

# **SOCIALISM AND ANIMAL ETHICS**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the  
University of Leicester

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2017

## **“Socialism and Animal Ethics”**

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This thesis looks at the relationship between socialism and animal ethics. It argues that, after forty years of a dominant liberal bias in animal ethics, not much has changed for nonhuman animals. It therefore asks whether liberalism is missing something in relation to animal ethics, and whether socialism might be the best vehicle to fill this gap. More specifically, given the institutionalised nature of contemporary animal exploitation, I argue that liberal animal ethics is ill equipped to address the political economy of animal exploitation. I also argue that its strategies for change are problematic, and that more attention must be paid to the issues of class and political agency in relation to the animal protection movement. Socialism seems a promising alternative to liberal animal ethics for several reasons, not least the historical links in practice between socialists and animal protection. Yet no studies currently exist that investigate the ideological links these socialists perceived between their political and moral beliefs. This is therefore one of the contributions this thesis offers to the discipline. I argue that these ideological links relate predominantly to ethical socialist values (such as kinship), which provides a useful moral imperative to care about nonhumans, but does not offer us a complete alternative to liberal animal ethics, since it fails to adequately address the gaps left by the latter – namely, the role of capitalism in animal exploitation and the issues of class, political agency and strategy. On the other hand, Marxism has a long history of association with these issues; I thus propose a *merged* socialist approach to animal ethics, one that combines ethical socialism with a post-colonial, Marxist analysis in order to create a comprehensive and convincing alternative to liberal animal ethics. This constitutes the first sustained, comprehensive account of socialist animal ethics within the discipline.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, this PhD would not have been possible without the financial support of my parents, who have put up (and put up with!) a great deal these last few years. A special thank you must go to my fellow PhD students, particularly Stephanie Gordon and Berta Barbet Porta, whose friendship and encouragement helped me through these last four years. I am deeply grateful to Ashley Dodsworth, who patiently answered my endless questions and gave me invaluable feedback on early drafts of the thesis. I am also indebted to the staff at the David Wilson Library at the University of Leicester and at the National Library of Scotland, in Edinburgh, who often went above and beyond the call of duty to help me access the material I needed. Finally, thanks must of course go to my supervisor, Professor Rob Garner, for his candid guidance and advice.

*This thesis is dedicated to all the nonhumans I have known over the years, who have shaped me into the person I am today, and who taught me what it means to love unconditionally.*

*In particular, to Harry and Ellie Hay, who passed away during the course of my PhD.*

*I miss you every day.*

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# Introduction

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This thesis looks at the relationship between socialism and animal ethics. It argues that, after forty years of a dominant liberal bias in animal ethics, not much has changed for nonhuman animals. It therefore asks whether liberalism is missing something in relation to animal ethics, and whether socialism might be the best vehicle to fill this gap. Socialism seems the most promising alternative to liberal animal ethics, given the links in practice between socialists and animal protection, and that socialism is particularly suited to addressing issues that liberalism neglects, such as class and agency. Yet no sustained, comprehensive account of socialist animal ethics currently exists. This thesis therefore addresses this gap in the literature, examining both the links in practice and the key ideological links between socialism and animal ethics.

The starting point for this enquiry is that the animal ethics literature has been appropriated by liberal animal ethicists and political theorists since its revitalisation in the 1970s, and that the discipline has consequently been heavily influenced and shaped by liberal theories and values. Yet, in the forty years since then there has been relatively little progress made in improving the situation for nonhuman animals in contemporary Western society. One of the initial research questions is, then: *what's wrong with liberal animal ethics?* In answering this question, I expound three main criticisms: 1) the issue of rights, specifically that these are too abstract and generally give little indication of what this means in practice, 2) that liberalism ignores the economic context of animal exploitation, and, crucially, 3) that liberalism is unclear on *strategy* – i.e. how the goals of animal ethics can be achieved.

Of course, much obviously depends on what is meant by animal ethics, and what exactly these intended goals are. Clearly, my research takes it for granted that nonhuman animals are worthy of moral concern, and that the need to improve the situation for nonhuman animals (in Western society) is pressing. Over 60 billion land animals are killed each year for human consumption (UNFAO, 2010) and this figure does not look set to decrease any time soon. While my own personal preference might be for the abolition of all exploitation, I try to keep this research free from any specific agenda (such as animal rights or abolitionism), beyond stating plainly that we need to do more to address this exploitation, and that, if the current (liberal) approach to animal

ethics was to have any impact on the exploitation of nonhuman animals, I believe we should have seen it by now. My purpose, then, is not to assess whether socialism would be more conducive to abolitionism (the end of all animal use) or animal rights (though I do address the relationship between socialism and rights), but, in order for me to conclude that socialism has something to offer animal ethics, it *would* have to move us towards improving the situation for nonhuman animals beyond simply maintaining the status quo (i.e. an animal welfare ethic).

Much will also depend, then, on which *version* of socialism we are discussing, given that socialism is such a broad church, and that the perspective of, say, a Marxist on animal ethics might be very different to that of a Utopian socialist. Indeed, the principal distinction that I make in early chapters is that between Marxism and ethical socialism, the former of which may be characterised by its focus on historical materialism and a class-based analysis of exploitation, while the latter tends to focus more on ethical values (such as love and kinship), viewing moral education and individual transformation as the key to change (this is, of course, a very simplistic description – in reality, the issue is much more complex). This is reflected in my historical analysis of early British socialism and animal ethics, where it becomes apparent that there are no ‘hard-and-fast’ categories with socialism, and that it is often easier to identify certain socialist *themes* rather than delineated schools of thought.

This is also true of contemporary animal ethics, where there has been some recent interest in applying socialist themes to the animal question from a variety of different backgrounds. The majority of these contributions are Marxist-based (Benton, 1993; Noske, 1997; Szybel, 1997; Wilde, 2000; Perlo, 2002; Hribal, 2003; Sanbonmatsu, 2005; Torres, 2007; Shukin, 2009; Gunderson, 2011a; Murray, 2011; Kowalczyk, 2014; Wadiwel, 2016), though many combine socialism with sociology (notably Nibert, 2002), and some focus on eco-socialism (Forkasiewicz, 2013). There is also a decidedly leftist agenda in the field of Critical Animal Studies (CAS), where Marxist analyses are particularly prevalent, although they claim anarchism, rather than socialism or Marxism, as one of their guiding principles (Best *et al.*, no date). While an examination of CAS’s ideology is beyond the scope of this thesis (and not relevant to my central point, in any case), this seems somewhat inaccurate to me. I would argue instead that the unstated core of CAS is a socialist approach to animal ethics, and that,

far from being a 21<sup>st</sup> century phenomenon, it has an intellectual history in the nineteenth century British pro-animal socialism examined in this thesis.

Although, therefore, the idea of approaching animal ethics from a socialist, or Marxist, perspective is not new (evidenced by the numerous examples mentioned above), there still lacks a sustained, comprehensive attempt to bring together these divergent elements (ethical socialism, Marxism, CAS, etc.), to establish their common themes and assumptions, but also to clarify (in the hope of resolving) their inconsistencies. This is therefore one of the central aims of this thesis. While the research began with an inclusive approach, not focused on any one particular school of thought but, rather, open to exploring all socialism's various forms, it soon became clear that there are many differences and tensions between the socialist schools of thought, and that these must be addressed if the goal is to advance a socialist animal ethic that is clear about our obligations towards nonhumans and what we must do to put these obligations into practice. Having initiated the thesis by way of an historical analysis of nineteenth century British socialism and animal ethics (for reasons explained shortly), the bulk of the research was, at first, primarily concerned with ethical socialism and animal ethics (since this particular tradition dominated in Britain in the late 1800s). While this approach clearly provided the moral imperative for a concern for nonhuman animals, it seemed that, on its own, it was not enough to provide a comprehensive and convincing alternative to liberalism, since it did not seem to address liberalism's main problems: that it does not provide a clear guide to action, nor does it address the economic aspect of animal exploitation. Given that, traditionally, an economic analysis of capitalism is one of Marxism's greatest strengths, I therefore surmised that merging ethical socialism with a more Marxist, class-based approach might strengthen the former, providing a more well-rounded, convincing alternative to the liberal paradigm.

In analysing the relationship between socialism and animal ethics, I used as my starting point the historical links between socialists and animal protection in nineteenth century Britain. This provides an original contribution to the literature, since none of the authors mentioned above pay attention to these (historical) 'links in practice' between socialism and animal ethics (which is surprising given the traditional socialist propensity for unifying theory and practice). I do not mean to suggest, however, that I am the first person to have noticed these historical links. Several historians (Lansbury,

1985; for example, Kean, 1998; Li, 2012) have already noted the involvement of a number of prominent socialists in the nineteenth century British animal protection movement, but, given that they are historians, not political theorists, they do not elaborate on the *ideological* links between socialism and animals perceived by these individuals. Likewise, while a handful of political theorists (such as Garner, 1998; Preece, 2012) have also remarked, in passing, on the historical links between socialism and animal ethics, we still lack a comprehensive, sustained account of the perceived *ideological* links between these movements.

As well as being original, the historical analysis is significant because it provides a foundation on which to base a socialist approach to animal ethics, by showing that there is a distinctive socialist tradition of concern for nonhuman animals that pre-dates contemporary liberal animal ethics and, therefore, that the common tendency in animal ethics to refer to the 1960s and '70s as the 'birth' of the discipline is inaccurate. In particular, I challenge the recent proposal that the 'political turn' in animal ethics is a new phenomenon (see Cochrane, Garner and O'Sullivan, 2016 for elucidation of this proposal) by demonstrating that this ignores the nineteenth century socialists' decidedly *political* approach to animal ethics. In addition, I pay special attention to Henry Salt and his position on rights in order to reclaim him from liberalism and place him (back) firmly in the socialist tradition. This may seem like a straightforward, incontrovertible move, given that Salt was very explicit in his political persuasion. Nevertheless, in discussing the history of animal rights, not only do several authors gloss over the fact that Salt was socialist, they, in fact, suggest a trajectory between Salt and the contemporary *liberal* approach to animal rights (Regan, 1983; see, for example, Clark, 1984; Preece, 2012). In contrast, I argue that the identification of Salt as the founding father of animal *rights* is problematic as his views on rights were, I suggest, more contradictory than is acknowledged or realised. In short, Salt's legacy was not the contemporary liberal tradition, as is often implied, but, rather, a distinctly socialist approach to animal ethics.

Given the dominance of ethical socialism in nineteenth century Britain, as previously mentioned, the ideological links between socialism and animal ethics perceived by nineteenth century British socialists generally consist of ethical values such as kinship, solidarity, love, justice, and so on (answering the question – why should we care about nonhumans? – and thus providing the moral imperative for animal

ethics). Yet the analysis revealed that the ethical socialists were less conclusive over how exactly change should come about (and that what they *did* suggest was not totally dissimilar to the contemporary liberal approach). Nor were they particularly well versed on the relationship between the economic system and animal exploitation (although, arguably, this issues relates more to *contemporary* society than nineteenth century Britain). Given that the central rationale motivating the research is liberalism's lack of engagement with these issues, the next logical step, after the historical analysis, was then to investigate how socialism would deal with these questions – predominantly from a more Marxist perspective, but also embellishing the ethical socialists' consideration of these issues. This approach allowed me to capitalise on the historical analysis, scrutinising the themes present in the work of the ethical socialists, which no other studies have done before, but also allowing me to sketch out a more well-rounded, comprehensive, *fused* socialist approach to animal ethics that then offers a stronger and more convincing alternative to liberal animal ethics. Before embarking on this task, however, I spend some time setting out the problem with liberalism, in chapter one, and contextualising the historical analysis, in chapter two.

Specifically, in order to provide a background for the claim that an alternative approach to animal ethics is needed, I set out, in chapter one, what liberal animal ethics looks like, focussing on its predominant strands: rights, utilitarianism, and contractarianism. One of the central questions guiding this chapter is: what is it about liberalism that is problematic for animal ethics? To address this question, I examine some of the distinctively liberal elements of traditional animal ethics, particularly: moral rights – its neglect of the social and economic environment in which (animal) rights are promoted – and its neglect of important issues such as class, agency and strategy. Despite the high profile that animal rights theory enjoys, it might be argued that the current liberal approach has had little practical success. While liberalism has demonstrated its prowess in moralising – demonstrating *why* we should care about animals – it has yet to advance beyond that stage. We know now, after many decades, why we should care about animals, but the real question is how we put those ethics into action. This is where liberalism stumbles, because it fails to provide a convincing blueprint for change (in favour of nonhumans). The key question, then, which is taken up in the rest of the thesis, is whether socialism, given its propensity to combine theory and action, offers an alternative, and preferable, approach.

Given that socialism is such a broad church, as previously mentioned, chapter two begins by examining some of the main distinctions in socialist theory, particularly (because this is central to the overall approach) between Marxism and ethical socialism. Since these distinctions were reflected in organisational form in Britain in the late 1800s, this leads on to an overview of the major socialist organisations of this era (the majority of which subscribed to *ethical* socialism, in one way or another) and their positions on animal protection. I then provide a brief overview of the key pro-animal socialists who perceived a connection between socialism and animal ethics, and I introduce the Humanitarian League as the organisation that best epitomised this connection.

Having contextualised the *practical* links between socialism and animal protection, chapter three then begins analysing the *ideological* links that these individuals saw as connecting their political beliefs with animal ethics. The questions guiding this chapter are thus: 1) what were the values that linked (ethical) socialism to animal ethics? And, 2) does this offer an alternative to liberal animal ethics? The main findings of this section are that, while the ethical socialist values associated with animal protection provide the moral imperative for a socialist concern for nonhumans, and do offer something new to the discipline (from which these values are all but absent), ethical socialism does not, on its own, appear to be able to offer a convincing alternative to liberalism since it too lacks engagement with the political economy of animal exploitation, as well as being unclear on the issues of strategy and agency.

Completing the analysis of the ethical socialist approach to animal ethics, in the second half of the chapter I focus specifically on the issue of rights, given their centrality to liberal animal ethics, and that Henry Salt is often portrayed as being the forerunner to liberal rights scholars such as Tom Regan (1983). I argue that the portrayal of Salt as a rights scholar is problematic and that his approach to animal ethics was somewhat contradictory. I conclude that, rather than the contemporary liberal tradition, Salt's legacy is in fact a distinctly socialist approach to animal ethics, and that many of the themes he highlighted have been lost to contemporary animal ethics.

Concluding the historical analysis, chapter four then jumps from the late 1800s to the 1970s and '80s, looking at the practical links between socialism and animal ethics in two case studies: 1) Trotskyist and civil rights campaigner Henry Spira, who became 'awakened' to the animal question during the 1970s and subsequently went on to

become one of the most prominent and influential animal rights activists of the nineties, and 2) the British Labour Party, which was perceived at the time to be the most committed to animal protection of all the mainstream parties (Windeatt, 1985). This leap from the late 1800s to the 1970s is justified because a) the animal protection movement languished in the first half of the twentieth century and only revived in the 1960s and '70s, and b) my aim is to examine *all* the significant historical links between socialism and animal ethics, not just the nineteenth century links. On the other hand, given the obvious differences between these time periods, and, especially, that nineteenth century British socialism evolved in the form it did due to a specific set of historical circumstances, this context needs to be understood in order to fully grasp the significance of ethical socialism and the values it promoted. For this reason, I chose not to group these time periods together in one 'historical links' chapter. Moreover, chapter four acts as a useful linking chapter, bridging the historical analysis and the theoretical analysis which follows (in chapters five and six). As well as introducing another key historical figure – Henry Spira – thereby contextualising his inclusion in later chapters, chapter four also moves us away from the narrow focus on ethical socialism, since neither Spira nor the Labour Party adhered to that particular version of socialism (Spira was of course a Trotskyist, while the Labour Party favoured social democratic principles during this era), although ethical socialist values were in fact quite central to their philosophies, as I demonstrate in the chapter.

Ultimately, the historical analysis reveals that the ethical socialist approach to animal ethics, centred on values such as love and kinship, clearly provides a useful moral imperative to care about nonhumans. Moreover, while liberalism *also* provides a moral imperative for animal ethics, most of the values espoused by the ethical socialists are absent from contemporary animal ethics; therefore the approach also appears to offer something new to the discipline. Nevertheless, since liberalism, as acknowledged, has excelled at providing a moral imperative to care about nonhumans, in order for socialism to offer a comprehensive, convincing alternative, it must be able to address the gaps left by liberalism – namely, the issues of class, agency and strategy – *as well as* providing a moral imperative for animal ethics. On this count, ethical socialism, on its own, does not appear to be able to offer a valid alternative, since it too lacks adequate engagement with how the economic system facilitates the exploitation of nonhuman animals. Nor does it provide a comprehensive account of agency and strategy; where

these issues *are* addressed by ethical socialists, their prescriptions are basically in accordance with liberalism's, to wit lacking engagement with the issues of race and class, and over-relying on individual, personal transformation rather than socio-economic, structural prescriptions for change. Looking at the socialist approaches of the 1970s and '80s, while Spira had much more concrete ideas on strategy and agency (which were distinct from the traditional liberal approach), he too failed to address the question of capitalism and animal exploitation (in fact, he explicitly chose to work *within* the capitalist system, without questioning it). Given their traditional neglect at the hands of liberalism, I take up these issues – capitalism, strategy and agency – in the rest of the thesis, drawing on more contemporary Marxist, sociological, and critical animal studies (CAS) literature, but also referring back to the ethical socialists' and Spira's thoughts on the topic (however brief).

Since an antipathy to capitalism is often regarded as one of unifying themes of socialism (Vincent, 2010), and that it is intrinsic to our understanding of other issues such as class and agency, chapter five deals, firstly, with the relationship between capitalism and animal ethics. Particularly amongst CAS scholars capitalism is regarded as inimical to animal advocacy (Best, 2009), yet very few authors have offered a complete, comprehensive account of why this might be the case. The central question of chapter five is therefore: what is it about capitalism that makes it antagonistic to the goals of animal advocacy? This involves asking, also: is it, in fact, *industrialism* that is more problematic? In addressing these questions I focus on several of capitalism's core characteristics, namely: 1) the issue of profit, 2) commodification, 3) capitalist production process and the 'politics of sight' (Pachirat, 2011), and 4) alienation and embodiment. Although these issues are traditionally associated with a Marxist-based approach, many of them were also discussed by the nineteenth century ethical socialists such as Henry Salt. While I conclude that these themes are extremely pertinent to animal ethics, ultimately we still have to ask: why is it important (for animal ethics) who owns the means of production? And, would a socialist system be any better for nonhumans?

Chapter six then looks at the issues of class and agency in relation to animal ethics since these questions relate to how we translate ethics into action and are therefore of crucial significance to the discipline. I argue in this chapter that liberal animal ethics has inadequately dealt with the question of agency, and that its emphasis

on individualistic moral transformation is problematic for animal protection. Employing a socialist approach to the issue, the second half of the chapter asks whether the working class might be the most appropriate agent of change in favour of nonhuman animals. This argument rests on the presumption of a shared oppression between nonhumans and the working class, and, if validated, suggests the importance of involving workers as allies in the struggle for animal liberation. A related question is whether nonhuman animals are part of the proletariat. In addressing this question I look at two related points: whether nonhumans labour, and whether they resist. While both of these points may be reasonably answered in the affirmative, this may not be enough to classify them as part of the proletariat if one adheres to a strict Marxist definition of the term. I conclude there is still a strong argument to be made for a shared oppression between nonhumans and the working class, and that this is one of the ways in which Marxism offers a useful alternative to traditional, liberal, animal ethics.

The final chapter of the thesis – the conclusion – presents the fused socialist approach to animal ethics prescribed by the research. Having established the principal failings of the current liberal approach to animal ethics – that it has, arguably, failed to make an impact on animal exploitation due to a lack of engagement with the role of the economic system in animal exploitation and because it does not address the disjuncture between theory and practice – the central aim of the thesis was to examine whether socialism offers a complete and convincing alternative. A useful starting point for this enquiry was the fact that historically several prominent nineteenth century socialists were greatly involved in the early Victorian animal protection movement, especially since these ‘links in practice’ between socialism and animal protection have been largely overlooked by mainstream, liberal, animal ethics. Attempting to understand how these socialists connected their political beliefs to their concern for nonhuman animals, the themes, or ideological links, that clearly emerged from examination of their writings reflected the particular school of socialist thought they subscribed to: ethical socialism. Centred on values such as love, kinship, solidarity and justice, ethical socialism clearly provides a useful moral imperative to care about nonhumans (and one that differs from those offered by liberalism), and, since these values are, by and large, absent from contemporary animal ethics (oriented towards more ‘rational’ values through its liberal bias), it also offers something new and useful to the discipline. In addition, I sought to demonstrate that Henry Salt’s legacy is not liberal animal ethics or animal rights, as is

often claimed, but rather a distinctly socialist approach to animal ethics. Given the political nature of this approach, which was warmly embraced by several of Salt's peers, I also challenge the argument that there has been a 'political turn' in animal ethics recently, by demonstrating that almost all of the characteristics of this new 'political turn' are actually issues that were dealt with by the nineteenth century pro-animal ethical socialists. Nevertheless, I found that the ethical socialists lacked adequate engagement with the question of how exactly the economic system facilitates the exploitation of nonhuman animals, and were unclear on how exactly change ought to come about, taking into account questions of agency, class and race. As a result, ethical socialism, on its own, does not appear to offer a complete and convincing alternative to the liberal paradigm. Thus, in order to address the questions that have been woefully ignored by liberal animal ethics (and inadequately addressed by ethical socialism) – namely, capitalism (in relation to animal exploitation), agency, class and strategy – I incorporate Marxism into the second half of the thesis, given Marxism's traditional aptitude at dealing with these issues. Despite the many differences between Marxism and ethical socialism, many of which are discussed in the thesis, they share at their core a commitment to equality, brotherhood (extended by the pro-animal socialists into kinship) and solidarity, which means that fusing them into one socialist animal ethic is not as far-fetched as it may seem. In fact, I argue that these approaches complement one another, and that this fusion strengthens the overall approach. The end result is a socialist animal ethic that provides a moral imperative to care about nonhumans (ethical socialism), but is not limited to moralising (as liberalism arguably is); on the contrary, it also offers us an economic analysis of animal exploitation (from Marxism), and therefore also strategies for change. Consequently, I conclude that this fused socialist approach does provide a complete and convincing alternative to traditional, liberal, animal ethics, though there are many aspects that require further elaboration, such as the role of rights within this approach.

## **A Note on Methodology**

The research undertaken for this thesis is partly empirical and partly normative, incorporating both moral and political philosophy. Researching the historical links between socialism and animal ethics required spending a great deal of time in the archives of LSE library in London, in particular sifting through the journals of the

Humanitarian League (of which there were three: *The Humanitarian*, published monthly from 1906 to 1918; *Humanity*, the earlier title of The Humanitarian, dating back to 1895; and *The Humane Review*, published monthly from 1900 to 1910<sup>1</sup>) as well as pamphlets and articles authored by members of the Humanitarian League (such as Charlotte Despard and Isabella Ford). Naturally, any books written by the socialists in question were also consulted, as were (given the paucity of first-hand publications<sup>2</sup>) their biographies.

For the 1970s and '80s links, I focused on a selection of Henry Spira's published work, including interviews he gave to newspapers and journals. I also consulted Peter Singer's biography of Spira, and the film he produced about Spira's life, which provided useful information on the latter's campaigning background and early years. Sourcing any material written specifically by the (1970s) Labour Party on animal welfare was much more challenging. Certain claims, for example, regarding the Greater London Council (GLC) – which was controlled by Labour at the time – being very progressive in terms of animal welfare (Garner, 1998) were difficult to substantiate. Nonetheless, the Labour Party did produce a policy document in the late 1970s specifically on the issue of animal welfare, entitled the *Charter for Animal Protection*. As a very explicit and detailed statement of Labour's position on the animal question, it was this document that I predominantly focused on.

## Terminology

To clear up any possible confusion, I use the terms 'nonhuman', 'nonhuman animal', 'other animal', and 'animal' interchangeably throughout the thesis, although I try to avoid the latter term where possible. This is, of course, because humans are also animals, and using the term 'animal' to mean only nonhuman animals endorses the idea of humans being apart from, and therefore superior to, other animals. As many other authors have pointed out (Nibert, 2002; for example, Derrida and Mallet, 2008), it is inherently speciesist and derogatory (to nonhumans) to give human animals their own word, whilst all the other millions of animal species are lumped together under one misleading (since it is meant to exclude humans) term. Similarly, I try to avoid the use

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<sup>1</sup> Not every edition was available in the archives; unfortunately several months were missing.

<sup>2</sup> Except for Henry Salt, who wrote prodigiously on the topic of animal rights and socialism.

<sup>2</sup> Except for Henry Salt, who wrote prodigiously on the topic of animal rights and socialism.

of pejorative terms such as ‘pet’ (which in animal liberation literature is gradually being replaced with the more emancipatory term ‘companion animal’), though where such terms are more convenient I will generally employ quotation marks to indicate that this is not my own or preferred usage.

Where I employ the phrase ‘the animal question’ this should be taken to mean the (very broad) subject of animal ethics; i.e. what other animals are owed in society, the moral status of nonhuman animals, the question of rights, and so on. Although not entirely accurate (for reasons that will become apparent in the course of the thesis – see particularly chapters one and three), some of the following terms may be used interchangeably – ‘animal ethics’, ‘animal protection’, ‘animal welfare’, ‘animal liberation’, ‘animal rights’, and ‘a concern for nonhumans’ – for example, when I say, ‘the link between socialism and a concern for nonhumans’, or ‘the link between socialism and animal protection’, etc. In addition, I refer to the Victorian animal welfare movement as both the animal *protection* movement and the animal *welfare* movement. As Ryder (1996, p.167) notes, ‘animal protection’, at least in the British sense of the term, conjures up ‘politically correct’ ideas of wildlife and habitat conservation, yet bridges the gap between ‘welfare’ and ‘rights’. It would be inaccurate, however, to label the Victorian animal protection movement as a ‘rights’ movement, since the mainstream movement (epitomised by the RSPCA) did not, in fact, advocate rights for nonhumans. (Neither was it a ‘liberation’ movement; this term more appropriately applies to the post-1970s movement.) Where I want to differentiate between the mainstream Victorian animal welfare movement and the more ‘radical’ approach of the ethical socialists I will make this clear (this distinction is discussed in chapter three). Similarly, I sometimes refer to the socialists who were involved in animal protection (both the ethical socialists of the nineteenth century, and the 1970s and ’80s individuals) as ‘pro-animal’ socialists, and a socialism that is conducive to animal protection as a ‘pro-animal’ socialism.

## Chapter 1 Liberalism and Animal Ethics

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It will by now be evident that the starting point for my research is that, since the intellectual debate on the animal question began afresh in the 1960s and '70s, there has been a palpable liberal bias in the animal ethics literature. This is not altogether surprising given that Peter Singer's (1995) *utilitarian* account of animal liberation is widely regarded as the text that initiated this academic debate, and thus pioneered the contemporary field of animal ethics. Although Singer's reign was subsequently challenged by Tom Regan's (1983) rights-based approach in the 1980s, both authors share a liberal pedigree. While successive authors have challenged the positions of both 'founding fathers' from, for example, contractarianism (Rowlands, 1997), a virtue ethics perspective (Hursthouse, 2006), an interest-based rights approach (Feinberg, 1974; Cochrane, 2007), feminist, care-based ethics (Donovan, 1994) and a group-differentiated rights approach (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011), to name just a few, almost all have remained firmly entrenched in the liberal analytic tradition. One of the central questions prompting my research is thus whether, and why, this liberal bias might be problematic for animal advocacy (and, consequently, whether socialism might offer a more promising alternative).

In order to address this question, this chapter firstly sets out what the liberal approach to animal ethics looks like, before going on to discuss some of its most (potentially) problematic values and assumptions, from a socialist perspective. Again, the key question driving this chapter is whether there is something about the liberal approach that renders it problematic for animal advocacy. However, I do not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of every single liberal approach to animal ethics that has emerged over the past forty years. Rather, my aim is to provide an impressionistic overview of liberal animal ethics and its key features, from which to provide a tentative evaluation of some of the key issues and what these might mean for animal ethics. This is not to suggest that this research takes an anti-liberal approach, however. Indeed, the contribution that liberalism has made to animal ethics and its role in the revitalisation of the discipline in the 1970s must be acknowledged, particularly in that it offered a valuable alternative to the prevalent animal welfare orthodoxy.

## 1.1 A New Paradigm for Animal Ethics

Although there have always been outliers (not least the ethical socialists discussed in the following chapter), most ethicists and philosophers prior to the 1970s adopted a ‘welfare’ position with regards to the moral standing of nonhuman animals. This is the view that, while nonhuman animals may be worthy of moral concern, they are less important, morally, than humans. The welfare position<sup>3</sup> therefore accepts that, in significant ways, humans are morally superior to nonhumans, but says that we should try to minimise the suffering of nonhumans to only that which is deemed ‘necessary’ (this, of course, is a highly subjective and vague term, which can therefore be used to justify a great deal of exploitation and injustice). Since few people nowadays would be prepared to argue that nonhumans have *no* moral standing, the welfare position might usefully be thought of as the moral baseline, or general ‘moral orthodoxy’ (Garner, 2002, p. 8), in contemporary Western society. It is certainly the position from which the state approaches issues pertaining to nonhuman animals, at least in the UK.

However, the revival of the animal question in the 1960s and ’70s brought with it an alternative to the ‘moral orthodoxy’. ‘Radical’ positions verging on species egalitarianism began to garner respect, or at least consideration, within the academic literature, though the theories behind these positions were themselves not particularly radical; in fact, they derived from well-established moral traditions. I have already mentioned that Singer’s proposal for animal liberation is, in many ways, considered the instigator of this post-1970s revival of interest in animal ethics. Shortly after the publication of Singer’s *Animal Liberation* (1975), an alternative approach was offered by Tom Regan (1980), in the form of a theory of animal rights. These two authors dominated the early literature (in fact, some might argue that, even now, their work is considered the starting point for all subsequent enquiries – most contemporary authors place their work in relation to the theories of Singer and Regan – and that no other work has come as close to revolutionising the discipline). Given the liberal theories they proposed – utilitarianism and rights, respectively – contemporary animal ethics thus has a strong tie with the liberal tradition. But what does liberal animal ethics look like? To answer this, we have to examine the approaches put forward by the dominant theorists.

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<sup>3</sup> This should not be mistaken for animal welfare *science*, which is an entirely different field (looking at the physiological and behavioural needs of nonhumans), though in common rhetoric animal welfare measures (supported by animal welfare science) are often associated with a ‘welfarist’ moral position.

### 1.1.1 Utilitarianism

In essence, utilitarianism holds that the best action is that which maximises utility – in other words, promoting the greatest amount of happiness. With the maximisation of happiness as the ultimate goal then, the only relevant consideration for utilitarianism is the ability to feel pleasure and pain; *sentience*, rather than any other capability (rationality, intelligence, etc.), is thus the benchmark for moral standing. Utilitarianism as a moral theory has a long history, and, in fact, Singer was not the first utilitarian to apply the theory to nonhuman animals. Widely regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham (somewhat grudgingly<sup>4</sup>) recognised that nonhumans were the rightful beneficiaries of moral consideration:

The day *may* come, when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate? What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse, or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an [human] infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?

(Bentham, 1789, p. 325 emphasis in original)

Arguably then, Singer simply took this to its logical conclusion: that nonhumans and humans have an equal interest in not suffering, and therefore deserve equal

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<sup>4</sup> Bentham did not put this conclusion into practice in his own life, however; indeed, just before he acknowledges that the important factor is suffering, he argues that meat-eating is entirely justified since humans *need* meat – thus “we are the better for it, and they [nonhumans] are never the worse [since] they have none of those long-protracted anticipations of future misery which we have” (Bentham, 1789, p. 324). A cynic might argue that this is an ‘ad hoc’ argument; Bentham was simply trying to justify his love of meat and refusal to give it up. Though his comments about nonhumans not being able to plan for the future could be attributed to historical ignorance (our understanding of nonhuman capabilities has greatly advanced thanks to new discoveries in animal behaviour, though there are still some who deny that nonhumans can anticipate future events), his comments on meat are less justifiable, considering that there were many vegetarians even in the nineteenth century (see the following chapter) demonstrating that meat was *not* a physiological human need. Bentham also argued that death at the hands of humans would be much faster and less painful than a natural death in the wild. Of course, this is highly contentious (there are many ways to die in the wild, not all of which are violent or painful). Certainly, given the choice of a natural death in the wild, or death by contemporary industrial farming or vivisection, I think I would take my chances with the former. In any case, while Bentham was not sure that inflicting *death* on an animal was wrong, his point was that inflicting *suffering* could hardly ever be justified.

consideration of this interest (the ‘equal consideration of interests’ principle). This is not synonymous with equal *treatment*, however. In fact, it might often lead to drastically different treatment. Nor does it automatically rule out exploitation, for the principle of utility must always preside; therefore, once all interests have been given equal weight, it might still be the case that nonhuman exploitation is justified because it will ensure the greatest amount of happiness overall. Clearly, utilitarianism must involve some serious calculations as to what will maximise utility, once all (relevant) interests have been taken into account. Unlike Bentham (as well as contemporary utilitarians such as Hare (1999)), however, Singer does not believe that death is not a harm for nonhumans. For nonhumans who are self-conscious, at least, death *is* a harm as it violates their preference for continued life (Singer, 1993)<sup>5</sup>.

Although utilitarianism has been greatly influential (both in general moral philosophy, and, specifically, in establishing sentience as the most important factor for moral consideration), it remains quite controversial, amassing copious criticism throughout the years. One of the central critiques of utilitarianism relates to its emphasis on consequences, specifically that the ‘demands of utility’ can often conflict with other things we value, like justice and rights (Rachels, 2003). A hypothetical example of this, which is particularly relevant for the animal question, is whether utilitarianism would require us to experiment on a small number of human, three-year old orphans with severe cognitive impairment, if doing so would cure some devastating human disease (let us imagine, for argument’s sake, that it would). Since the disease leads to a painful and prolonged death for millions of people each year, then, balancing the interests of the orphans in not suffering (due to being experimented on) with the interests of millions of people in not suffering from the disease, it would seem that maximising utility would require us to carry out the experiments. Yet, most people would balk at this conclusion, primarily because it appears to infringe on the orphans’ *right* not to be experimented on.

Of course, utilitarians do not endorse rights, human or otherwise. Nevertheless, this seems to be at odds with public opinion. (In fact, recognising the usefulness and

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<sup>5</sup> Singer can justify this argument because he advocates *preference* utilitarianism. As opposed to classical utilitarianism, which is only concerned with maximizing happiness, preference utilitarianism judges an action to be ‘good’ or ‘bad’ depending on whether it fulfills the interests, or preferences, of (all) those involved/affected by the action. Thus, the best action is that which promotes the interests of the majority.

widespread acceptance of rights discourse in contemporary Western society, Peter Singer (1978) has himself invoked the language of rights, acceding that (some) nonhumans have the ‘right’ to equal consideration of their interests. This has caused some confusion, particularly amongst animal rights activists, many of whom consider Singer’s *Animal Liberation* to be the ‘bible’ of the animal *rights* movement. As a result, Singer has since attempted to clarify his position, explaining that rights are not significant to his argument, and could be “dispensed with [...] altogether” (Singer, 1978, p. 122). His earlier use of the term ‘rights’ was merely a “concession to popular moral rhetoric” (ibid), which he now regards as regrettable.) The purpose of rights, for most people, is precisely to protect the individual from certain harms that may otherwise be in the interests of the ‘greater good’. Under utilitarianism, however, this has no moral bearing; indeed, utilitarianism may often *require* us to sacrifice the individual to the ‘greater good’.

There is another important critique of utilitarianism (that is particularly relevant to animal ethics) related to this discussion of the *aggregative* nature of utilitarianism. Returning to the previous hypothetical example of experimenting on severely cognitively impaired orphans, the utilitarian could avoid the disagreeable conclusion (that we should experiment on them) by revising the theory so that the best action is that which conforms to a set of rules whose general adherence by members of society brings about the most happiness/satisfies the most preferences (Rule Utilitarianism), rather than judging actions on a case-by-case basis (Act Utilitarianism). The utilitarian might then conclude that, *as a rule*, we should not experiment on severely cognitively impaired orphans, because this (rule) will generally contribute to the flourishing of society (compared to a society in which orphans may be experimented on). Singer, however, is an *act* utilitarian. Consequently, in order to assess whether an action is morally permissible, he must weigh up all the relevant interests of all parties, in order to conclude whether that action will bring about the greatest satisfaction of preferences. What several critics have pointed out is that utilitarianism does not seem to warrant the significant changes to our treatment of nonhumans that Singer suggests it does. In particular, Singer’s insistence on vegetarianism as an outcome of utilitarian calculations seems to be somewhat premature. As Regan (1980) points out, it is not merely the ‘trivial’ human interest in enjoying the taste of meat that is at stake with regards to animal agriculture, but also much more significant vested (economic) interests in

“business-as-usual” (ibid, p.310); interests which must be seriously considered by any self-respecting utilitarian<sup>6</sup>. “What Singer would have to show” Regan (ibid, p.316) concludes, “is that the consequences of treating animals [badly] are worse, all considered, than [the consequences] that would result if we treated them differently [better] – for example, if they were not raised intensively. *Possibly* this could be shown” (emphasis in original) – especially taking into account other human interests, such as environmental sustainability and improved (human) health associated with vegetarianism. Nevertheless, “[i]t is not *obviously* true that the consequences for everyone affected would be better [...] Some nice calculations are necessary to show this” (ibid, pp.311-312, emphasis in original); calculations that Singer does not provide. Moreover, while the utilitarian case for vegetarianism might plausibly be made, it is less clear whether such calculations would be as favourable to ending other areas of animal exploitation, such as vivisection.

### 1.1.2 Rights

Given the problems with utilitarianism outlined above, Regan (1980) suggests that the only way to ensure the protection of individuals’ interests is to assign them rights. With the publication of Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983) around the same time as Singer’s *Animal Liberation*, rights theory was seen as the main alternative to utilitarianism, and these two approaches continue to dominate the animal ethics literature.

Despite adhering to the Kantian language of capabilities, Regan begins his theory by challenging the Kantian notion that only moral *agents* – those able to take moral responsibility for their actions (requiring autonomy) – are owed moral consideration (Regan, 1983; Benton, 1996). Instead, Regan argues that we also have a moral duty towards other individuals whom he classes as moral *patients*. This includes, amongst other things, a duty not to harm them,

in virtue of their possession of inherent value. [...] On Regan’s view, a sufficient (but not necessary) condition for possession of inherent value is to be a ‘subject of a life’. Though it includes sentience, this criterion is more demanding than the utilitarian doctrine. To count as a subject of a life, individuals must have preferences, purposes, some sense of self-

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<sup>6</sup> I discuss these vested interests in further detail in chapter five.

identity through time, and enough capacity to be harmed or benefited by the actions of others to be said to have interests.

(Benton, 1996, p. 24)

Since (some) nonhuman animals have these capacities, and are thus ‘subjects-of-a-life’, these same individuals have a moral *right* not to be treated in certain ways (not to be eaten, for example (Regan, 1980)). Before going on to discuss the socialist critique of rights-based approaches, it might be useful here to outline the distinction between rights and abolitionism, since there is much confusion between these positions in public discourse, and even within the animal rights movement.

Because Regan (1983) posits that all ‘subjects-of-a-life’ have an equal right to life and liberty, the rights position is often conflated with abolitionism<sup>7</sup>: that is, the view that *all* uses of nonhumans are morally illegitimate (including, for most abolitionists, the keeping of ‘pets’). Both abolitionism and rights are therefore regarded as antithetical to the ‘welfarist’ position (or the general ‘moral orthodoxy’, as it is also known). Besides Regan, this blurring of the boundaries between rights and abolitionism is most apparent in the work of legal scholar, Gary Francione (1996, 2000). Implied in his work is the conviction that animal *rights*, once universally accepted (or perhaps legalised), will ultimately lead to the abolition of all animal use. This, of course, overlooks the fact that granting rights to nonhumans does not necessarily ensure their ‘freedom’ from (all) human use; much obviously depends on *which* rights are granted. In particular, by adopting an alternative rights approach (to the Kantian-inspired capacities approach of Regan) based on *interests*, contemporary authors have specifically sought to “decouple animal rights from animal liberation” (Cochrane, 2012, p. 25) and thus provide a more nuanced and moderate approach to animal rights.

The interest-based rights approach holds that rights derive from interests rather than the possession of some capacity, or being a ‘subject-of-a-life’. Interests themselves are a component of an individual’s wellbeing; animals therefore have interests because they have a wellbeing (Feinberg, 1974; Cochrane, 2007). For animal advocacy, this position is appealing in that it (potentially) goes further than the moral orthodoxy, since

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<sup>7</sup> We can also draw a distinction between abolitionism and animal ‘liberation’. Though the latter connotes abolitionism, it is not always intended so; sometimes the phrase ‘animal liberation’ simply refers to animal rights (divorced from abolitionism) or, more broadly, an end to *exploitation* (but not necessarily an end to being used, where this is not exploitative).

individuals may have an interest in many things, not simply avoiding pain and suffering. On the other hand, many of the things that we may have an interest in might be deemed too trivial to warrant a right. So, not all interests justify rights; an interest must be *sufficient* to warrant a right, but it is up to the political philosopher to judge what is sufficient.

Though interest-based rights were first applied to nonhumans by Joel Feinberg (1974) in the 1970s (and later by James Rachels (1991)), this alternative theory of rights was largely obscured by the popularity and dominance of Regan's approach in the animal ethics literature. Nevertheless, the publication of Alasdair Cochrane's *Animal Rights Without Liberation* (2012) suggests a new wave of interest in the approach (see also Garner, 2013). Cochrane (2012, p. 10) argues that nonhuman animals "have no intrinsic interest in liberty" since they lack autonomy – defined as the ability to frame, revise and pursue one's conception of the good. Since rights derive from interests, nonhuman animals do not, therefore, have a right to liberty. According to this view, owning and using them, in certain situations, is, then, morally permissible. Cochrane does, however, believe that nonhumans have an interest in avoiding suffering, and therefore they have the right not to have suffering inflicted on them. In this way, as Cochrane has demonstrated, rights are not (necessarily) synonymous with abolitionism.

Despite the widespread acceptance of rights theory within liberal circles, we should not take it for granted that rights are entirely without controversy. What is most important given the purpose of this research is that one of the most sustained critiques over the years has come from socialist scholars. It is worth briefly reviewing this criticism here as it helps us understand some of the problems with the liberal approach in relation to animal advocacy.

The first main problem that socialists have with rights (for humans and nonhumans) is that rights, as an abstraction, are meaningless without material equality. In other words, there is a fundamental disjuncture between rights in theory and rights in practice. While individuals may have rights on paper, in practice they are often prevented from claiming those rights by a variety of structural factors (e.g. poverty, lack of education, etc.). Yet liberal rights theory, it is argued, does not take into account such structurally induced vulnerability, while the liberal *state* does not put in place support mechanisms to help vulnerable individuals claim their rights (partly due to the liberal conceptualisation of liberty as non-interference). Consequently, liberalism has been

accused (by, for example, Benton, 1993) of perpetuating inequality; in essence granting rights only to those who can use them.

This leads on to the second major problem that socialists have with rights theory, which is that it takes as its starting point the characteristically liberal individual – i.e. independent and isolated from social forces and from other individuals. The rights assigned to such an individual therefore take no notice of social relations, or the fact that individuals may require other individuals to help them realise/fulfil their rights; in fact, these rights are supposed to protect the individual *from* other individuals. Fundamentally, then, rights are a product of liberal-capitalist society, which “[renders] individuals vulnerable to harms, from which protection is offered by the allocation of rights, which, in turn, cannot fulfil their promise in practice” (Benton, 1996, p. 33). In other words, rights are only needed in a society that rewards self-interest and competition; with a transformation of society, to one based on the values of brotherhood and solidarity, rights would therefore be made redundant (Lukes, 1987, p. 62).

How does this relate to animal ethics, specifically? One of the most detailed and sustained critiques of animal rights has been put forward by Marxist and sociologist, Ted Benton (1993, 1996). I focus here on two of Benton’s central criticisms, since these issues in particular remain largely ignored by liberal scholars. The first issue that Benton highlights is the difficulty in assigning rights in the case of nonhuman animals when the majority of animal exploitation is, nowadays, institutional. Traditionally, rights are viewed as claims “*to* something and *against* someone” (Feinberg, 1974, p. 43 emphasis in original; Cohen, 1986), with the “someone” usually signifying “an officeholder in an institution or else a private individual” (Feinberg, 1974, p. 44). However, apart from cases of individual animal cruelty/abuse, the vast majority of animal exploitation nowadays is *structural* in nature, with countless individuals/groups having a part to play. In the case of factory farming, for example, to whom do we assign responsibility for the suffering of the animals: the farmer, the meatpacking plant, the restaurant chain, the butcher, the consumer (etc.)? This points to a fundamental problem with rights, as they are traditionally conceived, which is that there must be a “someone” to whom responsibility can be assigned (Benton, 1996).

