through relationships with humans, they seem to miss a theory of political communication. This is problematic with regard to domesticated animals who cannot or do not want to have close relationships with humans, and with regard to wild and limimal animals, with whom humans also often (need to) communicate.

Building on Donaldson and Kymlicka's idea of animals as political actors and Wittgenstein's idea of language as a collection of language-games, I will now propose two ways in which political animal voice and human-animal communication can be conceptualized further, in interaction in and between human-animal communities. I first discuss the idea of political human-animal conversations. Second, I introduce the idea of an interpreter, a human or non-human animal who speaks different languages and is therefore able to assist political communication between groups and individuals that do not share a language.

Political Conversations. In a sense, all conversations in which the animals are taken seriously as interlocutors are political, because they challenge the stereotypical image of non-human animals as mute and because they show us new ways of thinking about communication and, more generally, living with different kinds of other animals. A good example of this kind of interaction is Haraway's communication with her dog companion Cayenne Pepper. In Haraway's descriptions of their training for agility, we can see how two subjects of different species communicate and meet each other in ways that clearly challenge existing ideas about human-animal interaction. The dog and the human work together towards a common goal, and in and through this process they get to know each other, change each other and create a common world, based on a mutual understanding. This type of world building is political because it challenges the species

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boundary and because it shows us that and how we can take other animals seriously as subjects. Cayenne Pepper is not silent at all. She expresses herself and has influence on the course of this conversation, in which there is room for the new.

Although these types of conversations (another good example would be Vicki Hearne's communication with dogs and horses) challenge ontological-political assumptions and have the potential to teach us something about the building of interspecies worlds, there are problems with regard to taking animals and animal agency seriously if the larger institutional framework in which these conversations take place is left intact. In the case of Cayenne Pepper and Haraway, we can see this on several levels. On the individual level, because the human decides that, when, and how the agility training takes place, but also on the level of society and politics. The interaction takes place in a world in which dogs are bred by humans, in which animals are eaten by humans, in which they are used for medical experiments: a world in which animals are exploited by humans on a large scale.[19] I do not mean to suggest that dogs cannot enjoy agility or never want to play or work with humans, or that all relationships can, or even should, be completely symmetrical in the distribution of power. But when the larger context remains intact, these promising interactions leave the animals dependent on the goodwill of the individual humans in their surroundings, and they do not reach their full (political) potential. So although this way of conceptualizing interaction is valuable for thinking about interspecies communication on an individual level and for opening our eyes towards new forms of co-existence, it seems necessary to look for ways in which these (and other) kinds of encounters can be translated into a political institutional framework.

Between humans, some language-games can be seen as conversations, and some of these conversations are political. This also applies to shared language-games between humans and animals; some can be regarded as conversations and some of these conversations take place in a political context. The borders are imprecise, even more since this is new territory, but human political conversations offer some guidance. Political conversations between humans take place in different situations: in and between communities, between individuals and groups, in conflicts, through activism, and so forth. In general, conversations will not automatically lead to understanding or harmony; the possibility of misunderstanding is inherent in all interactions, and the outcome of political acts can never be determined beforehand. However, through conversations different individuals and groups can communicate their standpoints and therefore more attention to human-animal conversations will promote animal voices.

An example of a situation in which political human-animal conversations already take place is Jun-Han Yeo and Harvey Neo's (2010) study of border conflicts between long-tailed macaques and humans in urban Singapore. The population of native macaques in the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve in Singapore is significantly affected by residential development encroaching into their habitat and destroying wildlife corridors. The National Parks Board (the agency overseeing the conservation of reserves and wildlife) has constantly to negotiate between complaining residents and preserving the macaque population. In this conflict, both the macaques and the humans exert pressure, though to different degrees; the macaques usually draw the short straw.