The second issue troubling Benton is that of conflicting rights. This is exemplified, Benton (1993, p. 148) argues, in the case of abusive ‘pet’ owners, where there is clearly a tension between the rights of the human ‘owner’ and the rights of the

animal. Moreover, the traditional, liberal division of the public/private sphere further problematises the issue by making it difficult to prosecute such individuals. For Benton, this means that rights alone are no guarantee of protection for nonhumans; what is needed *firstly* is a transformation of social relations of power and dependency in the private, domestic sphere.

On the other hand, this criticism does not necessarily discredit the entire liberal approach to animal ethics. Francione (2000), for example, agrees with Benton that property rights prove problematic for nonhumans, yet this does not lead him to abandon the liberal rights framework; on the contrary, Francione simply advocates granting nonhumans the basic, *primordial*, right not to be treated as property. This right, he argues, is fundamental to their enjoyment of all other rights, and without it nonhumans cannot even be considered within the politico-legal domain. Admittedly, however, Francione's approach is not widely accepted amongst liberal animal ethics scholars. Cochrane (2012, p.10), as we already saw, argues that nonhumans "have no intrinsic interest in liberty" since they lack autonomy. (Presumably Benton would agree, since, although he regards property rights as problematic for nonhumans, he also does not believe them to be autonomous. Thus, the paradox that prompts him to reject the liberal rights discourse entirely.) Garner (2004, p.36) also disputes the necessity of granting nonhumans the right not to be treated as property, since, he points out, wild animals are not considered property and yet they are not always better off than their domesticated compatriots.

The point is that rights theory clearly plays an important part in liberal animal ethics, yet rights (for humans, as well as nonhumans) remain problematic. Socialism, on the other hand, is particularly well suited to highlighting these issues. On the other hand, rights are not automatically ruled out in a socialist approach to animal ethics<sup>8</sup>. An alternative, discussed by Lukes (1987), is to render rights more socialist in form. A socialist right would be "more positive, less dependent on the activation of the right-holder, [...] more organisational than political, [...] devices to secure the benefits to be derived from harmonious communal living, not protection for the individual against the predations of others" (Campbell 1983, cited in Lukes 1985, p.95).

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<sup>8</sup> I discuss the ethical socialist approach to rights in chapter three.

### 1.1.3 Contractarianism

Although the rights and utilitarian positions of Regan and Singer (respectively) have framed the contemporary animal ethics literature, challenges have, of course, been posed, albeit from within a liberal framework. Given the influence of utilitarianism and Kantianism in moral philosophy, it is perhaps not surprising that one of these challenges employs the *other* major alternative in Western philosophical tradition: contractarianism, or Social Contract Theory.

In fact one of the oldest and most influential strands of moral philosophy, Social Contract Theory's basic premise is that social living is only possible because we have all agreed, implicitly, to abide by a set of rules governing our interactions with one another, with these rules being enforced by an established agency (generally, the state) (Rachels, 2003). Most often associated with Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), Social Contract Theory underwent something of a revival in the twentieth century thanks to John Rawls (1971), who blended the theory with a Kantian-inspired capacities approach in order to create a theory of justice. Rawls believed that the key to deciding which principles we could all agree to live by is impartiality. Thus, we must imagine ourselves in a hypothetical situation, which Rawls termed the 'original position', casting off our prejudices (gender, race, social class, etc.) in favour of a 'veil of ignorance'. Rawls argued that people in the original position, behind the veil of ignorance, would design their society according to two fundamental principles of (distributive) justice. The first principle is that each person is granted an equal right to as much civil liberty as possible, so long as everyone has the same liberty. The second principle states that inequality may be justified so long as it favours the least advantaged party, and so long as there is "fair equality of opportunity" (Rowlands, 1997, p. 238). Since the parties under this veil have no way of knowing which structures might favour their well-being, Rawls believed that, as rational, risk-averse beings, they are more likely to design a society according to these principles, in which no one is privileged over others.

Given that the social contract is traditionally seen as a reciprocal obligation between two parties of equal agency, contractarianism is generally thought to be "unable to underwrite the granting of direct moral status to non-human animals [since] non-human animals are, it is assumed, not rational agents, and contractarian approaches subsume only rational agents" (Rowlands, 1997, p. 235). This does not mean, however,

that nonhumans cannot be *beneficiaries* of a theory of morality (though some contractarians believe they cannot (see, for example, Carruthers, 1992)). Although contractarianism cannot, it is generally thought, grant *direct* moral standing to nonhumans, it can grant nonhumans *secondary* moral standing, though the extent to which we should be content with secondary moral standing for nonhumans remains contentious (Cohen, 2007; Garner, 2012; Tanner, 2013).

Nevertheless, some contractarians, most notably Mark Rowlands (1997), have specifically sought to challenge this traditional view, and thereby render contractarianism more amenable to animal advocacy. In revising contractarianism (specifically Rawls's version) to be more pro-animal, Rowlands (*ibid*, p.238) focuses on the first of Rawls's key principles (mentioned above), which Rowlands calls the 'intuitive equality argument' (or IEA). This is summarised as follows:

if a property is undeserved in the sense that its possessor has done nothing to merit its possession, then its possessor is not morally entitled to whatever benefits accrue from that possession. Possession of the property is a morally arbitrary matter, and, therefore, cannot be used to determine the moral entitlements of its possessor.

(*ibid*, pp.238-239)

Though the second principle (which Rowlands terms the 'social contract argument') is the better known of the two, the IEA is *prior* to the social contract argument; in other words, the IEA must be fulfilled before we can address the social contract argument. Consequently, Rowlands argues that Rawls should reject the idea that the contract only subsumes rational agents, because rationality, he argues, is also an undeserved property. Like gender and social class, then, rationality and species are aspects of one's identity that should be shed in the original position, because they are aspects over which we have no control.

Critics of this approach have put forward several reasons why we should be sceptical about applying contractarianism to animal ethics (see, for example, Garner, 2012). There are two criticisms, in particular, that I wish to briefly mention here, as they deliver, in my view, the most damaging blow to the contractarian approach to animal ethics. The first major criticism – which is commonly applied to Rawls's theory in general – relates to his use of the maximin strategy (Wolff, 2006); in other words, the assumption that persons in the original position will be risk-averse (and therefore design a society that protects the interests of the least advantaged, in case they end up, once the

veil is lifted, as someone in that position). In the case of nonhumans, however, they might be more willing to take the risk (that they end up as a nonhuman), especially “if they rationalise that, as animals, they would not be autonomous agents and therefore had less to lose by death” (Garner, 2012, p. 168)<sup>9</sup>.

The second major criticism relates to Rowlands and Rawls’s emphasis on ‘reflective equilibrium’, whereby the original position is designed so as to lead to principles that are in tune with, and reflect, our pre-existing moral judgements (the two principles described earlier) (Rawls, 1971; Rowlands, 1997, pp. 240–241). “The problem” Garner (2012, p. 169) points out, “with accepting that there are moral principles we value independently of what is decided by the participants in the contractual situation is that it reduces the importance of the contract device”. In other words, if the IEA allows for the inclusion of nonhumans, and is not dependent on the contract for its validity (being a pre-existing normative judgment), why not just dispense with the contract altogether, and simply “[invoke] the intuitive equality argument as a free-standing principle” (ibid)?

So far, I have set out what the liberal approach to animal ethics looks like, based on its most dominant strands in the literature, and also addressed some of the major problems with each of these theories. In this last section, I turn to some of the more general characteristics of the liberal approach (i.e. that can be found across the different theories) that, I argue, prove the most problematic for animal advocacy, and which lend themselves well to a socialist critique.

#### **1.1.4 The Liberal Reliance On Capacities**

Traditional liberal animal ethics has focused, almost entirely, on the entitlements derived from the innate *capacities*, or capabilities, of individuals (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011; Cochrane, 2013a). These capacities therefore determine the moral worth, or value, of the individual. Rights-based approaches, such as Tom Regan’s, epitomise this position, though it is also characteristic of other liberal approaches such as that of Martha Nussbaum (2007), who explicitly sets out to develop a “capabilities approach” to animal ethics. From a Marxist perspective, the problem with deriving

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<sup>9</sup> Note that whether or not nonhumans are, in fact, autonomous is irrelevant here; the important point is whether individuals in the original position believe so (and, arguably, the majority of people do not regard nonhuman animals as autonomous).

value from capabilities, and with the idea of ‘intrinsic value’, is that value is, in fact, produced by social relations (Marx, 1990; Wadiwel, 2016). Consequently, deriving rights or just moral treatment from intrinsic value is problematic; arguably, we should look, instead, at the systems of exchange and production that produce animal value (Benton, 1993; Wadiwel, 2016).

There are several possible ways the liberal animal ethicist might respond. The most compelling rejoinder would be to point out that there is an alternative to the capacities approach, which does not require abandoning liberalism, in the form of the *relational* approach to animal ethics. In essence, this approach argues that entitlements derive not from an individual’s capacities or interests, but from the individual’s relationships with others. One of the earliest versions of this argument can be found in the feminist care-based ethics of Carol Gilligan (1982), later embellished by other scholars (see, for example, Donovan and Adams, 2007). Challenging the mainstream, Kantian, ‘masculine’ tendency towards *rationality* in the field of ethics and morality, these scholars emphasised empathy and ‘caring’ over indifferent moral principles or rules. However, this empathy turns on having a personal, one-on-one relationship with another being. Care-based ethicists thus reject the apparently masculine ‘obligation’ to help strangers in need, for, without a *personal* relationship, ““caring” cannot take place” (Rachels, 2003, p. 169). This supposedly explains the priority we intuitively give to our immediate friends and family, and, in the case of nonhumans, explains why we care about our ‘pets’ (who we often regard as members of the family) but not (generally) livestock (Noddings, 2013).

Clearly, then, this does not appear to be a better alternative for animal ethicists to adopt, as it apparently leaves the majority of nonhumans vulnerable (those with whom we do not have a personal relationship). In general the relational approach can also be criticised for its arbitrary nature, and for allowing *subjective* concepts (such as empathy and caring) to govern our principles of justice (Cochrane, 2010). In particular, our personal relationships and *feelings* about others are often a product of the social and historical context and not a reliable indicator of what is morally ‘right’; in the past, people felt that slavery was morally acceptable, for example (Rachels, 2003). Arguably, we tend to have personal relationships with those who are similar to ourselves (in terms of social class, religion, etc.), but this does not mean we should prioritise those

individuals over others, nor that we should base our system of morality/justice on what is ‘usually, or traditionally, done’.

There is one relational approach, however, which manages to avoid the above problems: Donaldson and Kymlicka’s (2011) group-differentiated rights approach to animal ethics, outlined in *Zoopolis*. Employing the concepts of citizenship, denizenship and sovereignty to nonhuman animals, Donaldson and Kymlicka set out, arguably, a more nuanced concept of rights, based on the different relationships we have with different groups of nonhumans (specifically, domesticated animals, ‘liminal’ or urban animals such as squirrels and rats, and wild animals). This approach argues that domesticated animals should be granted special, *positive* rights in recognition of the close, dependent relationship they have with us, whilst also justifying the traditional position of non-intervention towards wild animals that most people (including Donaldson and Kymlicka) feel is intuitively correct.

However, the extent to which this approach really differs from traditional animal ethics can be overstated (Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan, 2016). Although they criticise traditional animal ethics for focusing too exclusively on capacities and ignoring the duties that stem from relationships, Donaldson and Kymlicka’s approach is still very much centred around a capacity-oriented ethic, specifically their fundamental belief that nonhuman animals are owed the right to life and liberty (which leads them to advocate the abolition of animal agriculture and animal experimentation). From here, they *then* discuss what other rights nonhumans may be owed due to their differing relationships with us, but the aforementioned rights are a given, non-negotiable. As a result, the approach is open to the critique of the capacity-based nature of liberal animal ethics outlined above (though it does come closest to addressing this issue from within the liberal tradition).

### **1.1.5 Liberalism, (Political) Agency, And Strategy**

The other major problem with the liberal approach, which I wish to introduce here<sup>10</sup>, relates to the issues of agency and political strategy. Reflecting liberalism’s emphasis on individualism, liberal animal ethics generally regards the individual as the key political agent. As a result, this means that, in terms of strategy, it is generally assumed

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<sup>10</sup> I discuss these issues in further detail in chapter six.

that change will come about (in favour of nonhumans) if only enough people can be persuaded of the cause through rational moral argument. In the academic literature, this attitude is apparent in Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1996), the first edition of which, having established a utilitarian case for animal advocacy, then extraneously ended with a collection of vegetarian recipes, suggesting that it is up to the individual to effect change<sup>11</sup>. This conviction has clearly infiltrated animal activism too, exemplified by the 'go vegan' approach that dominates the animal protection movement (for example, in recent, popular campaigns such as 'veganuary', which encourages members of the public to try being vegan for the month of January). As a result, traditional animal ethics has been criticised (see, for example, Benton, 1993; Nibert, 2002; Torres, 2007; Maurizi, 2013) for treating animal exploitation as a question of personal morality, rather than political economy. In fact, traditional, liberal animal ethics explicitly *denies* the importance of the economic system as one of the primary causes of nonhuman oppression and exploitation<sup>12</sup>. Not only does this assume that the politico-economic climate has little effect on people's psyches, but more importantly,

[a]s an essentially liberal outlook [...] it sets out from a distorted view of society [...] treating questions of power, authority, the state, capitalism, etc., as peripheral to the problem of ethics, which it cordons off from the messiness of the world in order to better clarify its own conceptual questions. The idea that comes from this is that we can work changes in society by educating the public, appealing to "reason". But [...] there are reasons why speciesism has survived for over ten thousand years, and not all of them have to do with people being "misinformed" or somehow in the dark about the facts.

(Sanbonmatsu, cited in Maurizi, 2013 no page no.)

Not only, then, does traditional animal ethics lack a *political* strategy for change (preferring instead to rely on persuasion, rational arguments, and activism that focuses on 'converting'), but also its choice of political agency is perhaps not the most effective (as I elaborate in chapter six).

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<sup>11</sup> The second edition is even more explicit, concluding that "living a cruelty-free lifestyle is important, but it is equally essential to work actively for an end to animal exploitation" by, we are told, joining an (animal protection) organisation (Singer, 1995, p. 261). It is a question of individual will, then, with no mention of political, economic or structural barriers.

<sup>12</sup> In his preface to the 2004 edition of *The Case for Animal Rights*, Regan (2004) acknowledges his initial naïveté in thinking philosophical argument alone will change the situation for nonhumans in society; similarly, in the conclusion he remarks that moralising is no substitute for political action, yet he *still* fails to make any mention of the role of the economic system in animal exploitation.

Again, however, the liberal might reply that these issues do not necessarily discredit liberal animal ethics as a whole. Specifically, they might point out recent attempts to, apparently, ‘politicise’ the discipline (for an overview, see Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan, 2016). While recognising that the novelty of such approaches has perhaps been overstated, Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan (2016) conclude that this new ‘turn’ in animal ethics does, in fact, add something new to the literature, though not what other authors have suggested<sup>14</sup>. Its originality, they argue, lies in its focus on justice “as distinctive from morality” (ibid, p.11), and, in particular, its submission of normative *and* constructive (rather than just explanatory) prescriptions regarding the transformation of existing political structures and processes in order to secure justice for nonhumans. This is “what makes these contributions distinctive from previous work in animal ethics, which focused far more on the moral obligations of individuals, or simply assumed that personal obligations ought to be enforced by the state” (ibid, p.13). In other words, while the traditional agent of change has been the individual, this new literature arguably treats the *state* and governmental institutions as the key agent of change. And, in contrast to the traditional literature which lacks a political strategy for change (relying, instead, on the state enforcing personal obligations), the new literature does offer an explicitly political strategy, through the reimagining of political structures. Selected examples of this new ‘turn’, highlighted by Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan (ibid, pp.12-13), include Donaldson and Kymlicka’s *Zoopolis* (2011), Martha Nussbaum’s (2007) capabilities approach, and Cochrane’s (2013b) cosmopolitan theory of rights. However, the fact remains that because most of the attempts to ‘politicise’ animal ethics have come from the liberal tradition many of the problems outlined above still apply to these approaches (particularly, in relation to the three examples just mentioned, the critiques of rights and capacities). In addition, one of the major problems with their reliance on the *state* as the key agent of change (in contrast to the individual) is that this ignores the vested interests of the state in continuing animal exploitation (a point that I discuss in detail in chapter five). In general, therefore, while the attempt to transform political structures is commendable and sorely needed, there is still a lack of engagement with the political economy of animal ethics, and a willingness to question

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<sup>14</sup> Crucially, the argument that there has been a recent politicisation of the discipline not only (wrongly) implies that the traditional literature is *not* political (which Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan rightly dispute), but it also ignores much earlier (pre-1970s) *political* approaches to animal ethics, such as that of the ethical socialists, which I discuss in the following two chapters.

the role of capitalism in animal exploitation<sup>15</sup>. (Arguably, liberalism's traditionally symbiotic relationship with capitalism suggests that perhaps liberalism is fundamentally ill-suited to animal advocacy; this is therefore one of the questions that this research attempts to address.)

## **1.2 Conclusion: What's liberalism (ever) done for us (animals)?**

This chapter has established the nature of liberal animal ethics, and suggested some of the most problematic (for animal advocacy) characteristics of this approach. I began by examining the most important strands in the literature – utilitarianism, rights, and contractarianism – and their (respective) critiques. In particular, I emphasised the socialist critique of rights – that rights are too abstract and take too little account of context – given their centrality to the liberal analytic tradition. In relation to animal rights, I noted Benton's central critique – that it is unclear who to assign responsibility in the case of nonhuman rights, and that liberal rights theory pays too little attention to the problem of conflicting rights (particularly with regards to liberalism's emphasis on liberty and moral pluralism) – which has gone largely unchallenged by liberal scholars. I then focused on some of the liberal approach's (most problematic) *general* characteristics; firstly, the liberal approach's insistence on nonhumans' value deriving from capacities or interests, when, from a Marxist perspective, value is socially produced. Thus, the exploitation of nonhumans *reflects* their socio-economic and political value (Wadiwel, 2016). Although this issue may be solved by adopting a relational approach to animal ethics, I argued that there are other reasons why we should reject this approach, especially because of its subjective and somewhat arbitrary nature.

The second area I examined was liberalism's lack of engagement with political strategy and agency. Traditional animal ethics implicitly regards the individual as the principal agent for change. It is believed that the key to change (on behalf of nonhumans) lies in persuading as many people as possible to adopt a cruelty-free lifestyle. This approach says nothing, however, about the economic or historical context of nonhuman exploitation, and it assumes that individuals actually have the power to affect change, which is highly debateable (see chapter six for a discussion of this issue).

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<sup>15</sup> I also deal with these questions in chapter five.

Thus, while liberal animal ethics excels at providing a moral imperative to care about nonhumans, one of its major limitations is a lack of engagement with the question of how the goals of the animal advocacy movement can be achieved, and in particular, a lack of critical reflection on the fact that the current approach (focussed exclusively on persuading individuals to change their lifestyles) is not arguably working. Although recent attempts to ‘politicise’ the discipline admittedly *do* offer a political strategy for change in the form of prescriptions for transforming political institutions, they still do not engage with the political economy of animal exploitation, nor with the question of whether, in fact, power actually lies with the state.

Ultimately, one of the most telling (and, arguably, the most important) signs that the liberal approach might not be the best vehicle for animal advocacy is that, in the forty years since the revitalisation of the discipline (according to the liberal framework established by Singer and Regan), there has not been much improvement in the situation for nonhuman animals (in Western society at least); certainly not what one would expect after forty years (if the approach was working) (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011). In terms of meat consumption, at the start of the revitalisation of the discipline in 1975, roughly 3.4 billion farm animals<sup>16</sup> were slaughtered in the US that year. By 2014 this figure had risen to 9.1 billion (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service). Although this only indicates an increase in overall meat consumption (which might not be indicative of meat consumed per person if calculated according to population increase), we also know that the number of vegans in the US has remained constant throughout the past dozen years despite the presence of vegan advocacy during this period (Phelps 2015, p.1). The statistics for animal experimentation are similarly grim. While the number of live animals used in experiments and scientific procedures in Britain fell during the 1970s and ’80s, it has been rapidly rising since around the year 2000 (Baker and Mellows-Facer, 2014). According to the UK Home Office (2015, p. 10), “between 2005 and 2013, the total number of procedures increased by 42%”<sup>17</sup>.

This suggests that liberalism may be an ineffective framework for animal ethics, and that, given the persistent liberal bias in the literature, an alternative to the liberal

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<sup>16</sup> Excluding fish, crustaceans, rabbits and other farmed animals for whom the USDA does not provide data, and excluding also non-farm animals such as horses.

<sup>17</sup> Whether or not the severity of these procedures has decreased recently is not of interest to me, or anyone who believes that (all) animal experimentation is morally reprehensible.

paradigm is sorely needed. The purpose of this thesis is thus to examine whether socialism offers a more convincing alternative approach to animal ethics than has previously been acknowledged. Considering, however, the nature of socialism – in particular, the numerous versions of socialism that one may adopt – the following chapter firstly sets out to establish the main varieties of socialism, and, in particular, (given their importance to the rest of the thesis) the most pertinent differences between ethical socialism and Marxism. As the chapter demonstrates, there are many inconsistencies between these schools of thought that need to be aired in order to establish a coherent socialist animal ethic. Since many of these tensions were being played out amongst British socialists of the 1800s, this provides a useful starting point into the analysis, as well as offering an original contribution to the discipline since the historical ‘links in practice’ between socialism and animal protection have been largely ignored by mainstream animal ethicists. However, in order to understand the ideological links perceived by these individuals, we need to firstly understand the historical context as well as their individual backgrounds. Thus, the discussion of the various forms of socialism is situated within a wider examination of the emergence of socialism in Britain in the 1800s, and the socialist organisations founded in the last half of that century, including their most prominent members. This sets the stage, in chapter three, for an examination of the ideological links perceived by some of these individuals between their socialism and their concern for nonhuman animals, before finally, in chapter four, critically evaluating this particular socialist approach and what it might be lacking in terms of providing a complete and valid alternative to liberal animal ethics.

## Chapter 2 Socialism and Animal Ethics

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Chapter one set out the key features of the traditional liberal approach to animal ethics in order to establish whether there might be something about liberal animal ethics that can account for the lack of change (for nonhumans) over the forty years since liberalism came to dominate the discipline. Having examined the problems with rights and capabilities, I concluded that, although liberalism has excelled at moralising on behalf of nonhumans, it lacks a political strategy for change, and has neglected to deal with questions of class, agency, and the role of capitalism in animal exploitation. The rest of the thesis thus asks whether socialism might offer a valid alternative, particularly given its propensity for theory *and* practice. Before I can examine the relationship between socialism and animal ethics, however, I firstly need to explain the key differences between the many forms of socialism, as this will clearly have important consequences for the subsequent analysis. This chapter then outlines one of the key distinctions in socialist theory: that is, the differences between Utopian, or ethical, socialism and Marxism (I spend time setting out the key characteristics of ethical socialism in particular given its importance to the rest of the thesis). These differences were reflected in the organisational form of early British socialism, which then provides the background for a closer examination of the dominant socialist organisations in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain, and the attitudes of these organisations towards animal ethics. Having set the (historical) scene, I then introduce the members of these organisations who were most involved in animal protection, as well as the key organisation they established – the Humanitarian League – in order to join together their various social justice causes (including animal protection). However, the themes that they saw as connecting socialism with animal protection are left until chapter three, where they can be examined in greater detail. The purpose of this chapter, then, is simply to contextualise the subsequent analysis, both in terms of socialist theory – by asking, ‘what are the different forms of socialism and how might they approach the animal question differently?’ – and also historically – providing an impressionistic overview of early British socialism and the different socialist organisations of the nineteenth century.

## 2.1 The Traditions of Socialism

Although socialist ideas and themes were already in circulation, what we think of today as ‘socialism’ is traditionally dated to the 1830s, when the first use of the word was recorded (Vincent, 2010). However, there has never just been one definitive socialism; in its early days, inspiration was drawn from diverse sources and traditions, which led to the establishment of countless different versions of socialism. Some of these versions overlapped in certain areas, sharing similar ideas and goals, but differed radically in other ways. Thus, Andrew Vincent (ibid, p.86) explains, “we should be careful about attributing definite parameters to socialism”; we must be constantly mindful of the differences between the socialist traditions, whilst, at the same time, avoiding overemphasising the differences.

In an attempt to make sense of socialism, various systems of classification have been offered over the years. The most common method, however, for separating out the different strands of socialist theory rests on the way these strands deal with the issues of agency and objective; agency referring to the *means* (i.e. ‘how can socialism be achieved?’) and objective referring to the *ends* (i.e. ‘what is the ultimate goal of socialism?’). Taking the ‘means’ first, one of the most common and (supposedly) most prominent distinctions is between *revolutionary* versus *reformist* socialism. Briefly, revolutionary socialism (best expressed through the traditions of Marxism and communism) holds that socialism requires the revolutionary overthrow of the existing socio-economic and political system, which, it believes, currently serves the interests of capitalists and the ruling class (Heywood, 2007). By contrast, reformist socialism (exemplified by the evolutionary socialism of Eduard Bernstein, and the parliamentary, or democratic, socialism often associated with the Fabian Society (discussed shortly)) advocates “democratic gradualism and constitutional reform as the path to socialism” (Vincent, 2010, p. 91). It therefore accepts key liberal democratic institutions and principles, such as parliament, representative democracy and party competition, including a role for the free market (ibid). In relation to the ‘ends’, or ultimate project, of socialism, the main distinction is perceived to be between fundamentalist socialism (such as Marxism and communism) and revisionist socialism (or social democracy). For fundamentalist socialists, the ultimate goal of socialism is to abolish capitalism and replace it with a system of common ownership of the means of production. Revisionists, on the other hand, aim to *reform* capitalism, rather than abolish it (Heywood, 2007).

Clearly there are many overlaps between the revolutionary and fundamentalist camps on the one hand, and between the revisionist and reformist traditions, on the other. Again, however, Vincent (2010, p. 89) advises to be wary of such simplistic distinctions, especially as they tend to gloss over the important differences *within* each tradition.

One other prevalent, and seemingly significant, distinction often made is between revolutionary ‘scientific’ socialism and Utopian, or ethical, socialism. The former is particularly characteristic of Marxism and its focus on historical materialism as being the explanatory factor in social change. According to Marxist theory, material and economic conditions not only determine social and political structures, but they also shape human consciousness. Thus, in order to change class and political relations, we must change the material conditions and relations of production (Vincent, 2010). Utopian socialism, on the other hand, was focused on designing a society that corresponded to human nature as closely as possible, and which would thus “provide the conditions for fully satisfied, happy and virtuous human beings” (ibid, p.90). Utopian socialism was one of the earliest trends in socialist thought, and owes a great deal to the work of Robert Owen, Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier. While Utopian socialism is often conflated with ethical socialism (Heywood, 2007), in fact the latter may be more accurately characterised as a separate tradition, albeit sharing some common tendencies and values. As we shall see below, ethical socialism was particularly characteristic of nineteenth century British socialism, and was (organisationally at least) closely allied with the reformist strand of socialism, exemplified by the Fabian Society (Vincent, 2010).

Principally, ethical socialism’s central focus was on social justice, and on replacing the capitalist system (that valued competition, materialism and selfishness) with an ethic of fellowship that, instead, encouraged mutual aid, cooperation and public service (Garner, 1988, p. 43). Thus, the ethical socialists offered a *moral* critique of capitalism, rather than one based on its economic efficiency (as in reformist socialism) (Vincent, 2010). As with other socialist traditions, ethical socialism drew on a number of different intellectual traditions and values, such as Eastern philosophy (especially Buddhism), mysticism, and Theosophy. Inspiration was also drawn from a variety of past thinkers, especially Percy Bysshe Shelly, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Consequently, one theme that was particularly influential amongst ethical

socialists was (an early form of) environmentalism and sustainability. This ‘back to nature’ philosophy combined a rather middle class romantic idea of the countryside and living off the land with a genuine desire to live a ‘simpler’ life (i.e. with no servants, growing one’s own food, few material possessions, etc.). Yet this approach offered more than simply a practical manual on how to live, it also offered an entirely new morality compared to that of traditional Victorian society. According to Gould (1988, p. 157):

Those who dealt in back to nature ideas posed the concept of world consciousness, that is an awareness of being at one with all living and inanimate things, as an alternative to Christianity. Utilitarian considerations of material profit and loss and an adherence to strict principles of rationality were rejected as guidelines to individual behaviour and to social life as a whole. Advocates of Back to Nature lived or promoted an unconventional life. It had a number of features. They included freedom from direct involvement with factory processes, self-sufficiency, spontaneity and greater leisure time, the reaching of a balance between the forces of the intellect and the emotions, fellowship and brotherhood, and a working with elemental forces as far as was possible.

Thus, “Back to Nature coalesced with socialist aspirations because Socialism was the most important force that challenged the existing social order and its ideology” in much the same way as ‘back to nature’ did (ibid, p.143).

As Gould, above, suggests, an important feature of both ‘back to nature’ and ethical socialism was that they provided an alternative religious, as well as political, ideology. This constituted a pronounced distinction between ethical socialism and the other strands of socialist ideology that emerged during the period. For Christopher Shaw (1990, p. 51), ethical socialism was “a transitional response of a generation which could no longer accept the specifics of Nonconformity but which found a secular socialism alien to its emotions”. Ethical socialism thus substituted as a religion for many of its followers; both in the sense of it providing a spiritual ‘manual’ on how to live, and shaping their worldview, but also in the sense that many of its followers lived by it fervently and were as passionate about converting others to the cause as any missionary.

On the other hand, there were also close ties between ethical socialism and Christian ethics, exemplified by the plethora of Church-based socialist organisations and groups (such as the Labour Church and the Brotherhood Church) (Shaw, 1990; Linehan, 2012). This was particularly true of the ethical socialists involved with the ILP

(discussed shortly) such as Keir Hardie, and, later on, with the Labour Party. If this seems like a contradiction, remember that the different strands of socialism “are not hard-and-fast categories. The thinkers within them often have very different perceptions on certain issues” (Vincent, 2010, p. 90). Many prominent socialists of the nineteenth century are very hard to label; they were often members of several socialist organisations (all professing different versions of socialism) and socialised with other figures representing the full spectrum of emerging political ideologies. As a result, we should be wary of accepting the common distinction between ethical socialism and revolutionary ‘scientific’ socialism. Though the former was often accused by the latter of being ‘utopian’ in character, ethical socialism was no less ‘revolutionary’. Certainly, there were differences between the two – especially that ethical socialism lacked a class-based analysis of change, preferring to focus instead on moral education – but the differences were largely related to *agency* rather than *objective*. In other words, they both sought a radical transformation of society, especially the abolition of capitalism, but they differed over how best this ought to be achieved. These debates played out through the rise and fall of various socialist organisations in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. In particular, for the purposes of my research, it is interesting to note the attitudes of these various organisations to animal protection, and whether some were more conducive to including nonhumans within their sphere of concern than others. The following section thus examines the organisation form of early British socialism, while the subsequent section deals with the attitudes of these organisations to animal protection.

## **2.2 Early British Socialism**

Acquiescing in the aforementioned distinctions, Geoffrey Foote (1997, p. 39) categorises nineteenth century British socialism into three separate strands: Marxists, Fabians, and Ethicals. There is a danger, however, that this exaggerates the influence of Marxism on British socialism, which, in fact, owed very little to Marxist thought. Having said that, one of the first, and most prominent, socialist organisations of the time – the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) – was grounded in the Marxist tradition (or, at least that was the aim of its founder, but, as we shall see, things were not so clear-cut in practice). Established in 1882 as the ‘Democratic Federation’, the ‘social’ prefix was later added in 1883 when the organisation adopted a more explicitly socialist platform

that included common ownership of the land (Yeo, 1977). In contrast to the spiritual and moral emphasis of the other socialist organisations that also emerged during this period (discussed shortly), the founder of the SDF, Henry Hyndman, was very explicit that his organisation was to adopt a more ‘bread and butter’<sup>18</sup> approach to socialism, inspired by Marxism. He went on:

I do not want the movement to be a depository of odd cranks: humanitarians, vegetarians, anti-vivisectionists and anti-vaccinationists, arty-crafties and all the rest of them. We are scientific socialists and have no room for sentimentalists. They confuse the issue.

(Hyndman, cited in Winsten, 1951, p. 64)

Interestingly, this now-famous citation was extracted from a conversation between Hyndman and the ethical socialists Henry Salt and George Bernard Shaw (who will be introduced shortly). Hyndman went on to accuse Shaw<sup>19</sup> of setting the movement back “twenty years at least” (ibid). Salt replied that the other causes, to which Hyndman objected, (particularly the animal question) could not wait until the social revolution, or until (what Hyndman would have seen as) the more ‘pressing’ issues had been addressed. Against Hyndman’s single focus, Salt insisted that “life is an organism and unless you deal with the whole system it will remain as diseased as before” (ibid). Furthermore, ‘sentimentality’, or feeling, was the life-blood of this organism, without which we are no better than machines, Salt protested (ibid). One further point that can be made about the Hyndman quote is that, as Margaret Mulvihill (1989, p. 59) stresses, “the SDF was never Hyndman’s creature”. Even amongst his supporters, there were many who disagreed with the views he expressed above (Kean, 1998). Few other socialists were as single-minded, or as dedicated to just *one* organisation, as Hyndman. In fact, as we shall see below, most socialists preferred to keep their options open, and membership of the different organisations was fluid.

At the same time as Hyndman was establishing the SDF, another organisation was emerging on the scene, one which epitomised the values of ethical socialism most clearly: the Fellowship of the New Life, founded in 1883 by Scottish philosopher

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<sup>18</sup> Originally referring to Chartism (which, according to Joseph Raynor Stephens, was a ‘bread and cheese’ question), the term ‘bread and butter’ or ‘bread and cheese’ socialism refers to the more ‘rigorous’ form of socialism that traditionally dealt with orthodox issues such as economics, housing, etc. rather than questions of morality and so on (see, for example, Preece, 2012, p. 126).

<sup>19</sup> Why Shaw in particular and not Salt? Possibly because Shaw was the better known of the two (and therefore had more public influence), as he continues to be, to this day.

Thomas Davidson (Manton, 2003). Why the organisation decided to name their quarterly journal ‘Seed-time’ (originally ‘The Sower’) is a question that has yet to be addressed by historians, though clearly the name invokes the ‘back to nature’ idea and the ‘simple life’ movement, which, not surprisingly, were some of the many topics covered by the publication. While the Fellowship has, historically, been overshadowed by its more famous splinter group, the Fabian Society, Kevin Manton (ibid) argues that its importance should not be underestimated, particularly since many members remained in both organisations even after the creation of the Fabian Society in 1884. Though both organisations shared a middle class, even elitist, approach to socialism, they are traditionally seen to differ on the *means* to change (as opposed to the ends). To make a crude distinction, the Fabian Society was more concerned with social and economic reform, while the Fellowship “wished to focus on personal, inner change” (Hannam, 1989, p. 27). This now-widespread understanding of the split between the two groups was reinforced and popularised by George Bernard Shaw’s condescending judgement of the Fellowship as ‘daydreamers’, while the Fabians were ‘do-ers’ (Manton, 2003). This clearly corresponds to the traditional distinction, previously discussed, between ethical, or Utopian, socialism, and reformist socialism (of which the Fabian Society is usually invoked as the prime example). Yet Manton argues that the apparent gulf between the Fabian and Ethical philosophy is much less drastic than authors such as Geoffrey Foote suggest. The separation between the supposedly ‘political’ or ‘pragmatic’ Fabians (and Marxists), and the ‘utopian’ Ethicals misrepresents the latter’s approach which, in fact, understood the necessity of improving the social condition *at the same time* as (working on) the individual<sup>20</sup> (Manton, 2003, pp. 283–284). Supporting this assessment, Vincent (2010, p. 91) argues that ethical socialism was “closely allied with reformist state socialism. In fact, in many aspects it overlaps directly with it”. (Hardly surprising, given that the two strands originated from the same source, in the Fellowship.) Admittedly, even amongst Fellowship members

[t]here were significant differences [...] both over the actions they took and the slant of their ideas [...] But two things need to be noted with reference to this internal diversity. First [...] this was a typical feature of all socialist groups at the turn of the century, when divisions within parties or groups and similarities across the apparent solidity of party lines were normal and often strong. Second [...] this internal diversity represented different

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<sup>20</sup> This is expanded in the discussion on individualism versus social reform in chapter six.

positions on an ideological scale common throughout turn-of-the-century socialism but perhaps most notable in the Fellowship, which stressed not simply ethical solutions but rather a unity of the moral and the material both in its analysis of society and the methods it chose to remedy these ills.

(Manton, 2003, p. 284)

This explains why many individuals could be members of several (sometimes all) of the socialist organisations on the scene with no apparent contradiction of their ideological beliefs.

On the other hand, some organisations enjoyed much greater popularity and longevity than others. The Fellowship in particular was rendered insignificant as the British socialist movement gradually transformed itself into a labour movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, eventually disbanding in 1898. Many other organisations also fell by the wayside, such as the Socialist League – an organisation created in 1885 by a group of SDF dissenters, led by William Morris. Also congenial to combining socialism with ideas of the ‘simple life’ (Gould, 1988), the League, although patronised by prominent socialists such as Edward Carpenter and Eleanor Marx, failed to increase its membership enough to become a viable force on the socialist scene. It was eventually taken over by the anarchist faction within it, before disbanding in 1901. Its one final legacy was the creation of the Bloomsbury Socialist Society – a London branch of the League that, in 1888, chose to establish itself as a separate organisation under the direction of Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling.

Another organisation that reflected the pull of ethical socialism yet failed to achieve the lasting success of some of the larger organisations was the Clarion movement. The Clarion movement began life as a newspaper, established by Robert Blatchford, but then branched out into a network of various activities and groups, including the Clarion Club, a cycling club, a café and the Clarion Van, which toured the country distributing socialist literature and holding local meetings. Like the Fellowship of the New Life, ‘Clarionism’ advocated a return to the ‘simple life’ and emphasised the individual’s spiritual needs, paying tribute to William Morris and Edward Carpenter. Although Blatchford had originally been drawn to socialism by the writings of Henry Hyndman, the emphasis of the Clarion movement was on humanitarianism and contact with nature, rather than Marxism. Unlike the Fabians and the Fellowship, however, the Clarion movement was explicitly aimed at a more working class audience. In this sense,

it anticipated the new direction in which the socialist movement was headed. Unfortunately for Blatchford, however, another organisation had emerged in the same decade that shared the Clarion's prescience, but which would overshadow the Clarion movement (and many of the other socialist organisations, for that matter). This organisation was known as the ILP: the Independent Labour Party.

Exemplifying this new, transformed, ethical socialism that combined "breathless idealism with some sturdy trade union boots that never left the ground" (Thompson, 1971, p. 75), the ILP was formed in 1893, with Keir Hardie at its helm. Its membership came from various sources; for example many of its Northern (English) members represented the last dregs of the Socialist League, while many of its council members came from the London Fabian Society (Pelling, 1965). Yet unlike the Fabians with their close ties to the Liberal Party, the ILP expressly desired to overcome 'Lib-Labism' (Winter, 1993, p. 7). Indeed, Hardie was outspoken in his dislike of the Liberals (Benn, 1992, p. 102). Moreover, in contrast to the elitism of the Fabians, the Fellowship of the New Life, and the Socialist League, the ILP had a "largely working class membership [that] favoured a very ethical, indeed evangelical, approach to socialism" (Winter, 1993, p. 9). Exemplifying the earlier point about the link between ethical socialism and religion, Hardie (1900, p. 3) wrote that for the ILP "Socialism is a religion. [...] to ninety-nine per cent of the members of the I.L.P. Socialism comes with all the emotional power of a great religious truth." Members of the ILP "wished to live their socialism, to put it into practice" (Winter, 1993, p. 9), which they believed would lead to the creation of the society they desired, partly because leading by example was seen as the best advertisement for their cause, and would therefore convert more and more people to socialism. "This ethical, communal and campaigning approach made the ILP's politics distinctive. ILPers were intent on creating the whole world anew [...] Often their moral vision [...] was clearer than their political vision" (ibid, p.8). This was a common critique of the ILP as well as of ethical socialism in general. Their "crusading spirit [...] often obscured more precise questions about socialist strategy [...] It was often assumed that socialism would simply come about as more and more people were won to the cause" (ibid, p.10). Hardie (1900, p. 4) was well aware of the problem, but sought to justify, rather than apologise for, the ILP's stance: "it is sometimes charged against the I.L.P. that it has never formulated its theory of

Socialism. That is true, and therein lies its strength". In the next breath, however, he then goes on to explain what socialism stands for:

[W]hat does Socialism mean? It means on its economic side that land and industrial capital shall be held as common property to be administered by the community in the interests of the whole of its members; and that industry shall be organised on the basis of Production for Use instead of the present day method of production for profit.

(ibid)

Apart from the fact that Hardie contradicts his own argument, what this implies is that the aforementioned critique of ethical socialism (having a clear moral, but not political, vision) is misguided. Rather than *lacking* a strategy, moral education *was* their strategy for change; it was just not (necessarily) political because it was not (primarily) focussed on reform (though, in fact, many ethical socialists did also campaign for reform alongside a change in morals). It was not a 'weakness', then, but an integral part of their design, and how they believed change could best be achieved.

So far, I have examined some of the main distinctions between the various socialist schools of thought, especially between revolutionary 'scientific' socialism, reformist socialism, Utopian socialism and ethical socialism. These differences were reflected in the organisational form of early British socialism (and the creation of numerous socialist organisations that apparently adhered to different versions of socialism, such as the SDF, Fellowship of the New Life, Fabian Society and the ILP). However, the differences between these schools of thought are often overstated. In practice, nineteenth century British socialists drew inspiration from numerous sources, which was reflected in their eclectic outlooks. Moreover, these socialists were often members of several (sometimes all) organisations, even those with apparently conflicting views (such as the SDF and the ILP). Does this mean, then, that the organisations all had a similar stand on animal protection? It is to this question that I now turn.

### **2.3 Animals and the Left**

Before looking at the role of animal protection within the various organisations mentioned above, it is first necessary to highlight that, although a number of ethical socialists were very much 'pro-animal', only a handful of these individuals actively campaigned or wrote on the matter. Given the huge overlap in membership of the

various socialist organisations – meaning that most nineteenth century ethical socialists were members of all the organisations on the scene – it was thus generally the *same* people in each organisation advocating a concern for animals. This explain Gould’s comments, looking back at the support for nonhuman animals in both the Clarion and in the SDF, that such support came from “predictable sources” (Gould, 1988, p. 47). Nevertheless it is worth examining the extent to which animal protection was accepted, and actively promoted, in the various organisations, as this helps to situate the ideological links between socialism and animals perceived by several pro-animal socialists discussed shortly.

As one might imagine, given Henry Hyndman’s desire (previously cited) to distance the SDF from “humanitarians, vegetarians, [and] anti-vivisectionists” (which he perceived as being too ‘sentimental’), the SDF was probably the least open to animal protection of all the organisations examined. Yet even the SDF was not immune to the humanitarian cause. There was a (limited) acceptance of humanitarianism to be found in *Justice*, the journal of the SDF. The June 20<sup>th</sup> 1885 edition, for example, draws the reader’s attention to Ouida’s article in the *Times* about the skinning alive of nonhumans in Naples, pointing out the irony that Italy (at the time of publication) had just been invited to Africa as a “civilising power” (*Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, 1885a, p. 6). In addition, the December 1894 edition carried a review of “Cruelties of Civilisation” (a compilation of essays edited by Edward Carpenter), which acknowledged the rapport between socialism and humanitarianism but concluded that we cannot appeal *only* to compassion when dealing with the legacy of capitalism (A. P. H., 1894). The author of this piece (known only as A.P.H.) clearly meant to play on the stereotypical dichotomy (previously discussed) between the more Marxist, revolutionary approach to socialism (represented by the SDF) and the ethical approach (focused on individualism and moral education) of the ethical socialists. Yet, as Manton argues (previously mentioned), this misrepresents the views of many ethical socialists, who were quite aware of the need to change the (capitalist) system at the same time as changing individuals’ morality (discussed further in chapter six).

Not surprisingly, we find in the explicitly ethical socialist organisations a much greater toleration and openness to ideas of animal protection. For example, Colin Spencer (1995, p. 279) contends that the Fellowship of the New Life, and thus its subsidiary, the Fabian Society, both emerged from the Food Reform Society (the pre-

runner to the Vegetarian Society) and that this tendency (towards vegetarianism) remained true of Fabian members. However, while there were certainly overlaps between the various groups (several vegetarian socialists such as Henry Salt, Isabella Ford and George Bernard Shaw were members of the Fabian Society), Fabian *philosophy* was, according to Salt (1921, p. 82), not particularly interested in wider questions of ‘humaneness’ such as animal rights, the ‘simple life’, or anti-vivisection.

The ILP, on the other hand, was set up specifically to foster an “alternative culture” (Winter, 1993) that included a concern for nonhuman animals. Katharine Bruce Glasier, one of the ILP’s most dedicated members, described the organisation thus:

[T]o all true members of the Independent Labour Party, every blade of grass, every living thing is sacred. The smoke that robs even spring of her vivid power, the foul pollutions that make our rivers sources of danger rather than delight, the hideous hoardings that deface our few green fields and lanes, these each blaspheme against our faith. Stray cats and dogs, hungry, forlorn and cold – do you laugh, comrades? I have found too many in your lanes not to know them included in our creed, and the poor, over-driven, worn-out cab-horse, the joke of modern society, disappears also with the gold hunger that created him.

(cited in Thompson, 1971, p. 75)

This sentiment made its way into the Clarion movement too (whose social networks and offshoot clubs were largely made up of ILP and SDF members). In a contemporary analysis, Gould (1988, p. 40) writes that amongst Clarion members it was generally understood that:

it was possible to aid the socialist cause by promoting an increased sensitivity to the needs of animals. An awareness of cruelty to animals could breed an awareness of cruelty to men, which could develop into social and political commitment. The argument could work both ways. If socialism was to protect the weak against the strong it had to include action to protect animals.

This was the crux of the humanitarian argument, and although it was paid lip service by most of the ethical socialist organisations at the time, none took the concept to heart as much as its disciples (discussed shortly) would have liked. This prompted them to set up their own organisation – the Humanitarian League – around which those interested in the welfare of nonhuman animals coalesced.

### 2.3.1 Socialism, Animals, and the Humanitarian League

The idea for the Humanitarian League (hereafter HL) came from a paper authored by Henry Salt<sup>21</sup>, entitled “Humanitarianism”, which he presented to his friends at the Fabian Society. Given the Fabian Society’s unsympathetic feelings towards the animal question (previously mentioned) (Salt, 1921, p. 82), and desiring an organisation with a wider scope than those already in existence (ibid, p.122), Salt, along with a group of “prominent socialists and vegetarians” (Weinbren, 1994, p. 88), decided to form a new society. The goal was

to enforce the principle that *it is iniquitous to inflict avoidable suffering on any sentient being* [...] In brief, the distinctive purpose of the Humanitarian League is to consolidate and give consistent expression to the principle of humaneness, and to show that Humanitarianism is not merely a kindly sentiment [...] but an essential portion of any intelligible system of ethics or social science.

(The Humanitarian League, 1910b, p. 2 emphasis in original)

Described at times as a “moral reform group” (Hannam, 1989, p. 73) and at others as a “radical pressure group” (Weinbren, 1994, p. 86), the HL expressly attempted to link the various social reform movements of the day. It “saw connections between those interested in the ‘simplification’ of life and the liberalization of social and sexual relations, people who focussed upon a more sensitive approach to animals and those who emphasized the importance of electoral politics” (ibid, p.93).

From the start, the HL’s relationship with the socialist movement was a complex and indeterminate one. Evidently, the HL had strong ties to socialism, given that its principal founder, Henry Salt, was socialist, and that one of its central purposes was to link seemingly unconnected social justice issues, in precisely the same way as Edward Carpenter’s “larger socialism” attempted to do so (discussed shortly). In fact, given the strong friendship between Salt and Carpenter, it may be safe to assume that this was exactly what Salt had in mind when he established the HL; that the HL was a further manifestation of the “larger socialism” to which both Salt and Carpenter ascribed.

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<sup>21</sup> Discussed in greater detail shortly.

Yet, while the majority of HL members were socialist (though not all were explicit about it), certainly not *all* of the HL's 'friends'<sup>22</sup> were. Besides, the HL did not place restrictions on membership; it did not even require its members to be vegetarian, although a majority of them were (Preece, 2012, p. 153). This attitude towards membership reflected the open, amorphous nature of the organisation, which was further consolidated by its structure. According to Weinbren (1994, p. 93), the structure of the HL (into four "quasi-autonomous" departments – Criminal Law and Prison Reform, Humane Diet and Dress, Lectures for Children, and Sports<sup>23</sup>) "allowed League supporters to emphasize varying aspects of Humanitarianism" without always agreeing on the totality of the HL's vision. It seemed that, in the pursuit of its goal – spreading humanitarianism – the HL was willing to put other differences aside. Attracting as many people as possible to its cause was thus of utmost importance<sup>24</sup>. In an attempt to appeal to individuals from "varied political backgrounds, in particular feminists, socialists, and radical liberals" (Hannam, 1989, p. 73), the HL was therefore hesitant to attach any label to its ideology, frequently noting in its journal, *The Humanitarian*, that the "League [HL] is avowedly non-political" (Salt, 1910, p. 75)<sup>26</sup>. Such a broad membership also meant that "different emphases were to be found in, for example, the publications about the low-paid written by a Fabian, a Liberal and a member of the Independent Labour Party" (Weinbren, 1994, p. 93).

As a result of this ambiguity, several authors (notably Hannam (1989) and Weinbren (1994)) have concluded that the HL's relationship with the socialist movement was "tenuous" at best (Gould, 1988, p. 47). At the same time, however, there is some acknowledgement that the HL "was not indiscriminate in its choice of allies. It sought alliances 'with kindred spirits that are in tendency, progressive'" (Weinbren, 1994, p. 94). Moreover, it must be noted that the ethical socialism that had emerged in nineteenth century Britain (to which the majority of HL members subscribed) had much

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<sup>22</sup> By which I mean those who supported the HL's general goals but were not necessarily members, and who did not necessarily agree with the HL's position on *all* issues.

<sup>23</sup> These four departments were later consolidated into two sub-committees: Criminal Law and Prison Reform, and Animals' Defence.

<sup>24</sup> The pragmatism of this approach is reminiscent of the reformist socialism characteristic of the Fabian Society, and indeed there was a link between the two organisations, as I discuss shortly.

<sup>26</sup> Given that one its primary goals was to influence legislation in favour of humane principles (Weinbren, 1994, p. 96), as well as its discussion of undoubtedly political issues such as prison reform, women's enfranchisement, public slaughterhouses, and poor law reform (The Humanitarian League, no date, para. 6), to claim that the HL was "non-political" is unconvincing to say the least.

in common still with liberalism (Garner, 1988; see Foote, 1997). It is thus understandable that the HL's relationship with socialism can be hard to discern from its relationship with the Left in general. Yet clearly a relationship *did* exist; from the very start the HL's position was decided by its origins. The journal of the HL, *The Humanitarian*, openly acknowledged that the organisation owed its very existence to one of the central pillars of the socialist movement: the Fabian Society (The Humanitarian League, 1916). "Salt first broached the issue of founding the Humanitarian League at a Fabian Society meeting in 1889; thus the League [HL] had decidedly socialist roots" (Preece, 2012, p. 150). Moreover, the Fabian Society published several HL essays, including Henry Salt's essay on "Humanitarianism" and Joseph Oakeshott's "The Humanizing of the Poor Law", which led to the HL being dubbed "a Fabian alter ego" by one critic (cited in Weinbren, 1994, p. 102).

Clearly the relationship between the HL and the socialist movement was complex, but, as one of the main embodiments of Carpenter's "larger socialism" (explained shortly), it deserves greater recognition than it has so far been granted. In chapter three, I examine the ideological links connecting socialism and animal ethics that are discernible in the HL's publications and in the work of the most prominent pro-animal socialists of the time. Firstly, however, I need to explain who these individuals were, and to contextualise their beliefs. I have chosen to focus only on a select few – those who were most explicit that it was their socialism that propelled them towards a concern for nonhumans – though I briefly mention some of the other socialists who were concerned with animal protection but less explicit in linking this concern with socialism, or who wrote substantially less on the topic, in the final section. The following section therefore introduces the key individuals whose involvement in animal protection constitutes a significant, yet overlooked, connection between socialism and animal ethics.

### **2.3.2 Henry S. Salt (1851-1939)**

In any discussion of the links between socialism and the animal question, the name Henry Salt is likely to crop up more than once. Vegetarian, socialist, and founder of the Humanitarian League, Salt epitomises most clearly any supposed connection between socialism and animal advocacy.

Born in 1851 and raised in Shrewsbury, Salt was educated at Eton and then Cambridge University before returning to Eton as a classics master in 1875. It was during this latter period at Eton that Salt began to formulate his political and ideological views, which may be partly attributed to his brother-in-law, Jim (James Leigh) Joynes, a socialist and vegetarian who introduced Salt to influential social reformers such as Edward Carpenter and George Bernard Shaw. Inspired by the work of Thoreau in particular, but also Rousseau and Carpenter, Salt was also becoming increasingly attracted to the ‘simplification’ movement: a ‘back to nature’ approach that involved giving up luxuries such as servants and leading a more ‘frugal’ existence. Thus, in 1884 Salt left his job at Eton (citing vegetarianism and socialism as the main factors (Salt, 1921, p. 65)), to live the ‘simple life’ with his wife in a cottage in Surrey. It was around this time that Salt first started contributing to *Justice*, the journal of the SDF (Hendrick, 1977, p. 28). Shortly after, in 1886, the Vegetarian Society published Salt’s *A Plea for Vegetarianism and Other Essays*, the book that convinced Gandhi of the moral propriety of vegetarianism (Gandhi, 1931).

In one of the clearest demonstrations of his belief in the connection between socialism and animal issues, Salt, together with a small band of friends including Edward Maitland and Howard Williams, launched the Humanitarian League in 1891: an organisation, as described above, that attempted to bring together the various social reform movements of the day by emphasising the ‘bigger picture’ – that cruelty is everywhere the same, and all its forms must be fought simultaneously (Salt, 1921, pp. 122–123). Among its various activities the HL campaigned on issues such as the cruelties of the Royal Buckhounds, published a journal, *Humanity* (later renamed *The Humanitarian*), and organised a series of lectures of the topic of Rights (Salt, 1921, p. 128). The impetus for the latter arose from the publication, in 1892, of Salt’s seminal work *Animals’ Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress*. To what extent this essay was accepted (or even widely known about) by Salt’s contemporaries remains contentious (see for example Lansbury, 1985; Singer, 1995; Li, 2012). For the contemporary animal protection movement however the book is regarded as foundational reading, alongside Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation*. Singer (who authors the preface to its 1980 reprint) himself regards *Animals’ Rights* as one of the most important pieces of animal ethics literature pre-1960’s (and the revitalisation of the discipline), acknowledging that most of the issues currently occupying animal ethicists

and activists “had all been said before” by Salt (Salt, 1980; Singer, 1995, p. xvi). While Salt’s text was certainly not the only piece of pre-twentieth century animal ethics literature (notable historical texts include Humphry Primatt’s *A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and the Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals* published in 1776 and John Oswald’s *The Cry of Nature, or An Appeal to Mercy and Justice on Behalf of the Persecuted Animals* published in 1791), it was certainly one of the first texts to address the question of *rights* specifically (however superficially they were dealt with), and to break away from the traditional mode of talking about nonhumans that relied heavily on notions of mercy or charity.

### **2.3.3 Edward Carpenter (1844-1929)**

Edward Carpenter, like many of the HL’s allies, was born into a wealthy Brighton family in 1844, taking orders while studying at Cambridge University in 1869. Gradually coming to socialism via several different sources (one of which was the work of Walt Whitman), Carpenter left Cambridge for the North of England and a desire to ‘get to know’ the working class (Salt, 1929). In 1883 he moved into a cottage in Millthorpe and ran a small farm (it was widely believed that this was an attempt at communal living but we have it from Salt (1929) that this was not true). Henry and Kate Salt took a neighbouring cottage for a time, and Isabella Ford was also a frequent visitor (Hannam, 1989). Given his religious background, it is not surprising that Carpenter was one of many socialists who spoke of his political convictions with religious fervour. More interesting, however, is his later interest in Eastern religion and mysticism, both of which, for Carpenter, were related to socialism in that they sought to transform humanity (Rowbotham, 1977). As well as several hugely influential texts on socialism, such as *Towards Democracy* and *England’s Ideals* (which encouraged Katharine Glasier to convert to socialism (Thompson, 1971, p. 66)), Carpenter was well-known for his work on sexual liberation, both for men and women (Carpenter was fairly open about his homosexuality). Close friends with Henry Salt and Isabella Ford, among countless others, Carpenter’s influence on socialists of that era was so great that Mulvihill (1989, p. 59), Charlotte Despard’s biographer, writes of that “group of ethical socialists [based] around Edward Carpenter” as a way of denominating the socialist humanitarians usually associated with the Humanitarian League (see also Hannam, 1989, p. 73). Carpenter’s lecture to the Independent Labour Party (ILP) on the “larger socialism” summarised the ethical, utopian socialism of his day (‘larger’ meaning

broader or wider). It was so ‘large’, in fact, that it combined a plethora of ideas and social justice issues – including non-parasitic living, the simplification of life, the liberation of women, and respect for (non-human) animals – which to others might have appeared totally unrelated (Carpenter, 1909; Rowbotham, 1977, p. 103). Moreover, as with the ILP’s approach to grassroots socialism, Carpenter lived what he preached. As a socialist, vegetarian, gay rights activist, campaigner for women’s rights, and an advocate of the ‘simple life’, who was interested in Eastern philosophy, and whose relationship with a working class man anticipated the breakdown of traditional class relations, Carpenter literally embodied the principles of his “larger socialism” (and thus the connection between socialism and animal ethics).

### **2.3.4 James Keir Hardie (1856-1915)**

Like his well-known socialist colleagues Ramsay Macdonald and John Bruce Glasier, Hardie was Scottish, illegitimate, and born into a poor, working class family. Having failed a career as a miner, and then as a trade union leader, Hardie’s foray into socialism was less than smooth, and came at the expense of his health and his family (Benn, 1992). Yet, in the end, his influence on British socialism and, his biographer argues, on “humanitarian socialism” in particular (ibid, p.xv) was hugely significant. For Hardie, like Carpenter, socialism was a religion, providing a set of ethical and moral principles on how to live (Foote, 1997, p. 44). This is demonstrated in his critique of capitalism, which was based on *ethical* grounds (as opposed to reformist socialism’s critique of capitalism based on its supposed inefficiency) (Benn, 1992, p. xix). Most notably, Hardie was one of the founding fathers of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) (Mulvihill, 1989), which from the outset was (according to one of its members, Katharine Bruce Glasier) committed to caring for all living creatures (Benn, 1992, p. 101). Influenced in part by his friend Cunninghame Graham, Hardie cared deeply about the environment, peace, animal welfare and the liberation of women (Hardie had a very close relationship with Sylvia Pankhurst). Furthermore (and again, like Graham), he was unusual for his time in the range of issues that he understood as being ‘political’ (ibid, p.48). A firm vegetarian since 1910, Benn (1992, p. 432) affirms that Hardie advocated food reform and vegetarianism “for political reasons”. At home and abroad he

immersed [himself] in issues of social justice. [...] He immediately raised the issues of poverty and low wages [...] everywhere he went, arguing, as he always did, that the basic

problems of Indian workers or black South African miners were the same as the poor of Lanarkshire and South Wales.

(ibid, p.232)

At a time when most people (including socialists) accepted (and took part in) colonial racism, Hardie was thus one of the few dissenting voices.

### **2.3.5 Isabella Ford (1855-1924)**

Born in 1855, Isabella Ford came from a wealthy family of Quakers, who “were also part of the broad humanitarian movement of the period which sought prison reform, the abolition of slavery, and the protection of wild life. Their [the Ford] daughters inherited this outlook and were vegetarians, campaigners for animal welfare, and conservationists” (Hannam, 1989, p. 13). Close friends with Edward Carpenter in Sheffield, Isabella Ford later became a prominent trade unionist and member of the ILP, although she also retained links with the Fabian Society through her cousin, Edward Pease<sup>27</sup>, who was one of the founders (Hannam, 1989). Influenced by Carpenter’s ideas of communal living and the ‘simple life’ movement, Ford took an interest in agriculture on her farm at Adel Grange. In a letter addressed to the Labour Leader regarding dairy cows she wrote:

We find that when the cows are out of doors day and night during the summer months they give more milk, and better milk, than in the winter, when they are stall fed [...] we run our cows for use and profit [...] and we are glad to find that the best economic treatment of our cows is also our best course morally. Morals certainly pay, even in farming!

(cited in Hannam, 1989, p. 32)

Such a liberal approach to economics was of course not unusual amongst ethical socialists, given the countless threads connecting ethical socialism and liberalism during this period. Socialism was still a very new force, and there were constant debates within the various political organisations on the exact form it ought to take. Membership of the socialist organisations was also fluid (as previously discussed), as individuals were still trying to formulate their own beliefs about socialism and its future in Britain. Moreover, most of these members had come to socialism from liberal backgrounds; Ford, for example, came from a family of progressive liberals, and only later converted to

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<sup>27</sup> She had been at the first meeting at Pease’s London flat, with her sister, where the Fellowship of the New Life and the Fabian Society were established.

socialism due to the influence of the people around her such as Edward Carpenter and Edward Pease (who also arrived at socialism from liberalism). More importantly, ethical socialism lacked any kind of economic analysis. This continued right through to the Labour Party, which often appeared to be indifferent to capital and the structure of capitalist institutions (Foote, 1997, p. 10).

### **2.3.6 Charlotte Despard (1844-1939)**

Like Edward Carpenter, Charlotte Despard was involved in many different movements all seemingly connected to a 'larger socialism': Despard was a socialist, Catholic, vegetarian, Sinn Fein activist, suffragist, pacifist and anti-vivisectionist. Born Charlotte French in 1844, Despard's father, who died when she was young, hailed from Ireland, and, despite not being close to him, Charlotte Despard had a strong emotional attachment to the country (which only increased after her marriage to an Irish gentleman). Six years after her father's death, her mother was placed in a home for the mentally ill; thus the young Despard's childhood was spent in a state of relative freedom, which manifest in an independent spirit that stayed with her throughout life. This spirit was not broken by her marriage to Maximilian Despard in 1870 since the match appears to have been a largely equal and happy one. When Maximilian Despard passed away from Bright's Disease in 1890, Charlotte Despard remained close to her in-laws in Ireland. Now a wealthy widow, Despard took up charitable work, setting up camp in Battersea, where she was appalled by the poverty and suffering of the people living there. With her own money, and on her own initiative, Despard began to establish various clubs, youth groups, clinics, affordable meal services and so on, that gradually "amounted to a mini welfare state for the area" (Mulvihill, 1989, p. 42). It was during this early period that Despard was 'educated' not only in socialism but also in Catholicism, to which she converted in 1898. Despite this, Despard remained open to many different forms of spiritualism. Like Edward Carpenter, she was drawn to mysticism and Eastern philosophy, in particular Buddhism<sup>28</sup>, after spending time in India during her marriage. Interestingly, in its links to vegetarianism and the inner perfection of man, the Buddhist influence had much in common with an earlier

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<sup>28</sup> Linklater (1980, p. 56) argues that a belief in mysticism, which produced movements such as the Theosophist Society and the Fellowship of the New Life, was often the catalyst that launched individuals (he uses the example of Annie Besant, from the Theosophists, and Edward Carpenter, from the Fellowship) into socialism.

influence on Despard: Percy Bysshe Shelley (Linklater, 1980). As previously mentioned, Shelley was a common source of inspiration for many ethical socialists (particularly Salt). A further common influence was the teachings of Thoreau and Whitman, who advocated the ‘simple life’ and being close to nature (Linklater, 1980; Mulvihill, 1989). This influence is most readily identified in the life of Edward Carpenter, with whom Despard shared much in common, and indeed the two were close friends. Her biographer, Margaret Mulvihill (1989, p. 59), supposes that, had she been living in Sheffield, Despard might have joined the group of ethical socialists associated with Carpenter (such as Isabella Ford and Henry Salt), but, as she was based in London, she chose instead to join the SDF. This might appear an unusual choice for someone whose socialism was decidedly utopian, and who “paid little attention to the process by which ownership of property was to be wrested from individuals and restored to the community” (Linklater, p.88), and especially given that, as previously mentioned, the SDF’s founder – Hyndman – was explicitly hostile to the association of socialism with ‘alternative’ movements such as vegetarianism and anti-vivisection (which he saw as ‘confusing the issue’). Yet, as previously explained,

[i]n practice [...] there was a considerable overlap both in membership and in solidarity between the SDF and other socialist or radical groups, especially outside London. As a member of both the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation Charlotte Despard was not unusual.

(Mulvihill, 1989, p. 59)

It was partly through her socialist affiliations (and partly a result of the increasingly dictator-like control over the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) by Cristabel and Mrs Pankhurst) that Despard was persuaded, along with a group of dissenters from the WSPU, to establish the Women’s Freedom League (WFL) during the latter part of 1907. Interestingly, Despard (1913 no page no.) explicitly argued that the ‘demands made by women’ had much to do with the ‘modern’ animal welfare movement (e.g. food reform and anti-vivisection) though nowhere else in her work does she elaborate on this point. Nevertheless, in practice, this link played out in the ‘Old Brown Dog affair’ (discussed in chapter six), in which Despard played a crucial role (see Lansbury, 1985, chap. 1).

Vegetarian since her husband’s death, Charlotte was also an active member of the Humanitarian League, and spoke alongside Isabella Ford and Louise Lind-af-Hageby at

the 1919 National Humanitarian Conference, instituted by the Humanitarian League and organised (that year) by the League of Peace and Freedom (Weinbren, 1994, p. 94).

### **2.3.7 Secondary Figures**

Of course, as Preece (2012, pp. 153–155) indicates, there were numerous other socialists who, in some way or another, showed an interest in animal protection, but who, for various reasons, are not central to my analysis. George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), for example, was a prominent socialist, vegetarian, and member of the Humanitarian League; yet, for Shaw (unlike his close friend Henry Salt), these concerns were not intrinsically related – “they were somewhat independent phenomena that were the consequence of the same kind of compassionate thought” (ibid, p.40). Whilst there obviously was some kind of connection, in that they both arose from the same disposition (which in itself may be significant), the fact that Shaw did not regard the link as significant is sufficient for him to be largely excluded from this chapter<sup>29</sup>.

Another well-known socialist mentioned several times already is Katharine Bruce Glasier (1867–1950). Formerly Katharine Saint John Conway, Glasier was converted to socialism after being given a copy of Edward Carpenter’s ‘England’s Ideals’, and soon became an integral figure within the ILP (Thompson, 1971). Her marriage to John Bruce Glasier – like Ramsay Macdonald and Keir Hardie, a Scot who was extremely influential on British socialism, which he too regarded as a “religious crusade” (ibid, p.17) – made the couple a formidable force within the movement, much like the partnership of Beatrice and Sydney Webb. Unlike the Webbs, however, their socialism was decidedly ethical and emotional, and neither contributed very much to socialist theory. In their work “we get a criticism of capitalist society, largely true but not deep, and over against it we get the adumbration of a Utopia. The strong point in the appeal is its breadth and humanity; the weak point, its indefiniteness” (ibid, p.88). So far, this would definitely appear to match the approach of pro-animal ethical socialists such as Carpenter and Hardie. Moreover, Katharine Glasier’s description (previously cited) of the ILP as an organisation that concerned itself with all living creatures suggests that this concern for nonhumans was important to her, which is supported by Preece’s assertion (2012, p. 154) that she was one of several vegetarians in the early

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<sup>29</sup> For a detailed study of his beliefs I highly recommend Preece’s in depth analysis of Shaw in relation to the ‘inclusive justice’ approach characteristic of the Humanitarian League.

Fabian Society. However, this assertion does not seem to be corroborated in any other accounts of the Glasiers. Thompson's biography (1971, p. 219), for example, notes that John Bruce Glasier (in an attempt to cure his ulcer) sought the help of a food reform doctor, who put him on a strict vegetarian diet, to which Katharine Glasier (out of support and encouragement it seems) decided the whole family must follow. Whatever her reasons, the diet was abandoned upon the recommendation of a different doctor, and Katharine Glasier does not appear to have made any attempt to take it back up later in life. In any case, given that she was not as active as others in the animal protection movement, and that she does not appear to have elaborated on a connection between socialism and animal protection (beyond her comments about the ILP), she has not been included as a key figure in the analysis.

Also mentioned a few times already in passing is Ramsay Macdonald (1866-1937), another illegitimate Scotsman who went on to become one of the most influential figures in early British socialism. Preece (2012, p. 155) lists Macdonald as one of socialists who supported the work of the Humanitarian League, and certainly the HL, in turn, was outspoken in its gratitude to Macdonald (as well as his colleague Keir Hardie), often mentioning and giving implicit support to his activities in its in-house journal *The Humanitarian* (The Humanitarian League, 1910a). Yet, again, Macdonald himself was never explicit about a connection between socialism and a concern for animals, thus justifying his exclusion from the subsequent analysis.

Worth mentioning also is Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936) – the first ever socialist MP in Britain, and president of the Scottish Labour Party in 1888 (Thompson, 1971, p. 57). As well as being a strong influence on Keir Hardie (see Benn, 1992, p. 47), Cunninghame Graham was an acquaintance of many of the ethical socialists previously discussed, including Carpenter and the Glasiers (Carpenter, 1916; Thompson, 1971). Ahead of his time, Graham was one of the first environmentalists, highlighting the extinction of many species of nonhuman animals and supporting the protection of indigenous human cultures (Benn, 1992). A keen sportsman, he was also deeply concerned with animal welfare, and was instrumental in establishing the Scottish branch of the Humanitarian League. However, the dearth of information on his life, and, more importantly, information that he wrote himself on the topic, have necessarily led to his exclusion from the key figures in the chapter.

Similarly, Gretta Cousins (1878-1954) crops up in the literature as someone who appears to have seen a connection between the various ‘alternative’ movements of the day. An Irish suffragist, Cousins was deeply involved in the Theosophy movement and mysticism (eventually moving to India with her husband, Jim Cousins), and in the Irish vegetarian movement. Through these parallel interests, she crossed paths with Charlotte Despard on numerous occasions, and she found Mrs Depard to be someone whom she admired greatly (Mulvihill, 1989). Like Cunninghame Graham, however, there is so little information available about Cousins – as well as the fact that her connection to socialism was not perhaps as strong as the others studied – that she remains only a secondary character in this analysis.

While Gretta Cousins may have found in Charlotte Despard a source of inspiration, Mrs Despard found her “heroine” in another well-known figure: Annie Besant (1847-1933) (Mulvihill, 1989, p. 127). Like both Charlotte Despard and Gretta Cousins, Besant had Irish heritage (and was in favour of Irish home rule), was vegetarian and a member of the Theosophy Society (eventually becoming its president) and spent a great deal of her life in India. Besant was also, at least before Theosophy took over her life, a supporter of the HL and an active member of the Fabian Society; she joined the latter as a result of her close friendship with George Bernard Shaw (Preece, 2012, pp. 151, 181–185). Nevertheless, whatever concern she may have had for nonhuman animals appears to have been secondary to her (many) other activities, unlike individuals such as Henry Salt and Edward Carpenter, who therefore constitute the primary focus of this chapter.

One final figure to note is John C. Kenworthy; a pastor, member of the Fellowship of the New Life, and contributor and friend to the Humanitarian League. Greatly inspired by the likes of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Edward Carpenter, Kenworthy was actively involved in many of the socialist experiments in ethical, communal living, such as the ‘Brotherhood Church’ in Croydon, and the (failed) attempted to form a land colony in Purleigh, Essex (1896-1900) (Gould, 1988; Linehan, 2012).

There were, of course, countless other individuals who contributed articles and opinions to HL journals, and generally supported the work of the HL (often financially); individuals such as Josiah Oldfield (1863-1953), a humanitarian and vegetarian doctor, and friend of Ghandi (Guha, 2013), and George William Foote (1850-1915), who was passionate about secularism and went on to become president of the National Secular

Society (Preece, 2012). However, none of these individuals were explicitly socialist (nor did they have very much of an impact on the movement as a whole), unlike the more prominent figures I have chosen to focus on.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In examining the relationship between socialism and animal ethics, much obviously depends on what is meant by socialism, particularly given that this heading encompasses numerous different schools of thought, not all of which are compatible. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter was to examine the prevailing distinctions between the various socialist traditions, particularly between revolutionary ‘scientific’ socialism and ethical, or Utopian, socialism. It was firstly pointed out that Utopian socialism does not always correlate with ethical socialism, being two separate approaches. Nevertheless, ethical socialism is often characterised as ‘Utopian’ in nature, primarily as it is assumed to lack a political strategy for change. It was shown that this is not necessarily true, however; while ethical socialism does focus on moral education and personal (individual) transformation as the key to social change, there were also many overlaps between ethical socialism and the reformist socialism of the Fabian Society. Since the complexities between these different schools of thought is exemplified in the organisational form of early British socialism, and because it grounds the subsequent historical analysis, I then moved on to discuss the emerging British socialist organisations of the nineteenth century, emphasising their overlap in membership in particular. As a result, we have to be wary about using ‘hard-and-fast’ categories when discussing the beliefs of nineteenth century British socialists (though few were immune to the influence of ethical socialism, more than any other variation).

In the second half of the chapter I analysed the attitudes towards animal protection of these organisations, concluding that it was the (same) individuals within these groups that drove the link, rather than any explicit, organisational, pro-animal manifesto. Before examining who these individuals were, I firstly introduced the one organisation that *was* explicit in its pro-animal focus (as well as a focus on human justice issues): the Humanitarian League. Against other authors (such as Hannam (1989) and Gould (1988, p. 47)), I argued that the HL’s affiliation with socialism was more than “tenuous” – the original idea of establishing the HL came out of a Fabian Society meeting, and the Fabian influence could also be felt in the HL’s pragmatism

and emphasis on reformism (alongside the traditional ethical socialist emphasis on moral education).

Finally, I introduced the most prominent pro-animal ethical socialists of the time – all of whom were members of the HL – as well as some other secondary figures. It is the work of these prominent socialists, as well as an analysis of HL publications, that I draw on in the following chapter, in an examination of the perceived ideological links between ethical socialism and animal ethics. Clearly this is only one kind of socialist ethic, which, as will be examined, might not suffice as an alternative to the liberal paradigm. Yet, it is a useful starting point from which to assess what else might be needed in order to establish a socialist animal ethic that is comprehensive and convincing enough to provide a valid alternative to the dominant liberal approach.

## Chapter 3 The Ethical Socialist Approach to Animal Ethics

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In chapter two I examined some of the central distinctions between the various socialist schools of thought, and how these differences played out in practice in nineteenth century Britain. I also presented the main socialist organisations of this era and their positions on animal protection, before going on to introduce the members who most agitated on behalf of nonhuman animals. Having set the (historical) scene, this chapter can now examine the perceived ideological links between ethical socialism and animal ethics identified in the work of the individuals introduced in the previous chapter and in the publications of the Humanitarian League. The central purpose of this chapter is to assess whether or not ethical socialism offers a valid alternative to traditional liberal animal ethics. This chapter also sets forth my argument regarding the legacy of Henry Salt: that Salt's legacy is not contemporary *liberal* animal ethics, as is often suggested (Regan, 1983; Clark, 1984; Shaw, 1990; Li, 2012; Preece, 2012), but, rather, a route towards a distinctively socialist animal ethics.

In the first half of the chapter I present an overview of the ethical socialists' approach to animal ethics, which, I contend, was primarily focussed on value. As discussed in the previous chapter, British socialism owed little to Marxism (and lots to ethical socialism), so it is hardly surprising that this was reflected amongst the pro-animal socialists and supporters of the Humanitarian League. For them, the ultimate goal was to awaken humanity to its true potential – a more compassionate, humane way of living – by advocating kinship and solidarity with all living beings. Notwithstanding the protestations of Marxists, this was 'revolutionary' in that the society they envisaged was worlds away from Victorian society. In addition, they recognised capitalism as being a huge part of the problem and advocated instead a 'frugal' anti-materialism. They agreed with Marxism, then, that a change of economic system was needed, but they lacked the 'scientific' analysis of how this ought to come about exactly. They preferred to leave this analysis to others, it seems, concentrating instead on proselytising and spreading their vision. On the other hand – and, again, reflecting the overlap between ethical socialism and reformist socialism previously mentioned – they also campaigned actively for reform (on behalf of human and nonhuman animals) on a variety of issues, recognising the need to act *through* the legislature, not circumventing

it. Although they cannot, therefore, be dismissed off-hand as ‘Utopian’, their understanding of political structures and agency, and especially of political economy, was limited. Their strength undoubtedly lay in their emphasis on certain socialist values, which, crucially, are largely absent from contemporary animal ethics. These themes, therefore, offer an original, valuable contribution to the discipline (which thus demonstrates the value of the historical analysis), though this is not enough to redeem ethical socialism, which, I conclude, cannot, on its own, constitute a valid alternative to liberal animal ethics.

In the second half of the chapter I focus on the ethical socialists’ position on rights, given the centrality of rights theory to liberal animal ethics. I concentrate especially on Henry Salt, since Salt is often portrayed as being a ‘rights scholar’ (Regan, 1983; Clark, 1984). I conclude that this depiction is problematic for two main reasons: firstly, Salt appeared to be rather confused on what exactly rights were and often misinterpreted the notion; and, secondly, that Salt’s position on rights is somewhat undermined by his simultaneous emphasis on welfare. My argument is thus that there was much more on the link between the Left and animal ethics in Salt’s work than on rights, and that those who claim a trajectory between Salt and contemporary liberal scholars (incorrectly) ignore Salt’s decidedly socialist affiliation. This again demonstrates the value of the historical analysis of animal ethics and socialism, particularly given the recent claim that there has been a “political turn” (see Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan, 2016 for an overview of this claim) in animal ethics, which ignores this early period of interest in the topic by the ethical socialists.

One final point to note, before moving on to the central analysis, is that the values I have chosen to focus on – those most prominent in the work of the ethical socialists – may appear on first glance to be rather incongruous and random. Yet, as previously mentioned, the linking of diverse ideas and (social reform) issues was, in fact, highly characteristic of ethical socialism – epitomised by Carpenter’s “larger socialism”. Seen through this lens, the themes I examine – including inclusive justice, kinship, emancipation and the ‘simple life’ – were not random at all, but connected by a common vision for humanity. This should become apparent as the analysis proceeds. So what were these values that formed the basis of the ethical socialist approach to animal ethics?

### 3.1 Inclusive Justice

Central to Salt and his colleagues' (ethical) socialist approach to animal protection was the idea of 'inclusive justice' – a term I borrow from Rod Preece (2012), as set out in his excellent account of George Bernard Shaw's relationship with the animal protection movement in late Victorian Britain. However, while Preece argues that this 'inclusive justice' characterised much of the humanitarianism of that era, especially the HL, he fails to make the connection between this approach to animal protection and the distinctly *socialist* persuasion of those advocating it<sup>30</sup>. Li (2012), on the other hand, acknowledges this connection, albeit implicitly (she never uses the term 'inclusive justice'), when she argues that the socialist strand of animal protection was instrumental in shifting the animal protection movement away from the moral reform tradition, which had been particularly *selective* in its approach to animal protection. To contextualise this statement requires a brief interlude into social and cultural history. It is, by now, fairly well-established that the Victorian animal protection movement emerged out of the moral reform tradition, characterised by its religious nature and its "moral crusade" against a range of social ills, including slavery, prostitution, and cruelty to children and other animals (ibid, p.6). As a result, the early animal protection movement came to be seen as an almost entirely middle class affair that unfairly targeted the working class (whilst ignoring upper class 'pursuits' such as stag hunting) and viewed cruelty as an individual flaw rather than an institutional problem (Lansbury, 1985; Ritvo, 1987; Jasper and Nelkin, 1992; Kean, 1998; Preece, 2012). This was epitomised by the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)<sup>31</sup>, whose wealthy patrons were comforted by the idea of cruelty to animals being a lower-class propensity (Ritvo, 1987). Under this framework, animal protection was seen as a way of 'civilising' the lower classes, for whom, it was argued, examples of 'unsavoury' behaviour (drunkenness, gambling, etc.) often went along with cruelty to other animals, such as during bear-baiting (before it was banned), dog-fighting, etc. According to Ritvo (1987, p. 152) "the reports of prosecutions made it clear that the RSPCA's

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<sup>30</sup> Despite the fact that the central figure of Preece's book – George Bernard Shaw – was socialist, Preece does not appear to find it significant that a number of prominent socialists were involved in animal protection. In fact, Preece is one of the authors who argues that Peter Singer has inherited Henry Salt's mantle, ignoring the fact that Singer is a utilitarian, while Salt was socialist.

<sup>31</sup> Gaining its Royal credentials in 1840.

concern with animal baiting and fighting had at least as much to do with human discipline as with animal pain”. In fact,

[s]o widely was it understood that the lower classes were the target of the anticruelty laws that one witness before the Royal Commission in Vivisection [...] stated flatly that the laws were intended “for the ignorant, and not for the best people in the country”.

(ibid, p.137)

Clearly proponents of this, what I call, ‘civility argument’ recognised that there was a correlation between violence to (nonhuman) animals and violence towards humans<sup>32</sup>. But their interest in animal welfare appeared to stem less from a genuine concern for nonhumans than from a concern about human interests, more precisely “the moral constitution of English society” (ibid, p.130)<sup>33</sup>. This was clearly an example of the ‘indirect duty view’ of animal ethics, since it advocated animal welfare in order, primarily, to benefit human society (and nonhumans benefitted only as a happy coincidence).

As I discuss shortly (in the context of his rights position), Salt also sometimes appeared to advocate an indirect duty position, in arguing that greater protection for nonhumans would benefit humans too, since cruelty was everywhere the same – thus, cruelty towards animals could easily lead to cruelty towards humans (since it was exactly the same impulse involved in both cases). Salt therefore shared the belief that animal welfare had a ‘civilising’ effect: the better humans treated other animals the more moral, or humane, they became. Yet, because of his belief in ‘inclusive justice’ (as I will shortly explain), Salt did not apply this solely to the working class. Rather it was related to his aspirations for humanity in general and his understanding of human emancipation (by which he meant emancipation from illusion, egoism and hatred, and realising our ‘true’ potential as ‘godly’ – i.e. supremely humane – beings), which, Salt argued, was therefore intrinsically related to the emancipation of other animals. This idea was also espoused by other HL members. For example, Josiah Oldfield (1895, p.

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<sup>32</sup> The connection between violence to humans and violence to nonhumans continues to be explored within the present animal ethics literature (see for example Adams, 1994; Nibert, 1994). It was also related to Salt’s argument that our (mis)treatment of animals was directly related to (the existence of) war. This was most explicitly demonstrated through blood-sports, which were, he believed, an unmistakable training for war (Salt, 1935). Thus, kindness to animals benefitted humans too, in encouraging peace, as well as humaneness and civility.

<sup>33</sup> See also Lansbury (1985) and Tester (1991) for discussion on how animal advocacy often was/became about something *other than* concern for animals.

16) stated that cruelty (the example he used was eating meat) prevents mankind from “ever becoming humanely human” and “is antagonistic to the development of the higher life and soul of man” (ibid, p.3).

As well as being selective in targeting only certain types of animal cruelty (i.e. only cruelty perpetrated by the working class), the traditional moral reform approach to animal protection was also accused of being hypocritical in its application of humane principles – caring more about animals than about (certain) humans. Ritvo (ibid, p.133) goes on to explain that the humanitarianism of Victorian animal welfare advocates was therefore limited, and that:

[b]y and large these limits corresponded to the line dividing the lower classes, already implicitly defined as cruel and in need of discipline, from the respectable orders of society. Sometimes this division led humanitarians to value animals more than the vulgar humans who abused them. [...] Those unsympathetic to the humanitarian cause frequently wondered why people professedly sensitive to the sufferings of animals were less concerned with the tribulations endured by many human beings.

Those who particularly took offense against this ‘misplaced’ concern for nonhumans (ignoring more pressing human needs) were socialists, particularly of the ‘bread and butter’ kind (so-called “practical socialists” (Li, 2012, p. 18)). The SDF, in its journal, *Justice*, was quick to point out the hypocrisy of a society that afforded nonhumans greater protections than humans (workers and the poor) (*Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, 1884a, p. 1, *Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, 1884b, p. 1, *Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, 1885b, p. 1, *Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, 1886, p. 1; see, for example, Burns, 1885, p. 2)<sup>35</sup>. Unsurprisingly, the HL, and Salt in particular, were conscious of such criticism; not only that it discredited the animal protection movement, but also that, along with “the anti-cruelty movement’s noted class bias, religious conservatism, emphasis on individualist values of personal moral reform and private charity [it] all worked to alienate the more class-conscious socialist workers from comfortably identifying with or joining it” (Li, 2012,

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<sup>35</sup> As previously argued, the SDF, on paper, was the least open to animal protection of all the socialist organisations of that time, being much more of the “bread and butter” variety than ethical socialist. However, in practice, there was some support to be found for the animal cause, given that many ethical socialists and HL members were also SDF supporters. In addition, it must be noted that most contributors to *Justice* praised improvements in nonhuman welfare; what they were criticizing was simply that such improvements were not *also* being made on behalf of the poor (see, for example, *Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, 1884a, p. 1).

p. 18; Preece, 2012). Consequently, Salt spent a great deal of time appeasing these concerns in his writing. Addressing the critique that the movement unfairly targeted the working class, for example, Salt argued:

An attempt is often made by the apologists of amateur butchery to play off one class against another [...] They protest, on the one hand, against any interference with aristocratic sport, on the plea that working men are no less addicted to such pastimes; and, on the other hand, a cry is raised against the unfairness of restricting the amusements of the poor, while noble lords and ladies are permitted to hunt the carted stag with impunity. The obvious answer to these quibbling excuses is that all such barbarities, whether practiced by rich or poor, are alike condemned by any conceivable principle of justice and humaneness; and, further, that it is a doubtful compliment to working men to suggest that they have nothing better to do in their spare hours than to torture defenceless rabbits.

(Salt, 1980, p. 75)

Salt's main defence, therefore, was that all of these concerns – favouring the upper classes, ignoring working class culture, focusing on animals more than people – were solved by an *inclusive* approach to humanitarianism, which would treat *all* forms of cruelty as equally immoral. Applying this inclusivism consistently throughout his writing, Salt was thus highly critical of 'animal lovers' who cared not for the poor (or worse yet, were not even consistent in their 'love' of animals and continued to eat meat), and of socialists who preached socialism alone, not realising that "by condoning cruelty to animals we perpetuate the very spirit which condones cruelty to men" (Salt, 1907, p. 2). For Salt, "we may take it as certain that, in the long run, as we treat our fellow-beings, "the animals", so shall we treat our fellow-men" (Salt, 1921, p. 156).

Quite rightly, Salt also pointed out that to suggest that cruelty was part of working class culture was rather insulting. On the other hand, the HL frequently pointed out that the cruelty inflicted on animals by the working class was often borne out of circumstance. Keir Hardie, for example, emphasised that the "ill-treatment of animals is often the result of ill-treatment of men under unjust social conditions" (Hardie 1911, cited in *The Humanitarian League*, 1911, p. 131). A similar point was made by John C. Kenworthy in *The New Charter* (1896, p. 16). While this did not exonerate the perpetrator of responsibility, it certainly made it more understandable (Weinbren, 1994, p. 93) and reinforced the HL's position that more humane treatment of animals had to be fought for *alongside* more humane treatment of humans, otherwise it would be futile. Selectivity, that allowed people to pursue kind treatment of animals whilst ignoring the

plight of the poor (or vice versa), was not only misguided but also “a flagrant act of injustice” (Carpenter *et al.*, 1895, p. 13). “It is not right to punish working men for inhumanity, when the same deeds go unpunished in the nobility and gentry” (*ibid.*).

Centred on this inclusivism, the ethical socialist approach to animal protection was thus very different to the moral reform tradition of the mainstream animal protection movement<sup>36</sup>. It differed in another crucial way too – in its emphasis on *justice* (for humans and other animals) as opposed to the old tradition of (simply) ‘kindness’, ‘mercy’ and/or ‘charity’. It was this insistence on *justice* that led Salt to advocate rights for nonhumans despite his reservations and doubts regarding the use of ‘rights’ (as I discuss in the final section of this chapter). While Salt believed that compassion and justice were “in some measure akin” (Salt, 1906a, p. 14), he recognised that a duty of kindness on its own would not suffice, since ‘kindness’ (or mercy, or charity) could be turned off, like a tap, whenever it suited (Salt, 1900, p. 214). Justice, on the other hand (in the form of rights or direct duties), being more objective and rational, ensured that nonhumans would not be subject to human ‘whims’. An emphasis on justice (and rights) also, it was hoped, discouraged the prevalent inconsistencies (see above) that brought criticism to the movement (Li, 2012), since one would not be able to *choose* who ‘deserved’ rights – either everyone had them, or no-one did. The belief that justice was at the heart of animal ethics, particularly vegetarianism (being the outward manifestation of a concern for nonhumans), was shared by many of Salt’s fellow HL members such as Keir Hardie and Charlotte Despard. Mulvihill (1989, p. 127), for example, writes that Despard’s conversion to vegetarianism sprang from a deep-rooted “feeling that the slaughter and consumption of animals were symptoms of a corrupt and unjust society”.