The residents knew the macaques lived in the area before they moved there and they state that wanting to be closer to nature was one of the reasons they chose to live there. They also feed the macaques, which has invited the animals to move closer to the human settlements, leading to problems: the macaques steal food and make noises, and there often are encounters that the humans experience as problematic or frightening. However, the attitude of the humans is not only negative, in addition to feeding them, some of them like the way macaques look and the sounds they make, and many humans think they should not be killed.

One possible solution for the conflict would be that the humans leave; they knew the macaques were there before they came and they often have the opportunity to live elsewhere. If this is impossible, it is necessary to think about new forms of communication. Yeo and Neo discuss different ways in which the macaques and humans interact, such as having eye contact, reading each other's body language, staying at a distance or, on the other hand, making overtures. The macaques respond to human speech and their tone of voice[20]; humans respond to the sounds the macaques make. In the recommendations Yeo and Neo offer at the end of their paper, they mainly focus on what the humans can do. Humans should, for example, be educated about the consequences of their behavior (such as feeding the macaques) and about the macaques' behavior so that they know how to keep them at a distance. Taking interaction into account and focusing on both sides of the communication, from a political perspective, could strengthen the voice and position of the macaques in the conflict. The macaques already communicate with the humans and they exercise political agency, by questioning the borders between the communities and by challenging the human-animal hierarchy. Learning about each other's languages, developing a new shared

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language and establishing (political) rituals could give the macaques a better understanding of the humans and vice versa.

Although it goes beyond the aim of this paper to invent new institutions that can facilitate these kinds of political interspecies communications, a first step could be the development of forms of greeting as political rituals. Greeting might not seem to have an explicit political content, but in conflicts such as these it could function as a way in which humans acknowledge the macaques' existence (as individual others, as subjects) and it would therefore be a political act.21 Furthermore, establishing greeting rituals can be helpful in determining borders between the two groups. In general, learning about greeting rituals of other animals and respectfully engaging in new rituals with them can function as a gateway to further political interaction and extended conversations. Macaques are very sensitive to facial expressions and gestures (Maestripieri) and responding to how they express themselves could make a large difference in how the interaction evolves.

Interpreters. Although it is not necessary to completely understand someone to be able to speak with her or him, there is a need for some understanding of the other to be able to respond in the correct manner. Domesticated animals and humans have cultural experience to draw from; many species of other animals (mammals, birds) are also easy to understand for humans without prior knowledge of them and vice versa. This is, again, a matter of degree and there are many different kinds of relationships and interactions possible. Some animals (individuals or species) are communicative, others are shy; some animals are similar to humans, others might be too small or physically too different to understand for humans without studying them for a longer period of time. Education can and should play a role in mixed human-animal communities22 and between communities, but it seems to be physically impossible to learn all other animals' languages, in the same way it is impossible to learn all human languages. Since it is impossible to speak all languages, in political communication between humans the parties involved either use a language everyone speaks (such as English or Spanish), or an interpreter is present to facilitate the conversation. In human-animal relationships and encounters, interpreters can also play a role.

An interpreter would be someone who knows how to interact with (certain types of) animals and humans in a meaningful way, who speaks or at least understands their respective languages and who can make the position of humans clear to a group of animals, or the other way around. An interpreter can be a human or non-human animal, or a human-animal duo (for example a human and a companion animal who

facilitate the communication between a group of animals and a human group). Interpreters can be of use in contact with animals (communities or individuals) who prefer to have as little contact with humans as possible and in contact with animals who are physically or culturally very different from humans and therefore difficult to read. They can also be central in promoting animals' voices in human cultural, legal and political frameworks, especially in the transition from current political communities to new, shared communities.

Different situations will ask for different kinds of interpreters. One can imagine an animal who understands humans and who can translate what they have to say to her group (animals who have experience with humans already do this in communication with younger or less experienced animals), or a human who understands a certain type of animals well and who can translate what an individual or a group of these animals has to say to a group of humans. An example of a human interpreter who has played a role in showing animals in a different light to human culture is Jane Goodall, who gave the chimpanzees she studied names instead of numbers. In addition to ethologists and biologists one can also think of artists, writers, politicians and philosophers.