It might be argued, at this point, that this emphasis on ‘inclusive justice’ is not inconsistent with the liberal approach to animal ethics set out in chapter one. Especially in its focus on justice, the ethical socialist approach thus appears remarkably similar to

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<sup>36</sup> For this reason, Preece (2012) is misleading when he argues that inclusive justice characterised much of the humanitarianism of that era without explaining that this approach marked a significant shift away from the earlier form of the movement, which had emerged from the moral reform tradition. (In addition, it may be argued that this approach was still not mainstream by the end of the nineteenth century – it was not embraced by the RSPCA until quite recently, for example – but rather remained a fringe section of the movement, albeit a strong one.) Similarly, those (such as Jasper and Nelkin, 1992) who argue that the nineteenth century animal protection movement was an *entirely* middle class affair, borne out of the moral reform tradition, are also misleading in failing to acknowledging the dissenting voices, predominantly socialist, which eventually helped to politicise and radicalise the movement (Li, 2012).

contemporary attempts to ‘politicise’ the discipline, which may be characterised by their specific focus on transforming/reimagining political institutions to be more amenable to justice for nonhumans (Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan, 2016). To be sure, there are many similarities and overlaps between ethical socialism and liberalism, as previously suggested. This is one of the reasons why a distinction is often made between ethical socialism and Marxism (in particular). In many other ways, however, ethical socialism was very much in disagreement with liberalism, and shared similarities with Marxism. The central question, then, is ‘in what ways does the ethical socialist emphasis on inclusive justice offer something different to the contemporary liberal emphasis on justice?’ One possible answer is that, for Salt and the HL, ‘inclusive justice’ was a way of linking socialism and animal ethics – being a central tenet of both theories. Salt thus admonished socialists for not supporting the animal cause (and arguing that humans deserved concern instead) because they “cut away the ground from under their feet” since “one of their strongest arguments [is] itself based on this same sense of justice and humanity” (Salt, 1896 no page no.).

Besides its centrality to the ethical socialist vision, the other main reason why ‘inclusive justice’ is worthy of mention despite its similarities to the liberal approach to animal ethics is that it demonstrates the prescience of the pro-animal ethical socialists. As I discussed in chapter one, there has been some debate amongst contemporary scholars as to whether there has been a recent politicisation of animal ethics. Though the answer is arguably ‘no’, in that the post-1970s literature has always been ‘political’, it has been suggested that more recent contributions to the discipline do offer something new in their explicit focus on justice and transforming political institutions (in accordance with the principles of justice) (Cochrane, Garner and O’Sullivan, 2016). Hence the above discussion on ‘inclusive justice’ is significant because it suggests that, far from being a contemporary phenomenon, a focus on justice was in fact characteristic of the *ethical socialist* approach to animal ethics; thus, the ‘political turn’ is not new, but, rather, was initiated by the nineteenth century ethical socialists. Taking this argument further, Li (2012) contends that it was the influence of the ethical socialists that helped the animal protection movement gradually shift away from the moral reform tradition and towards a more political stance, characteristic of the contemporary discipline. Thus, the argument might be made that the discipline owes its present nature to pro-animal ethical socialism.

While inclusive justice, then, might appear to suggest a trajectory between ethical socialism and contemporary *liberal* animal ethics, the other central values that I discuss in this chapter were very much rooted in the socialist tradition, and are largely absent from contemporary animal ethics (I would argue, to the detriment of the discipline). The first of these that I focus on below was one of most fundamental values to pro-animal ethical socialists: kinship.

## 3.2 Kinship

I saw deep in the eyes of the animals the human soul look out upon me. [...] Thee my brother and sister I see and mistake not. [...] Thy half-warm horns and long tongue lapping round my wrist do not conceal thy humanity any more than the learned talk of the pedant conceals his – for all thou art dumb we have words and plenty between us.

(Carpenter, 1905, p. 175)

The idea that there was a brotherhood and kinship between all sentient beings was one of the HL's guiding principles (Weinbren, 1994, p. 100). For Salt, however, kinship was more than a principle, it was his religion, as he explained in his (own) funeral address (which he had prepared in advance of his death):

I wholly disbelieve in the present established religion; but I have a very firm religious faith of my own – a Creed of Kinship I call it – a belief that in years yet to come there will be a recognition of brotherhood between man and man, nation and nation, human and subhuman, which will transform a state of semi-savagery, as we have it, into one of civilisation, when there will be no such barbarity of warfare, or the robbery of the poor by the rich, or the ill-usage of the lower animals by mankind.

(Salt, cited in Winsten, 1951, p. 203)

The importance placed on kinship clearly derived from the traditional socialist emphasis on brotherhood and solidarity. In the spirit of Carpenter's "larger socialism", kinship was in fact just an extension of brotherhood. Inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution, the ethical socialists had simply taken brotherhood to its logical conclusion. Central to this conviction, then, was the revelation that humans *are* animals<sup>37</sup>, the consequences of which, they believed, had yet to be applied to ethics and our treatment of non-human animals (see for example Moore, 1906).

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<sup>37</sup> Thus Salt was highly critical of the unqualified use of the term "animals" (when it referred only to nonhumans).

The motive that you'll find most strong,  
The simple rule, the short-and-long,  
For doing animals no wrong,  
Is this, *that you are one*.

(Salt, cited in Winsten, 1951, p. 60 emphasis in original)

Salt believed that, once it was fully acknowledged and accepted, this great 'truth' would transform our relations with other animals *and* with other humans. Yet this depended on an identification with the 'other', and the fostering of a solidarity of interests between humans and animals, based on a "democratic sentiment of universal empathy"<sup>38</sup> (Salt, 1935, p. 4) (these principles were, for Salt, fundamental to socialism as well as animal ethics). This attitude was clearly supported by HL members in their behaviour towards nonhuman animals and in their writing. For example, Keir Hardie's biographer, Caroline Benn (1992, p. 296), writes that Hardie "*identified* with animals [my emphasis]. They were his cronies. A press profile noted he was often seen to stop in London's streets and talk to the horses". This kind of camaraderie was central to Salt and the HL's conceptualisation of kinship. Another example can be found in *The New Charter: a discussion of the rights of men and the rights of animals*, published by George Bell & Sons (Ernest Bell) on behalf of the HL, in which John C. Kenworthy (1896, pp. 5–7) writes that the reason one should not kick a dog lies in the "unity" of life: "No man, no creature, lives to himself or itself alone. The life of every individual, of every species, is conditioned by the lives of all other individuals, of all species", thus "the abundance and quality of one's own life depends upon the abundance and quality of the life that surrounds one". 'Just' relations, then, are founded on love: "the duty and advantage of each individual life is to love and help other lives" (ibid). This also relates to the ethical socialists' vision of a 'new' morality (discussed shortly), according to which the flourishing of society depended on the recognition of such virtues. Salt believed, however, that this was impossible while humankind remained divided internally (class from class, man from woman) and from other animals.

Linked to his belief in inclusivism, he therefore argued

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<sup>38</sup> It was this identification and solidarity that ensured that empathy did not turn into mere patronage, which was important for Salt, given his desire to steer the movement away from 'sentimentality' and towards justice for nonhumans (previously discussed).

that food-reform [vegetarianism], like Socialism, has an essential part to play in the liberation of man-kind. I cannot see how there be any real and full recognition of Kinship, as long as men continue either to *cheat*, or *eat*, their fellow-beings!

(cited in Hendrick, 1977, p. 167)

In other words, human liberation (emancipation) depended on the realisation of kinship, which in turn relied on humans identifying with other animals and extending empathy and compassion towards them<sup>39</sup>. Salt thus believed that the emancipation of men will bring with it the emancipation of other animals; the two are interconnected and cannot be separated (Salt, 1935, p. 4). This argument – that only by recognising the kinship between mankind and the other animals can mankind be free – was reiterated by other HL members such as Edward Carpenter. For example, Carpenter wrote that, in vivisection, ‘mankind’

is really torturing his [sic] own inmost being, slaying the consciousness of his self as it arises again in the creature before him – his own everlasting soul, the knowledge of which before all things and alone can give him true health and freedom from disease.

(Carpenter *et al.*, 1895, p. 17)

### 3.3 A New Morality

Both the inclusive justice approach and the emphasis on kinship may be said to form part of the HL’s vision for a new, transformed social condition, one that favoured cooperation and love over competition and selfishness. This was inextricably linked to their understanding of socialism (being, for them, the goal, or ‘ends’, of socialism). As articulated by Carpenter, socialism, at heart, meant

a new sentiment of humanity, a better sort of morality [...] morality being the essential part of the movement [...] If socialism [...] means merely a change of society without a change of its heart [...] it amounts to nothing, and is not in effect a change at all [...] If it is to be a substantial movement, it must mean a changed ideal, a changed conception of daily life [...] it must mean simplicity of life, defence of the weak.

(Carpenter, 1885, p. 71)

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<sup>39</sup> This was one way in which human and nonhuman emancipation was linked, according to Salt. As previously discussed (in the context of the ‘civility argument’), the other way the two were linked was based on the understanding that extending compassion and justice to nonhumans would allow humans to reach their true humane potential and thus be rid of the hate and prejudice that trapped them in a state of ‘barbarity’.

This new morality was thus set up to be the antithesis of the prevailing, capitalist morality,

which, having paid its domestic servants their regular wages, is quite satisfied with itself, and expects them to do *their* duty in return, but is silent about their real needs and welfare; which treats its wage-workers as simple machines for the grinding out of profits, and lifts its eyebrows in serene surprise when they retaliate against such treatment; which can only regard a criminal as a person who has broken a formula, and in return must be punished according to a formula; and a pig as an animal for which you provide reasonable provender and a sty, and which in return you are entitled to *eat*.

(Carpenter, 1921b, p. 260 emphasis in original)

Part of what contributed to this new morality was their socialist understanding of human nature. Rejecting the values of competition and egoism that they saw as inherent to capitalism, the HL instead emphasised cooperation and kinship as necessary for the “improvement of the human race” (Weinbren, 1994, p. 89). A friend of the HL, Josiah Oldfield, in his paper “The Evils of Butchery”, argued that the popular idea of nature ‘red in tooth and claw’ was a weapon of the tyrant, who, historically, had used it as an excuse to justify oppression over the weak. This was the case, he argued, for the bourgeoisie, as well as the slaveholder. “The fallacy” he wrote

lies in the failure to recognise that in Nature there are two forces at work, the antagonism of individualism and the cooperation of Socialism [...] it is the corporate cohesion which depends on the sacrifice of Self and the helping of the other which has done most for the evolution of and survival of the fittest.

(Oldfield, 1895, p. 6)

Campaigning for the application of love, peace and mutual cooperation to society, Salt thus argued that tribal egoism (what he referred to as patriotism) had to be replaced with cosmopolitanism<sup>40</sup>.

In general, HL members shared a “sense of optimism about human capacity” (Weinbren, 1994, p. 91) that echoes Marx’s optimism that human nature could be changed through economic transformation. However, although ethical socialists did recognise the necessity of transforming the economic system of production, they spent more time elaborating the need for a transformation of social and personal relations

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<sup>40</sup> Crucially, for Salt, socialism was nothing more than the application of these principles to human society, while vegetarianism was exactly the same but applied to (other) animals (Salt, 1889).

based on love, equality and freedom (Salt, 1891a; Rowbotham, 1977). In “The New Morality”, for example, Carpenter (1921b, p. 256) writes that, under socialism, children should be taught

to regard all human beings, of whatever race or class, as ends in themselves – never to be looked upon as mere things or chattels to be made use of. Let them also learn to look upon the animals in the same light – as beings, they too, who are climbing the great ladder of creation – beings with whom also we humans have a common spirit and interest.

Besides education, one of the primary ways in which it was believed this transformation would be achieved was through, according to Carpenter (1885, p. 71), “a changed conception of daily life [especially a] simplicity of life”. He was referring here to the idea of ‘the simple life’, which was extremely popular among ethical socialists of the late 1800s, so much so that it actually became an independent movement (though it remained strongly associated with ethical socialism), sometimes referred to as the ‘back to nature’ movement (see Gould, 1988).

### **3.3.1 The ‘Simple Life’, Purity, and ‘Living Off Others’**

Pioneered by writers such as Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and Carpenter himself, the ‘simple life’ movement emerged out of a desire to get back to nature (in fact, Gould (1988) labels the movement ‘back to nature’ as opposed to ‘the simple life’, though the two are analogous) and to live a ‘pure’ (in many senses of the word) life, linked to a critique of ‘civilisation’ in its (then) current form<sup>41</sup>. This can be seen in the work of Salt (his autobiography was titled *Seventy Years among Savages*) and Carpenter (who published a book entitled *Civilisation: its cause and cure*) in particular.

Just as Marx believed in the inevitability of communism, Carpenter believed in the evitable return to a ‘Nature-religion’ period where “man will once more *feel* his unity with his fellows, he will feel his unity with the animals, with the mountains and the streams, with the earth itself and the slow lapse of the constellations” (Carpenter, 1921a, p. 71 emphasis in original). This romanticised view of nature can also be seen in Keir Hardie’s writings. In an address to a Bradford ILP conference, Hardie asked the audience to “defend ‘the loveliness of the unspoiled world’, love animals, love flowers,

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<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to compare their critique of civilisation with Norbert Elias’ (1994) discussion of civilisation in relation to the ‘politics of sight’, discussed in chapter five. There are certainly many overlaps between the two.

eliminate poverty and work for peace” (cited in Benn, 1992, p. 320). According to Benn (ibid, p.432), Hardie believed that

under socialism ‘the rivers would run pure and clear as they did of yore and the wood would again cover the mountainside’, even when he made clear that market capitalism’s rapacious greed was the cause of the many environmental problems being left to future generations, few really understood except the workers who were daily experiencing the ill effects. Socialists were the first modern ecologists.

As Weinbren (1994, p. 90) notes, there was clearly a sense that modern society had a corrupting or polluting effect (mentally and physically) and that socialism (at least their version of it) offered a kind of ‘purity’:

The moment one comes to look into the heart of modern society one perceives how essentially unclean it is – how, after all, the pervading aim and effort of personal life, either consciously or unconsciously entertained, is to maintain ourselves at the cost of others – to live at the expense of other folk’s labor.

(Carpenter, 1884, p. 3)

This idea of ‘purity’ was therefore also connected to the rejection of (what HL members viewed as) capitalist society’s dependence on ‘living off others’, which was understood both literally and metaphorically. Taken literally, ‘living off others’ meant eating meat, which Salt (1921, p. 64) frequently referred to as cannibalism. In “Socialists and Vegetarians” Salt (1896 no page no.) argues that,

[i]f the promptings of gentleness and mercy are deliberately disregarded in the case of animals, it cannot surprise us if they are also excluded from consideration in those social questions where the welfare of human beings is concerned. If those who live selfishly on the labour of others are rightly denounced as “blood-suckers”, do not those who pamper a depraved appetite at the expense of much animal suffering deserve a somewhat similar appellation?

While this critique of ‘living off others’ suggests a political economy understanding of capitalism, the use of words such as “selfishly” and “depraved” link the analysis to a thoroughly *moralising* denouncement of the system, as one would expect from an ethical socialist.

For Charlotte Despard too, vegetarianism was linked to purity, as she implied in a speech to the Liverpool Vegetarian Society, later reported by the *Liverpool Express*:

Mrs Despard expressed the opinion that vegetarianism was really at the base of a great many things. Food seemed only a humble thing, but if they realised what did and might go

into them through the body, then perhaps they would think the question of food was one of the greatest importance.

(cited in Mulvihill, 1989, p. 100)

Similarly, Carpenter argued that the fact that vegetarianism was better both health-wise and ethically “all means cleanness [sic]” both spiritually and physically (Carpenter, 1921a, p. 62).

Understood metaphorically, the concept of ‘living off others’ relates to the HL’s condemnation of exploitation, both of humans and other animals. This was implied in Keir Hardie’s reference (cited above) to the fact that it was the workers who were most affected by environmental problems (such as pollution). Salt, however, in *The Creed of Kinship*, goes even further, implying that animals are exploited *in the same way* as human workers; in both cases we have a situation of someone in power taking advantage of another’s weakness (Salt, 1935, p. 3)<sup>43</sup>. In other words, socialism and animal advocacy are both about standing up for the oppressed and vulnerable; a sentiment which echoes Salt’s insistence on the fundamentality of *empathy* as the basis for both movements. Salt later refers to both forms of ‘living off others’ as cannibalism – literal cannibalism (in eating the bodies of other animals “so closely akin” to ourselves) and metaphorical cannibalism (in living off the labour of others) – following J. Howard Moore:

Our competitive system of industry is a vestigial institution. It is a survival from the militant ages of the past.... It is a system of cannibalism. Instead of instilling the feeling of brotherhood, it compels us to eat each other.

(cited in Salt, 1921, p. 64)

In advocating these two understandings of the concept of ‘living off others’ (with regards to humans and nonhumans), Salt links kinship to class, and offers a clear connection between socialism and a concern for nonhumans:

We can never be a humane people, so long as the working classes are sacrificed, body and soul, to the greed of their oppressors, or while the “lower animals” are regarded as mere “live-stock” and food-producers for man.

(Salt, 1889, p. 1)

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<sup>43</sup> This particularly relates to the discussion on oppression, class and agency in chapter six.

Moreover, by linking the ethical socialist values to a more Marxist understanding of class, Salt (unintentionally) differentiates his (and the HL's) approach from the contemporary liberal approach to animal ethics, in which these themes (kinship, class, solidarity, etc.) are absent. This therefore suggests that Salt and his colleagues' approach does offer an alternative to the dominant liberal narrative, though whether it is comprehensive enough to supplant the latter has yet to be determined.

### **3.3.2 Vegetarianism and Frugality**

As demonstrated above, vegetarianism was quite central to the ethical socialists' 'new morality' because it was believed to promote purity (of body and mind) and meant that one was not 'living off others' (literally). There was another reason that vegetarianism was encouraged by the HL, however, and that was because it allowed one to live 'frugally' – frugality being another central tenet of the simple life/back to nature movement. Because vegetarianism was a cheaper diet, it was promoted as being especially beneficial to the working class, making them “stronger in health, and much better off in pocket” (Salt, 1896, para. 3). This “frugality in material things was an essential article of their [the ethical socialists'] Socialist religion”, writes Thompson (1971, p. 89)<sup>45</sup>, as evidenced by Carpenter's (1916, p. 240) claim that the

new movements [...] tending towards the establishment of mystical ideas and a new social order [such as] Hyndman's Democratic Federation, Edmund Gurney's Society for Psychical Research, Mme. Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, the Vegetarian Society, the Anti-vivisection movement, [...] marked the coming of a great reaction from the smug commercialism and materialism of the mid-Victorian epoch.

Yet, one did not necessarily have to join these societies in order to put such principles into action; they could be actively lived through one's own life, as an inspiration for others. Both Salt and Carpenter, for example, renounced the use of servants, and attempted to live the 'simple life' – growing their own vegetables, doing their own cleaning; in short, doing away with the 'comforts' and luxuries that the upper classes were used to, and encouraging others to do the same (Salt, 1891a, p. 2). Charlotte Despard also, after the death of her husband, renounced the comfort of her

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<sup>45</sup> Another example of this frugality, also linked to the concept of purity, is the practice of teetotalism, which was common among ethical socialists (for example Keir Hardie (see Benn, 1992, pp. 12–14)). In fact, J. C. Kenworthy (1896, p. 3) – an HL member – included teetotalism on his list of movements that contribute to social regeneration (the others are vegetarianism, antivivisection, socialism, humanitarianism and land reform).

upper class background and donned a simple attire (which became her distinct trademark), although she chose “to live her ‘simple life’ not in some rural Tolstoyan commune but in an urban wilderness” (Mulvihill, 1989, p. 43).

Salt connected this idea of frugality to a rejection of excess – “over-dressing, over-eating, over-building, and generally over-laying life with useless trappings and paraphernalia” (Salt, 1891a, p. 2) – and thus a rejection of capitalism, to which excess, he believed, was intrinsic. This was again linked to his promotion of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism, Salt believed, because of its association with simplicity of living and unselfishness, was likely to lead to a questioning of the prevailing system (i.e. capitalism) that results in “vast accumulations of private wealth, contrasted with an appalling destitution among other classes of their fellow-countrymen” (Salt, 1885 no page number). While this *could* be interpreted as a critique of affluence and individualism rather than capitalism, nevertheless, Salt believed these properties to be inseparable from capitalism, which he therefore regarded as antithetical to vegetarianism.

### **3.3.3 Purity and Emancipation**

It has been argued that purity played a crucial role in the HL’s understanding of capitalism, conceptualised as excess (challenged by frugality and vegetarianism) and pollution (challenged by environmentalism). Similarly, the concept can be detected in Weinbren’s claim that “the [Humanitarian] League argued that civilization was a disease caused by private property” (Weinbren, 1994, p. 90). Yet the concept of ‘purity’ also had religious connotations. This is not very surprising given the fact that one of the many interconnected elements of ethical socialism was an interest in spirituality and/or religion; not only were many ethical socialists (such as Charlotte Despard and Edward Carpenter) interested in mysticism (exemplified by their membership of the Theosophy movement), but also many of them felt ethical socialism to be equivalent to a religious doctrine (as in the case of Keir Hardie) (Salt, 1891a; Thompson, 1971; Linklater, 1980; see Garner, 1988, p. 44). As a result, purity was also linked to their conceptualisation of emancipation (as inner perfection) and salvation, as demonstrated in Carpenter’s assertion that vivisection ‘keeps us further from God’:

Every time he [the human] pins the trembling rabbit down to the operating table he draws a fresh veil between himself and the source of all Life and Light, and in the name of

Knowledge confirms himself in pitiful blindness and ignorance. And the nation which tolerates and sanctions these practices does the same.

(Carpenter *et al.*, 1895, p. 16)

By rejecting the cruelty of vivisection, mankind therefore became ‘clean’ (spiritually), by which means emancipation could be achieved.

So far I have examined the key values that, I argue, constituted the ethical socialist approach to animal ethics – principally, inclusive justice, kinship, and a transformed morality based on anti-materialism, vegetarianism, the ‘simple life’ and purity – which, taken a whole (as the ethical socialists intended), provide a useful moral imperative to care about nonhumans from a socialist perspective. The approach also offers something new to the discipline in that these values (with the exception of inclusive justice) have been lost to contemporary animal ethics. It does not necessarily follow, however, that this approach, on its own, constitutes a comprehensive and valid alternative to liberal animal ethics. For that to be the case, it would also have to address liberalism’s failings, particularly the issues of class, agency, strategy and the role of capitalism in animal exploitation. I return to this enquiry shortly; for now, however, in the last half of this chapter, I wish to focus on the ethical socialists’ position on rights, given the importance of rights theory to liberal animal ethics and socialism’s perceived antipathy to the concept. In particular, I focus on Henry Salt, since he is commonly portrayed as a rights scholar. I argue that this label is problematic, and that, although the ethical socialists were certainly not *hostile* to the concept of rights, their position on rights was ambivalent at best.

### **3.4 Rights**

Given the title of his most famous work (*Animals’ Rights*), one would expect Henry Salt to have penned a well-developed theory of rights for nonhumans, yet closer examination of his writing reveals that this was far from the case. In fact, in *Animals’ Rights* and other articles on the topic of rights for nonhumans, Salt spends most of the time discussing what such rights would look like *in practice* without actually fully examining rights *theory* and how it can be applied to nonhumans.

This is perhaps more forgivable considering the time in which Salt was writing. The theory of natural rights was highly controversial amongst socialist circles in the late 1800s (Li, 2012). Beatrice Webb, one of the leading figures in the Fabian Society, had

yet to even accept the concept of women's rights (Preece, 2012). Internally, the Humanitarian League reflected the general controversy over rights, as demonstrated in its publication of *The New Charter: A discussion of the rights of men and the rights of animals*, a volume of essays edited by Salt. According to one of the volume's contributors, G. W. Foote (1896), it was the term itself – rights – that provoked dissension, rather than the sentiment behind the concept<sup>46</sup>. This is corroborated by other HL publications, in which there appears to be a general acceptance of rights, including animal rights, although very few contributors are comfortable using the specific term 'rights' (notable exceptions are Oldfield, 1895, p. 15; Salt, 1980). As a result of the controversy over the word, G. W. Foote (1896, p. 115) suggests using alternative phrases such as duties or "claims" (to sympathy and consideration) which, he argues, do not change the underlying meaning or impulse from which 'rights' stem. Not only were many ethical socialists ambiguous about what exactly rights were, but also several authors blatantly mistook rights theory, treating moral and natural rights as two separate entities:

We need not discuss the Legal Rights of animals, since these can be decided by an appeal to the Statute Book; nor need we discuss the Natural Rights of animals, as this involves too many grave differences of opinion and sentiment; but I think we may profitably discuss the Moral Rights of animals, for this simply means – Are they, or are they not, participators in the beneficence of our ethical progress?

(Foote, 1896, p. 112)

In this context, Salt's views on animal rights appear more or less conservative as opposed to pioneering. Recognising the controversial nature of the topic, Salt quickly rid himself of such "abstract" debate (Li, 2012, p. 25):

Into the interminable field of discussion as to the fitness of this term [rights] I do not propose to enter, because my purpose is not an academic but a practical one, and in the redressing of social injustice Action cannot forever wait for the good pleasure of Logic. It may be that, from a strictly logical point of view, there are no such things as "Rights," in which case it is obvious that we cannot claim for animals what is denied to men; but if, as is usually conceded, there are rights of men [sic], then we assert there are also, in due degree, rights of animals also.

(Salt, 1900, p. 210)

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<sup>46</sup> For both human and nonhuman rights.

Rather than taking the time to elaborate a theory of animal rights, Salt used the concept only because he recognised that rights were “useful in putting forward a much stronger claim for animals than the predominating moderate position of duty of “kindness” or “mercy”” (Li, 2012, p. 26). In short, “Salt’s use of the word “rights” was in fact an appeal to the idea that the strength of a claim to consideration was reinforced by its urgency. It was the needs of animals that gave them rights” (Shaw, 1990, p. 42).

Given the controversy over the term ‘rights’, Salt made it clear that, like fellow members of the HL, it was the sentiment that mattered, not the semantics:

[I]f objection be taken to the use of the word “rights”, whether of men or of animals, it is open to us to consider the question from another side, and to arrive at the same results by a different process,-viz., by the way of “duties”. Duties and rights [...] are in reality correlative. “A right is really a duty that some one owes to me, and a duty is a right that I owe to another”.

(Salt, 1900, p. 210)

Salt therefore had no objection to the substitution of duties for rights,

provided always that the duties be acknowledged to be real and direct ones. [...] In using the word “rights” therefore, I must premise that I do so, not because it is essential to my argument, but because it appears to be on the whole the best term available, and most expressive of what I have in mind. If a more suitable name can be found, I am quite ready to adopt it.

(ibid, p.211)

(In some ways this is reminiscent of Singer’s (1978, p. 122) accession to the use of rights, given their centrality to “popular moral rhetoric”.)

But what exactly were these ‘rights’, according to Salt? He goes on to explain the underlying sentiment:

If men have not “rights” – well, they have an unmistakable intimation of something very similar; a sense of justice which marks the boundary-line where acquiescence ceases and resistance begins; a demand for freedom to live their own life, subject to the necessity of respecting the equal freedom of other people.

(Salt, 1980, p. 2)

Salt took this definition from Herbert Spencer, frequently citing from the following passage:

Every man [...] is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal liberty of any other man. [...] Whoever admits that each man must have a certain restricted freedom, asserts that it is right he should have this restricted freedom... And hence the several particular freedoms deducible may fitly be called [...] his rights.

(Spencer, cited in Salt, 1980, p. 2)

There are several points to be made in relation to the above. Firstly, the central point that Salt took from Spencer was the idea of rights as ‘restricted freedom’. He reformulated it thus:

We claim for animals, as for men, in so far as it is compatible with the public welfare, a measure of individuality and freedom, a space in which to live their own lives – in a word, Rights.

(Salt, 1900, p. 210)

This freedom was justified because animals were individuals – an idea derived from Schopenhauer (1903) – which, for Salt, included the possession of autonomy and a “future life”. (For Salt (1980, p. 16), it was the denial of this individuality that allowed humans to perpetrate cruelty towards nonhumans.) In this regard, there was “no absolute difference” between humans and nonhumans (Salt, 1900, p. 210): “To live one’s own natural life, to realise oneself, is the true moral purpose of man and animals equally” (Salt, 1908, p. 1)<sup>48</sup>.

While Salt’s emphasis on the importance of freedom for nonhumans, in recognition of their autonomy, echoes Tom Regan’s position on animal ethics and would therefore seem to warrant the idea that Regan’s approach is a revival of Salt’s, Salt was clear that his approach to rights formed part of a wider theory of justice for nonhumans, as expressed (Salt noted) by John Lawrence in 1796 (cited in Salt, 1900, p. 212 emphasis in original):

No human government [...] has ever recognized the *jus animalium*, which ought surely to form a part of the jurisprudence of every system founded on the principles of justice and humanity.

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<sup>48</sup> This was part of the reason that Salt abhorred zoos, which, he argued, unmistakably constituted unnecessary suffering – because of their denial of autonomy – and ought to be abolished. The material “comforts” apparently provided to animals in zoos – even if this were accurate – could never justify the “thwarting of animal individuality”, given the importance of freedom to all animals (ibid).

Against the moral reform approach to animal protection (as advocated, at the time, by the RSPCA), previously discussed, Salt (1900, p. 222) believed that justice required the recognition of reciprocal rights that included nonhumans:

In our dealings with the non-human as with the human race, it is not “charity,” or “self-sacrifice,” or “mercy” that is required, but simple justice – an insistence on our own duties as on those of our neighbors, a recognition of our neighbors’ rights as of our own.

Not only, then, would the recognition of animal rights benefit nonhumans, but it would also benefit humans, for

[T]he principles of justice, if they are to make solid and permanent headway, must be applied with thoroughness and consistency. If there are rights of animals, there must *a fortiori* be rights of men; and [...] it is impossible to maintain that an admission of human rights does not involve an admission of animals’ rights also.

(Salt, 1980, p. 116)

As such, animal rights was not a separate issue, but rather formed “an integral part of the great “social question”” (Salt, 1900, p. 221). In fact, Salt believed that animal rights was simply the inevitable result of the widening out of society’s circle of concern<sup>49</sup>, which was, at that time, only just in the process of incorporating women:

The present condition of the more highly organized domestic animals is in many ways very analogous to that of the negro slaves of a hundred years ago: [...] the same exclusion from the common pale of humanity; the same hypocritical fallacies, to justify that exclusion; and, as a consequence, the same deliberate stubborn denial of their social “rights”.

(Salt, 1980, p. 21)

Salt was not the first to make this comparison. Quite a few other scholars, even before Salt’s time, had made the link between slavery/racism and our treatment of other animals. Jeremy Bentham, for example, wrote his now-famous phrase about animals (‘the question is not can they reason, nor can they talk, but can they suffer?’) in the context of the emancipation of black people, while, contemporaneously, Humphry Primatt (an Anglican vicar and author of *The duty of mercy and the sin of cruelty to brute animals*) also compared prevalent attitudes to animals with racism (Kean, 1998).

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<sup>49</sup> An idea that Salt borrowed from William Lecky (1838-1903), an Irish philosopher and historian, who postulated: “at one time the benevolent affection embrace merely the family; soon the circle expanding includes first a class, then a nation, then a coalition of nations, then all humanity; and finally its influence is felt in the dealings of man with the animal world” (Lecky 1869, cited in Salt, 1891b no page number).

The second point to be made about Salt's understanding of rights relates to his rather confused and "undiscriminating" use of other scholars in his writing (Shaw, 1990, p. 42). For example, Spencer's definition of rights cited by Salt (see above) clearly derived from the work of Mill, who, of course, was not advocating rights at all. Another example of the apparent incongruity in Salt's writing is his frequent admiration of Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian. In explaining the history of (the idea of) animal rights, Salt (1980, p. 5) credits Bentham as being the first to advocate "the rights of animals with authority and persistence", yet Bentham, like Mill, was not in fact an advocate of rights at all. Was Salt simply confused about utilitarian theory? Shaw (1990, p. 43) suggests that – quite the contrary – Salt approved of the utilitarian emphasis on the capacity of suffering as the only relevant characteristic "that gives a being the right to equal consideration [of interests]". Li (2012, p. 14) also argues that "[t]he secularists who supported the animal cause based their stand on the utilitarian consideration of pain and pleasure, and a concept of the kinship of all life derived from evolutionism". This points to the conclusion that Salt's theoretical position was oftentimes contradictory, being, as it was, derived from so many diverse sources (as was ethical socialism in general, of course).

Another apparent contradiction in his work relates to his reliance on Spencer's definition of rights (cited above), which would seem to emphasise a negative right to autonomy above all else. Yet, as discussed in chapter one, this may be problematic for nonhumans, and, in fact, Salt later appears to contradict this right when he claims that "humanitarians do not share the extreme view expressed by Lewis Gompertz [...] that mankind has no moral right to use the lower animals in its service" (Salt, 1908, p. 3)<sup>51</sup>. In an interesting take on equality, Salt argued that since men must toil and labour unremittingly, so too should animals; the duty of humanitarians is not the *abolition* of such work but simply to take responsibility for the welfare of society's workers (both human and other animal) "with a view to the gradual humanising of their lot" (ibid). Shaw (1990, p. 44) adds that Salt was not concerned about the total abolition of domesticated (working) animals such as cab-horses, "because such a use did not violate

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<sup>51</sup> Gompertz was a vegan inventor and abolitionist who died in 1861.

the nature of the animal. As to wild animals [...] they had the right to be left alone to express their Schopenhauer-esque individuality”<sup>52</sup>.

On the other hand, Salt elsewhere elaborates on Spencer’s negative right to autonomy, proposing a *positive* right of “citizenship” for “beasts of burden”<sup>53</sup>. Since these animals must work for the good of society just as certain humans do, they deserve the same rights as workers, in recognition of their place within, and usefulness to, society (Salt, 1921, p. 216). In the case of wild animals, however, he argued that “we have not the same social duties towards these, as towards the domestic, for services performed, yet we are morally bound to do them no unnecessary wrong” (Salt, 1900, p. 218)<sup>55</sup>.

Despite having just set out what appears to be a relatively strong rights position, Salt then justifies his position on working animals by citing John Lawrence:

Man is indispensably bound [...] to bestow upon animals, in return for the benefit he derives from their service, good and sufficient nourishment, comfortable shelter, and merciful treatment; to commit no wanton outrage upon their feelings whilst alive, and to put them to the speediest and least painful death when it shall be necessary to deprive them of life.

(Lawrence, cited in Salt, 1900, p. 217)

Given that this would appear to constitute a welfare position towards animal protection, with its emphasis on good treatment and ‘humane’ slaughter, it seems to point to a further contradiction within Salt’s writing. As I discuss shortly, the fact that Salt sometimes seems to advocate a welfare position makes his identification as a rights scholar problematic. On the other hand, Salt was unapologetic in his pragmatism when it came to animal ethics. He lamented the fact that even Lawrence’s more conservative prescription for animal protection (cited above) had yet to be implemented in British society, thus there was little hope for any prescription (like Gompertz’s) that advocated *greater* rights for nonhumans, let alone total abolition of their use:

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<sup>52</sup> To an abolitionist this is not a particularly convincing argument as it presupposes that (Salt believed that) the fact of its domestication somehow becomes part of the nature of an animal.

<sup>53</sup> Although, to clarify, Salt never discussed the idea of positive vs. negative rights, since there was no such distinction at that time.

<sup>55</sup> Much of the groundwork for Donaldson and Kymlicka’s (2011) apparently novel approach to animal ethics – that different rights are owed to nonhumans depending on their relation to human society – as laid out in *Zoopolis* can be detected in Salt’s writings on this topic.

Being compelled to deal with facts as we find them, and seeing that from immemorial ages the labor [sic] of animals has been interwoven with the labor of man in the fabric of human society, it seems wiser to claim for animals their due rights, as a part of that organization, than to insist on an abstract moral proposition which can neither be proved nor disproved, and is quite certain to be barren of any practical results.

(ibid, pp.216-217)

Elsewhere Salt (1980, p. 23) admits that while animal liberation may, at the present time, be impossible, this should not discourage advocates from trying, or from setting off down a path (of animal rights) without being fully conscious of the destination. Such pragmatism demonstrates that the ethical socialist approach was not as ‘Utopian’ as critics (such as Marx) would have us believe, and supports the argument that there were many overlaps between the ethical socialist position and the reformist tradition characteristic of the Fabians.

Another example of an apparent contradiction in Salt’s rights theory is his assertion, in *Animals’ Rights* (1980, p. 111), that advocating rights for nonhumans is “not primarily, for the sake of the victims [...] but for the sake of mankind itself”; our very humanity is concerned in the development. This was related to Salt’s ideas about (human) emancipation, which, he argued, depended on the recognition of kinship with other animals. Yet, to argue that animal rights was, fundamentally, ‘for the sake of mankind’, would appear to bring us back full circle to the indirect duty view of animal ethics (the idea that duties involving nonhumans are actually duties to other humans or human society in general). Salt (1907, p. 2) appears to substantiate this theory, when he claims that “it is to satisfy his own needs and instincts – involved in those of the sufferer – that the humanitarian takes action; it is self-fulfilment rather than self-sacrifice that he desires”. But, on the other hand, we know that Salt did advocate direct duties to nonhumans, and was very explicit on this point. Perhaps, instead, the contradiction rests on an alternative interpretation of self-fulfilment and emancipation. Given the fact that many ethical socialists and HL members were influenced by Eastern religion, particularly Buddhism, their interpretation of emancipation might be better understood as an amalgamation of the socialist concept of emancipation and the Buddhist concept of nirvana (or enlightenment), which can only be achieved by dedicating one’s life to the service of others. This transcendent version of the self implies that another being’s suffering actually *becomes* one’s own, and corresponds to

Salt's assertion: "While others are oppressed we are oppressed; in benefitting others we benefit ourselves" (Salt, cited in Winsten, 1951, p. 182).

The final contradiction in Salt's theory of nonhuman rights that I wish to address is that he often appears to be advocating a welfare position to animal ethics, which would further render his identification as a rights scholar somewhat problematic. One example of this has already been mentioned (see above); another, important, example is his frequent elicitation of the concept of 'unnecessary suffering'. This is best understood in the context of Salt's views on equality and the moral status of nonhumans, which I address below.

### **1.1.1 Equality and Suffering**

While Salt (1900, p. 210) wanted to claim for nonhumans their "individuality and freedom, a space in which to live their own lives – in a word, Rights" (though not freedom from exploitation, in the case of domesticated animals), he also believed that "all forms of life are not of equal value, but that the higher the sensibility of the animal, and the closer his affinity to ourselves, the stronger his claim on our humaneness" (Salt, 1906b, p. 45). (Here Salt again anticipates the prevailing attitude in the present-day field of animal ethics, where it is argued that rights should be linked with capacities, particularly intelligence. This is also demonstrated in current 'personhood' debates, which focus predominantly on great apes (Cavalieri and Singer, 1993).) In fact, Salt admits, in the preface to a HL publication, that "the human being has, and must continue to have, a priority of claim over the non-human" (Carpenter *et al.*, 1895 no page number). Other HL members appeared to have shared this view on the moral status of nonhumans. Edward Carpenter, for example, was even more explicit about the superiority of humans over other animals; he argued that mankind has "authority over all animals [who] can alone give them their place in creation" (Carpenter, 1921a, p. 33).

Combined with his assertion that the life of other animals is not as sacred as human life (Salt, 1906b, p. 86), Salt therefore frequently claims that vegetarians are not against *all* killing on principle, but, rather, against *unnecessary* killing (and suffering) (see, for example, Salt, 1900, pp. 218–219, 1980, p. 47). Since the idea of 'unnecessary suffering', and that nonhumans are less important, morally, than humans, is one of the central tenets of the animal *welfare* (as opposed to rights) ethic, it therefore appears incongruous that Salt, hailed as one of the founding fathers of animal rights, would have

invoked the concept so often. While Salt acknowledged the inevitable problems with the idea of ‘necessary suffering’ (what constitutes necessary suffering, by whose judgement? etc.), he defended its use, arguing that all words relating to the expression of rights (human or nonhuman) are liable to contestation, and that such rights must anyway be *prima facie* (Salt, 1980, p. 107). On the other hand, what Salt deemed as ‘unnecessary suffering’ constitutes a fairly radical position even by modern standards; it would, for example, require the *total* abolition of meat-eating (Salt argued that cruelty is inherent and unavoidable in slaughterhouses), the abolition of zoos, pet-keeping<sup>56</sup>, and the immediate cessation of vivisection (Salt, 1906b).

What are we to make, then, of Salt’s assertion that nonhuman life is not as sacred as human life? Was this simply the remnants of a stubborn anthropocentrism – characteristic of socialism, though perhaps less so of ethical socialism – that even radical animal advocates such as Salt had yet to shake off? Certainly there were elements of this in Salt’s writing, such as when he argued that, in the interests of self-defence, humans are justified “in safe-guarding ourselves against such a multiplication of any species of animal as might imperil the *established supremacy of man*” (Salt, 1980, p. 46 my emphasis). Note that the point was not whether a ‘multiplication of species’ would threaten our *survival*, but rather our *supremacy*, under which, of course, very many acts of violence may be justified. This is not the only time that Salt talks about the “supremacy [of man] over the wild animals” (Salt, 1980, p. 47). Yet, on the other hand, Salt (1906b, p. 26) elsewhere writes (in relation to the idea that there is a fundamental difference between humans and other animals): “We are learning to get rid of these “anthropocentric” delusions, which [...] “treat man as a being essentially different and inseparably set apart from all other sentient creatures””. Salt was clearly conflicted; on the one hand, he was pioneering in his beliefs about equality and animal rights, and on the other hand, pragmatic about how to best achieve change, while at the same time trying to break free from the “anthropocentric delusions” on which ‘civilisation’ had been built.

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<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, Salt was almost as critical of the practice of keeping ‘pets’ as he was of zoos, presumably because pet-keeping again went against the animal’s ‘true’ nature and prevented him from ‘living his own life’. This point in particular separated him from the mainstream animal protection movement (e.g. the RSPCA), many of whom had been encouraged to join the movement through a love of/care about their pets (Lansbury, 1985).

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the key values that constitute the main ideological link between ethical socialism and animal ethics perceived by members of the Humanitarian League. Although they touched on other, more Marxist, issues such as class and capitalism in their work (as I note in later chapters), their apprehension of these subjects was limited. Ethics and morality was undoubtedly their main concern, especially promulgating the values I examined in the first half of the chapter.

The first of these values introduced was the concept of ‘inclusive justice’. This concept was central to the ethical socialist approach to animal ethics, and was pioneering in that it marked a contrast to the moral reform tradition of the mainstream animal welfare movement (epitomised by the RSPCA) (Li, 2012). The latter approach was accused of unfairly targeting working class cruelty to animals and ignoring the cruelty of the upper classes, and (relatedly) viewing animal protection as a way of ‘civilising’ the lower classes. To modern audiences, this ‘civility argument’ seems to constitute an indirect duty view of animal ethics (that it is for the sake of humans, primarily, that nonhumans deserve protection). Yet, to contemporaneous critics (particularly ‘bread and butter’ socialists), the traditional animal welfare movement was also guilty, paradoxically, of caring about animals more than people – it was argued that the movement was primarily comprised of middle class ‘pet lovers’ who dedicated attention and care to nonhuman welfare yet gave little concern to the situation of the poor, etc. Salt and his colleagues publicly agreed with these criticisms yet pointed out that the accusers were just as guilty of selectively choosing which cruelties were ‘worse’ than others, and which individuals deserved compassion at the expense of others. By contrast, the ethical socialist approach emphasised that compassion was neither finite nor bound by class, gender or species. By the same token, all cruelty sprang from the same impulse and was equally wrong, no matter whether the victim was human or nonhuman, rich or poor.

The second thread of this approach was the emphasis on *justice* as opposed to the traditional moral reform position that advocated (only) a duty of ‘kindness’, ‘mercy’ and/or ‘charity’ to nonhumans. While kindness was an important part of the ethical socialists’ approach, they recognised that kindness alone would not ensure that nonhumans were treated consistently (i.e. no special treatment for ‘pets’) and that, in

cases where interests might clash, nonhuman interests would be considered equally. Although the inclusive justice position is not incompatible with a liberal approach to animal ethics, the point is that, for the majority of HL members, it was definitely a socialist position – to advocate inclusive justice from an animal ethics perspective without also subscribing to socialism would have been inconsistent. Salt (1915, p. 82) thus concludes:

[There can be] little prospect of improvement, until it is recognised by humanitarians and reformers of all classes, that it is useless to preach peace by itself, or socialism by itself, or criminal law by itself, or anti-vivisection by itself, or vegetarianism by itself, or kindness to animals by itself. The cause of each and all of the barbarities that afflict the world is the same – the general lack of humanity, the lack of knowledge that all sentient life is akin, and that he who seeks to injure a fellow-being is in fact injuring himself. The “prospects” of humanitarianism are wrapped up in the recognition of this despised and neglected truth.

Nevertheless, while Salt advocated direct duties, or rights, for nonhumans because it was what they were owed (i.e. justice), he also admittedly advocated nonhuman rights because it had a civilising affect on *humans*. Although this can seem like a version of the ‘civility argument’ previously discussed<sup>57</sup>, it was actually linked to his understanding of (human) emancipation, which depended on mankind reaching the ultimate level of humaneness (a godly humaneness). On the other hand, for Salt and the other ethical socialists, human emancipation also depended on the recognition of kinship – that humans *are* animals<sup>58</sup> – which formed the second key value in their approach to animal ethics. This principle emerged from thoughtful consideration of Darwin’s theory of evolution and what this meant for morality and ethics. The result was a widening out of the socialist notion of brotherhood into the more inclusive notion of kinship. It meant not only extending empathy to nonhumans, but also the application of the traditional socialist values of identification and a solidarity of interests.

Clearly, the ethical socialist approach to animal protection was not about nonhumans alone; it was, rather, one part of a much wider ideology, or worldview,

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<sup>57</sup> The ‘civility argument’ was only applied to the working class, however.

<sup>58</sup> Clearly, however, there appears to be a contradiction between the idea that emancipation depends on humans recognising their ‘animality’ and that emancipation depends on humans rising above the other animals and becoming more God-like. While it may be plausibly argued that they believed godly humaneness to be an attribute of other animals too, a more likely explanation is that it simply was a contradiction in their line of reasoning – a leftover remnant of the widespread belief that humans were still (morally) superior to other animals.

whose aim was a new morality, a total transformation of social relations, from its present state of competition, egoism and cruelty, to a society driven by love, compassion and identification. This transformation, they believed, would herald a return to mankind's 'original' – i.e. 'true' – state of being; despite the importance of Darwin's theory of evolution, the ethical socialists in the HL rejected the associated idea of nature being 'red in tooth and claw', instead favouring a more positive, socialist, view of (human) nature, which viewed cooperation and empathy as intrinsic to (human) flourishing. This humanitarian and selfless impulse had been quelled, however, by years of capitalism, and so could not be expected to resurface spontaneously, without help. On the contrary, it required a multifaceted approach that included, but was not reduced to, a transformation of the economic system of production. Unlike the "practical" socialists, the ethical socialists were explicit that what was needed was also a change in morality, which would be best achieved through education and leading by example. In particular, they extolled the virtues of living 'the simple life' – i.e. a life close to nature, eschewing material things and living without servants. Inspired by Thoreau, Whitman and even Rousseau, the simple life movement was warmly embraced by British ethical socialists (even those, such as William Morris, who rejected its kindred movements of vegetarianism and animal protection), particularly Salt, Carpenter, and other members of the Fellowship of the New Life.

One key component of the 'simple life' was the idea of purity, which explained many of the movement's manifestations. For example, environmentalism was promoted so as to not pollute the earth, while vegetarianism was promoted so as to not pollute one's body (and, in a way, one's mind). Purity also meant not 'living off others' – both in the sense of living off their labour (hence why advocates eschewed material possessions and servants) and living off their bodies (hence why they refused to eat other animals). In elaborating this principle, Salt provides a solid link between kinship, class and vegetarianism – and thus between socialism and animal ethics – in a way that clearly differentiates his approach from the contemporary liberal approach to animal ethics. Vegetarianism was not only advocated because of its link to purity, however, but also because it was a cheap and rather plain diet, thus allowing vegetarians to live frugally – another central tenet of the simple life movement. One of the reasons that frugality was so highly valued by the ethical socialists was because it was regarded as

the antithesis of capitalism, which was characterised by profit, excess, egoism and greed (thus, largely a *moral* critique of capitalism, typical of ethical socialism).

Having examined the key values linking ethical socialism to animal ethics, I then moved on, in the second half of the chapter, to examine the question of rights, particularly Henry Salt's position on the topic, given that he is often seen as an inspiration for contemporary liberal rights scholars (Regan, 1983; see Clark, 1984). I argued that, while rights were implied in the notion of inclusive justice, they were not nearly as important to the ethical socialist approach as the other values I discussed. In fact, more in tune with socialism's traditional hostility to rights, the ethical socialists were, at best, ambivalent about the concept of rights (for humans and nonhumans). More specifically, I argued that Salt's identification as a rights scholar is problematic given that Salt (like the other ethical socialists) was often unclear about rights (what they were and what his position on them was) and sometimes appeared to be advocating a welfare position rather than a rights position. Of the many contradictions in Salt's work, one of the most evident was his position on killing and the underlying belief that humans and nonhumans were not of equal (moral) value.

What can we extrapolate from this examination to the role of rights within a socialist animal ethic? What it suggests is that ethical socialism appeared to be more open to the idea of rights than other socialist branches such as Marxism, although the ethical socialists were wary of espousing an explicitly pro-rights position (possibly for fear of contradicting the other branches, whose opinions on rights were rather obdurate). Certainly, they preferred to focus instead on equality – if we live in a world where humans have rights, then nonhumans should have them too. As with other topics on which their understanding was limited, and their opinions not yet decided, the ethical socialists really did not bother spending much time on this question. This is therefore one of the areas – along with class, agency, capitalism, etc. – where the Marxist critique of the subject could be usefully employed to bolster the analysis and balance out the ethical socialists' lack of engagement with the subject, thereby offering a more complete and convincing socialist animal ethic (and therefore a valid alternative to the liberal approach).

Before concluding the evaluation of the ethical socialist position, I firstly complete the historical analysis by examining, in the following chapter, the practical links between socialism and animal ethics of the 1970s and '80s. The chapter

demonstrates that despite the different nature of the socialism espoused by the 1970s and '80s case studies, ethical socialist values have in fact permeated these more contemporary socialist approaches. As with chapter two, the central purpose of the chapter, however, is to introduce important historical figures of the 1970s and '80s – particularly Henry Spira – in order to contextualise their inclusion in later thematic chapters. The chapter ends by evaluating the different socialist approaches to animal ethics so far examined (both the nineteenth century and 1970s/'80s varieties), and whether they provide a complete and convincing alternative to the liberal approach, or whether more is needed in this regard, and how this lacuna may be addressed.

## Chapter 4 Socialism and Animals in the 1970s and '80s

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Having focused, in the previous two chapters, on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I now turn to the 1970s and '80s and expand the analysis to include the US as well as Britain. There are several reasons for this temporal leap. While the late 1800s was a period of great interest in animal welfare, this had dwindled within the first two decades of the twentieth century, and so it remained until the late 1960s when it started to make something of a comeback<sup>59</sup>. The most common explanation for this decline and subsequent “revitalisation” relates to a post-material understanding of non-economic cause groups (see Inglehart, 1977). In other words:

The animal protection movement prospered at a time of affluence and international security in the nineteenth century, stagnated in the first half of the twentieth century marked by international conflict and economic depression, and re-emerged as post-1945 affluence began to take effect. Concern for the welfare of animals would seem to be a particularly appropriate cause for those who no longer have to worry about economic security. Moreover, at a practical level, the more affluent society is, the more surplus income exists for membership subscriptions and donations.

(Garner, 1999, p. 95)

Of course, in chapter two we saw that it tended to be the upper and middle classes who were involved in animal protection in the late nineteenth century<sup>60</sup> (see Weinbren, 1994, p. 95); thus one would not expect their economic security to have been greatly affected by subsequent national depressions. The outbreak of war, on the other hand, had a well known ‘chilling effect’ on progressive movements. This was the case for the women’s suffrage movement, and so it was hardly surprising that concerns for nonhumans were also put on hold<sup>61</sup>.

Similarly, the revitalisation of the movement in the 1970s corresponds with the emergence of other leftist, progressive movements such as the women’s liberation

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<sup>59</sup> Except, as I have mentioned before, the issue of hunting, which never dwindled to the same extent as other animal protection issues in Britain.

<sup>60</sup> In this way the nineteenth century movement is similar to the contemporary animal protection movement which tends to be supported by individuals with a certain degree of economic security (see, for example, Nibert, 2002, p. 229).

<sup>61</sup> Revealingly, the HL officially came to an end in September 1919 although its support-base had already diminished by that point (Weinbren, 1994, p. 100).

movement and environmentalism (Freeman, 1973; Neumayer, 2004), both of which may also be explained in the context of post-1945 affluence. It was no coincidence, however, that the movement for nonhuman protection became associated with other ‘liberation’ campaigns; Peter Singer’s book, *Animal Liberation*, first published in 1975, deliberately sought to invoke the power and spirit of earlier campaigns such as the women’s liberation movement, and in this way give credibility to the animal protection movement. Not only did it spark further academic interest in the animal question (which added further credibility to the movement), but it is also widely heralded as the bible of the animal rights movement (Blum, 1995, p. 115). Although Singer was not in fact advocating rights in the book, the obvious association of the movement with other campaigns (such as women’s liberation) where rights was already the universally recognised language of empowerment, meant that, when the movement was revived in the 1970s, it was very much as a *rights* movement, rather than the more ‘respectable’ welfare movement of the nineteenth century (associated with the RSPCA)<sup>62</sup>.

Not only were the 1970s important in terms of the revival and radicalisation of the animal protection movement, but, like its nineteenth counterpart, there was also a socialist element to this revival (Garner, 2004, p. 38). In Britain this link resulted in increasing interest in animal welfare issues from within the Labour Party, while, in the US, the link was exemplified by the civil rights campaigner and Trotskyist, Henry Spira, who was ‘awakened’ to the animal cause in the 1970s and soon became one of the most influential animal rights activists in recent history.

Following on from the previous two chapters, the purpose of this chapter is to continue with the historical analysis of (all) the significant links in practice between socialists and animal protection, thereby demonstrating that a tradition of concern for nonhumans exists in socialism’s own history (which suggests that we ought to investigate more thoroughly the rationale behind this association). The chapter also confirms the relevance of the previous chapter and the analysis of ethical socialism, by demonstrating that contemporary socialists have been influenced (knowingly or unknowingly) by ethical socialist values. Finally, the purpose of the chapter is also to provide an introduction to Henry Spira in order to ground his inclusion in later chapters.

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<sup>62</sup> As I discussed in chapter three, the RSPCA’s approach to animal protection was representative of the moral reform tradition, while the HL sought offered an alternative, politicised approach (Li, 2012).

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on Henry Spira, given his importance to the animal rights movement. Like his nineteenth century namesake – Salt – Spira’s socialist affiliation is rarely attended to by the animal protection community (the movement and academia); among those who do acknowledge it (Singer, 1998; for example Munro, 2002), very few elaborate on the connection perceived by Spira between his political beliefs and his views on animal ethics, and the significance of this connection. Though Spira was not consciously emulating the campaigning style of Salt and the HL, I point out that there were many similar themes, such as Spira’s emphasis on inclusive justice, emancipation, and kinship. I do not go into detail about the more ‘Marxist’ links Spira perceived, however (such as his identification of a shared oppression between the working class and nonhuman animals), as this is included as part of the analysis of these themes in the final two chapters.

In the second section, I move on to examine the connection between the British Labour Party and animal protection in the 1970s and ’80s. I focus on the 1978 *Charter for Animal Protection* as the most explicit presentation of the Labour Party’s recently developed attitude towards animal protection. I also introduce some of the key individuals within the Labour Party who were responsible for this sympathetic attitude towards animal protection. I show that, like the nineteenth century socialist organisations, it was *individuals* who constituted the link between socialism and animal protection, rather than it being an official party line.

#### **4.1 Henry Spira (1927-1998)**

Born in Belgium, in June 1927, to Jewish parents, Spira had familial connections to Poland, Hungary and Germany. The family moved around a lot when Spira was a child, eventually settling in New York when he was thirteen years old. As a result of this rather turbulent upbringing, Spira appeared relatively at ease in various settings and with people from very different cultural backgrounds; his childhood experience persuaded him that he had to depend upon his own ‘value system’ since the “ones [he] encountered [...] were mutually exclusive” (Singer, 1998, p. 4).

While he was living in New York, still at High School, Spira

became involved with a left-wing Jewish youth movement called Hashomer Hatzair. HH, as the movement was known, [...] promoted a form of humanistic socialism based on the collective settlements, or kibbutzim, that were being established in Palestine.

(Singer, 1998, p. 6)

This movement was to prove a great influence on Spira's values and subsequent life trajectory. Singer writes that the HH movement was highly idealistic and anti-materialistic, the end point being a life "close to nature, in which all were equal" (ibid). In this way, the movement echoes the 'simple life' movement that was central to the approach of the ethical socialists associated with the Humanitarian League, such as Henry Salt and Edward Carpenter.

Having found a home in the HH, the young Spira now found himself in a difficult position with his father, who had more traditional ideas on lifestyle and authority – at odds with the HH's encouragement of independence of mind (Singer, 1998, p. 6). His father was a man for whom, it seemed, "the only positive values are success and money" (ibid, p.1). Given Spira's anti-materialism and disinterest in wealth<sup>64</sup>, their values could not be reconciled, and so Spira left home at age sixteen, attending high school in the morning and working a part-time job in the afternoons (Singer, 1998, p. 8). During this time his commitment to the HH remained constant, although the society was undergoing changes of its own, in particular under the growing influence of Trotskyism. As a result, Spira came to "see injustice not as a matter of the greed or sadism of particular individuals, but as something more systematic", eventually signing up to the "leading Trotskyist political organisation" (ibid, p.10), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in 1944.

The logical next step for Spira was to join the merchant marine, which had become a hotbed of union activism by the 1940s. According to Singer (1998, p. 11), "there were a lot of Trotskyists in the union", although Spira was among the minority in being a member of the SWP (ibid, p.13). He remained a seaman until 1952 – the McCarthy period – when he was forced off the ships because of his political beliefs (Spira, 1985, p. 195; Singer, 1998, p. 13). After a brief stint in the army and then on an automobile assembly line – during which time Spira was heavily involved in the civil

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<sup>64</sup> Later, when Spira was working on the ships, he explained (cited in Singer, 1998, p. 197) that he had "so much money I didn't know where to put it. [...] it was interesting for the experience, but I didn't want the lifestyle. It didn't give me a high."

rights movement, writing a number of articles for “small, leftist publications” (Spira, 1985, p. 195), including several on the suspicious activity of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) – Spira returned to the ships (the McCarthy period having ended) and became embroiled in the struggle to restore democracy to the National Maritime Union (NMU) (Spira, 1985, p. 195; Singer, 1998, p. 35). Around about the same time, he left the SWP, in part because it had ignored the work of Trotsky himself in becoming a society of idealistic pedants, out of touch with reality:

One of the things that Trotsky wrote about was the idea of “the permanent revolution.” That meant that you had to have your feet on the ground and you had to figure out what’s possible today, and what’s possible tomorrow. It was a permanent struggle, not one big leap, and it had to be based on what’s actually happening. All the various campaigns are linked with one another. You move forward a step, then you see further ahead, and you can move forward another step.

(Spira, cited in Singer, 1998, p. 35)

After the campaign to remove the president of the NMU ended, Spira found himself no longer enamoured with life on-board the ships, which was rapidly transforming under the ‘industrial revolution’ of the sixties. He therefore decided to take up a position as a high school teacher in New York, having been persuaded of the merits of teaching whilst working on the ships during a stint in Guinea (Spira, 1985, p. 195; Singer, 1998, pp. 40–42). It was around this time that he was given a cat to look after by a friend, which led to feelings of discomfort about stroking one animal while sticking a knife and fork into another (Swindells, 1996). Yet he “still had no inkling of animal welfare as a political issue” (Spira, 1985, p. 195). That was, until he read Peter Singer’s review of *Animals, Men and Morals* (1971), published in the New York Review of Books in 1973<sup>65</sup>.

Singer described a universe of more than 4 billion animals being killed each year in the USA alone. Their suffering is intense, widespread, expanding, systematic and socially sanctioned. And the victims are unable to organise in defence of their own interests. I felt that animal liberation was the logical extension of what my life was all about – identifying with the powerless and the vulnerable, the victims, dominated and oppressed.

(ibid, p.196)

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<sup>65</sup> This essay eventually became Singer’s famous book, *Animal Liberation*.

This insight persuaded Spira to enrol, the following year, on an evening course taught by Peter Singer on the topic of animal liberation at New York University's School of Continuing Education. This was enough to convince Spira of the relevance and urgency of the animal question, so he looked around to see what other animal welfare organisations had so far been doing.

My background had made me ready to question anything, be it the FBI, trade union bosses, or animal welfare organizations with millions of dollars in their bank accounts. In looking at the immensity of animal suffering and then at the state of the animal movement, I felt that it was going nowhere.

(Spira, 1985, p. 196)

Together with a small group of fellow students from Singer's course, Spira decided that a new approach was needed, one that would take inspiration from Spira's background in trade unionism and the civil rights movement. They set out on a series of campaigns that aimed to really make a difference to animal suffering, starting by giving the movement credibility with a campaign against cat experiments at the American Museum of Natural History (Spira, 1996b, pp. 1, 359). From then on, Spira became a formidable force in the animal rights movement.

Before going on to discuss the ideological links between ethical socialism and Spira's own work, a note on his socialist position is necessary (I discuss the different positions at various times throughout the thesis, but it is worth clarifying the point here). Spira was, of course, first and foremost a Trotskyist. It was as a result of this influence that Spira recognised the systemic nature of injustice (Singer, 1998) – that what was needed, therefore, was a change in economic and political system, rather than moral education (as an ethical socialist might suggest). One would expect, then, for a Trotskyist, that the end goal would be a transformation of the system, and that the 'means' to achieve this would be through revolution. Yet Spira's position does not appear to correspond with either of these tenets. For starters, the 'ends' for Spira was a *reformed* capitalism, rather than the abolishment of capitalism (this is evidenced, as I discuss in chapter six, through his desire to work with capitalists, encouraging them to adopt more responsible, humane practices), which appears more akin to a reformist socialist position (such as that of the Fabians) than a Trotskyist position. On the other hand, contrary to reformist (particularly parliamentary) socialism, Spira did not believe that legislation was an effective vehicle for change (believing that power lay with

corporations instead). Further complicating things, Spira also shared many of the same ethical socialist values as the nineteenth century socialists discussed in the previous two chapters. Since the other, more Marxist, links he perceived between socialism and animal ethics will be discussed thematically in chapters five and six, I concentrate for now on these values and their importance to Spira's overall position on animal ethics.

#### **4.1.1 Inclusive Justice**

In chapter two, we saw that the 'bread and butter' or 'practical' socialists of the late nineteenth century were scathing of the traditional animal protection movement because they felt that the latter prioritised nonhuman welfare over human welfare. One hundred years later, little seemed to have changed in the attitude of mainstream socialists towards animal ethics. Speaking about the connection between animal advocacy and the Left, Spira affirmed that the Left inherited from Marx the "anthropocentric view that humans define themselves by stressing the differences between themselves and other animals, with animals relegated to instruments of labour" (Spira, 1993b, p. 11). Spira's involvement with the animal cause was thus rather unusual, as Singer explains: "it wasn't very fashionable in the early seventies for people [...] from the left – people with involvement with civil rights or the rank and file trade union movements – to start getting concerned about animals" (Singer, 1989, p. 5). The popular belief amongst the Left was, according to Spira (*ibid*), that "animals really didn't matter and humans did".

Unlike his comrades, however, Spira (awakened to the pertinence of the animal question by Peter Singer's article in the *New York Review of Books*) immediately recognised the struggle for animal rights as an extension of the struggle for *human* rights, in which he had already been greatly involved (Zacharias, 1995a, p. 8). Echoing the words of Henry Salt, Spira expressly stated that animal rights was the logical extension, or widening, of the circle of compassion/concern, which had only recently expanded to include ethnic minorities, women, and so on (Marcus, 1993). Conversely, Spira also recognised that if you started to exclude some individuals from the circle of concern it was then easier to exclude others (Zacharias, 1995b, p. 11). Therefore, "to be consistent, we cannot be selective about which groups of beings are worthy of our concern" (Spira, 1993b, p. 14). As noted in chapter three, this understanding of the animal question was central to the 'inclusive justice' or 'larger socialism' approach of

Henry Salt and the HL (for whom it was also a defence against claims of unfairly vilifying the working class).

Against those who argued that animal rights distracted campaigners from more pressing human concerns and drained their energy and resources, Spira argued that there was no such thing as a limited supply of compassion, which might make us careful or penurious in how we spend it. Rather, “compassion is such that the more you use it, the more of it you have” (Spira, cited in Zacharias, 1995b, p. 11). On the other hand, Spira also realised that, of all exploited groups, nonhumans suffered the most intensely, which made them extra deserving of attention: “in the hierarchy of exploitation/domination it’s the non-human animals who are on the bottom of the pile” (see also Spira, 1979b, p. 10; Singer, 1989, p. 5).

Although compassion and empathy were fundamental, Spira believed, to all social justice movements (Singer, 1989, p. 5), nevertheless he also maintained that what attracted him to the animal cause was its appeal to rationality as opposed to emotion. This Spira learnt from his teacher, Peter Singer:

Singer made an enormous impression on me because his concern for other animals was rational and defensible in public debate. It did not depend on sentimentality, on the cuteness of the animals in question or their popularity as pets. To me he was saying simply that it is wrong to harm others, and as a matter of consistency we don’t limit who the others are; if they can tell the difference between pain and pleasure, then they have the fundamental right not to be harmed.

(Spira, 1985, p. 196)

There are several points worth mentioning here. Firstly, it was already noted that this emphasis on consistency resembled the HL’s insistence on inclusivism. Inclusivism was only part of the ethical socialist approach to animal protection, however; also crucial to their approach was an emphasis on justice as opposed to charity. This constituted an important distinction between the ethical socialist approach to animal protection and traditional Victorian humanitarianism, which was often accused of sentimentality with regards to nonhuman welfare. Spira clearly shared the wish that the animal protection movement be seen as a legitimate social justice issue, which, he felt, would culminate in the recognition of *rights* for nonhumans (Spira appears to erroneously categorise

Singer's approach as rights-based<sup>66</sup>). In other writings, Spira was very explicit in his support of a rights-based position for other animals (see, for example, Spira, 1983), founded exclusively on sentience. The ability to feel pleasure and pain was enough to grant one the (negative) right, 'not to be harmed'<sup>67</sup>. Clearly, despite the traditional tension between socialism and rights (touched on in chapters one and three), Spira never questions the aptness of rights in relation to nonhuman animals, or to humans for that matter – since, as we have already seen, Spira regarded the animal question as an extension of the *human rights* struggle of which he had been involved (Spira, 1996a, p. 39).

#### 4.1.2 Emancipation and Kinship

Extending his inclusivism even further, Spira (ibid, p.28) asserted that violence to nonhumans is an extension of violence to humans, and vice-versa. This realisation led Spira to advocate a coming-together of the various nonviolence movements, which, he believed, shared certain core values: a respect for (all) life, defence of the vulnerable, and the desire to 'do no harm' (Zacharias, 1995a, p. 9). We saw in the discussion of the 'civility argument' in chapter three that the link between violence towards humans and violence towards other animals was also noted by Henry Salt and the HL, and formed part of Salt's argument that the emancipation of humans depended on the emancipation of nonhumans. However, Salt also believed that human emancipation depended on kinship (i.e. the realisation that humans *are* animals); an idea that also found its way into Spira's work: "Animal liberation is also human liberation. Animal liberationists [...] recognise our kinship with all feeling beings" (Spira, 1983, p. 373). And again: "we can liberate the non-human animals and, in the process, ourselves, for we can't be free while billions of our kin are imprisoned and their minds and bodies continuously violated" (Spira, cited in Mason, 1984, p. 36). Corresponding to Henry Salt's understanding of the term, the sense of emancipation being used by Spira was twofold. The first was that treating animals according to our highest moral standards (animal liberation) allows us to attain the highest possible level of morality, and in this esoteric sense we can achieve emancipation (spiritually, etc.). This connotation can be detected

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<sup>66</sup> This is a common mistake, however, which I discussed in chapter one.

<sup>67</sup> Whether Spira thought nonhumans had/ought to have *additional* rights (including positive ones) is uncertain. He never entered into discussion with critics of animal rights (based on, for example, a contractarian understanding of rights), although he was presumably aware of such arguments given his connections to academia (see Singer, 1998, p. 84).

in Spira's writing: "Can we claim to be enlightened, or even "civilised", if we acquiesce in animal suffering?" (Spira, 1993b, p. 14). The second sense of emancipation utilised by Salt and evidently also understood by Spira relates to our bodied reality as animals<sup>68</sup>, the realisation of which leads to an appreciation of the kinship between humans and other animals. This is further apparent in Spira's hope that "people will come to view eating an animal as cannibalism" (cited in Feder, 1989, p. 3) – another interesting similarity between Spira and his predecessor, Henry Salt (see chapter three).

### **4.1.3 Rejecting the 'Religion' of Science**

Although Spira was careful not to be seen as anti-science or anti-progress – in all of his campaigns relating to animal testing Spira focussed on the positive aspects of an animal-free science which would rely on 'chic', elegant, modern techniques as opposed to "archaic" methods involving animals (Spira, 1979a, p. 1) – nevertheless, Spira had a subversive attitude towards scientists, who he disapprovingly noted were often regarded as a "priesthood" (see, for example, Kowinski, 1985; Marcus, 1993). An important part of his work, as he saw it, was thus to challenge the 'sacrosanctity' of science, to ensure that scientists were held accountable for their treatment of nonhuman animals. Elements of both attitudes are not usual in the animal protection movement. For example, Garner (2004, p. 75) points out that although animal advocates often highlight the scientific benefits of using alternatives to animals in experiments, the movement "does provide an effective vehicle for those who [...] question the wisdom of the perpetual search for material and scientific advance". Certainly the latter attitude can be detected in the work of Edward Carpenter, Henry Salt and the HL. Carpenter in particular was extremely critical of the unquestioning faith that was, by the 1800s, being placed in science. In addition, the 'simple life' movement, and 'back to nature' approach of Carpenter and the HL, could arguably be understood as a form of resistance to the enlightenment conceptualisation of progress. This again suggests that Spira shared many of the core values that linked ethical socialism and animal ethics, despite Spira's Trotskyist affiliation. Having introduced the work of Henry Spira, I turn now to examine the British Labour Party of the 1970s and '80s, which was seen to be rather pro-animal at

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<sup>68</sup> This is an important element of several contemporary, socialist approaches to the animal question, in particular that of Forkasiewicz (2013), discussed in chapter five (in the section on embodiment, or 'animality').

the time, and to briefly evaluate the similarities between the socialism espoused by the party and ethical socialism.

## 4.2 The Labour Party

There are several reasons for examining the Labour Party of the 1970s and '80s (more than at any other time). The first is that several authors have pointed to this era as being a significant, and in many ways unparalleled, moment in terms of the struggle over control of the party by those on the far left. It was arguably this shift towards the left that gave space to the animal question. According to Garner (2004, p. 213):

The identification and representation of a number of exploited groups, including animals, was the rationale behind much of the Labour left's strategy in London during the first half of the 1980s. [...] It is no coincidence that many [left-wing Labour councils] – such as Lambeth and Islington – carried quite progressive animal charters and that Tony Banks, one of the leaders of the GLC, has, since becoming an MP, been one of the most active initiators and supporters of legislation protecting animals. [...] Labour's 1983 election manifesto was probably the most radical the party has ever put before the voters and reflected the dominance of the left at that time. The commitments to animal welfare reforms were no exception.

The perception that Labour was, during this period, committed to animal protection was so widespread that it “had massive influence on the animal welfare societies. [...] Inherently conservative organizations urged their members to vote Labour” (Windeatt, 1985, p. 1).

At the same time, the 1970s and '80s witnessed a revival of the animal rights movement (as mentioned); yet this revival was also associated, particularly in the UK, with a ‘radicalisation’ of the movement, which had previously been associated with the ‘respectability’ of the nineteenth century humane movement (characterised by the RSPCA)<sup>69</sup>. Combined with the apparent interest in the animal question from the Labour Party, this led to the politicisation of the animal rights movement during the 1980s (see Ryder, 1989). This was manifest in the attempts to ‘get animals into politics’ through, for example, the creation of the General Election Coordinating Committee for Animal Protection (GECCAP).

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<sup>69</sup> Notwithstanding attempts by the ethical socialists to ‘politicise’ animal ethics (Li, 2012), as I have already discussed.

As with the much earlier political turn in animal protection (of the nineteenth century), the involvement of a number of committed pro-animal socialists appears to have been crucial, in terms of attempts to change legislation in favour of nonhumans (see Garner, 1998, p. 234). Occupying the top three positions on Garner's list of animal advocates in the House of Commons from 1987-1992 are Tony Banks<sup>70</sup>, Ron Davies and Elliot Morley – significantly, all Labour MPs. We might also mention Tony Benn: a prominent Labour figure during this era who actively supported animal welfare until his death in 2014. Having been concerned about the treatment of animals since childhood, in 1980 Benn and his wife Caroline became vegetarian thanks to the persuasion of their son, Hilary Benn (another Labour MP who served on the Greater London Council (GLC)) (Benn, 1994, p. 258, 2010, pp. 63, 125). Also vegetarian (and, like Tony Benn, active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) was Fenner Brockway, whose lifetime and political career spanned *both* periods mentioned in this thesis. Born in 1888 and friends with Keir Hardie, Brockway was active in Labour politics well into the 1980s, right up until his death in 1988. Another individual who bridged both temporal periods was Lord Houghton (Baron Houghton of Sowerby), former chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), who was devoted to animal welfare, particularly anti-vivisection, and greatly involved in the GECCAP. Equally worthy of mention is Valerie Veness, (then) deputy leader of Labour's Islington Council, who was converted to the animal cause in 1976 (Windeatt, 1985). Finally, Windeatt (*ibid*) suggests a history of association between Labour and the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS); for example, the leader of the GECCAP, Richard Course (who worked alongside Lord Houghton), was Executive Director of LACS in the 1980s. This link appears to persist today, with two Labour politicians (Robert Evans and Kerry McCarthy) as Vice Presidents of LACS and one Labour MP (Chris Williamson) on the Board of Trustees.<sup>71</sup>

In 1978 the Labour Party published an entire document outlining its position on animal protection – the *Charter for Animal Protection*, “Living Without Cruelty” – the first such policy statement to be produced by a political party (The Labour Party, 1983). The Charter is a detailed policy background paper outlining the key problems (covering almost all aspects of animal welfare) within the various animal industries and offering

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<sup>70</sup> Tony Banks, Labour MP, was made life peer in 2005 (as Baron Stratford), and passed away unexpectedly in 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Of course, hunting is one clear example of a link between the Left and animals, particularly in relation to the issue of class, which I discuss in chapter six.

proposals for each sector. Produced by the Labour Policy Committee under Tony Benn's chairmanship, the Charter was widely (though not fully) endorsed by the National Executive Committee (NEC)<sup>72</sup>. Its opening address begins:

It if [sic] often said that the way a society treats its animals is an indication of the nature of the society itself. The Labour Party has always regarded itself as a humanitarian party, a caring party; the party of social justice. It is anomalous, therefore, that the party has not adopted a more forceful approach to animal welfare and has seemingly turned a blind eye to the great cruelty that is regularly inflicted on the animals in our society.

(The Labour Party, 1978, p. 5)

Utilising the Charter as the epitome of Labour's position on the animal question during that era, and bringing in the work of pro-animal Labour MPs mentioned above, the following section briefly examines the key values discernible this body of work that suggest a link between socialism and animal ethics.

#### **4.2.1 Emancipation, Violence and Kinship**

As suggested in chapter three, Salt believed that the better we treat nonhumans, the closer we are to achieving a 'higher' morality (which is our 'true' state of being), without which we cannot, therefore, be truly free. This idea of (achieving) emancipation through 'civilised behaviour' is also present in the Charter, when the author writes that protecting other animals protects human 'dignity':

Animals are unable to act for themselves. It is us, supposedly intelligent, humans who must act on their behalf in order to protect not only the well being of all animals and the wider ecology but also to protect our own dignity as humans.

(The Labour Party, 1978, p. 35)

Like Salt, Tony Benn also relied on the emancipation argument in his own writing on animal protection. In his final book, *Letters to my Grandchildren*, Benn (2010, pp. 127–128) compellingly insists that we must “find a way to take cruelty out of [society]” for our sake as well as the other animals', because engaging in cruelty *diminishes oneself*.

As explained in chapter three, however, for the ethical socialists the idea of emancipation was tangled up with (and dependent on) other ideas – not only civility – particularly kinship (because, it was argued, humans could only achieve emancipation

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<sup>72</sup> This goes some way to explain why the subsequent 1983 manifesto contained a much watered-down version of the Charter's animal welfare commitments.

by recognising their true place in the world as *animals*) and violence (because violence towards other animals leads to violence towards humans; thus emancipation is dependent on the eradication of *all* violence). Both aspects also crop up in the work of the Labour Party in relation to animal protection in the 1970s and '80s. The violence argument, for example, surfaces in Windeatt's interview with Val Veness published in 1985. Rather than referencing the argument (that violence towards nonhumans leads to violence towards humans) in abstract terms, Veness explained how her discovery of the empirical link between violence to humans and violence to nonhumans (in the form of military/defence vivisection<sup>73</sup>) helped her understand the connection between animal protection and socialism:

The one things [sic] that really clicked with me [...] was the plastic bullets used in Northern Ireland, and the Porton Downs tests on ballistics – animals being used to exploit and keep down another section of humans.

(Veness, cited in Windeatt, 1985, p. 3)

The other feature of the emancipation argument – the idea of kinship – emerges in Fenner (Lord) Brockway's contribution to the 1978 “live food animals for slaughter” debate in the House of Lords. Citing a Native American, Chief Seattle, with whom he was in correspondence, Brockway concludes:

“The deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers.” [...] It is in that spirit of identity with all life and with the animal kingdom that we must face these problems.

For those reasons I welcome Labour's charter for animal protection, Living Without Cruelty, which includes impressive sections on the two matters which the noble Lord, Lord Houghton, raised of live animals and live food animals for export. The campaign against cruelty to animals and cruelty to human beings is one; we are all a part of one family.

(Brockway, 1978, p. 388)

Yet, ironically, the appeal to kinship is largely absent from the Charter itself. Despite identifying Labour as “a humanitarian party, a caring party” (previously cited), the Charter goes on to resist the idea of ‘sentimentality’ that it clearly sees as being associated with humanitarianism, empathy, and so on:

While much of the case for improved standards of animal welfare is of an emotive nature, there are also sound economic, health and environmental reasons for action to be taken.

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<sup>73</sup> A significant percentage of the animal testing that occurs in the UK is for military purposes (Sorenson, 2011); for example, toxicity testing with nuclear weapons and chemical warfare.

The media have for too long perpetuated the impression that it is only ‘cranks’ and ‘poor misguided individuals’ who care about animal welfare. It is therefore time for the question to fully enter the political arena and for it to be given the due respect and attention that such an important question deserves.

The questions involves are not simply ones of conscience but also of welfare and economics. They should therefore become an integral part of party policy and not be decided by free votes in Parliament.

(The Labour Party, 1978, p. 7)

Although paying homage to the ‘emotive’ reasons for concerning oneself with the animal question, the Charter clearly favours the ‘rational’ approach that also attracted Spira to the cause. On the other hand, for Henry Salt and the other ethical socialists of the nineteenth century, kinship and rationality were not mutually exclusive. Although kinship was fundamental to their approach, they were also eager to avoid the charge of ‘sentimentality’ that was associated with the traditional humane movement (and often went along with an inconsistent approach to humanitarianism) (see chapter three). As a result they too sought a *political* approach to animal protection that regarded animal protection as a ‘social justice’ issue – though this was one of the primary reasons why they believed nonhumans were deserving of rights, rather than leaving it up to the goodwill, or charity, of humans. Labour, on the other hand, does not endorse animal *rights*, but, rather, an animal *welfare* ethic, with the focus primarily on legislation as opposed to moral education.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Analogous to chapter two, this chapter introduced the key individuals from the 1970s and ’80s who perceived an ideological link between socialism and animals, namely Henry Spira, in the US, and certain Labour Party members in Britain. Building on chapter three, I then highlighted the ethical socialist values discernible in the writing of these individuals (and Labour Party publications), leaving aside other ideological links to be discussed in later thematic chapters (since the purpose of this chapter was primarily to complete the historical analysis and introduce certain key figures in order to contextualise their later inclusion in the thesis). The jump from the late 1800s to the 1970s and ’80s was justified by the fact that (with the possible exception of the hunting issue) the animal protection movement had languished by the beginning of the twentieth century and remained so until the 1970s, when the movement was revitalised as a

liberation/rights campaign. In the US, the link between socialism and animal protection was epitomised by Trotskyist and civil rights campaigner Henry Spira, who became one of the most influential animal rights activist of the era. Other scholars (primarily Garner, 2004) have suggested that, in Britain, there was a link between animal protection and the Labour Party during this era, especially since the 1983 party manifesto contained apparently ‘radical’ proposals for animal welfare.

I chose to keep these two sections (the 19<sup>th</sup> century links and the 1970s and ’80s links) separate not only because the historical analysis was overly long for one chapter, but also because, of course, Spira was *not* an ethical socialist, nor did the Labour Party endorse that particular branch of socialism (though elements of ethical socialism have permeated their work, as I demonstrated). It was important, then, to recognise the differences between these branches of socialism, as this allows us to evaluate their merits and weaknesses, which helps towards constructing a comprehensive and convincing socialist animal ethic. On the other hand, the fact that there were many *similarities* between ethical socialism and the 1970s/’80s varieties suggests that the ethical socialist approach was not as idiosyncratic as might otherwise be believed, and that, in fact, it might have something valuable to offer as part of a wider socialist approach to animal ethics.

The first half of the chapter focused on Henry Spira, and demonstrated that, despite Spira’s Trotskyist affiliation, his approach had much in common with the ethical socialist approach examined in chapter three, particularly in its emphasis on inclusive justice, emancipation and kinship, and scepticism of scientific ‘progress’. Like the nineteenth century pioneers introduced in chapter two, Spira saw animal rights as the logical extension of society’s circle of concern. This was partly due to our kinship with other animals, and partly due to the ‘emancipation argument’ – that only by including other animals in our circle of concern can we be truly ‘civilised’ and, in this way, emancipated. Drawing on human rights struggles, he also recognised that if we exclude some (such as nonhumans) from our circle of concern it is easier to exclude others. Similarly, he acknowledged that violence to nonhumans was linked to violence to humans, and vice-versa. Yet, while his approach was founded on empathy and kinship, most important for Spira (as for Henry Salt and the Humanitarian League), was that it was grounded in rationality, not sentimentality.

The second half of the chapter examined the British Labour Party's attitude to animal protection in the 1970s and '80s. Since the comments about animals in the 1983 manifesto constituted a radically abridged version of the party's 1978 background policy paper on animal welfare, I chose to focus directly on the latter – Labour's *Charter for Animal Protection*, entitled "Living Without Cruelty" – as well as the work of certain Labour Party members (those who particularly encouraged a connection between Labour and the animal protection movement). Like Henry Spira and the nineteenth century socialists examined in chapter two, the Charter appeared to recognise the civility argument – that a concern for animals is a 'civilising' force in society – and thus also a form of the emancipation argument. This argument was also advocated by Tony Benn (Labour MP), and embellished by Val Veness (deputy leader of Labour's Islington Council during the 1980s) who pointed out the links between violence to nonhumans and violence to humans in terms of military experiments on other animals, and by Fenner Brockway (Labour politician) who spoke about the kinship between humans and other animals. On the other hand, like Spira, Salt and the HL, the Charter was keen for the issue not to be seen as one of sentimentality or emotions. However, rather than focussing on the social justice or rights side of the debate, the Charter appeared more comfortable with highlighting the more anthropocentric reasons for supporting animal welfare (i.e. economics, health and environment). Clearly one of the main differences, then, between the Labour Party's link to animal ethics and that of the other pro-animal socialists I discussed is that the former espoused an animal welfare ethic, while the latter were much more 'radical' in their prescriptions (notwithstanding Salt's incongruous comments on 'unnecessary suffering', etc.). This is not to dismiss the link between Labour and animal protection; clearly, there was a widespread sentiment amongst the general public and animal welfare societies that Labour was doing more than any other political party at the time for nonhumans (see Windeatt, 1985). Even today, the fact that the (only) three vegan MPs in the whole of the UK are all Labour is arguably significant. However, while certain individuals and even members of the public may have seen, and continue to see, a link between Labour and animal protection, it is not one strongly endorsed by the party as a whole.

Having completed the historical analysis of socialism and animal protection, we can now reflect back on how the various schools of thought have approached the topic, and how this helps us build up a picture of what a complete, convincing socialist animal

ethic would look like. As I concluded at the end of chapter three, ethical socialism clearly provides a useful moral imperative to care about nonhumans, but, since liberalism has historically been very good at moralising, this does not, on its own, make ethical socialism a valid alternative to the liberal approach. What liberalism lacks, as chapter one concluded, is adequate engagement with the question of (political) strategy; in other words, providing a blueprint for action (on behalf of nonhumans), that takes into account issues of race and class and the role of capitalism in animal exploitation. As we saw in chapter two, however, the ethical socialists of the nineteenth century, who coalesced in organisations such as the ILP, were also not particularly versed in these issues; while they acknowledged the importance of certain, classically ‘Marxist’, issues (such as capitalism), they lacked the erudition to be able to discuss and grapple with these topics fully. Crucially, therefore, all of ethical socialism’s apparent ‘weaknesses’ are traditionally regarded as Marxism’s strengths. This suggests that bringing Marxism into the analysis could strengthen the ethical socialist position, and that merging the two elements could provide a much more complete and compelling account of socialist animal ethics. As such, the following two chapters embrace a more Marxist approach to animal ethics, addressing the topics of capitalism (and its effect on animal exploitation), in chapter five, and class, agency and strategy, in chapter six. Where the historical figures (the ethical socialists and Henry Spira) mentioned these issues, however briefly, I incorporate their comments into the discussion, but this is strengthened by a Marxist analysis of the issues, drawing on more contemporary socialist and sociological sources. The main question that I address over the course of the next two chapters is whether socialism can provide a valid alternative to liberal animal ethics by addressing the themes that the latter has so far neglected.

## Chapter 5 The Political Economy of Animal Exploitation

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Having discussed some of the key problems with liberal animal ethics in chapter one, chapters two to four then set out an historical analysis of the links between socialism and animal ethics, starting in the late 1800s with the British ethical socialists and finishing in the US with Trotskyist Henry Spira. It became apparent that, while each of these varieties of socialism had its strengths and weaknesses, taken individually none was comprehensive and convincing enough to provide a valid alternative to liberal animal ethics. In particular, one of the areas in which each of these approaches was lacking was a sustained and thorough critique of capitalism in relation to animal exploitation. In order to provide a valid alternative to liberal animal ethics, socialism *must* be able to adequately address this question. As noted in chapter one, one of the central critiques of liberal animal ethics (put forward by Benton, 1993; Nibert, 2002; Torres, 2007 among others) is its over-reliance on individualism; our attitudes towards nonhumans are believed to be a consequence of our personal morality, rather than a product of the social and economic structure. Yet, arguably, all social relations are a product of the economic system – our relationship with nonhumans is no exception. In fact, as I discuss shortly, there is some evidence to suggest that, historically, capitalist accumulation was built on the exploitation of nonhumans. If this is right, this would suggest that animal exploitation (and therefore animal ethics) must be theorised in relation to capitalist economic relations; by leaving the latter out of its analysis, liberal animal ethics misses the bigger picture, providing an incomplete account of human-animal relations.

Whether or not one accepts the foregoing argument, few would deny that the real problem nowadays is not individual cruelty, but rather the institutionalised exploitation of animals. The widespread acceptance of this assertion is demonstrated by the overwhelming emphasis, on the part of the animal rights movement, on the exploitation of animals as food, as opposed to issues of ‘pet’ abuse, etc. (not that the latter is neglected). This is despite the fact that the mainstream animal rights movement adheres to *liberal* animal ethics, which, as I stated above, does not tend to recognise animal exploitation as a by-product of the economic system. Yet, even liberal scholars generally accept that, in terms of both the *extent* of the cruelty and the *numbers* of

animals involved, institutionalised cruelty to nonhumans far surpasses individual cruelty as the most pressing issue for animal advocates. Worldwide, around 150 billion animals are killed each year for food (in the meat, dairy and egg industries) (ADAPTT, 2016), while approximately 100 million are killed each year in vivisection in the US alone (PETA, 2016). Data for individualised abuse is naturally much more limited (not least since much abuse goes unrecorded), however the number of cases of animal abuse recorded per year in the US, for example, remains in the thousands (The Humane Society, 2016).