Interpreting raises many (factual and moral) questions, about whether the interpreters get it right — and if there is a fixed "right," since acting with and interpreting (human) animals changes what happens — about how they can be honest, and how they can put their own interests aside. These problems also apply to interpreters in human contexts. However, the advantage of interpreters over the collaborators Donaldson and Kymlicka propose, who operate in close relationships with animals that are based on trust, is that they are public figures who can be held accountable for their acts. A focus on language, instead of trust and dependency, contributes to taking the animals seriously as political actors, and of course other animals can be interpreters too. As I mentioned before, the possibility of misunderstanding is inherent in every act of communication, but misunderstandings can also be valuable (as in the case of Alex and Pepperberg) in learning about the other, or about one's own position. So although it might not directly solve problems, being explicit about communications and facilitating them in different contexts will most likely shed new light on relationships and it might make new relationships possible.

IV. Animal Democracy. So far, I have argued that if we see animals as political actors and if we want to extend existing political frameworks to include them, we need to

think about political communication. I have also argued that although animals are often represented as mute or silent, they are in fact not. They communicate with each other and with humans and this communication has formed the meaning of words and concepts, even though language is often presented as solely human.

Donaldson and Kymlicka propose to extend an existing liberal democratic political system to include other animals. They convincingly point out the weaknesses of existing animal rights theories that only focus on negative rights, and they argue we need an account of positive rights, in which the animals (at least some of them, such as domesticated animals who participate in shared human-animal communities) are included in procedures of decision making. However, the structure of their arguments as to why animals should be granted rights are similar to the arguments of other animal rights theories, that focus on the inclusion of animals in moral communities by extending existing human concepts.[23]

In his discussion of the respective animal rights theories of Singer and Regan, Cary Wolfe examines the argument that aims to extend a human or humanistic concept, such as universal human rights, to other animals. It is usually argued that we need to extend a human concept to other animals because it applies to them in the same way as it does to humans[24] and because discriminating on the basis of species would be unjust and arbitrary. We can see an example of this logic at work in the Great Ape Project through which philosophers (Singer; Cavalieri), ethologists and other scientists, argue for a small set of universal negative rights — the right to life, to protection of individual liberty, and prohibition of torture — for great apes, on the basis of their similarities to humans. Non-human primates possess selfhood, form communities, have cultures, use tools and language, and so on and if these kinds of characteristics are morally relevant for humans, they are for other primates. So if we think humans should be granted rights on the basis of possessing these characteristics, other animals who possess them should be granted rights too. Once this is established for great apes, the argument could and should be extended to other species on similar grounds. It would be arbitrary to extend rights just to non-human primates, and the negative rights that are proposed matter to many species. So the interesting result of the path followed by animal rights theories is that they show how the logic inherent in human rights leads to the conclusion that these rights should also apply to other animals.

Because animal rights are powerful in theory and in practice, and because the stakes are high for so many non-human animals, Wolfe adopts a "pragmatic" (191) approach towards supporting projects that promote animal rights. He sees these projects, and the

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discourse that they draw upon, as rhetorically powerful because they are "relics" (192). But he does so "only in abeyance, as it were, only in recognition of the underlying fact that the operative theories and procedures we now have for articulating the social and legal relation between ethics and action are inadequate ... for thinking about the ethics of the question of the human as well as the nonhuman animal" (192). According to Wolfe, using existing ethical models and arguing they should also apply to other animals is the easy part. The harder part, and what we must strive for, is to develop a different kind of ethics that addresses theoretical complexities that surround the question of the (human) animal in different registers.