Given the traditional antipathy of socialism towards capitalism, it is not surprising that contemporary alternative approaches to liberal animal ethics, particularly Marxist-based approaches such as CAS, tend to regard capitalism as one of the fundamental obstacles to animal liberation (Nibert, 2002; Torres, 2007; Best, 2009). Yet very few scholars are explicit about *what exactly* it is about capitalism that makes it bad for nonhumans (with the possible exception of Gunderson (2011a)), preferring instead to rely on polemical hyperbole and counterfactual arguments. One of the central objectives of this chapter is thus to attempt to answer, as specifically as possible, the question: why might capitalism be (and is it) problematic for animal ethics? This also involves asking whether the problem is, in fact, *industrialism*, as opposed to capitalism, per se.

In order to answer these questions, the chapter begins by defining capitalism, and then identifying the areas in which nonhuman interests and capitalism's interests conflict. Where the historical figures, discussed in previous chapters, explored these themes, I bring their deliberations into the analysis, in the hope of further demonstrating the relevance of their work to contemporary animal ethics, and finally putting paid to the notion that Henry Salt's successor is liberal animal ethicists such as Singer (by demonstrating that his legacy is, instead, a thoroughly socialist approach to animal ethics, similar to that set out in this research). While they were somewhat aware of the importance of these themes, however, their understanding of topics such as political economy was limited, and this is reflected in their writings (in other words, they wrote rather superficially on these themes, if at all). Thus, by looking to Marxism – traditionally highly suited to dealing with such topics – to fill in the gaps left by ethical socialism (and Spira's Trotskyism), we are able to develop a more complete and convincing socialist animal ethic than if we took either approach individually.

Having investigated these issues, I aim, at the end of the chapter, to be able to provide a preliminary answer to the related questions: why is it important who owns the means of production (in relation to animal exploitation)? And why might we need to change the conditions of production/labour if we wish to end animal exploitation?

## **5.1 What is Capitalism?**

In relation to animal ethics, Best (2009, p. 42) proposes the key aspects of capitalism as follows: marketisation; economic growth (a “grow-or-die” mentality); industrialisation; mass production and consumption; the profit imperatives takes precedent over any moral imperative – maximising profit is *the* overarching priority; reduction of value to exchange value only; total commodification, including of labour; economic monopolies and political oligarchies; and, finally, social life is dominated by the ‘survival of the fittest’ principle. A similar list is offered by David Pepper (1993, p. 78), who emphasises: “production for sale, rather than direct consumption; buying and selling labour power; exchange through the medium of money” and; competition between capitalists, which drives increasing demand for ‘efficient’ production. Given the centrality of the profit motive, capitalism, Pepper notes, must, *by definition*, reproduce inequality. Indeed, poverty, he writes, “is a *necessary* feature of capitalism” (ibid, p.91, my emphasis).

But capitalism is not predestined, nor did it just appear, suddenly, fully formed. On the contrary, Marx argues, capitalism was a gradual process that took place in stages between roughly the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (though some may argue that the process has not yet finished, as capitalism is constantly evolving in the face of new challenges, technologies, etc.). That nonhuman animals played a key role in this process has been fairly well highlighted by contemporary historians, sociologists and several (non-liberal) animal ethics scholars. The key points are worth reiterating, however.

## **5.2 The Role of Animals in Capitalism’s History**

For Marx, as set out in *Capital* (1990), the development of capitalism in its early stages was dependent on primitive accumulation and the creation of ‘free’ wage labour, which meant the dispossession of the peasants from the land. As Marx himself notes, one of the principal driving forces behind this enclosure of the land was the profit to be made from sheep farming (Hribal, 2003; Murray, 2011). The exploitation of humans

(separating peasants from the land and subsequently forcing them to sell their labour) was thus intrinsically connected to the exploitation of nonhumans (in this case, sheep). Enclosure not only transformed the wage relation, but also the relationship between humans and nonhumans (as their ‘stock’) (Benton, 1993).

Incidentally, the centrality of nonhumans to the creation of wealth is indicated through the developing political economy lexicon. By now well-known is the recognition of the etymology of ‘cattle’ and its relation to the Latin ‘capitale’, both of which signified wealth or “movable property” during the Middle Ages (Hribal, 2012, p. 5). Similarly, Hribal (ibid, p.4) points out,

early Roman coins came to bear both the image of a sheep and represented the value of that sheep. A given number of sheep equaled [sic] one coin, and that coin was now traded for goods and services. *Pecus* (the word for sheep) transformed into *pecunia* (the word for money).

Thus, “the value of domesticated animals formed the basis of value itself” (ibid). In *Animal Capital*, Nicole Shukin (2009, p. 126) continues this line of enquiry, highlighting that virtual capital and carnal capital (i.e. live animals) share the common designation: “stock”. This process was first observed by Marx (1990) himself, who argued that the money-form comes to be attached to the primary object of wealth, of which the earliest was indeed cattle.

Following on from this early process of enclosure, the subsequent rise of capitalism was, arguably, dependent on the unpaid and unfree labour of nonhumans (Murray, 2011). Though traces of this labour is alluded to in history books, seldom is it deemed significant to the development of capitalism, nor has it generally prompted historians to ask whether animals are part of the working class. Addressing this lacuna is the work of Jason Hribal (2003, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012), who provides a relatively complete and detailed account of the (key) role of nonhuman labour in the history of capitalist accumulation. From “farming, manufacture, transport, mining and lumber”, there was practically no area of social life that was not reliant on the labour of nonhumans (Hribal, 2003, p. 443). Animals not only produced commodities (milk, eggs, wool, etc.), but eventually became commodities themselves, as ‘meat’ became more and more profitable, particularly over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (ibid).

Moreover, the refinement of exploitation techniques on nonhumans allowed for (and improved) the exploitation of humans as capitalism developed. Hribal (2012, p. 13), for example, argues:

if there is an origin to the concept of surplus, it undoubtedly comes from the taking of milk from female mammals [...] turning reproduction [...] into a form of labor [sic] from which a surplus of milk can be extracted for other purposes.

For the origins of Taylorism, in particular the manipulation of workers' movement for improved 'efficiency', we might similarly look to the practice of controlled breeding, i.e. altering the bodies of nonhumans in order to increase productivity, which became widespread amongst sheep farmers by the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Hribal, 2003). In addition, Henry Ford admitted that his idea for automotive assembly line production came directly from the Chicago and Cincinnati beef-packing yards – it was not, therefore, that Fordist methods were applied to nonhumans, as authors such as Murray (2011) claim, but rather that Ford took his method from the exploitation of nonhumans and applied it to humans (Adams, 2000; Shukin, 2009). It is also worth noting that techniques used for nonhuman domestication and to repress nonhuman 'resistance' to labour (e.g. bridles, cages, cattle prods, collars, chains, and so on) were later used on humans, particularly women and slaves (Forkasiewicz, 2014); slaves were even 'broken' using the same techniques as those used on wild horses (Thomas, 1984)<sup>75</sup>.

All this is not to say, however, that the origin of animal exploitation lies in the advent of capitalism – far from it. The roots of animal exploitation go much further back – to the Neolithic era, according to Camatte (1995), and the emergence of animal husbandry, out of which came the ideas of private property and exchange value (and thus, he argues, the rise of patriarchy). Other authors, such as Vint (2009) and Thomas (1984), have similarly argued that the animal body was the first part of nature to be appropriated as private 'property', and thus exploited as a means to (human) ends. Animal exploitation is therefore not *limited* to capitalism; the majority of those who regard capitalism as a problem for animal protection freely admit that exploitation can occur in a variety of different economic systems (Noske, 1997; Torres, 2007; Best, 2009; Vint, 2009; Forkasiewicz, 2013). Henry Salt, for example, recognised that animal exploitation may still exist under a socialist regime, which prompted him to argue that

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<sup>75</sup> See chapter six for further discussion of the links between human (in particular, workers) and nonhuman exploitation.

ethics must be addressed *alongside* a transformation of the economic system of production (Salt, 1896). Nevertheless, the earlier, pre-capitalist, changes to human-nonhuman relations arguably provided the structural conditions for the emergence of capitalism, which then depended more and more on nonhuman exploitation for its continuing development and flourishing (Camatte, 1995; Hribal, 2012). More importantly, while capitalism and animal exploitation can, in theory, exist independently of one another (taking the form of, e.g., a vegan capitalism, or socialist factory farms), the argument made by the aforementioned authors, and one which I explore in the rest of this chapter, is that capitalism, more than any other economic system, has *worsened* the exploitation of nonhumans, whilst, at the same time, creating the very conditions for their liberation (in that capitalism, arguably, has rendered nonhuman animals superfluous to human flourishing, yet never before have they been killed and exploited on such a scale) (Pignataro, 2009; Wadiwel, 2016).

So what is it exactly about capitalism that has, arguably, exacerbated the exploitation of nonhuman animals in Western society? Based on an examination of capitalism's key features, I have identified four main issues that, I argue, explain why capitalism has proved to be a negative influence on nonhuman exploitation. These are: 1) the vested interests of capitalists in animal exploitation, based on the centrality of the profit motive, 2) commodification, 3) the capitalist production process and the 'politics of sight', and 4) alienation and embodiment. As will be evident shortly, there is much overlap between these four areas (profit is one of the driving forces behind commodification, for example, and commodification also entails the repression of 'animality'; equally, it would be impossible to discuss commodity fetishism without also alluding to alienation and distancing (the 'politics of sight')); one cannot be addressed without the other, hence why I have included all four in my analysis. In addition to my contention that these are some of the most pertinent issues for animal ethics, I have also chosen to examine these four areas in particular because, although, individually, each has been identified as important by other (generally non-liberal) scholars, they have never, to my knowledge, been addressed *collectively*, under the banner of an explicitly socialist approach to animal ethics, nor have they each been given the attention they deserve (with the possible exception of commodification and alienation). In addition, these issues have yet to break into mainstream animal advocacy (both the movement and academia), being almost entirely ignored by liberal animal

ethicists. The rest of this chapter thus examines these four broad areas in turn, before attempting to sketch out some preliminary answers to the research questions set out at the start of the chapter.

### **5.3 Vested Interests and the Profit Motive**

Arguably, one of the central ways in which capitalism is antagonistic to animal liberation relates to the power of those (capitalists) with vested interests in animal exploitation. Although not a new phenomenon – Henry Salt was one of the first to recognise that powerful private interests held a direct stake in animal exploitation, even in the nineteenth century (Salt, 1889, p. 1, 1897, p. 12) – in recent decades the profit generated by animal exploitation has continued to grow exponentially, leading many authors to argue that exploiting animals is ‘big business’ (Torres, 2007, p. 45). A cursory glance at the statistics appears to support this argument. Taking an average from the past decade (2005-2015), for example, the retail equivalent value of the US beef industry was over \$80 billion per year, while the retail equivalent value of the US broiler industry in 2010 was \$45 billion (USDA, 2016a, 2016b). Moreover, consistent with the capitalist tendency towards “economic monopolies and political oligarchies” (Best, 2009, p. 42) previously mentioned, the economic and political power of the meat industry is demonstrated by the fact that just four corporations control more than 80% of the US market in ‘beef’ (and this situation is replicated in other meat markets) (Smith, 2002; Pachirat, 2011). Just looking at one of these companies – Tyson Foods (since 2001 “the single largest processor and marketer of dead animals in the world”) – total sales in 2000 reached \$23.8 billion (Pachirat, 2011, p. 276). It is not just the corporations that deal directly with the slaughter of nonhuman individuals who stand to gain from this trade, however. “Chemical companies”, for example, “also benefit greatly [...] since animal feed carries far less stringent pesticide tolerances than does feed intended for human consumption. The net result [...] is that more chemical can be used” (Lappé and Bailey, 1998, p. 87). Moreover, since a large percentage of the most widely grown plant crops in the United States (corn and soy)<sup>76</sup> are used to feed livestock rather than humans (60% and 47% respectively), even farmers not directly engaged with livestock production have a vested interest in the continuance of animal

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<sup>76</sup> These crops are also often genetically modified (in the US) and their production relies heavily on the use of industrial chemicals and fertilisers (GRACE, 2017).

exploitation (as it relates to consumption) (Olson, 2006). While a comprehensive list of those with a vested interest in animal exploitation is beyond the bounds of this enquiry, an informative reading provided by Phelps (2015, p. 43) includes:

investment banks, brokerage houses, railroad, trucking, and shipping companies, the manufacturers of farm equipment and cold storage facilities, and, of course, the giant, multi-national agribusiness conglomerates like Tyson Foods, ArcherDanielMidlands, and Monsanto, as well as food processing giants like Kraft and General Mills.

And that's just animal agriculture. With a vested interest in vivisection, "the US pharmaceutical manufacturing industry includes about 1,700 companies with combined annual revenue of about \$200 billion" (First Research, 2017). In addition, there are those who provide the 'test subjects' for such research – animal breeders such as Charles River – who have created their own "highly profitable industry" on the back of nonhuman exploitation (Phelps, 2015, p. 47).

The combined economic and political weight of these industries should not be underestimated. In the US, the presence of a 'revolving door' whereby government personnel and policy makers have been or maintain a position on the board of corporations and lobbying industries (particularly in the case of the agriculture and biotech industries) ensures that these capitalist interests are represented in the legislature. Even without this inside assistance, animal exploiters have powerful lobbies, such as farmer organisations, that fight vehemently against legislation that threatens their interests (Benton, 1993, p. 161). These lobbies have to date successfully blocked many pro-animal initiatives, such as the proposed bill "to establish national welfare standards for laying hens" put forward by HSUS and United Egg Producers in 2011 (this case also demonstrated that lobbyists from different industries – in this case beef, pork and dairy – will often come together and support one another despite having no direct economic interest in the specified area themselves, because they regard any attempt to intervene in animal exploitation as being against their overall, long-term interests) (Phelps, 2015, p. 185). Not only do these industries block pro-animal legislation, but they have also been instrumental in successfully *advancing* legislation that ensures the continued exploitation of nonhumans and directly curtails animal liberation efforts, such as the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA), which labels acts of civil disobedience on behalf of nonhumans as "acts of "terrorism" subject to heavy fines and severe sentences in federal prisons" (ibid, p.41). Particularly in so-

called “farm states”, the power of agribusiness over the state is demonstrated by the introduction of “ag-gag” laws which criminalise the recording (including taking photographs) of animal enterprise operations (ibid). That the state (whether in the US or Britain) is highly sensitive to the interests of powerful capitalists, over appeals to ethics or reason, appears self-evident to a great many left-leaning authors (see, for example, Benton, 1993; Noske, 1997; Nibert, 2002; Torres, 2007; Sorenson, 2011; Phelps, 2015). Yet, despite having wide-reaching implications for the animal liberation movement, this problem is largely overlooked within the mainstream animal ethics literature (which, I have argued, is dominated by liberal scholars, and liberalism concerns itself with the individual, rather than with socio-economic structures).

Nevertheless, the vested interests of those who exploit nonhumans are based on the profit motive (i.e. they exploit animals for profit). As we saw earlier, the profit imperative is widely identified as one of capitalism’s key features (Pepper, 1993; see, for example, Best, 2009). Again, it was the nineteenth century ethical socialists involved in animal protection who first drew attention to this issue. In his exploration of the Humanitarian League (HL), Dan Weinbren (1994, pp. 93–94) notes that

Humanity [the HL’s journal] argued in 1898 that as long as pecuniary profit was the guiding principle, ‘it will remain impossible to secure a right treatment of animals [as] economic necessity leaves no scope for humaneness’. The [Humanitarian] League made it clear that ‘the idea of profit precedes and transcends all ideas of kindness of humanity’ [...] The League called upon ‘Labour’ to ‘defend animals against the horrible exploitation of so-called science’ and it argued that vivisection was due to ‘irresponsible money power’.

Individual members of the HL reinforced this critique; for example, Josiah Oldfield, the vegetarian doctor, argued that “in butchery the constraint of the purse has little power towards humanity” (Oldfield, 1895, p. 8). In-keeping with ethical socialism’s moral critique of capitalism, the problem was not necessarily profit per se, but rather that capitalism (inherently) placed profit above all else: “That the market is ruled by Money and not by Humanity is an important point to remember” (ibid, p.7). In such a system, Salt elaborated, justice, and in particular animal rights, could never be fully realised:

In the rush and hurry of a competitive society, where commercial profit is avowed to be the main object of work, and where the well-being of men and women is ruthlessly sacrificed to that object, what likelihood is there that the lower animals will not be used with a sole regard to the same predominant purpose? Humane individuals may here and there protest, and the growing conscience of the public may express itself in legislation against the worst

forms of palpable ill-usage, but the bulk of the people simply cannot, and will not, afford to treat animals as they ought to be treated.

(Salt, 1980, p. 117)

The issue painted by the ethical socialists was thus one of priority: that, under capitalism, profit superseded all claims on compassion or morality, a claim that is also espoused by many contemporary scholars (Pepper, 1993; such as Best, 2009; Gunderson, 2011a). Yet the ethical socialists, writing in the late 1800s, could not possibly have imagined how new industrial technologies would come to transform and intensify animal exploitation, nor the exponential profit currently at stake, which has made the need to address this issue even more pressing.

Nowhere is this more acutely felt than in livestock production. In contrast to much earlier forms of animal agriculture, modern-day livestock production is entirely concerned with maximising profit, rather than producing for human needs – in Marxist terms, favouring exchange value over use value (Gunderson, 2011a). “Indeed” Llorente (2011, p. 128) notes, “*The Agricultural Dictionary* defines “factory farming” as “a type of farming [that operates] solely for monetary profit.”” In pursuit of this endeavour, capitalist livestock production tends more and more towards more ‘efficient’ practices that reduce costs (including labour) and increase productivity (maximising output) – very often assisted by new technological advances – and, in general, more stringent control of the production process (Benton, 1993; Gunderson, 2011a). This has tangible repercussions for nonhuman animals. In traditional Marxist analysis, profit is derived from the “commodity labor power”, i.e. the surplus labour extracted from production minus the costs of subsistence (of the worker) and investment in the production process (machinery, etc.) (Murray, 2011, p. 98). In an attempt to extract more surplus labour, nonhumans have thus been forced to work harder and harder; from a semi-autonomous existence until the late 1600s, dairy cows, for example, are now kept continually pregnant, with no respite (or ‘dry’ time; i.e. time not pregnant), in order to become more ‘efficient’ milk producers (Hribal, 2003).

In meatpacking industries – one of the areas that has received the most attention from contemporary animal ethicists – ‘efficiency’ has been achieved through the implementation of Taylorist practices that restrict workers’ movement and

individuality<sup>77</sup>. Timothy Pachirat's account of his time spent undercover at a US slaughterhouse, described in *Every Twelve Seconds*, provides an insight into the practical repercussions of the profit imperative in animal industry. Profit in the slaughterhouse, Pachirat (2011, p. 276) notes, "is measured by the quantity of processed meat per hour"; the emphasis is thus on keeping the production line going no matter what – suffering is secondary, an unfortunate but inevitable by-product (Smith, 2002). This frantic pace "translates into a rate of worker injury that surpasses that of any other industry" (ibid). For the nonhumans themselves, this same emphasis on speed means that many animals are still fully conscious during slaughter (Gunderson, 2011a). When profit is the main driving force, suffering is therefore inevitable, as Henry Salt predicted. Indeed, it would seem that little has changed since Upton Sinclair (1906, p. 376) had his main character, a former slaughterhouse employee, in *The Jungle* declare:

What they wanted from a hog was all the profits that could be got out of him; and that was what they wanted from the working-man, and also that was what they wanted from the public. What the hog thought of it, and what he suffered, were not considered; and no more was it with labor, and no more with the purchaser of meat.

Yet the crucial difference between human and nonhuman labour in meat production is that the latter is doubly exploited: both as labour and as a commodity (Vint, 2009). Unlike the human workers in Pachirat's and Sinclair's narratives, the nonhumans involved have been groomed for this experience since birth; their entire lives are given over to the production process<sup>78</sup> (Noske, 1997). Most problematic for those concerned with animal exploitation is that one of the most effective ways of increasing profit in livestock production is to make this life – from birth to slaughter – as short as possible (Gunderson, 2011a). This is often achieved through the use of drugs to speed growth, which can lead to lameness and extreme, lifelong pain for animals whose legs were not designed to carry such weight (ibid). In a grotesque exaggeration of Taylorism applied to workers, nonhuman bodies are completely transformed to suit the production process, whether through genetic modification, selective breeding (for "higher meat content"), environmental control (e.g. the process of 'forced molting' to prolong the reproductive life of battery hens), or physical mutilation (as in the case of

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<sup>77</sup> The production process is discussed in greater detail in section 5.5.

<sup>78</sup> This distinction – between nonhumans as labour and as a commodity – is also discussed in chapter six (nonhumans as part of the proletariat).

debeaking hens “to prevent unnatural cannibalism”) (Noske, 1997; Gunderson, 2011a, p. 263; Murray, 2011).

In its fixation on ‘efficiency’ (driven by its obsession with profit maximisation), no part of the nonhuman is ‘wasted’. Thus ‘rendering’ becomes an integral part in the story of capitalism and animal production, as Nicole Shukin (2009, p. 67), in *Animal Capital*, explains: “rendering returns animal waste to another capitalizing round in the marketplace rather than releasing it into circuits of value outside of those circumscribed by the profit motive”. In other words, nonhumans have no value to capitalism apart from their value as moneymaking commodities for capitalists. The importance of these ‘extra’ products created from the waste of animal industries should not, Shukin (ibid, p.75) asserts, be underestimated:

If “mere jelly” is metaphorical, for Marx, of labor time as the homogenous substance produced by and underpinning the system of exchange value, it is also uncannily evocative of the animal fats and gelatins being literally extruded [...] from the rendering machines of capitalism.

This proclivity towards using every part of the nonhuman body, in order to maximise ‘efficiency’ and profit, also encourages controversial practices such as recycling unwanted, end-of-the-line nonhuman body parts to be used as food for livestock, effectively creating cannibals of the nonhumans enmeshed in the industry (Torres, 2007).

Beyond the animal welfare concerns highlighted above, what is the wider significance of this analysis for animal ethics? As Gunderson (2011a, p. 260) asserts, while industrial farming techniques (‘factory farming’) are rightly lambasted by animal advocates, they are generally portrayed by liberal animal ethics as being independent from the global economic system, “rather than particular instruments of labor to increase profit margins”. Given that, as we saw earlier, the perpetual accumulation of capital (wealth) is ingrained in the very fabric of capitalism’s structure, any attempts to try to address animal exploitation outside of – bypassing – the economic system (e.g. welfare reforms) are therefore doomed to failure (Pepper, 1993; Best, 2009; Gunderson, 2011a). For Gunderson (and I would have to share in his cynicism), the *only* way to

address such exploitation is thus if non-exploitative food production techniques (such as lab-grown, synthetic meat production) become *more profitable* than factory farming<sup>79</sup>.

So far, I have argued that one of the key areas in which capitalism (negatively) impacts on nonhuman animals is through the profit motive and the vested interests of those involved in animal exploitation. The second (related) area through which capitalism impacts on nonhumans is commodification.

## 5.4 Commodification

The issue of commodification and its link to capitalism has possibly received the most attention from non-liberal animal ethics scholars (Torres, 2007; Vint, 2009; notably Gunderson, 2011a; Murray, 2011; Wadiwel, 2016), of the four areas I set out earlier. Once again, Henry Salt proved prescient in his acknowledgement that, under capitalism, humans treat nonhumans as commodities (Salt, 1935, p. 100). Unfortunately this is all he had to say on the matter, and no further analyses are offered by either Humanitarian League members or ethical socialists, although by the nineteenth century it was becoming common for capitalists themselves to refer to nonhumans as profit-making ‘machines’ (Hribal, 2003).

In defining capitalism, we saw earlier that one of its most prominent features is that it commodifies everything, every body, including labour (Pepper, 1993; Best, 2009; Forkasiewicz, 2013). While it is acknowledged that commodification existed before capitalism, many scholars suggest that capitalism has exacerbated the phenomenon, indeed that capitalism was *built* on such dismemberment and fragmentation (Adams, 2000; Best, 2009). Two questions immediately come to mind from this assertion. The first is why commodification is so essential to capitalism, and the second is how this commodification occurs. In order to address the first question, I begin by examining the Marxist analysis of commodification under capitalism, before explaining how this analysis can be (and has been) applied to nonhuman animals. After briefly addressing the consequences of commodification on notions of nonhuman value, I then turn to the second question: how this commodification occurs, arguing that it is a direct result of capitalist production processes (enabled by science and technology). Finally, I address the key controversies in the debate surrounding commodification and nonhumans.

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<sup>79</sup> I return to the question of solutions and profitability in the conclusion of this chapter.

In Marxist terms commodification occurs in a capitalist system when exchange comes to predominate (as opposed to production only for immediate needs). Workers are forced to ‘sell’ their labour in the market, and this labour-power therefore becomes a commodity to be bought and sold, something separate from the worker... yet it cannot be separated from the worker, it is a part of her, and thus she in fact becomes a commodity herself (particularly if the worker is a woman, as then her reproductive function and body can also be commodified in addition to her labour-power (see, for example, Blatt, 2009; Wadiwel, 2016)). Not only, therefore, is the worker alienated from her labour-power (and, often, her body)<sup>80</sup>, but her worth becomes measured by her value in the market (Pepper, 1993). In other words, commodification is “emblematic of the triumph in [capitalist] society of exchange value over use and intrinsic value” (Gunderson, 2011a; Forkasiewicz, 2013, p. 76).

Arguably, some of Marx’s most significant contributions come from his insight into capitalism and its obsession with commodification, culminating in his theory of ‘commodity fetishism’. By this, Marx meant that, in capitalism, commodities are seen to have an intrinsic value (derived from their exchange value), when in fact, he argued, their value comes from the labour-power imbedded within them. However, the social relations behind the creation of the commodity are concealed, distanced from the commodity, through a variety of mechanisms<sup>81</sup>, including linguistics, marketing, and the (capitalist) production and distribution process (Pepper, 1993; Adams, 2000; Llorente, 2011; Murray, 2011; Hribal, 2012). Making only minor changes to the theory, several contemporary scholars have directly applied Marx’s analysis of commodity fetishism to nonhuman animals, so successfully, I might add, that one wonders again whether nonhumans were not Marx’s initial source of inspiration for the theory. Of course, Marx was *not* referring to nonhumans in his analysis, yet, interestingly, Marx does frequently “make reference to the removal of the skin [...] as a metaphor for labour commodification” (Wadiwel, 2016, p. 65): for example, “like someone who has brought his [sic] own hide to market” (Marx, 1990, p. 280). As Wadiwel (*ibid*) highlights, Marx uses this metaphor as a way to describe the “moment of transition – from subject to commodity; from commodity to money, etc. [...] through [bodily] effacement”. Of

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<sup>80</sup> I discuss alienation in further detail in section 5.6.

<sup>81</sup> These distancing mechanisms are further elaborated in the discussion on the ‘politics of sight’, in the following section (5.5).

interest to animal ethicists is Marx's choice of such a metaphor to describe (labour) commodification, given that this, quite literally, describes the process of commodification of nonhuman animals. Like human workers, nonhumans produce commodities (such as milk, for example), but, unlike human workers, they also *become* commodities ('meat' etc.)<sup>82</sup>. In both cases, the commodity produced is detached from the labour and social relations involved (as an example: milk is seen as milk – a product to be bought and sold amongst humans – not as the outcome of a cow's pregnancy, created for the purpose of nourishing her calf, who has now, necessarily, been removed from his mother and slaughtered so that the commodity, milk, may be sold and used by humans) (Benton, 1993; Torres, 2007; Murray, 2011). As a result, the consumer is distanced from the ethical responsibility of their purchases, and is more likely then to continue buying the commodity, since they can avoid having to confront the social relations behind the commodity. This is what Carol Adams (2000) terms the 'absent referent'; in the creation of meat as a commodity, its origins are concealed through language – i.e. 'beef' rather than 'dead cow'. The cow as an individual, sentient being is absent from the (for example) beef pie, while 'meat' takes on a value all of its own (in its link to virility, wealth, etc.).

Hence, as previously noted, the construction of value in capitalist society depends upon the erasure, or concealment, of the intrinsic value (labour-power) of the commodity, in favour of an exchange value. In the case of nonhumans not only is their commodification an *outcome* of a set of exploitative social relations (i.e. nonhumans being incarcerated for human benefit), but it also *feeds into* the social relations between nonhumans and humans produced by capitalist conceptions of value (i.e. that nonhumans are only valuable for their body parts and as 'property') (Vint, 2009; Murray, 2011). In other words, the commodification of nonhumans is self-perpetuating because it reinforces the idea of humans being superior to and different from nonhumans. As Wadiwel (2016, p. 72) explains, "just as, in capitalism, the continual circulation of money underpins the mirage of financial value", so too the saturation of nonhuman commodities in the market acts as a form of "currency which reflects human value (superiority, dignity, etc.)".

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<sup>82</sup> This distinction is not universally accepted, however, as I discuss at the end of this section.

Having examined how the concept of commodity fetishism can be, and has been, applied to nonhumans, I turn now to the question of how this commodification comes about; specifically, I argue that this process is intrinsically linked to capitalism, so that the former cannot be remedied until we address the latter.

Arguably the commodification of animals under capitalism has been exacerbated as a result of the intersection between technology, science, and capitalist production processes. Though Descartes is credited with the invention of the animal ‘machine’, it was capitalism, Agnese Pignataro (2009) asserts, who made it a reality, turning both human and nonhumans workers into cogs in a machine, as Marx warned it would (Sinclair, 1906; Hribal, 2012). This is perhaps most noticeably demonstrated through the slaughterhouse ‘disassembly’ line – from whence came Ford’s assembly line, as previously noted – whose very name indicates the deconstruction of the nonhuman into a commodity (Adams, 2000; Pachirat, 2011). As a result of this ‘disassembly’ of the nonhuman into parts, where most workers do not interact with the nonhuman in its totality, its aliveness is kept hidden, even from those who may otherwise be their greatest ally: slaughterhouse workers<sup>83</sup>. What’s worse, as Pachirat (2011, pp. 225–231) gleaned from his time as a slaughterhouse employee, even the so-called animal welfare measures in place actually perpetuate the commodification of nonhumans; the animal-handling audit, for example, consisting of five forms or checklists designed to ensure that the killing of animals follows certain ‘humane’ guidelines, requires cataloguing ‘animal vocalizations’, thereby transforming the personal confrontation with an animals’ voice – “an intentional communication of pain and suffering” (ibid, p.226) – into nothing more than “data input” (ibid, p.229). This idea – of nonhumans as ‘input’/raw materials in the great meat-packing ‘machine’ (language used by those who work in factory farming themselves (Llorente, 2011)) – is further encouraged as a result of the speed and ‘efficiency’ of the line, and the fear of rebuke from supervisors and even other colleagues (Pachirat, 2011); all of which stem from the relentless drive for profit, as we saw earlier.

While Fordist style production methods have generally commodified the nonhuman in death, Taylorism begins the transformation of the nonhuman into a commodity even as the animal still lives. While line production techniques (such as

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<sup>83</sup> More on the solidarity between workers and nonhumans in the following chapter.

audits, surveillance, etc. (see Pachirat, 2011)) seek to extend (conceptual) control over human and nonhuman bodies, Taylorist techniques quite literally (physically) control nonhuman bodies, through (for example) physical manipulation, confinement and genetic engineering, as previously discussed. In the intersection between science, technology and the pursuit of profit, capitalism has turned animals' bodies against them, totally modifying the animal to suit the production process and eliminating the unproductive aspects (e.g. broiler hens, genetically engineered to put on so much weight that their legs break under the strain, or male calves raised for veal, fed an iron-deficient diet so that their flesh remains the desired colour) (Noske, 1997; Torres, 2007). Not only animal bodies, Barbara Noske (ibid) points out, but also animals' 'skills' have been subjected to the forces of 'scientific management': "animals are forced to 'specialize' in one skill only, be it laying eggs, giving [sic] milk, growing fur or even inhaling nerve gas, thus becoming virtually deskilled in other ways" (Noske, 1997, p. 16). Their well-being is then measured by "increased productivity" despite the fact that "productivity pertains to one particular animal capacity in isolation [...] whereas an animal's well-being concerns the whole animal" (ibid, pp.16-17). What is especially pertinent for our discussion is that dealing with one animal 'skill' implies extracting one part from the totality that is the animal, thus *de-animalising* and commodifying the animal. Both Fordist and Taylorist techniques require the erasure of nonhuman 'animality'<sup>84</sup> – i.e. the recognition that an animal is a living, sentient individual with its own preferences, etc. This is because animality is hard to control – animals can resist, they may also look different, grow differently, etc. – which would make them difficult to turn into exchangeable products in the market. Commodification, therefore, requires *standardisation* – hens are made equivalent to all other hens, cows to all other cows, and so on (Forkasiewicz, 2013). Their bodies must be made uniform – achieved, in life, through the techniques discussed (genetic engineering, confinement, drugs, etc.) and, in death, through removal of the skin, effacement, preparation of the 'meat' into pieces, etc. (Wadiwel, 2016). Thus, for Wadiwel (ibid), it is the moment that the animal goes from living to dead that value (i.e. market value) is produced, because it is only in death that the process of commodification – and the erasure of animality – is complete. This, I suspect, would be strongly contested by Jason Hribal (2003, 2012), whose work focuses on the value of nonhumans as labour-power *as well as* commodities. In fact, he argues,

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<sup>84</sup> I discuss animality further in the context of alienation in the final section (5.6).

since the true value of commodities is the labour-power invested in them, it is wrong to speak of nonhumans as commodities at all. A commodity is something dead, and while nonhumans certainly do die in capitalist production, their death is only the end of the commodification process. By focussing only on the end point, we encourage the censoring of the rest of the process – the labour-power of nonhumans – which, as we saw earlier, was essential for capitalist accumulation. (In fact, Hribal (2012, pp. 20–21) argues, nonhumans were not even exploited for meat until around the nineteenth century; up to then “[t]heir value lay in other forms of labor: plowing, manure, and milk and eggs”, but this came to be seen as “underproduction”. Thus meat was “created” as “an industrial means of profit”.) Nonhumans are commodities, he asserts, only from the perspective of humans and the capitalist process of production; by succumbing to this way of thinking about nonhumans we risk obscuring their resistance and agency, and we therefore perpetuate the idea of nonhumans as ‘things’ rather than individuals.

## **5.5 Capitalist Production and The ‘Politics of Sight’**

The third characteristic of capitalism that, I argue, is closely linked to the exploitation of nonhuman animals relates to its process of production and what Pachirat (2011) terms the ‘Politics of Sight’. Briefly, the politics of sight refers to “organized, concerted attempts to make visible what is hidden [...] in order to bring about social and political transformation”. While social mechanisms of distance and concealment are so thoroughly addressed by Pachirat in *Every Twelve Seconds* – being the central focus of the study – that one might wonder what else there is to say on the matter, what I would argue is missing from the book is an explicit acknowledgement of the link between these mechanisms of distancing and capitalism. Though Pachirat talks extensively about how the mechanisms operate in the slaughterhouse production process, nowhere does he acknowledge these processes as being particularly associated with capitalist economy (nor does he discuss capitalism at all, for that matter). To address this gap, in this section I review the discussion regarding mechanisms of distance and concealment and their effect on nonhuman exploitation and commodification, before examining how these mechanisms operate specifically through the capitalist production process. Since much of this analysis is already present in Pachirat’s account of industrialised slaughter – though detached from an explicitly socialist agenda – my aim in this section is simply

to bring to the surface the underlying critique of capitalism, by demonstrating that these processes are inherently capitalist.

We have already seen the importance of concealment and invisibility in relation to commodification (and, consequently, its precursor: the profit motive) – as Pepper puts it, “if products are made principally for profit, to be realised in a vast anonymous market; if they can no longer be directly identified by producers with the specific needs of specific consumers, then the reverse also applies”. The relations of labour that went into the creation of the commodity, as well as, Pepper (1993) notes, the relationship between its producers and nature, are hidden from sight, “all traces of exploitation [...] obliterated” (Harvey, 1990, p. 101)<sup>86</sup>. One consequence of this distancing of the consumer from the production process, recognised by Henry Salt (and later, by Marxist theorists such as Frederic Jameson (1991)), is that “it is exceedingly difficult to bring home a due sense of blood-guiltiness to the right person” (Salt, 1980, p. 88). Consumers are therefore unlikely to change their purchasing habits or to be the instigators of change without a change to the production process (or at least its transparency).

The other major consequence of distancing mechanisms relates to the idea of ‘civility’ (one of the central themes in the work of the HL ethical socialists as previously discussed). This link – between distancing and ‘civility’ – is the central focus of sociologist Norbert Elias (1994), whose body of work established the centrality of invisibility and distancing to the ‘civilizing process’ (Bauman, 1979), and has influenced numerous contemporary scholars including Pachirat (2011). Elias recounts how certain human behaviours and “states of being such as nudity, defecation, urinating, spitting, nose-blowing, sexual intercourse, the killing of animals, and a host of others” (ibid, p.10) have been gradually, over time, removed from sight, distanced from the public, and associated with feelings of disgust and shame. (Note that, apart from (arguably) killing, these behaviours are associated with our animal nature; thus, the repression of these animal characteristics also represents the repression of our animality (discussed further in the following section), and an attempt to clearly demarcate human from animal – to elevate the former as superior to the latter (based on the overcoming of these ‘base’, ‘crude’ instincts).) This explains the increasing

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<sup>86</sup> Hence, as Llorente (2011, p. 128) argues, “[a]nother significant parallel between Marxism and the animal liberation movement [is] that similar methods and techniques conceal and help to sustain, the oppression of “intensively reared” farm animals and exploited workers”.

invisibility of nonhuman animals in society, since the sight of dead animals, or indeed live sentient ones who scream and bleed, disturbs people's moral conscience, and would probably make it more difficult to market their (animal) products (Elias, 1994; Pignataro, 2009; Fitzgerald and Taylor, 2014). One of the earliest examples of this process in action is the relocation of the infamous Smithfield livestock market in London in the early nineteenth century. As a result of the "noisy presence and unrestrained expressions of animality" of the nonhumans in the market, combined with – drawing on Pachirat's insights – the unavoidable stench of blood and death that no doubt would have spread out into neighbouring suburbs – in short, the undeniable fact that this was a place of death for sentient creatures – the market was moved out of the centre, in order to not pose a "moral danger to London's populace" (Smith, 2002, p. 50)<sup>88</sup>. By the end of the nineteenth century, American slaughterhouses had also moved to the outskirts of cities, with Upton Sinclair (1906, p. 41) immortalising the process of the "slaughtering-machine" as "all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and of memory". Since then, slaughterhouses have remained geographically isolated from the public, in order to spatially shield the consumer from the 'unpleasant', 'dirty work' that goes on inside (Adams, 2000; Smith, 2002; Pachirat, 2011). One further consequence of this desire to 'not see' the realities of livestock production, allowing others to do the 'dirty work' instead, is that those Others come to be tainted by association; their very presence forces the public to acknowledge 'unpleasant' facts – not only the reality of meat consumption, but also the conditions under which this work takes place, including the danger to the workers involved. This is rendered even more problematic given that many of these workers "are themselves regarded by the dominant culture as alien. They are immigrants whose first language is often not English" (Smith, 2002, p. 52), compounding the distancing between their reality and that of the general public, and making the work of animal slaughter all the more clandestine.

It is not just on the outside, however, that slaughterhouses are hidden from sight. Mechanisms of distance and concealment are also at work inside the slaughterhouse –

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<sup>88</sup> In earlier chapters, I discussed 'civility' in relation to the ethical socialists of the HL, who believed that compassion and justice towards nonhumans was 'civilising' for mankind – civilising here meaning to become truly humane, by accessing our higher moral guidance and overcoming base impulses towards violence, etc. Although this civilising process was an important part of their pro-animal morality, they were quite explicit that their version of 'civility' was quite different from the capitalist notion of progress and civilisation – the version that can be detected in Elias' account of the history of the civilising process – of which they were highly disparaging (as evidenced in Carpenter, 1921a).

those specifically related to the capitalist production process – which, I argue, entrench and exacerbate nonhuman exploitation. I begin with two aspects of production that are, according to Marx (1985, p. 87), specific to capitalist economy, namely: 1) extension of machinery and 2) the complex division of labour, which “amounts to increasing social and perceptual fragmentation” (Forkasiewicz, 2013, p. 77). I return to the first point shortly, but for now I wish to focus on the division of labour and its relation to mechanisms of distancing, given the centrality of the former to capitalist production. Arguably one of the key findings of Pachirat’s exposé of slaughterhouse work is not only the ways in which the slaughterhouse is cloistered from society, but also “how the work of killing is hidden even from those who participate directly in it” (Pachirat, 2011, p. 9). This is achieved through what Pachirat calls ‘zones of confinement’: complex “divisions of labor and space [which] work to fragment sight, to fracture experience, and to neutralize the work of violence” (ibid, p.159). Not only is the slaughterhouse divided into isolated, colour-coded zones (departments), each with their own supervisors and micro climates, but even within each department the immense division of labour (indicated by a quick glance at the 121 different jobs listed by Pachirat in the appendix (2011, pp. 257–270), with each worker in charge of usually only body part; e.g. “lower belly ripper”, “right flanker”, “neck opener” and so on) ensures detachment from the work of killing as well as the “dispersal of ethical responsibility” (Smith, 2002, p. 52; Pachirat, 2011). For, with the act of killing broken down into so many stages, which moment can we pinpoint, and say, ‘that is the precise point at which the animal is killed’? In Pachirat’s experience, this desire to shift the blame – the responsibility – for taking the life of another, to disassociate oneself with the act of killing, led the workers in the slaughterhouse in which he carried out his research to imbue a quasi-mystical status on the role of the “knocker”:

Like Tom, Jill, and the other kill floor workers, I prefer to isolate and concentrate the work of killing in the person of the knocker, to participate in an implicit moral exchange in which the knocker alone performs the work of killing, while the work I do is morally unrelated to that killing. It is a fiction, but a convincing one, particularly for those already seeking to be convinced: of all the workers in the plant, only the knocker delivers the blow that begins the irreversible process of transforming the live creatures into dead ones. Although the sticker [who cuts the cow’s jugular veins and carotid arteries] technically kills the cow, it is unconscious by the time it reaches him. Only the knocker places the hot steel gun against the shaking, furry foreheads of creature after creature, sees his reflection in their rolling eyes, and pulls the trigger that will eventually rob them of life: only the knocker. [As a

result] the other 120 *kill floor workers* can say, and believe it, “I’m not going to take part in this. I’m not going to stand and watch this.”

(Pachirat, 2011, pp. 159–160 emphasis in original)

Yet the knocker too can shift the moral responsibility – stunning, after all, is often heralded as ‘humane’ slaughter, believed to reduce suffering (Smith, 2002) – though the fact that knockers have to see a psychiatrist every three months suggests that, within the slaughterhouse, few really believe that to be true (Pachirat, 2011, pp. 152–153).

It is not just the fragmentation of labour, however, that encourages distancing from the reality of the work and the ethical responsibility of what that reality entails (killing). Distancing, or detachment, is also encouraged through the perpetual motion and fast pace of the line, especially “the repetitive nature of the tasks involved” (Smith, 2002, p. 52; Pachirat, 2011). Earlier, I argued that the drive for speed – and its implications for nonhuman exploitation – was an outcome of the profit motive, but speed can also be used as a mechanism of distancing, in that it encourages workers to regard nonhuman as inputs – commodities (Benton, 1993) – as Pachirat (2011, p. 149 my emphasis) discovered:

[O]nce the abstract goal of keeping the line tight takes precedence over the individuality of the animals, it really does make sense to apply the electric shock regularly. [...] the prod keeps a steady stream of *raw material* entering the plant, satisfies co-workers and supervisors, and saves me from having to expend the energy it takes to move the animals with plastic paddles.

Following a more traditional Marxist analysis, the monotony that is created through speed and repetition, when “at the rate of one cow [...] slaughtered every twelve seconds [...] the reality [of] *killing* evaporates into a routinized, almost hallucinatory, blur” (ibid, p.138, emphasis in original) also encourages an *estrangement* from both the process of production and the products of their (workers’) labour (Forkasiewicz, 2013). At the same time, workers are not only alienated from their labour, but also from their ‘animality’ – the appreciation that they too are animals, and share something with the living, sentient creatures passing through their hands. This is compounded by the increasing use of technology and automated, mechanised production – which is, Marx asserts, specific to capitalist economy (as already mentioned) – meaning that one worker may now be in charge of thousands of animals (as in broiler production especially), thereby reducing physical contact with individual animals, and further

distancing the human worker from their place as an animal among animals and encouraging them to view nonhumans as commodities or material ‘inputs’ (Adams, 2000; Pignataro, 2009). It is to these final two issues – alienation and animality – that I now turn.

## 5.6 Alienation and Embodiment

The final two areas that I wish to discuss – which, I argue, go some way to explaining the relationship between capitalism and animal exploitation – are alienation and embodiment<sup>89</sup>. I begin by examining the concept of alienation under capitalism and how this can be (and has been) applied to nonhumans, before bringing in the issue of embodiment – or animality – and how this relates to animal exploitation under capitalism.

Alienation plays a central role in Marxist theory, particularly in regard to the problems with capitalism. It was present in our discussion of commodity fetishism, in that, when commodities are divorced from the relations of production (as happens in capitalist economies) and imbued with an exchange value that is separate from their true value (the labour-power behind their creation), workers are then *alienated* from the products of their labour. This is partly a result of the capitalist production process, particularly the (increasingly more complex) division of labour, through which means “individuals become less and less cognizant of the consequences of their productive activity, which results in estrangement from the process and products of their labor” (Forkasiewicz, 2013, p. 77). Thus, “products”, Pepper (1993, p. 89) explains, “and the labour they embody, have become objects apparently existing outside their producers.” This requires the labourer “believing as objectively true, natural or inevitable, a set of premises that run counter to [the labourer’s] own interests, which are not really true, natural or inevitable” (ibid, p.88). In other words, alienation depends on ‘false consciousness’. What is particularly interesting for our discussion of animal exploitation is that arguably one of the best examples of false consciousness in practice is capitalism’s portrayal of meat as a human ‘need’ (at least in the industrialised West). By continuing to eat meat, we are therefore alienated from our animal selves – the fact

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<sup>89</sup> Embodiment stands in opposition to the dualistic ‘mind over matter’, and the liberal favouring of the former, associated with rationality, intelligence, etc. Instead, embodiment (which I also refer to ‘animality’) implies a return to the body, and therefore acknowledging our animal natures.

that we too have animal bodies (as I discuss shortly) – in other words, we engage in a “process of self-alienation” (Zurowski, 2014 no page no.).

However, several authors (most notably Benton, 1993) have pointed out that Marx’s critique of alienation under capitalism was, in fact, predicated on the human-animal divide; “for Marx, humans are alienated or degraded when they are reduced to mere animality” (Szybel, 1997, p. 172). What differentiates humans from nonhumans, according to Marx (1970, p. 113), is that the former has the ability to produce: 1) ‘freely’, i.e. over and above his (physical) needs, 2) consciously, i.e. humans (unlike nonhumans, Marx posits) do not labour out of *instinct*, and 3) creatively, i.e. the human worker can imagine and design the product in his head, before committing it to reality. As a result of the last two points, “animals”, Marx believed, “cannot be alienated from the products of their labour in the same way as can humans” (Vint, 2009, p. 123). Under capitalist production, however,

the worker’s activity [...] belongs to another; it is the loss of his [sic] self. As a result, therefore, man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions – eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal.

(Marx, 1970, p. 111)

While the extent to which this dualism is really constitutional of Marxist thinking remains controversial (Szybel, 1997; see, for example, Llorente, 2011), we can, in any case, challenge the centrality of the human-animal divide to the concept of alienation from at least two different angles. The first is simply to argue that “[T]his species distinction, at the heart of Marx’s consideration of labour, is no longer consistent with the ways in which animals are integrated into the social relations of capitalism”; in other words, the extent to which animals are now fundamental to capitalist production, as well as the extent of their exploitation (even Marx, one might guess, could never have imagined the situation nonhumans have to endure in modern day ‘factory farms’) (Vint, 2009, p. 123). Nor is it consistent with what we now know about nonhuman capabilities – for example, that beavers will rebuilt dams that have been broken, suggesting that they have an idea in their heads of how the finished product should look – thanks to extensive behavioural research (ibid). Taking this into consideration, we might then argue (as several contemporary scholars have done) that alienation does, in fact, occur in the case of nonhumans. Two scholars in particular are well known for this assertion.

The first is Ted Benton (1993, p. 59), who argues that “a good deal of the content of Marx’s contrast between a fulfilled or emancipated human life, and a dehumanized, estranged existence can also be applied in the analysis of the conditions imposed by intensive rearing regimes in the case of non-human animals”.

A more elaborate thesis, however, is provided by Barbara Noske (1997) who demonstrated that each of the four ways in which humans are alienated as a result of the capitalist production process – 1) alienation from the product of one’s labour, 2) alienation from one’s own “productive activity”, 3) alienation from species life, and 4) alienation from other humans and from nature – as set out by Marx (1970, pp. 111–114) in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, is relevant to nonhuman alienation too. As we saw earlier in the discussion of commodification, nonhuman animals are, like humans, also alienated from the product of their labour under capitalism. These products include not only commodities such as milk and eggs, but also “their own offspring or (parts of) their own body” (Noske, 1997, p. 18). In fact, in a bid to increase efficiency and surplus value, nonhumans bodies have become “an alien and hostile power” that “is actually working against the animal’s own interests” (ibid). During this process of commodification, the animal is also forced to specialise in one ‘skill’ (such as fattening, or egg-laying), thereby “extracting [...] one single part from a totality which *is* the animal” and alienating the animal from their productive activity (ibid, p.19). Noske then goes on to point out that nonhumans under the capitalist mode of production are alienated both from nature – being removed from their natural ecosystems entirely, kept in artificial, unstimulating conditions, and fed a diet that is unnatural and unsuited to their physiological requirements (resulting in numerous health problems) – and from fellow-animals – being either kept in isolation (as in the case of nonhumans used for vivisection) or in unnaturally crowded environments. Given the increasing lack of physical contact between humans and nonhumans in animal production, previously mentioned, they cannot even form social relationships with humans. In short, “we need to recognise that there are multiple species-beings, and that animals can be alienated from their species-being as much as humans can be from ours” (Vint, 2009, p. 130).

The second way in which we might challenge the centrality of the human-animal divide to Marx’s concept of alienation, is by pointing out Marx’s own inconsistencies on the matter. Not only the fact that, elsewhere, the *continuity* between humans and

animals was important to Marx (see, especially, Llorente, 2011), but also that Marx himself actually applied the concept of alienation to nonhumans (albeit unconsciously), when he remarks in *The German Ideology* (Marx, 1978, p. 168) that animals too can be estranged from their “essence”<sup>91</sup> – which, as Gunderson (2011a, p. 266) identifies, is surely the very definition of alienation.

Nevertheless, the importance that Marx places on the suppression, or overcoming, of animality as key to overcoming human alienation was reflective, ironically, of a capitalist mode of thinking. In chapter three, I discussed animality (in the form of kinship) as one of ethical- and eco-socialism’s key values; here, however, my aim is to examine the relationship between animality and capitalism – particularly the latter’s disdain for the former – and how this might lead to the exacerbation of nonhuman exploitation.

We have already seen that, historically, capitalist accumulation relied on the splitting apart of traditional symbiotic human-animal relations, and the subsequent enclosure of nonhumans (Benton, 1993; Shukin, 2009). Antonio Gramsci (1992, p. 235) similarly asserts of industrialism<sup>93</sup> that it “is a continual victory over man’s animality”. This also evokes the earlier discussion of Norbert Elias’ analysis of civilisation and the ‘politics of sight’. Drawing on Freud’s insight that the history of civilisation was the repression of instinct, Elias detailed how this process relied on the concealment and hiding ‘out of sight’ of – what became internalised as – ‘repulsive’ or ‘shameful’. From a historical determinist perspective, however, we could argue that this process – the internalisation of ‘civilised behaviour’, which, interestingly, Bauman (1979, p. 123) associates with “hiding one’s emotions, preference given to ‘reason’ and calculation” (i.e. very much opposed to the materialist emphasis on animal-being) – is “a product of a specific historic figuration” (ibid) (the civilising process being frequently associated with the development of capitalism). Arguably, then, the oppression of animality has been, and continues to be, an essential part of capitalism (Forkasiewicz, 2013).

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<sup>91</sup> The example Marx uses is (freshwater) fish, whose essence is the water of a river. Thus, they are estranged from this essence when the river is polluted by industry.

<sup>93</sup> Certainly, capitalism and industrialism are not synonymous – a point which I return to in the conclusion – however, in the context of animality, the distinction is irrelevant. Gramsci used industrialism, Forkasiewicz (2013, p. 77) surmises, as “the most tangible expression of capitalist modernity”.

The (animal) body, therefore, is often theorised as the first site of oppression; first, both in a chronological sense – the animal body being “the first sentient part of nature that was appropriated into property and exploited as a means to human ends” (Thomas, 1984; Camatte, 1995; Vint, 2009, p. 126) and therefore “the *first* victim of capitalist colonization and instrumentalization” (Forkasiewicz, 2013, p. 78 emphasis in original) – and in the sense of being “fundamental” (ibid), “the ground zero of exploitation” (ibid, p.76). In its uncontrollable drive for profit, and the prioritisation of exchange over use value, capitalism seeks to deny, even eradicate, animality and animal nature. This is achieved, as I have already discussed, through the production process, specifically techniques of scientific management (Taylorism), industrialism, technology (genetic engineering) and the commodification of nonhumans (Smith, 2002; Pachirat, 2011; Forkasiewicz, 2013; Wadiwel, 2016). It is not just nonhumans, however, who are alienated from their animality. Taylorist management systems also alienate human workers on the animal ‘disassembly line’ from their own bodies, while techniques of distancing (previously discussed) ensure their alienation from other animals’ bodies (Adams, 2000).

Besides the obvious concerns for animal welfare caused by the erasure of animality, what does this mean for animal ethics more broadly? In chapter three, I examined the link between animality (as kinship) and ethical socialism, and why animality might be considered a useful tool in a reconceptualization of animal ethics. Here, I have attempted to give substance to Forkasiewicz’s claim that the “commodification and oppression of animality, and capitalism are internally related. [...] Under capitalism, then, animal being is inherently imperiled [sic]” (2013, pp. 77–78). As a result, we cannot articulate a theory of animal exploitation that does not simultaneously address the capitalist economic system. While liberal scholars have not, to date, attempted to address this problem, I would argue that they also *cannot* address it while remaining faithful to their politics, since liberalism is inadequately equipped to deal with such issues.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Given that institutionalised animal exploitation is widely regarded as one of the most pressing issues for the animal protection movement (and therefore one that animal ethicists ought to concern themselves with), it is all the more problematic that liberal

animal ethics has yet to (or, is unable to) address the link between the economic system and nonhuman exploitation. While some nineteenth century ethical socialists attempted to grapple with a few of the issues constituting this link, political economy was not their forte, rendering their contributions to the discussion rather superficial and vague. (Admittedly, institutionalised animal exploitation was not such a problem in the late 1800s; therefore they could not be expected to provide the kinds of insights needed to tackle the problem as it currently stands.) Nevertheless, given liberalism's neglect of the topic, a socialist animal ethics needs to be able to deal with it as fully as possible in order to present a valid and convincing alternative. Given the customary association of Marxism with such topics, it seemed natural to turn to a more traditional Marxist analysis of the issue, bringing in the work of contemporary socialists and sociologists, in the hope of filling the gaps left by both liberalism and ethical socialism. Yet, even contemporary scholars who view capitalism as the primary problem with regards to animal exploitation, seldom offer a substantial explanation as to what exactly it is about capitalism that renders it problematic. This chapter therefore sought to offer some preliminary answers to this question.

I proposed four reasons why capitalism might be said to be 'bad' for nonhuman animals: 1) the vested interests of capitalists in animal exploitation and the profit motive, 2) commodification, 3) the capitalist production process and the 'politics of sight', and 4) alienation and embodiment (or 'animality'). Of these areas examined, profit, commodification, alienation, the repression of animality, and the division of labour, may all be said to be key characteristics of capitalism. Does this, then, help us answer the subsidiary question that I posed in the introduction – whether the problem is really *industrialism*, as opposed to capitalism? In a word, yes. Industrialism, as a mode of production, certainly has a part to play in animal exploitation. Arguably some of the most worrying practices for animal advocates stem from the removal of nonhumans from their natural habitats and their installation in 'factory farms'. (Even the widespread use of the term "animal industrial complex" (Noske, 1997) connotes the image of industrial manufacturing.) And certainly, implicit in the discussion on Fordist production processes, including extensive division of labour, and the application of scientific management techniques (Taylorism) to nonhumans, is the role of industrialism in nonhuman exploitation. Nonetheless, while capitalism may (arguably) express itself *through* industrialism (Best, 2009; Forkasiewicz, 2013), it is not reducible

to it<sup>95</sup>. While industrialism speaks only to production, capitalism also concerns *ownership*, in particular the question: ‘who owns the means of production?’<sup>96</sup> In relation to animal exploitation, this question is of crucial significance, yet it has been almost entirely ignored by mainstream animal ethicists. For socialists, on the other hand, this question is elementary; it is therefore not so surprising that one possible response can be found in Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*. When asked by a young student how socialism could be expected to change meat consumption, Dr Schliemann – Sinclair’s spokesman for socialism in the novel – replies:

So long as we have wage slavery [...] it matters not in the least how debasing and repulsive a task may be, it is easy to find people to perform it. But just as soon as labor is set free, then the price of such work will begin to rise. So one by one the old, dingy, and unsanitary factories will come down [...] substitutes will be found for their products. In exactly the same way, as the citizens [...] become refined, year by year the cost of slaughterhouse products will increase; until eventually those who want to eat meat will have to do their own killing – and how long do you think the custom would survive then?

(Sinclair, 1906, p. 409)

In other words, Sinclair suggests that with collective ownership of the means of production, labour is set free, so the price of labour rises, and, as a result, the true cost of meat is reflected in its market value (making it too expensive for most), which ties in with Gunderson’s (2011a) conclusion – discussed earlier – that the only way to eliminate industrial meat production is for alternative products (such as in-vitro meat) to be cheaper to produce. Sinclair also hypothesises, however, that, not being *forced* to do the ‘dirty work’, no one would then choose to. This is interesting to consider from the point of view of Pachirat’s (2011) account of industrial slaughter and the ‘politics of sight’; the conclusion of which I take to be that it is not so much the *visual* aspect of

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<sup>95</sup> Additionally, as Hribal (2012) points out, technology (and therefore industrial advances) has been around longer than capitalism, but it is only in the current socioeconomic system, because of the profit motive and the need to extract more and more surplus labour, that it has been used to such excessive and exploitative levels. (Whether technology itself is inherently bad for animals remains controversial; Hribal (ibid), for example, answers in the affirmative, while Gunderson (2011a) believes that technology may in fact herald the end of animal exploitation.)

<sup>96</sup> Capitalism is clearly about much more than just industrialism; however, I would like to reiterate the earlier point, that the argument I am making (along with other animal scholars who discuss capitalism) is not that without capitalism there would be no animal exploitation. Clearly, exploitation can (and has) existed in the absence of capitalism. The argument is rather that capitalism *exacerbates* the exploitation of animals (as a result of the four areas I have discussed, along with, arguably, other factors outside the scope of this chapter), and that we cannot hope to end animal exploitation without simultaneously addressing the capitalist system.

distancing that is problematic in animal exploitation (though this is also important) – i.e. *seeing* the killing taking place – but, rather, the *experiential* nature of slaughter that we seek to distance ourselves from (for example, many workers in the slaughterhouse saw the killing taking place, but were still able to distance themselves from it, since it was not their hands that delivered the fatal blow). This suggests that rather than the popular idiom – ‘if slaughterhouses had glass walls, we’d all be vegetarian’ – a more apt, and important, consideration (which Carol Glasser (2012) also points out, and which I consider in a different context in chapter six) is that ‘if slaughterhouses had no *workers*, we’d all be vegetarian’ (since no one would want to do this work themselves, as Sinclair suggests).

One further consequence of collective ownership of the means of production, highlighted by Pepper (1993) in the context of environmentalism, but which is also relevant for our discussion, is that production would be for need, rather than exchange. This would open up space for debate around what exactly our needs are (whether meat is in fact a human need, for example). More importantly, however, production for need would not require the corporate/mass marketing of meat and animal products that currently pervades society, nor mass production in general (the saturation of animal products in the market, we saw earlier, enables the invisibility of the production process (Adams, 2000), and reinforces the idea of nonhumans as a commodity, a form of currency that reinstates human superiority (Wadiwel, 2016)). Of course, production for need rather than exchange would also put paid to commodity fetishism and the capitalist “relation of possession, characterized by concealment and distance of production from consumption” (Pachirat, 2011, p. 244). In its place would be transparency and openness regarding products and the social relations imbued within them, reminiscent of Ursula Le Guin’s anarchist utopia (depicted in *The Dispossessed*), where “[n]o doors were locked, few shut. There were no disguises and no advertisements. It was all there, all the work, all the life of the city, open to the eye and to the hand” (2002, pp. 84–85). And though this visibility might, in itself, not end nonhuman exploitation (for reasons stated earlier), it would go a long way to, at least, improving working conditions for humans and nonhumans in animal industries.

Finally, since, under capitalism, the profit motive takes precedence above all else, removing the profit motive from the equation would also leave more room for ‘humaneness’ to take centre stage; for, while there is so much profit to be made in

animal exploitation, there can be no real progress made towards ending this exploitation – a reality that was apparent to Henry Salt (1980) even at the start of the animal advocacy movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of which he warned his fellow animal advocates. Yet, over one hundred years later, this issue has still not been addressed by the animal rights movement (despite the fact that it is arguably even more pressing than in Salt’s time), though contemporary socialist scholars have echoed Salt’s warning. Gunderson (2011a, p. 268 emphasis in original), as I previously noted, similarly concludes that welfare reforms “are no match for a system that *must* accumulate more capital with a strict structure of private property relations”.

By ignoring the aforementioned issues, liberal animal ethics makes it seem as though the problem is industrialism (particularly industrial technologies applied to nonhumans), rather than capitalism. Gunderson (ibid, p.260, emphasis in original) hits the nail on the head when he points out the problem with this approach:

Undoubtedly, industrial technologies are the most *visible* transformation of the livestock revolution; however, few confront *why* industrial technologies have superseded old ways of farming and ranching and will, most likely, continue to do so. Reading such literature makes the concrete, pens, machines, and steel within CAFOs [concentrated animal feeding operations] and abattoirs seem as if they in some way exist in isolation from the global economic system in which they are fixed. [...] Without understanding the sociohistorical development and drive of capitalism and its unique need to produce for exchange values, industrial technologies in food animal production will continue to be considered an autonomous ‘problem’ to be dealt with rather than particular instruments of labor to increase profit margins.

Given Marxism’s proficiency in addressing such issues, this is therefore one of the central ways in which Marxism may offer a valuable, much needed, contribution to a socialist animal ethic, rounding out and strengthening the overall approach.

One final theme that Marxism is also adept at addressing, and which has been inadequately dealt with by liberal animal ethics, is class, agency and political strategy. Although these issues were also touched on by the ethical socialists, they lacked a theoretical understanding of how these issues ought to be tackled. As a result, their prescriptions relating to strategy appear similar to liberalism’s, both of which provide an inadequate account of agency, race and class. Hence, the final chapter of the thesis examines these issues in greater detail, merging the historical analysis with the more Marxist account developed in chapter five in order to assess whether this fused socialist

approach can provide a comprehensive and compelling alternative to the liberal paradigm.

## **Chapter 6 Class, Agency, and Oppression**

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As argued in chapter one, one of the central problems with liberal animal ethics is that it inadequately addresses the question of strategy; in other words, how change ought to come about. From the historical analysis we saw different approaches to this question, from the ‘leading by example’, but also campaigning for legislation, of the ethical socialists, to Spira’s strategy of working with corporations involved in animal exploitation in order to effect change from the inside out. Given the inconsistencies apparent in these various socialist approaches, it is necessary to examine this issue in greater detail, as this could be one of the gaps in animal ethics that a merged socialist approach is apt to fill. That being so, this chapter begins by outlining the issue of agency in relation to animal ethics. More specifically, I set out the traditional liberal approach to agency and, in the first half of the chapter, attempt to demonstrate why this approach is problematic for the animal protection movement. Having established a critique of the liberal approach, in the next section I then move on to examine the socialist approach to the issue. In particular, this section examines the hypothesis that the working class might be a more appropriate agent for change in favour of nonhuman animals. One potential justification for this hypothesis is the idea of a shared oppression between the working class and nonhumans. I also look at the possibility of augmenting a sense of solidarity between the working class and nonhumans based on the idea of nonhumans as workers, and the possible benefits that might arise from such a classification.

### **6.1 Political Agency and Animal Ethics**

Political agency is, in contemporary global politics, characterised as the “capacity [of agents] to impact upon the state-centred political system” (Marchetti, 2013, p. 4). In the context of animal ethics, the issue of agency therefore relates to the question: *who* has the greatest capacity to impact upon the political system – i.e. to ‘change the game’ – in favour of nonhuman animals? Clearly this is an important question to ask, not least because the answer will determine the strategy of animal protection politics (including which group(s) are targeted by animal protection campaigns, etc.). Yet it is a question that has been sorely neglected within the animal ethics literature due to, I argue, the dominance of liberalism, which is fundamentally ill equipped to deal with the issue

(ideologically speaking). Since the animal rights movement is modelled on the liberal (academic) discourse, it too has avoided discussion of the issue. Before going on to examine the liberal approach to agency, however, it might be helpful to briefly look at the agency issue in the context of environmental politics, because, in contrast to animal ethics, there have been several attempts by green political theorists to engage with the issue, and much of the debate can be extrapolated to animal ethics.

### **6.1.1 Agency in Green Political Theory**

Helpfully, the debate is reviewed by Andy Dobson (2007, p. 135), who notes:

A central characteristic of green political theory is that it has never consistently asked that question [of agency], principally because the answer is held to be obvious: everyone. The general political-ecological position that the environmental crisis will eventually be suffered by everybody on the planet, and that therefore the ideology's appeal is universal, has been perceived as a source of strength for the green movement.

The other side of the debate, however, argues that the idea of the green movement having a 'universalistic' appeal is Utopian and potentially damaging to the cause. It is Utopian because

it is simply untrue to say that [...] it is in everybody's interest to bring about a sustainable and egalitarian society. A significant and influential proportion of society, for example, has a material interest in prolonging the environmental crisis because there is money to be made from managing it.

(ibid)

Moreover, it requires people to have a long-term perspective (in perceiving the long-term damage to the environment caused by present-day behaviour), and, since the environmental effects of our behaviour may not be felt within our lifetime, it also requires a certain degree of altruism (because it is future generations who will have to live with the consequences). Since the actions that it advocates are (rightly or wrongly) often perceived as a loss or sacrifice (recycling, for example, requires a certain amount of time and effort, and not flying as often means curbing one's foreign holidays), then in effect the movement is asking people to make short-term losses for a long-term gain – one which they might not even enjoy – which is arguably an unrealistic demand. Furthermore, the 'universalistic' appeal ignores the fact that environmental problems affect the vulnerable disproportionately (as propounded by the environmental justice movement in the US) (ibid, p.137). Vulnerable people, therefore, may have a much

greater interest in creating an environment-friendly, sustainable society than other social groups.

As a result, class theory, Dobson (ibid) reports, argues “that radical greens must abandon their Utopian, universalistic strategy, and instead identify and organize a group of people in society whose immediate interests lie in leading sustainable lives”. Thus we return to the central question: *which* group is the most important agent of change? Despite earlier noting that green political theory “has never consistently asked that question” (see above), Dobson later acknowledges that there have been some attempts to grapple with this issue, most of which have centred on two main proposed agents: the first being the middle class, and the second, the ‘new social movements’. Briefly, the idea of the middle class being the best agent for change in the green movement is supported by widespread sociological data that shows that those involved in the green movement tend to be middle class and college educated (the same data appears to hold true for the contemporary animal protection movement (see, for example, Nibert, 2002, p. 229)). Critics of this approach, however, point out that the middle class has little economic interest in environmental sustainability given that they are not the worst affected by environmental degradation (etc.), and that cuts to economic growth (widely proposed by radical environmentalists) would be regarded unfavourably by the middle class (Dobson, 2007, p. 140). The idea of the ‘new social movements’ as the most appropriate agent, on the other hand, appears to be somewhat more popular among green political theorists (Pepper, 1993, p. 135; Dobson, 2007, p. 141). Incorporating a wide range of social issues, the ‘new social movements’ are generally held to include environmentalists, feminists, the peace movement, the civil rights movement, ethnic minorities, and the ‘disenfranchised’. Although these groups clearly represent a variety of interests, they are believed to have a number of things in common, such as a desire for cultural, rather than political or economic, change, and an emphasis “on the individual as the locus of revolution” (Pepper, 1993, p. 136). Since the traditional emphasis on the individual as the main agent of change is characteristic of liberalism, this renders the ‘new social movements’ incompatible with a socialist approach, according to Pepper. Yet, others have countered that a socialist (or, at least, a Marxist, structuralist) approach is “often over-reductionist” (ibid). The real struggle nowadays, they propose, is related to consumption rather than production “and new social

movement acknowledge this. They emphasise a consumer, not a producer, revolution” (ibid).

But how can groups with such diverging interests be expected to act coherently, for the good of all? Given the problems that would undoubtedly arise in trying to create an overarching group identity out of these new social movements, Dobson (2007, p. 143) – exploring Jürgen Habermas’s proposal to focus only on those groups that seek real, fundamental change (as opposed to superficial change) – suggests that the challenge for the green movement is thus to “identify a foment a group in society that is not only relatively ‘disengaged’ from it, but that is also already inclined towards the foundations of sustainable living”. Such a group, he posits, may arguably be found in the ‘developing’ world; i.e. the “Third World lumpenproletariat” (Pepper, 1993, p. 139), alternatively named (by Arnold Toynbee) the ‘external proletariat’ (Dobson, 2007, p. 144), who are totally marginalised from the processes of production and consumption. According to ecofeminists, however, it is women who are the relevant social actor, since they are not only marginalised from the formal processes of production and consumption, but they also “occupy a critical space in the reproductive process” (ibid, p.145), which renders them an ideal mediator between Nature and *mankind*.

Such has been the treatment of the agency question from green political theory, but what about animal ethics? Given the dominance of liberalism within animal ethics, the following section addresses the mainstream – and therefore liberal – approach to agency, and how this has been translated in practice by the animal rights movement. I then move on to examine the socialist approach to the issue, and whether it might be possible to envisage a shared oppression between the working class and nonhuman animals.

### **6.1.2 The Liberal Approach to Agency**

As previously suggested, there are two separate (but related) questions that are pertinent to the agency issue. The first is: how does social change come about? The second, as we have already seen, asks: who should be entrusted with this task? Mainstream (liberal) animal ethics answers the first question thus: through individualistic moral transformation. As in the green movement, where is it assumed that “changing behaviour is mostly a matter of simply changing people’s minds” (Dobson, 2007, p. 135), there is a widely held and persistent assumption within the animal protection

movement that, with enough education and publicity, people will be convinced of the logic behind animal protection and desist in those actions that cause harm to nonhumans (Garner, 2005). Thus the emphasis is squarely on the individual as the primary agent of change, as opposed to advocating change through group action or state regulation (though the liberal approach may also encourage the latter, its primary focus, I argue, is on the individual). Moreover, like the green movement, the liberal approach professes to be universalistic in nature; generally no one group is (openly) targeted, or excluded, by animal protection campaigns, since it is widely held that everyone can, under the right conditions, be convinced of the rationale for animal protection (again like the green movement, the fact that animal protection is believed to transcend traditional Right-Left distinctions is perceived as one of the movement's strengths (Spira, 1993a)). Yet, while the liberal approach intends to target (all) individuals as the key actor for social change, in reality, because liberalism tends to ignore structural impediments, the group usually targeted is, in fact, the middle class. In order to elaborate these points in further detail, I wish to briefly discuss how the liberal approach to agency has been translated by the animal protection movement into a predominantly consumer-focused campaign centred around food and lifestyle habits. After setting out the problems with such an approach for animal protection, I then move on to examine the socialist alternative, and especially how this tackles issues such as oppression, solidarity and nonhuman animals as members of the proletariat.

#### ***6.1.2.1 The 'Go Vegan' Strategy***

Given that the contemporary revival of the animal rights movement owes much to the publication of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* in the 1970s (widely regarded as the 'bible' of the animal rights movement), it is hardly surprising that the movement displays the same liberal bias as in academia. In terms of the movement's strategy, this bias has resulted in an over-emphasis on consumer-focused campaigns, such as the 'veganuary' campaign (which encourages individuals to try being vegan for the entire month of January). Such campaigns fall under the general heading of the 'go vegan' strategy<sup>97</sup>, which focuses on individuals' food choices in particular, but also other consumption habits. Such campaigns are thus directed at the individual moral conscience, rather than state institutions/organisations or corporations, suggesting that

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<sup>97</sup> This also includes campaigns that encourage people to go vegetarian, not just vegan.

the key to political change lies in changing the personal morality of everyone (this is also implied by Singer, in *Animal Liberation*, through the inclusion of vegetarian recipes at the end of his (academic) account of animal ethics). This strategy also tends to frame animal ethics – veganism being the practical embodiment of animal ethics – as primarily a matter of consumption, a lifestyle choice. Veganism is thus presented as a simple matter of ‘saying no’ to animal products (in this way mirroring the ‘just say no’ approach to drug use, which also, as discussed later, ignores the socio-economic and cultural factors that may drive some individuals to use drugs). This approach conforms to a highly individualistic society: all responsibility for change is placed on the individual, reflecting neoliberalism’s emphasis on self-regulation (Gard, 2011, p. 71; Littler, 2011, p. 33). Not only does this let state/corporate actors ‘off the hook’, but it also completely ignores the structural constraints on individuals’ ‘choices’ with regards to consumption.

From a Marxist perspective, the ‘go vegan’ strategy, in arguing that social change (in favour of nonhuman animals) will come about through changing people’s attitudes and values, clearly favours an idealist attitude towards social change. Such idealism can also be detected in the green movement, where it is commonly professed that ‘if only people knew the truth’ (about pollution etc.) they would be inspired to change their ways (Pepper, 1993). Marx, on the other hand, famously argued that ideas are a reflection of material reality; it is erroneous, therefore, to try to change people without also changing the material conditions in which they find themselves (Dobson, 2007). These material conditions include structural constraints on individuals’ consumption habits (discussed below); yet the ‘go vegan’ strategy implies that individuals have the power to affect change irrespective of economic structures. In fact, its ‘vote with your dollars/fork’ slogan, suggests that consumption and purchasing power equate to political power. From a materialist perspective, therefore, the ‘go vegan’ strategy overestimates the power of individuals to act autonomously.

In reality, there are a range of socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain individuals’ consumption habits, including time, money, family circumstances and other “frameworks of care”, such as (perceived) responsibility and commitment to a range of actors, including one’s community (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2008, p. 47). One of the central critiques of the ‘go vegan’ approach is therefore that, although it professes to be universalistic (as discussed above), it clearly sets out from a privileged white

perspective, presenting veganism as an ‘easy’ choice, because it assumes the availability of cruelty-free options, such as, for example, fresh fruit and vegetables. In reality, however, many low-income neighbourhoods (particularly in the US) lack basic supermarkets/food stores, and those that do exist often prioritise unhealthy, non-vegan products over things like fresh fruit and vegetables. On the other hand, when these products *are* available, they are often financially non-viable for the majority of residents (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2008; Alkon and Agyeman, 2011). In pressing the individual to affect change through their lifestyle and consumption choices, therefore, the liberal approach, in reality, upholds *the middle class* as the main agent of change, since this approach only gives a voice to those with financial and social capital, disenfranchising a large section of the population who do not have the money or means to participate (Dobson, 2007; Littler, 2011). (That the middle class are, in fact, the main agent of change, as suggested by the liberal ‘go vegan’ strategy, is not so surprising given that the data on the animal rights movement suggests that its participants tend to be college-educated, middle class and white (Nibert, 2002); however, it contradicts the movement’s claim to a universalistic appeal.) The movement’s lack of acknowledgement of this bias – particularly the attempts to frame veganism as ‘easy’ – not only reinforces the traditional liberal idea that animal exploitation is simply a matter of personal prejudice (i.e. flawed morals) (Nibert, 2002; Torres, 2007; as argued by Best, 2011; Sanbonmatsu, see Maurizi, 2013), but also contributes to the growing public repudiation of veganism as ‘elitist’, both of which end up alienating a wide range of people including potential allies (Adamas, 2011).

In addition to the socio-economic and cultural factors mentioned above, the liberal focus on transforming the individual’s moral conscience ignores the presence of wider economic structures that impinge on people’s purchasing options. In particular, attempts to persuade consumers to reduce their meat consumption through moral reasoning alone ignores the link between the free market economy, government economic policies, and the consumption of other animals; i.e. the fact that meat (and fish) production is heavily subsidised in the EU and US (Winders and Nibert, 2004; Reus and Comiti, 2008). It is thus in the interest of these governments to continue to promote the consumption of meat (and fish), which will impact on the consumer in terms of advertising (of these products), prices, and so on. In short, lifestyle choices are constituted by the socio-economic and cultural context in which the individual is

situated; yet, lacking a materialist perspective, liberalism's insistence on transforming the individual's moral conscience ignores this, treating the individual as ahistorical and asocial.

Furthermore, by presenting the issue as (primarily) a matter of personal lifestyle choice – as reflected in Singer's *Animal Liberation*, previously mentioned – the liberal approach to agency *depoliticises* animal protection; that is to say, it suggests that animal protection is not an appropriate subject for economic and political debate, rather it must be a debate that occurs between private, individual actors. As a result, it necessarily situates the animal question within the 'private' sphere, which is particularly problematic for animal rights activists given the traditional liberal emphasis on people's right to privacy, liberty, and moral pluralism. Accordingly, liberalism holds that, since there are many competing, yet equally valid, ideas of 'the good', I should not be allowed to foist my version of 'the good' onto anyone else, and the state, in particular, must remain neutral in the face of competing claims. This makes it difficult to interfere in people's lives when it comes to animal protection; it strongly affirms that people must be *convinced* (to stop eating meat, for example), not *forced* (through law, etc.). Moreover, it arguably tends to stifle political conversation around animal issues – particularly meat-eating – as a result of this idea that 'what I eat is my business alone, and no-one (especially not the state) has the right to tell me what to eat', which is fiercely defended by liberalists.

Yet, as Carol Adams (1993, p. 210) points out, this "invocation of autonomy – the insistence that enforcing vegetarianism at a conference restricts an individual's autonomy – presumes that no one else's liberty is at issue in food choices". In other words, by focussing on the individual and their personal choices, the liberal approach manages to obscure all the other agents who are impacted by animal protection issues (in this case, meat-eating), making it appear that the only important party involved is the individual (being targeted) herself. In particular, by focussing on *consumption* (rather than production), the 'go vegan' strategy ignores the long chain of individuals involved in the process of transforming nonhuman individuals into 'products', and, in fact, perpetuates the construction of nonhumans as commodities (see chapter five for a discussion of the chain of production, the 'politics of sight', and the commodification of nonhumans).

## 6.2 Socialist Agency and Animal Ethics

In the first half of the chapter I introduced the notion of agency and how this relates to animal protection. It was suggested that there are two pertinent questions with regards to this issue: *how* change should come about (i.e. through regulation or individual moral reform), and *who* should do it (i.e. individuals vs. group action). Liberal animal ethics' answer to the first question is 'through individual moral transformation'; i.e. that social change (in favour of nonhumans) will come about by convincing everyone of the logic behind animal protection. Thus, the 'who' is clearly: the individual. A clear example of this approach in practice is the 'go vegan' strategy of the animal rights movement, which (as the name suggests) focuses on encouraging as many people as possibly to go vegan or vegetarian (or at least reduce their meat consumption), and to choose cruelty-free products. This strategy, however, assumes that individuals have the power to affect social change without acknowledging the presence of socio-economic and cultural constraints on individuals' 'purchasing power'. As a result, the approach appears to target the middle class rather than being 'universalistic', as it purportedly desires. In addition, the 'go vegan' strategy presents animal protection as simply a lifestyle choice, rather than a political issue. Accordingly, animal ethics is relegated to the 'private' sphere, and thus is subject to liberal notions of liberty and autonomy. Combined with the emphasis on consumption that tends to accompany a focus on personal transformation and individualism, this obscures the fact that animal protection involves a multitude of parties; not only those involved in the chain of production, but also the nonhuman individuals themselves. Indeed, the movement's focus on consumption in particular has also perpetuated the invisibility of nonhuman individuals and their conceptualisation as commodities.

So much for the contemporary liberal approach to agency, but what might a socialist alternative look like? For starters, we must distinguish between the ethical socialist approach of the late nineteenth century and the more contemporary, Marxist-inspired, socialist approach to the issue (though there are certainly overlaps between the two, as discussed shortly). Consequently, the following section addresses the ethical socialist approach to agency; in particular its similarities to the liberal approach established above. The subsequent section then examines the issue of agency from a more Marxist perspective, principally whether the working class constitute a more appropriate agent of change than any other social group.

### 6.2.1 The Ethical Socialist Approach to Agency

While one of the characteristics of the liberal approach, outlined above, is its propensity to regard animal ethics as a question of personal morality, similar comments have also been made about the early humane movement (epitomised by the RSPCA in the 1800s) – that it tended to regard cruelty as an individual flaw (Jasper and Nelkin, 1992). While there were several differences between the early humane movement and the ethical socialist approach of the Humanitarian League (HL) and Henry Salt (as discussed in chapter three), and although HL members were quick to acknowledge the material factors that drove some individuals to commit cruelty, in terms of strategy they tended to follow convention by largely focussing on the individual (Weinbren, 1994). Echoing the ‘go vegan’ strategy of the contemporary animal rights movement, much of the HL’s propaganda, including many of Salt’s shorter articles, focused on issues relating to lifestyle choices (in fact, one whole department of the HL was dedicated to Humane Diet and Dress (The Humanitarian League, no date)). In particular, much time was spent highlighting the cruelty involved in the wearing of fur and feathers – what Salt coined “murderous millinery” (Salt, 1980, pp. 63–71). Moreover, while vegetarianism was not a prerequisite for becoming a member of the HL (Preece, 2012, p. 153), the majority of its members *were* vegetarian (including Charlotte Despard, Edward Carpenter, Isabella Ford, Keir Hardie, and of course Henry Salt), with close ties to various vegetarian societies (Ernest Bell, who published numerous books for the HL was president of the Vegetarian Society (Salt, 1921, p. 124)).

Amongst ethical socialists, particularly Salt and Carpenter, there was a great deal of emphasis placed on ‘living by example’. Salt, in his own work, frequently asserted that reform must be accompanied by self-reform and vice-versa, and that practicing what one preaches is the only way to progress the cause (Salt, 1906b). As a result, Salt regarded vegetarianism not only as a personal practice, an exercise in individualism, but also (and more importantly) as an exercise in propaganda, whose ultimate aim is to influence public opinion (*ibid*). Carpenter (1895, p. 15) reiterated this idea of using individualism as a strategy for social change when he wrote (in relation to vivisection) that ‘man’ (i.e. the individual) must take responsibility for social problems, “since being a social animal it is difficult for him to say that he is separate from the society to which he belongs, and not responsible for its ill-doings”. Many ethical socialists and HL members (such as John C. Kenworthy) were also enthusiastic

supporters of small experimental commune-living, much like the contemporary green movement (according to Dobson, 2007, p. 138). This approach thus distinguished ethical socialism from the more ‘practical’, Marxian varieties, since Marx was explicit that the “strategy of change through ‘small experiments’ and ‘force of example’ was an unfounded attempt to change people without changing the conditions in which they lived and worked” (ibid), as previously noted.

Continuing the idea that much of the responsibility for social change fell on the individual, Salt frequently argued that it was the *consumer* of animal products that ought to take responsibility for the cruelty involved rather than the producer,<sup>98</sup> who was only providing what was demanded of him (Salt, 1935, p. 58, 1980, p. 80). This obviously corresponds to the liberal ‘go vegan’ strategy discussed above, which was critiqued for its focus on consumption since this tends to exclude all but the middle and upper classes from animal protection and suggests that animal protection is a ‘private’, rather than a political (or economic), issue. However, as mentioned in chapter three, there is some evidence that Salt and the HL deliberately targeted their vegetarian ‘propaganda’ to the working class (or at least tried to), not (only) the middle and upper classes; they were quite explicit that vegetarianism was affordable and sustainable for the poor, especially by growing one’s own vegetables, which they encouraged. In fact, it was precisely *because* vegetarianism was linked to frugality (and therefore, they argued, inimical to capitalism) that it was a useful tool for socialism. In addition, although individualism was an important part of the HL’s strategy, it also had “a practical agenda which emphasized *both* collective, state-instituted reforms [...] *and* individual self-improvement” (Weinbren, 1994, p. 89 emphasis added). The ethical socialists thus clearly regarded the problem as a *systemic* one, although part of the solution they proposed relied on self-reform/lifestyle choice. This apparent incongruity may be partly explained in the context of Salt’s recognition that exploitation may still occur under a socialist regime – the problem being more about justice and humanity than about the economic system of production. Hence, advocating such principles was just as important as changing the economic system of production, as, without them, a socialist revolution would simply result in the status quo for nonhumans (Salt, 1896).

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<sup>98</sup> Within this category of producer he also made the distinction between the employer (capitalist) and the wage-slave; it was the former, Salt argued, who ought to take responsibility, not the latter (Salt, 1897, p. 14).

How does this compare with Henry Spira's attitude towards strategy and agency? The early influence of Trotskyism – through the HH and the SWP (see chapter four) – on Spira's life had a great impact on the way he later approached campaigning on behalf of nonhuman animals. Through Trotskyism, Spira came to “see injustice not as a matter of the greed or sadism of particular individuals, but as something more systematic” (Singer, 1998, p. 10). In the case of vivisection (one of the issues on which Spira campaigned most vigorously), this insight resulted in Spira taking a very different approach to that of the mainstream animal rights movement, which tended to portray those involved in animal exploitation as morally flawed and cruel (similar, arguably, to the contemporary liberal ‘go vegan’ strategy), and encouraged the public to boycott animal products as much as possible. Spira, on the other hand, chose to work *with* research scientists and other exploitative industries, rather than the general public, in a bid to help them reduce the cruelty involved in their practices<sup>99</sup>. This was because, for real change to occur,

it's going to be animal researchers who are the ones who are going to do it, it's not going to be us [...] these are the folks that you need if you're going to be serious about change...

(Spira, cited in Singer, 1998, p. 113)

In accordance with the Trotskyist insight that injustice was not a matter of individual prejudice, Spira was quick to remove the blame from the perpetrators of (institutionalised) cruelty to nonhuman animals (in much the same way that Salt and the HL absolved the working class from cruelty, as previously discussed). In fact, for Spira,

the issue is no longer “cruelty”. Cruelty happens in individual cases, here and there, when someone is cruel to his or her animals. In institutionalised or legalised suffering, the people who hurt animals don't do it because they get their jollies from hurting animals. They do it because it's an accepted way of teaching science in the classrooms, it's an accepted way of producing food for people's dinners, it's the accepted way to safety test new products. The suffering has nothing to do with intent; intent is irrelevant.

(Harrington, 1981, p. 19)

The issue, according to Spira, was not then a matter of changing individual morality, but rather of changing wider socio-cultural norms and structures, within which

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<sup>99</sup> Using, for example, the 3Rs of animal research: to *reduce* the number of animals used, to *refine* the procedures in order to inflict less pain, and, where possible, to *replace* animal experiments with alternative methods.

individuals' behaviour is confined. Accordingly, Spira did not appear to regard individuals or consumers as the primary agent of change<sup>100</sup>; rather he preferred to go direct to the producer, exemplified in one of his most successful campaigns against animal testing in which he worked closely with the cosmetics giant, Revlon. In fact, Spira's campaigning strategy suggests that he regarded corporations as one of the most important actors for social change if only they could be persuaded to change their behaviour,<sup>101</sup> which Spira attempted by appealing to their self-interest, in particular their public image (Spira, 1996b, pp. 3, 163). Yet, given Spira's assertion that one must affect "structural social change" in order to change the situation for nonhuman animals (cited in Singer, 1998, p. 149), his decision to focus on corporations as the key to social change (rather than, for example, focussing on state regulation/legislation) appears surprising, especially since we might expect a socialist to seek the abolishment of corporate power, rather than working to maintain and improve it. Moreover, corporations are often restricted by current legislation and regulatory requirements as to how far they can actually change their behaviour. Yet Spira (1983, p. 377) was adamant that:

No congressional bill, no legal gimmickry, by itself, will save the animals. [...] Laws function to maintain and justify the status quo. In movement-related issues, laws are changed to keep disturbances at a minimum.

The danger, Spira believed, was that "political lobbying or legal maneuvering [sic] becomes a substitute for action" (Singer, 1998, p. 191). And again, "legislation is no substitute for direct action against the institutions and corporations that are involved in animal abuse" (Spira, 1985, p. 207).

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To resume, the liberal approach, as we saw in the first half of the chapter, tends to regard individualism (as opposed to, for example, state regulation) as the preferred strategy for social change, with the emphasis therefore firmly placed on the individual as the key agent (rather than group action). On the other hand, the ethical socialist approach of Salt and the HL *also* focussed on transforming individuals' moral

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<sup>100</sup> Admittedly, whilst most of Spira's campaigns tended to by-pass the public (who were only mobilised as a 'last resort' if the target of the campaigns remained unresponsive), in his writing Spira contradicts himself, by frequently focussing on the power of the individual to effect change (see, for example, Spira, 1987, 1996c).