Compared to the Great Ape Project and similar initiatives, Donaldson and Kymlicka's theory can be seen as a step in the right direction because they argue for rights for all animals, and because they propose a relational approach in which animal agency is taken into account. But they still start from a human conception of politics, in which a multitude of animals and interactions is captured and ordered in a human liberal democratic way. In this framework, humans play the main role in deciding upon the terms and conditions of both the discourse and the practices connected to it. This can, for example, be seen in the idea of "dependent agency," where a human does the communication with other humans, but also in the larger project of categorizing animals (as citizens, denizens, or sovereign communities) and in deciding upon their rights and duties. Although their multiplicity and difference is recognized, animals are relatively silent when it comes to determining how the political situation can or should evolve. Despite the problems, I do not think we should adopt a pragmatic approach, in which we rely on concepts such as rights and citizenship as relics or because of their rhetoric power. I would rather propose another way of looking at the meaning(s) of the concepts invoked, in which they have the potential to change.

First, humans need concepts to be able to think at all. Existing concepts can function as tools to imagine how change is possible. However, concepts such as rights are not just relics that can be used instrumentally. In addition to having the potential to change situations in the outside world, words carry within them the potential to change their meaning when these situations change. In the context of animal rights we can see that the concept "rights" can make a difference in the world, but also that were universal animal rights adopted, the meaning of "rights" would change. The large changes in our society will be reflected in the meaning of the word.

If we take the idea of human-animal intersubjectivity in politics seriously, as Donaldson and Kymlicka propose, we (human and non-human animals) need to look for ways in which non-human animals can take part in reformulating the meanings of concepts and in determining the shape of the conditions of interaction. This could be the beginning of new, pluralistic, democratic interaction. This does not mean that humans should grant animals access to their democracies or communities, because the animals are already part of them, in many ways. Rather, humans should acknowledge and formalize animals' presence, so that humans and animals can further develop democratic concepts and institutions together.

Conclusion. Both Donaldson-and-Kymlicka and Wittgenstein use philosophy as a means to see things differently. For Wittgenstein seeing things differently is the goal of philosophy; Donaldson and Kymlicka use a political philosophical framework to show non-human animals in a different light, as political actors. The strength of their account concerning political animal agency and human-animal relationships lies precisely there — they show us what is already present from a new perspective.

The next task seems to be an investigation into the scope and meaning of existing political concepts in relation to animals (and also to humans). In addition to paying more attention to animal behavior and interspecies interaction, we need carefully to reconsider the borders of what counts as a political or linguistic act, and to investigate what concepts such as democracy, political agency, and citizenship mean once their scope broadens.

The same double movement applies to language; investigating existing human-animal language-games needs to go hand in hand with a reconsideration of both the scope and the definition of language. The idea of language as a collection of language-games and the idea of family resemblance can play a role in helping us understand how words and acts are and can be related. Although we need critically to examine existing concepts, these concepts can also function as glue between views (to get from one to the next); they can help us understand how change can be possible and help us envision what we are trying to reach. The question of what counts as language is also a political question. Studying human-animal language-games shows us that a narrow conception of language, as solely belonging to humans, is arbitrary and untenable, as well as biased.

Jane Bennett points to a similar entanglement of knowledge, meaning and concepts when she writes about political agency of worms as described by Charles Darwin and Bruno Latour. She argues that new knowledge of animals and a better understanding of

their behavior have changed the way we see them and how we (can) evaluate their actions. However, if we truly want to take the worms seriously, this does not end with our revised assessment of their activities: it also means questioning the uniqueness of humans and the concepts related to that view. In addition to reinventing concepts, we need to think about new "procedures, technologies and regimes of perception" (Bennett 108) that will make it possible to read other animals more carefully and to respond to what they have to say in a better way than we do now. In creating new political concepts and institutions that are better suited to answer to human-animal languages and politics, animals are not passive recipients to whom humans give words. They can, do and should play an active role in shaping the terms of interaction and determining the meanings of the matters involved.

Notes

1. Hereafter mostly referred to as "animals" for reasons of space.

2. For a detailed analysis of this phenomenon in the philosophical tradition, see Derrida.

3. By focusing on political communication, I do not mean to imply that all political acts are communicative or that all political animal agency can be framed in terms of language. I also do not aim to develop a theory of deliberation. I want to address the stereotypical image of animals as mute or silent in relation to politics and to explore possibilities of translating existing communications to a political framework.

4. With a few exceptions, most notably Robert Garner and Mark Rowlands.

5. This group is new in animal rights literature. One of the goals of *Zoopolis* is to dismantle the dichotomy between wild and domesticated animals (or nature and culture) and replace this with a matrix of types of animals and human-animal interaction and relationships (referring to Wolch). Donaldson and Kymlicka convincingly show there are many animals who are neither wild nor domesticated and that the lines between these categories are not fixed (domesticated animals can become liminal or wild and vice versa). The introduction of this new group can clarify rights and duties of and towards these animals, which is important, but it seems somewhat paradoxical to create a new category for the animals who do not fit into the other categories, especially because this group is so diverse.

6. In addition to nationality and popular sovereignty, on the basis of which they should already be regarded as citizens, according to Donaldson and Kymlicka.

7. The idea of dependent agency does not only tell us something about political agency in the context of animal citizenship. Donaldson and Kymlicka also want to direct our attention to the role that relationships play in citizenship for humans; we are all dependent on others at points in our lives and relationships matter in every political community. In human-animal relationships the animals also influence the humans.

8. Hereafter abbreviated as "PI."

9. "Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word, but they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all 'language'" (PI, §65).

10. "We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the every-day language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike. Something new (spontaneous, 'specific') is always a language-game" (PI, II xi: 224).

11. According to Wittgenstein, linguistic acts are not necessarily more complex or of a higher level than non-linguistic acts. In aesthetic judgments, that Wittgenstein considers to be complex judgments, the gestures someone makes are often more important than the words that are spoken (*Lectures* 1-40).

12. Although the conversations between Alex and Pepperberg are mutual and as much Alex's doing as Pepperberg's, there are moral and political problems with this type of research (in which the animal lives in captivity). Exploring this further would ask for the development of new forms of research.

13. "Language must be learned / taught in its pragmatic function: it is an effective means of acting and of making others act" (Despret 3).

14. And humans have used language to draw a line between all humans and all other animals, by calling them "animals," which has obscured both the similarities between humans and animals, and the differences between animals and other animals (species and individuals) (see Derrida).

15. When Wittgenstein writes (*On Certainty*, §540): "A dog might learn to run to N at the call "N" and to M at the call "M," – but would that mean he knows what these people are called?" he seems to suggest the answer is no; even though we can teach a dog the name of a human, the dog will not know that this is what the human is called because dogs cannot grasp what a name is. But if M and N are people who play roles in the life of this dog, the dog will know what they are called. For dogs as well as for humans, these are different language-games.

16. "I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, color of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. — And I shall say: 'games' form a family" (PI, §67).

17. Nothing ever is exactly the same as something else, things (acts, humans, animals, concepts) resemble each other and humans use this resemblance to connect and categorize, but these categories always contingent.

18. Wittgenstein argues there are no boundaries to concepts that are related in this way; we can for example not draw boundaries around the concept "game" (PI, §68).

19. For a detailed analysis of this problem in Haraway's work, see Weisberg.

20. In the words of resident Cindy: "I once reprimanded a monkey for attempting to snatch my bag from me. It seemed to understand my reaction, like raising my voice, pointing a finger at it, and it backed off" (Yeo and Neo 14)

21. Iris Marion Young argues greeting is a necessary condition for political communication; in this example greeting already is an act of political communication.

22. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that domesticated animals in shared human-animal communities should have a right to basic socialization, a right to learn how to behave in a community with humans and other animals. Similarly, humans in mixed communities have to learn how they should behave towards the other animals in the community.

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23. Donaldson and Kymlicka provide a clear overview of both the arguments of existing animal rights theories and their own view on the matter in Zoopolis (1-49).

24 Either on the ground that they are sentient beings, as Singer argues, or on the ground that they are "subjects of a life," as Regan argues.

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