<sup>101</sup> An early example of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

conscience and on the consumer rather than the producer, although, at the same time, they also campaigned for legislative reform and for reducing consumption (rather than more mindful consumption). Conversely, Trotskyist and animal rights campaigner Henry Spira did *not* believe that legislative reform or state regulation were important strategies for animal activists, though neither did he particularly favour individualistic moral transformation; rather, for Spira, the primary agent of change was corporations and manufacturers. Yet, both the ethical socialist approach and Spira's approach differ from the mainstream liberal approach to agency in that both also recognised and supported the contemporary socialist argument – outlined below – of there being a shared oppression between the working class and nonhuman animals. The following section explores this idea in further detail, before going on to discuss other questions that arise through a socialist approach to agency, such as whether the working class is the most appropriate agent of change on behalf of nonhumans, and whether nonhumans themselves can be thought of as workers.

### **6.2.2 The Working Class and Nonhumans: A Shared Oppression?**

Unlike the liberal (and, to some extent, the ethical socialist) approach to agency, which saw individualistic moral transformation as the key to social change, a more traditional (Marxian) socialist approach to the question of agency would presumably favour collective (group) action as the most effective way of bringing about social change. This brings us back full circle to the key question established at the start of the chapter: *which* group ought to be entrusted with this task? In addressing the political economy of animal ethics in chapter five, one of the central questions posed was: in whose interest is animal exploitation? In examining the question of agency, we might, alternatively, ask: in whose interest is *the end* of animal exploitation? As such, there appears to be some evidence to suggest that the answer to this question is, in fact, the working class.

For starters, it is the working class who are most at risk from the health and environmental consequences of animal exploitation. Take the meat industry, for example. Besides the moral argument for not eating meat, there are two other main reasons for avoiding meat consumption: the first being the environmental impact of livestock production (including the dairy industry), and the second being that meat consumption has been consistently linked to numerous health problems (see, for

example, Campbell and Campbell II, 2006). Yet both of these issues are even more pressing for the working class. The fact that environmental problems “affect the vulnerable disproportionately” is the founding principle of the environmental justice movement in the US (Dobson, 2007, p. 137); since the livestock industry produces more pollution than all other major industries (UNFAO, 2006) promoting a reduction in meat consumption would seem to be a major objective for the environmental justice movement. Added to this, however, is the fact that slaughterhouses are more likely to be situated in low-income communities; it is these communities, therefore, who have to live with the negative (often unacknowledged) externalities of the meat industry, including water and noise pollution, and increased rates of violence and domestic abuse (Nibert, 1994). In terms of health, poorer people tend to have greater incidences of ill-health associated with diet and lifestyle, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. A large part of this may be attributed to the fact that poor people are particularly targeted by the meat industry and have fewer options when it comes to healthy eating choices. For example, due, in part, to government economic policies and subsidies, meat – particularly unhealthy (meat-based) fast food – is often far cheaper than healthy fruit and vegetables, and, crucially, provides more calories per dollar than the latter (which is often the central concern for poor families with lots of mouths to feed). As previously mentioned, the siting of food outlets also leaves poor people vulnerable, as very often the only accessible venues are fast food chains or ‘gas stores’, which again prioritise meat-based options.

The second principle way in which the working class are harmed by animal exploitation is through the exploitation of human workers in animal exploitation industries. Significantly, this theme pervaded the work of the ethical socialists associated with the HL (despite their predominant focus on the consumer, as explained above). Part of the reason they encouraged individuals to consume less was that consumption was also “harmful [...] to the person (whoever that may be) who labours to produce [luxury items]” (Salt, 1891a, p. 2). This was particularly true of workers in animal industries, as frequently pointed out by HL members. In one article, entitled ‘Humane Dress’, for example, the author argued:

The effect upon the workers, the fur-pullers, who are employed to “pull” the skins for manufacture, cannot be ignored. These women work in their living rooms or in a very confined space, for they are amongst the home workers, whose average wage is 7s. a week,

as they are obliged to take whatever they can get, and with the fur cape makers they suffer from a liability to consumption owing to the stoppage of the respiratory organs by the bits of fluff which fly off from the skins they are handling, and invade the nostrils and air passages, so entering the lungs. They also suffer from the stench which rises from the animal skins.

(Mallet, 1911, p. 100)

Such concerns prompted Belgian-born Jules Ruhl to argue, in an article entitled “The Protection of Animals and the Labour Question” published in the November 1906 edition of *The Humanitarian*:

It is not possible, be sure of it, to separate the cause of the human worker from that of the non-human worker [...] in a word, all the domestic animals [...] the animal question is but the natural continuation of the labour question and its indispensable complement; for the state of animals cannot be ameliorated except in so far as and in proportion as the condition of the human worker is ameliorated. [...] What, at its source, is this question of the protection of animals? It is nothing else than the protection of the weak against the strong, of the oppressed against the oppressor, of the worker against the employer who takes advantage of him? [sic] [...] Study the present labour question, the social question, the colonial question, the struggle between capital and labour, and what will you find? Nearly always the weak striving against the strong, the oppressed against the oppressor, the workers in contention with the employer who very often abuses his power. Well, then, if you would be logical in your protection of animals, and at the same time would assure the triumph of your cause, extend your protection to the human worker, unite these two causes of which I have spoken, in a common sympathy. Such an example has already been set in England by the Humanitarian League.

(Ruhl, 1906, p. 86)

Decades later, this same sentiment found its way into the work of fellow socialist and animal rights campaigner, Henry Spira. In fact, highlighting the exploitation of human workers in relation to meat production was key to Spira’s campaigning strategy, as demonstrated in several adverts produced by the Coalition for Nonviolent Food<sup>102</sup>. One, for example, ironically lists “Five Good Reasons To Eat Your Cat Or Dog”, with number four being: “You’ll help exploited workers. [...] Many workers, particularly in the poultry industry, are crippled by having to cut up to 90 chickens a minute. When they can no longer work, they are discarded like worn out tires” (Spira, 1996b, p. 215). Spira also highlighted that most of these workers were “poor minority women” (ibid,

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<sup>102</sup> The Coalition for Nonviolent Food was a project of Animal Rights International, founded by Spira.

p.219). This strategy was especially central to his campaign against Frank Perdue, the chicken mogul:

the Perdue campaign also offered an opportunity to become involved in human rights issues. Perdue had been heavily criticized for dangerous working conditions in his slaughter-houses, exploitation of minority women and rampant sexual harassment. On various occasions we were able to spotlight these issues in full page ads.

(ibid, p.221)

While this issue has not perhaps received the attention it deserves from contemporary socialist animal activists, it certainly has not gone unnoticed within the animal protection community. Nibert (2002), for example, notes that the commodification process – whereby nonhumans are turned into ‘luxury’ consumer goods – causes suffering to the (human) workers involved, while Torres (2007) highlights the fact that illegal immigrants are over-represented among slaughter-house workers in the US. More explicitly, Glasser (2012 no page number, emphasis added) argues:

Examples of the connections between human and animal exploitation are starkly exhibited in meat packing plants and leather tanneries. The mass production and systematic killing of animals for food is where we see the greatest amount of suffering for animals, and notably this includes human animals as well. [...] In 2005, Human Rights Watch identified meat-packing plants as being the most dangerous factory job in the U.S. [...] Tannery workers also face job risks that increase their mortality. [...] What is often neglected in conversations about the morality of leather is that human animals are doing the tanning, exposing themselves to various noxious chemicals. Multiple studies have found deleterious health effects and increased mortality among tannery workers, including increased risk of bladder cancer and testicular cancer. [...] Perhaps it is true – if slaughterhouses had glass walls we would all be vegetarians. Not as prescient, but certainly just as true and just as difficult to achieve, is that *if slaughterhouses had no workers we'd all be vegetarian*.

In raising this last point Glasser demonstrates tremendous foresight and originality, for this issue is only just starting to be discussed within (certain) animal rights circles. In the animal advocacy movement in general there has been an unfortunate tendency to demonise those who work in animal industries (for taking part in the exploitation and oppression of nonhuman animals). Yet, what this argument suggests is that there might in fact be an (overlooked) opportunity to enrol workers into the animal liberation project, to reconceptualise them as a potentially crucial ally in the fight against animal exploitation.

The meat industry is not the only area, however, in which the oppression of nonhumans coincides with the oppression of the working class. The plight of the orangutan in relation to palm oil extraction has been well documented; less well known is the human cost involved. Working conditions are described as “hot, unhealthy and badly paid” (Milman, 2013, p. 36), and many plantations rely on cheap, or child, labour, essentially operating in a black market. Moreover, much of the land is bought for a pittance from small farmers who are unaware of what they are signing up to. This is not the only case where land rights come into conflict with the interests of animal exploiters. In the (so called) ‘developing’ world, small subsistence farmers are routinely forced off their land by agri-business in order to produce animal feed. While the *environmental* impacts of the West’s current animal-based diet in terms of deforestation in large parts of Latin America for cattle and soya<sup>103</sup> farming is increasingly well known, there are few reports on the devastating impact on indigenous peoples and ‘campesinos’<sup>104</sup>, and their land:

Paraguay is the world’s fastest-growing producer of soybeans and the fourth-largest soy exporter in the world. [...] This exponential increase is a result of the rising demand for meat and cattle feed in China, as well as the booming agro-fuel industry in Europe. [...] The soy boom has been disastrous for small farmers, who, after living for years on government-allotted forestland, have begun to be uprooted. In the last decade, the Paraguayan government has given away or illegally sold this public land to political friends in the soybean business, pushing the peasants out. [...] Since the first soy boom in 1990, almost 100,000 small-scale farmers have been forced to migrate to urban slums; about 9,000 rural families are evicted by soy production each year.

(Abramson, 2009, p. 34)

It is not only land rights, however, that are at stake, but also the health of the communities where production is situated. Argentina, for example, has seen increased cancer rates, especially in children, and birth defects among rural populations close to soya fields, owing to the heavy use of pesticides deemed (by the seed and fertiliser manufacturers) ‘necessary’ in order to maintain high yields (Ellis, 2013).

While there are clearly numerous links between the exploitation of nonhumans and the exploitation of the working class, the foregoing points have largely been raised

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<sup>103</sup> The majority of this soya is grown for cattle feed (*not* for soya milk or vegan meat substitutes as often claimed), and is therefore inextricably linked to meat production.

<sup>104</sup> Peasants and small farmers.

by those *outside* the working class; in other words the links mentioned have been proposed by academics and animal rights activists, rather than arising from amongst the ranks of the working class. One question we might ask, then, is whether the link (between the working class and nonhumans) has actually been made by the agency concerned. One important example of working class solidarity with nonhumans was the ‘Old Brown Dog’ affair of the early twentieth century.

### ***6.2.2.1 The Old Brown Dog Affair***

The incident of the ‘Old Brown Dog’ refers to a series of events that took place in Battersea, London, in the first decade of the twentieth century, which culminated in a confrontation between medical students and the local working class community who rallied behind several prominent anti-vivisection suffragettes (notably Charlotte Despard and Louise Lind-af-Hageby) in order to protect a statue of a terrier ‘done to death’ through vivisection. The initial provocation for the events was the vivisection of a small brown dog carried out by William Bayliss in 1903, witnessed by Louise Lind-af-Hageby and mentioned in her anti-vivisection publication, ‘The Shambles of Science’. Stephen Coleridge, secretary of the National Anti-Vivisection Society, then relayed the details of the incident in a speech that was reported on by the *Daily News* in which he accused Bayliss of contravening the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act. Although (or perhaps *because*) Bayliss won a subsequent libel case against Coleridge and the *Daily News*, a memorial was erected for the dog by the World League Against Vivisection (with the support of the British anti-vivisection movement).

It was no coincidence that the statue found its home in ‘radical’ Battersea, whose mayor at the time, J. H. Brown, was a trade unionist and strong supporter of the brown dog’s cause (Lansbury, 1985, p. 11). Charlotte Despard had also set up her ‘mini welfare state’ in Battersea, and was of course one of the key defenders of the statue along with Lind-af-Hageby. Yet Despard was not the only link between Battersea and anti-vivisection. The area was also home to its very own Anti-Vivisection Hospital (anti-vivisection hospitals became fairly common place in working class areas, for reasons discussed later), which enjoyed extremely strong support from the local working class community (Lansbury, 1985, p. 58; Kean, 1998, p. 154).

The plaque on the statue – reading “in Memory of the 232 dogs Vivisected [...] during the year 1902. Men and Woman of England, how long shall these Things be?” –

provoked the anger of London medical students, leading to a series of skirmishes between the students, suffragettes and the working class (Lansbury, 1985, p. 14). In the end, interestingly, the statue was only taken down after the election of a new *Conservative* Battersea council in 1910, for whom protecting the statue was not worth the bother.

Despite the fact that the statue was eventually removed, and that this defeat marked the decline of the anti-vivisection movement in Britain, the incident was nevertheless successful in linking the interests of the working class to anti-vivisection, so much so that the latter actually came to be seen (by working class people) as a working class issue (Lansbury, 1985, p. 18). But why did the affair attract so much support from the working class and trade unions (who were not normally known to associate with suffragettes (ibid, p.48)) in the first place?

One of the foremost reasons why the working class came to support the 'Old Brown Dog' relates to the working class's fear of the medical profession (and science in general), due to the latter's tendency to consider poor people and their bodies as disposable (in the same way it did with nonhumans). This was partly informed by events surrounding compulsory vaccinations in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the campaign against which had focused on the supremacy of the medical establishment, and the fact that it now had the power to interfere in people's lives (Kean, 1998, p. 164). For women, this was not the only area where medicine sought to control female bodies; notably, the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, vehemently opposed by feminists such as Josephine Butler, meant that any woman (even) *accused* of prostitution could be (forcibly) subjected to a medical examination, and, if found to have a venereal disease, detained without consent. This was solidified by the increasing encroachment of gynaecologists into women's bodies, and the development of surgeries for castration. It was not hard, therefore, for the poor to see in the image of the vivisected animal a reflection of themselves (Lansbury, 1985, p. 60). Recognising the power of such imagery, the anti-vivisection movement deliberately emphasised these connections in their campaigns, noting the comparable vulnerability of those subject to state directives (in particular: children, working-class women and nonhuman animals) (Kean, 1998, p. 107).

Added to this was increasing suspicion amongst the working class that many doctors were deliberately mistreating (or refusing to treat) poor patients in order to gain

further knowledge of the disease that afflicted them. For the working class, then, nonhuman vivisection was seen as simply the legal, ostensibly ‘legitimate’, outlet of a more sinister impulse that would, if given the opportunity, culminate in the vivisection of humans (hence the establishment of openly anti-vivisection hospitals in working class areas) (Lansbury, 1985, p. 58). Clearly, there was an element of what I have elsewhere (see chapter three) called the ‘civility argument’ in such reasoning; that is, many working class individuals recognised that violence towards nonhumans might lead to violence towards humans. (This idea was also depicted in Hogarth’s prints – the man who is cruel to animals goes on to kill a woman – which were very popular among the working class at the time (ibid, p.48).) Curbing this violent impulse, through anti-vivisection laws, was a way of protecting their own interests, for if the medical profession was banned from experimenting on nonhumans they would be even less likely to get away with experimenting on poor people.

These fears were not simply based on rumour, either. In fact, they were often substantiated by physicians themselves, many of whom saw their right to research as more important than the care of patients (ibid, p.58). According to Lansbury (1985, p. 163), Dr Bernard (a notorious vivisector) actually regarded human experimentation (especially on women) as ‘frequently necessary’. Such views were held as legitimate by the medical profession because the patients in question could not pay for their treatment; they therefore ‘owed’ this sacrifice to society. In essence, it was believed that some must suffer for the good of many (taking utilitarian ethics to the extreme). It was clear to the working class, however, that ‘some’ in this case would always refer to themselves, and never to the middle or upper classes (ibid, p.58).

Thus, there was clearly an element of class struggle to be found in the ‘Old Brown Dog’ affair, which partly helps to explain the working class’s support of the anti-vivisection movement. This was fostered (as previously suggested) by anti-vivisection campaigners, who argued that the 1876 Act pertaining to animal experiments effectively legalised torture so long as “the torture were inflicted by a selected class of persons” (Coleridge 1916, cited in Kean, 1998, p. 154). Such double standards – one rule for the vivisectors (predominantly middle class and male) and one for everyone else – must have seemed particularly unfair given that it was the working

class who had come under particular admonition by the RSPCA and other animal welfare campaigners for their apparently inhumane treatment of animals<sup>105</sup>.

One final point worth mentioning is that, although Battersea was well-known as a hotbed of radical activity, the area was coming under increasing pressure from the Moderates who sought to take control of Battersea Council from the Socialists and Progressives. Thus, the statue of the old brown dog also acted as a symbol of community strength against outside forces, so much so, in fact, that at the time of its installation: “[t]he symbol of Socialist authority in Battersea was now the brown dog” (Lansbury, 1985, p. 20).

The Old Brown Dog affair thus clearly provides a practical example of the debate on socialist agency. Moreover, while it remains, as far as I am aware, one of the most *explicit* examples of working class solidarity with nonhumans – where the existence of common interests (in abolishing vivisection) between the working class and nonhumans was blatant and widely acknowledged by the latter – if we expand the definition of the working class<sup>106</sup> to include the ‘Third World’ lumpenproletariat then it could be argued that many further examples of a perceived link exist in the developing world. Taking the aforementioned example of soy production in Latin America to demonstrate this argument, we could easily envisage cases where local, poor communities have protested against the takeover of land for animal-feed production, for example. (There may also be other cases in which there was a shared oppression between nonhumans and the working class, but, for reasons relating to false consciousness, these links were not perceived by the working class.) In any case, the degree of historical solidarity demonstrated by the working class is not essential to the argument of this chapter, though the fact that such a link has been perceived by the working class *at all* obviously provides further ammunition for the argument that the working class may be the most appropriate agent for change on behalf of nonhumans.

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<sup>105</sup> Yet, as traditionally working class amusements such as bear-baiting and cock-fighting became outlawed, and only sports such as fox and stag-hunting (which were unavailable to the working class) remained, the humane treatment of animals also became a way of defining the working class (as being humane towards other animals) in opposition to the gentry and land-owning classes (Kean, 1998, p. 64).

<sup>106</sup> This would be consistent with contemporary socialist scholars, who are divided on the issue of agency, since the boundaries of the working class are no longer clear, and since the proletariat did not prove to be the revolutionary force Marx anticipated (Pepper, 1993; Wright, 1996; Dobson, 2007).

One of the central questions posed in this chapter was: who is the most appropriate agent for social change (in favour of nonhuman animals)? Since the traditional socialist response to this question is ‘the working class’, in this section I explored one of the ways in which we might conceptualise a link between the working class and nonhuman animals through their shared oppression. This argument turns on the exploitation of workers and poor people in animal industries (and other situations in which the exploitation of nonhumans is central). Another way in which we might envisage a link between the two, however, is if nonhuman animals are actually considered *part of* the working class (as labourers). (If this argument were validated, it might be used to encourage political and economic solidarity between the working class and nonhumans, as well as furthering the sense of a shared oppression.) It is to this proposition that I now turn.

#### **6.2.2.2 *Are Nonhumans Part of the Proletariat?***

Contradicting the traditional assumption that Marxist theory remains hostile to the project of animal liberation, the past few decades have seen a surge of interest in using various Marxist themes to explore human-nonhuman relations (for example Benton, 1988, 1993, 2003; Sztybel, 1997; Noske, 1997; Wilde, 2000; Perlo, 2002; Hribal, 2003, 2007, 2012; Sanbonmatsu, 2005; Gunderson, 2011b; Llorente, 2011; Forkasiewicz, 2013; Wadiwel, 2016). One of the questions, still under-theorised, that has sparked heated debate between some of these authors is whether nonhuman animals can be reasonably thought of as part of the proletariat. In attempting to answer this question, two subsidiary questions have been proposed: 1. Can other animals labour? And 2. Can other animals resist/do they have agency?

Interestingly, these themes may not be as *avant-garde* as the contemporary surge of interest in them suggests. Though lacking a Marxist analysis, many of the ethical socialists associated with the HL readily acknowledged nonhuman animals as workers (answering the first question – can animals labour? – in the affirmative). Kenworthy (1896, p. 14), for example, compared the horse to his fellow human labourer; a comparison that prompted Colonel William Lisle Blenkinsopp Coulson (1841-1911), a staunch supporter of the HL, to argue that the horse deserves to be treated as a ‘citizen’ (Carpenter *et al.*, 1895, p. 3) – much like Salt’s proposal for citizenship rights for ‘beasts of burden’ (see chapter three). This conceptualisation of animals as workers can also be perceived in a speech given by Charlotte Despard to the HL and published in the

*Humanitarian* (The Humanitarian League, 1915, p. 106) in which she makes explicit reference to domestic animals as workers.

In the contemporary literature, one of the most explicit examinations of the question of nonhumans as workers is Jonathan Clark's (2014) enquiry into the role of lab animals in clinical trials, in which he examines "whether it makes sense, both analytically and politically, to regard the participation of nonhuman animals in pre-clinical toxicity testing as a form of clinical labour" (ibid, p.120). Clark notes that for Marx only beings "capable of intention in action can be said to labour" (ibid, p.125); it is thus the *planning* that makes labour uniquely human. Marx himself seemingly regarded nonhumans as instruments, or objects, of labour, but never as labourers themselves. Nonhumans were simply "conductors of human activity [a view which clearly] denies their agency" (ibid, p.124)<sup>107</sup>. Clark then goes on to argue that other animals do in fact exercise purposive labour (best demonstrated, he suggests, in the case of beavers), but that, in any case, *humans* do not always engage in this kind of labour; indeed, most of the time, human labour more closely resembles that of the other animals.

We might wonder, however, what the benefit is of conceiving other animals as labourers? For Clark, the purpose of this endeavour is clear: "once one accepts that at least certain other animals labour, it becomes possible to expand the concept of social relations of production" (ibid, p.127). Moreover, he argues, if it is accepted that nonhuman animals labour then it must also be accepted that they can exercise agency, and that they might in fact be "capable of initiating the labour process and enrolling human beings into it" (ibid). Such an approach thus reminds us that nonhumans are properly "subjects rather than objects" (ibid, p.131)<sup>108</sup>. While the benefits suggested by Clark appear largely unsound – it does not necessarily follow that animals exercise agency simply because they labour (as discussed shortly) – there are other possible benefits to this approach that Clark overlooks. I would argue that one of the most positive outcomes of such a conclusion – that animals can and do labour – could be the

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<sup>107</sup> Interestingly, however, Marx clearly accepted that animals could also resist their use, as demonstrated by his acknowledgement that "a horse has a head of its own" (Marx 1990, cited in Clark, 2014, p. 124).

<sup>108</sup> Although Clark (2014, p. 131) also admits that "the same point could just as easily be made by suggesting that they are not labourers but rather subjects who are treated as objects of labour".

granting of certain positive rights that acknowledge this special role, something akin to workers' rights for nonhumans.

For many working animals (guide dogs in particular) their entire existence revolves around the job; their working day never ends. While most people would not think it acceptable for human individuals to have to work 24/7 (except perhaps in the case of carers and women's household/domestic labour, which is often ignored in Marxist accounts of labour in any case), allowing working animals 'downtime' is rarely considered. Yet this is especially pertinent since many working animals start their training at an incredibly young age; translated into human years this would, in many cases, equate to child labour. Another area of consideration may be pensions for retired working animals, many of whom are often euthanized when they are no longer of service. In this respect, public opinion may be ahead of research: in 2013 Nottinghamshire Police announced plans to introduce a pension scheme for police dogs, with payouts totalling £1500 over a three-year period paid to the handlers/carers of retired police dogs to cover medical bills and general "upkeep". Commenting on the scheme, one Police and Crime Commissioner (cited in Pleasance, 2013 no page number, emphasis added) noted:

We look after the people who work for us who have been police officers and staff – they get a decent retirement and I think it's important the same is done for the dogs. These animals work hard for the police and *they are officers in their own right*.

Since this approach would involve treating working animals as individuals, with likes and dislikes, who deserve 'time off' to play, relax, and to express themselves through other behaviours, it would give Clark his desired outcome – the recognition of animals' subjectivity – whilst avoiding the controversy surrounding nonhuman agency (see the debate below).

On the other hand, one of the most fundamental problems with identifying nonhumans as labourers (and therefore part of the working class), which Clark (2014, p. 131) anticipates, is that such a conceptualisation risks "obscuring [...] the relations of domination to which [...] animals are subjected" (which are of a different nature than those inflicted on human workers). It is generally accepted that there is a fundamental conceptual difference between human and nonhuman labourers, in that the former are not usually coerced (and if they are, then we no longer call it (voluntary) labour, but slave labour) while the latter seldom have any say in the matter. Since animals cannot

freely sell their labour, nor buy or sell their means of subsistence, in the marketplace – by which criteria the working class is defined (according to Marxist theory) – many socialists would surely argue that animals cannot be considered part of the proletariat, regardless of whether or not they labour. For this reason too – that animals cannot freely sell their labour in the marketplace – many authors (notably Spiegel, 1988) have suggested that nonhuman animals are more like slaves than workers.

Just as this issue has caused controversy in contemporary animal ethics, within the Humanitarian League there were also differing opinions on whether nonhumans were more akin to slaves than to workers. Foote (1896, p. 120), for example, likened domesticated animals to slaves under the masterdom of humans. Isabella Ford (1904, pp. 6–7) took up the same topic (though with a feminist twist) in *Women and Socialism*, drawing an analogy between the domestication (in her opinion, subjugation) of animals and the domestication/subjugation of women. Both have been, she argued, ‘encouraged’ to be docile and submissive; women through the witch trails of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (which targeted ‘independent’ women who dared to break convention), and nonhuman animals through breeding.

Nevertheless, this controversy (whether or not nonhumans can be meaningfully classified as labourers) points to a more pressing issue: that the ways in which nonhumans are exploited in present society are multifarious, overlapping, and on an entirely different scale to the exploitation inflicted on human workers. As Sanbonmatsu (cited in Maurizi, 2013 no page number) summarises:

[I]t is [...] clear that nonhuman beings are much more fundamental to human society and identity than would be suggested by a purely economic description of their role. [...] Like human workers, some nonhuman animals, to be sure, are still exploited for their labor – as work horses, oxen, seeing eye and bomb-sniffing dogs, and so on. However, what we as humans do to the nonhuman beings is not in fact analogous to what the owning class does to the working class, because capitalists don't literally *eat* their workers.

As Clark suggests, employing the concept of labour in relation to nonhumans, then, risks obscuring this quite fundamental difference between human and nonhuman exploitation, and, especially, the fact that for nonhumans it is not just their labour which is commodified, but their very being (see chapter five for a discussion of commodification). One final issue with the idea of nonhumans as labourers that I foresee is that, of course, not *all* nonhumans with whom we share our lives are working

animals. Domestic companion animals, for example, can hardly be thought of as labourers; what would this mean, then, for the foregoing analysis? Should companion animals be conceptualised as a class of their own? Classing nonhumans as labourers, it seems, would only work under a categorization scheme similar, perhaps, to that of Donaldson and Kymlicka in *Zoopolis* (2011). Yet such categories are far from anodyne; moreover, it is unclear whether dividing nonhumans in such a way, so as to allow *some* to be regarded as part of the working class, would be of benefit to animal advocacy more broadly (though it may arguably be regarded as a step forward, especially regarding the implementation of certain positive rights, as I suggested).

So much for whether animals labour, but what of the second question, previously mentioned – whether animals have agency, and (if so) whether they resist? One of the few contemporary authors to tackle this issue using Marxist theory is Agnieszka Kowalczyk. Kowalczyk (2014, p. 154) takes it for granted that nonhumans labour: for one, she argues, if the definition of the working class can be extended to include “non-factory (unwaged) workers”, as advocated by Italian Autonomous Marxists and ecofeminists, then this provides fertile ground “for incorporating a more-than-human perspective into Marxist thinking” (ibid, p.155). However, there is one major problem she foresees with conceptualising nonhumans as part of the working class:

In classical Marxist terms, workers as an historical subject form a true “class for itself” only when they engage in struggle against the imposition of work. [...] This leads us to the problem broadly discussed in CAS [Critical Animal Studies] – can animals exercise agency?

Ibid, p.156

Jason Hribal (2003; 2007; 2010; 2012) would certainly argue that they can; in fact, his research is entirely founded on the validity of this claim. Animal agency, he argues, is clearly demonstrated through the history of nonhuman animal resistance – a history that has been totally ignored, he claims, because of human exceptionalism (built entirely upon the idea that nonhumans are not agents) (Hribal 2010, 2012). This denial of agency is often based on the invocation of rationality and the pretence that animal agency is nothing more than instinct, lacking the required intentionality for agency proper. Hribal’s response is that, since the majority of the animals he discusses (in *Fear of the Animal Planet*) are domesticated and therefore trained, the fact that they anyway

rebel against such training proves that they must be acting with intention and purpose (Hribal, 2010). Since such a claim seems difficult to prove, we might look instead to Kowalczyk's alternative response to the criticism that instinctual actions do not demonstrate agency. Using a Foucauldian account of resistance, infused with a feminist account of body politics, Kowalczyk (2014, p. 157) argues that:

[T]he analysis of experiences of women in different cultural contexts forces us to pay attention to more subtle signs of resistance. On the one hand, relations of power are inscribed in the body, but the body can also become the plane of resistance to those relations by transforming oppressive practices.

Conceptualised as such, resistance need not be planned or even intentional for it to count as resistance. Thus, Kowalczyk bypasses the question of whether or not nonhuman agency is purely instinctual, for such a question is rendered irrelevant. On the other hand, she then goes on to argue, following Carter and Charles (2011), that although nonhumans *can* resist, they are “incapable of collective political struggle” (Kowalczyk, 2014, p. 158) since they lack Corporate Agency, or the ability to “recognize oneself as a subject and object” (ibid). According to Carter and Charles (2011, p. 256), the move from Primary Agency (which all animals possess) to Corporate Agency “requires the mobilisation of political, cultural and linguistic resources rather than individual “resistance”” and is therefore unachievable for nonhumans. Accepting the premise that nonhuman animals lack syntactic language, Kowalczyk proposes that, given the general acceptance that human-animal communication is possible, “Corporate Agency [might plausibly] be established across species boundaries if we sacrifice elements of this sociological perspective in favour of a class-based approach” (Kowalczyk, 2014, p. 158). She suggests that such a “Trans-species Corporate Agency” (ibid) might look something like the kind of representation of nonhuman interests outlined by Chaone Mallory (2008, p. 8), when she describes witnessing, at the anti-WTO (World Trade Organisation) protests that took place in Seattle in 1999, “a group of environmentalists dressed in sea turtle costume marching alongside union steel workers, [...] each phalanx [...] engaged in a performative enactment of a particular politicised identity for which they were demanding recognition”. Mallory's claim rests on the premise that identities are *performed* rather than innate, thus

the protest speech of the sea turtle voiced through human actor/agents who felt this performative affinity with such creatures was no less real than that of the union workers who were engaged in self-representation and enactment of a collective subjectivity.

(ibid)

Yet, contra Kowalczyk, there appears to be nothing *inherently* class-based about such an approach; while Mallory's account of performative affinity opens up space for "solidarity and mutual representation among marginalised groups" (ibid, p.9) and provides a compelling response to the problem of interpreting the interests of an 'other', this representation is certainly not limited to the working class<sup>109</sup>. Kowalczyk's insistence that "there is no doubt that the possibility exists for a common site of resistance for labour movements, "new social movements", animal liberation movements and non-humans themselves" appears, instead, to conform to the contemporary trend in ecosocialism of

identifying 'new social movements' rather than labour as agents for revolution, and wanting to compromise with their socialist roots by calling for alliances between new social movements and the labour movement. [...] Such calls [...] may, however, gloss over just how much new social movements diverge fundamentally from a Marxist-socialist perspective.

(Pepper, 1993, p. 135)

Moreover, without a more explicit, convincing foundation on which working class solidarity with nonhumans might be based, we have to wonder why the labour movement would choose to involve itself in such an alliance. The fact that nonhumans labour, and therefore could be conceptualised as fellow workers, seems like a plausible foundation on which to build such solidarity; the fact that they cannot organise themselves into a collective resistance appears largely besides the point, since, as labourers (and therefore part of the working class), it would be the working class who would be expected to enact change on their behalf (under this analysis).

Yet it was also pointed out that not all nonhumans labour (depending on one's definition of labour, of course), thus, following such a distinction, only some nonhumans (working animals) could be conceptualised as part of the working class. Would, then, a better strategy be to treat nonhumans as a class in and of themselves?

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<sup>109</sup> Mallory's analysis suggests that anyone who feels an authentic affinity with nonhuman animals may be an appropriate representative of their interests. Admittedly, however, this approach would appear to fit in with the inclusivism of the Humanitarian League (discussed in chapter three). Whilst recognising and promoting the connections between the labour movement and animal advocacy, Salt and other HL members regarded the animal question as *more* than just a working class issue (otherwise they probably would not have lasted as long as they did, given that the majority of their supporters were middle or upper class).

Not if we accept the premise (put forward by Kowalczyk, Mallory, and others) that nonhumans cannot engage in collective resistance, since we are still left with the problem of who should bring about change in their favour (rendering the notion of nonhumans as a class of their own superfluous). We could, of course, challenge the notion of collective resistance, but, given our present understanding of nonhuman behaviour, etc., this would appear rather foolhardy. An alternative might be to revisit and challenge the idea that only working animals could be part of the working class. While domesticated animals have historically been associated with the middle class (the familiar image of the pampered lap dog), making it harder to foster a sense of solidarity with the working class, it *is* possible to envisage a solidarity of interests between the working class and wild animals, particularly if we expand the definition of the working class to include the ‘Third World lumpenproletariat’ (a move that corresponds to current trends in socialist theory, as previously mentioned). Wild animals, like poor people in developing countries, will, arguably, be worse affected by (‘First World’) pollution, they are already suffering habitat loss at the hands of corporate capitalism, and, like the ‘external proletariat’, they are also outside our patterns of consumption. Whether or not this abstraction asks too much of the working class’s imagination, it demonstrates that there are numerous ways to conceptualise nonhumans as members of the working class. While much more work is required to fully embellish this theory, it appears to be a worthwhile task, since it would allow for greater and more nuanced recognition of (certain) nonhuman rights, as well as providing a potentially compelling case for involving the working class in animal liberation.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the issue of agency in relation to animal ethics, covering not only the question of how political change is expected to come about (i.e. strategy), but, more specifically: who is best placed to bring about such change? It was argued that the question of agency has been inadequately dealt with in animal ethics due to the dominance of liberal scholars in the field. The first half of the chapter thus addressed the mainstream, liberal approach to agency, and how this might be problematic for animal protection. According to liberal animal ethics, social change in favour of nonhumans is expected to come about through individualistic moral transformation; in other words, by convincing everyone of the rationale for animal protection. (Since

arguably the principal way for such ‘enlightened’ individuals to then affect social change is through their ‘purchasing power’, individualism is thus, in practice, closely affiliated with a consumerist strategy.) This individualism is promoted by liberal animal ethics far and above other strategies such as state regulation (particularly given liberalism’s emphasis on moral pluralism, which renders problematic the idea of regulation in favour of animal rights). Like the green movement, liberal animal ethics also emphasises the universalistic nature of its appeal; rather than targeting one particular group, liberal animal ethics presumes that, with enough education and publicity, *all* individuals may be won over eventually. Since the contemporary animal protection movement has modelled itself on the animal ethics literature, the movement shares this individualistic approach to agency, exemplified by its ubiquitous clarion call to ‘go vegan/vegetarian’.

As a form of idealism, the ‘go vegan’ strategy is clearly based on the belief that social change will come about by changing people’s ideas. According to a Marxist, materialist perspective, however, ideas are a reflection of material reality; it is therefore futile to try to change people without also changing the socio-economic and cultural circumstances in which they find themselves. Moreover, by ignoring these material circumstances – which include, for many individuals, a lack of access to affordable vegan-friendly products, and government subsidies in favour of meat production – the liberal ‘go vegan’ strategy arguably excludes, even demonises, many individuals who lack the purchasing power to participate. As a result, despite professing universalism, the approach appears to conform to the traditional liberal emphasis on *the middle class* as the preferred agent of change. By addressing animal ethics as primarily a question of individual morality, the liberal approach also depoliticises animal ethics, relegating the issue to the ‘private’ sphere, to be dealt with amongst individuals. This is problematic for animal protection given the association of the private sphere with the liberal emphasis on moral pluralism and liberty, which makes it difficult to interfere with individuals’ food choices (and other personal consumption habits) and for the state to impose a version of the good (in which nonhumans are not exploited) onto its citizens. Furthermore, the overwhelming focus on the individual in relation to animal ethics ignores not only the other humans who are implicated in the process of turning nonhumans into commodities, but also the nonhuman individuals themselves.

Having established the problems with the liberal approach to agency, in the second half of the chapter I then examined whether there might be any benefit in addressing the issue from a socialist perspective. Firstly, I acknowledged that different types of socialism may approach the issue very differently; in fact, there were several similarities between the ethical socialist approach and the contemporary liberal approach, in particular the focus on lifestyle choices (such as vegetarianism, wearing fur, etc.), and on the consumer (of animal products) rather than the producer (who, Salt argued, was not to blame for simply providing what was demanded of her). On the other hand, Salt and the HL deliberately tried to address concerns that their approach was 'elitist' by arguing for reduced, rather than displaced, consumption, and by highlighting the links between animal protection in practice (particularly vegetarianism), frugality, and anti-capitalism. Like Salt and the HL, Henry Spira did not regard the producers of animal products as blame-worthy or morally corrupt; as a result, however, Spira took a different approach to that of the ethical socialists and the contemporary liberal approach, by focussing on the *producer* as the primary agent of change, rather than the consumer. Nevertheless, Spira shared with the liberal approach an aversion to legislation (arguably because he realised that, in a liberal society, laws could never be changed to support such a radical, partisan attitude as that of the animal rights position given liberalism's emphasis on state neutrality in the face of competing versions of 'the good'). Yet, both Spira's approach and that of the nineteenth century ethical socialists differed fundamentally from the contemporary liberal approach to agency in that both recognised and elaborated the socialist argument of a shared oppression between the working class and nonhuman animals, primarily through the exploitation of human workers in animal industries.

Though Spira and the HL's treatment of this issue did not extend into a discussion of agency more broadly<sup>110</sup>, the idea of a shared oppression between the working class and nonhumans constitutes one of the main reasons for considering the working class as the most appropriate agent for change in favour of nonhumans. In chapter five, it was suggested that, similar to the problem faced by environmentalists (see Dobson, 2007), it is not in everyone's interest to bring about an 'animal-friendly' society; numerous pro-animal scholars (for example Benton, 1993; Nibert, 2002;

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<sup>110</sup> Hence the need for a *fused* socialist approach that brings in a Marxist analysis in order to fully address this issue.

Torres, 2007) have, in fact, argued that one of the main obstacles to animal liberation in the West is the power of those with vested interests in animal exploitation, such as agribusiness and ‘big pharma’. This chapter therefore examined the argument that it is in the best interest of the working class to help *end* animal exploitation, not only because it is usually the working class who have to work in dangerous and exploitative conditions in the slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants (as highlighted by Salt, the HL, Spira, and several contemporary scholars), but also because, arguably, the current (Carnist) food system affects the vulnerable disproportionately; for example, in the West, poor and minority communities often lack access to healthy foods (previously discussed), leading to greater rates of obesity (and other ‘lifestyle diseases’) among these sections of the population (Roberto and Gorski, 2015). Furthermore, this shared oppression extends beyond the boundaries of the so-called ‘developed’ world; the West’s exploitation of nonhumans (particularly for meat consumption) has repercussions for the ‘external proletariat’ of the ‘developing’ world through violations of their land rights (where small, subsistence farmers and indigenous peoples are forced off their land by agribusiness in order to produce animal feed (predominantly for consumption in the West)), environmental and health problems (e.g. pollution caused by livestock, the production of genetically modified crops as animal feed), and so on. Though the inclusion of the ‘Third World lumpenproletariat’ in the argument might be said to stretch the definition of the working class beyond that which Marx himself would have accepted, in fact it fits in with the contemporary Marxist recognition that the boundaries of the working class are no longer clear; nor, indeed, has the traditional proletariat turned out to be the revolutionary force Marx anticipated.

Besides the idea of a shared oppression between the working class and nonhumans, one of the other main arguments related to agency and class is the proposition that nonhuman animals labour (and thus, as workers, ought to be conceptualised as part of the proletariat). In the last section of the chapter, I examined the benefits and problems with this argument, concluding that, although not *all* nonhumans labour, and although their exploitation is doubly compounded (in that they give their lives, not only their labour, in the production process), conceptualising them as workers might be a step forward towards granting them not only basic rights, but also special, positive rights in recognition of their service (and intrinsic importance) to society. On the other hand, this conceptualisation faces the more ostensibly pressing

problem that: “In classical Marxist terms, workers as an historical subject form a true “class for itself” only when they engage in struggle against the imposition of work” (Kowalczyk, 2014, p. 156). In other words, for nonhumans to be classed as part of the proletariat (under the traditional Marxist definition), they must be seen to resist their exploitation. Rejecting the idea that resistance requires intent and rationality, Kowalczyk argues that nonhuman animals display ‘embodied’ resistance, though only individually. Since they lack the ability to resist collectively, nonhuman animals still require human agents/agency to act on their behalf. Kowalczyk thus proposes a form of “Trans-species Corporate Agency” (ibid, p.158) whereby their interests are represented by a range of other actors, including those in the labour movement, but also the new social movements and animal liberation movement. Arguably this approach – recognising a diversity of potential agents in various oppressed groups – would fit in well with the inclusive approach of Salt and the HL, since, although they recognised and promoted the connections between the labour movement and animal advocacy, they clearly regarded the animal question as more than just a working class issue. However, I have to wonder how likely these links are in reality, without relying on the foregoing argument that set out why the labour movement should involve itself in such an alliance (because it is in the interest of the working class to end animal exploitation). Moreover, if we accept the premise that nonhumans can resist individually (which appears hardly contentious), does it really matter whether or not they can resist collectively? Surely this would only be an issue if we sought to define them as a class of their own? Yet the purpose of the analysis has been, rather, to assess whether they can be reasonably classified as *part* of the working class; if this premise is credited, then it would seem that the working class should be the best representative of nonhuman animals’ interests.

While the question of whether nonhumans are part of the proletariat remains contentious, there appears to be much to justify the more general idea of a shared oppression between the working class and nonhumans. In other words, the working class should care about nonhumans, because they are exploited in similar ways by capitalism, both in the West and in developing countries. But, why does it matter whether they care or not? One of the most pertinent reasons is that, as Glasser observes, ‘if slaughterhouses had no *workers*, we’d all be vegetarian’. A comparable and timely question raised by socialist animal activists is whether collective ownership of the slaughterhouses is necessary in order to shut them down (Hochschartner, 2014). The

answers to these questions will have tangible consequences for the animal protection movement – whether through attempts to involve workers as allies in the cause, or a realisation of the importance of controlling the means of production – yet, it is only with a (fused) socialist approach to animal ethics – employing a more traditional class-based analysis, combined with the values of ethical socialism, particularly kinship and solidarity – that these questions are given the full attention they deserve; otherwise, issues such as agency and strategy will continue to be neglected by mainstream liberal animal ethics.

## Conclusion

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This thesis examined the relationship between socialism and animal ethics. The motivation for this enquiry was that liberal animal ethics has had little practical success in changing the situation for nonhuman animals in Western society and that an alternative approach is therefore needed. In this respect, I sought to determine whether or not socialism provides a valid and convincing alternative to liberal animal ethics.

In order to make such an assessment, I firstly had to set out the liberal approach to animal ethics and the areas in which it proves most problematic. These are, I argued: moral rights, neglect of the economic context of animal exploitation, and inadequate engagement with the issues of agency and strategy. Given that liberalism's identified shortcomings are traditionally regarded as central themes within socialist, particularly Marxist, theory, I proposed that a socialist animal ethic might not only be able to fill in the gaps left by liberalism, but also, in fact, match liberalism's accomplishments, thereby constituting a complete and compelling substitute. A useful and pertinent starting point for examining whether or not socialism could provide such an alternative was the historical links in practice between socialists and the animal protection movement, beginning in Britain in the late nineteenth century. The fact that a number of prominent socialists perceived a connection between their political beliefs and their concern for nonhuman animals is significant not only because it provides an original contribution to the literature (in which these links have been largely ignored), but also because it demonstrates that there is a distinctive socialist tradition of concern for nonhumans that pre-dates contemporary liberal animal ethics. More specifically, I argued that the so-called 'political turn' in animal ethics is not new, as certain authors (such as Milligan, 2015) have recently suggested, since all of its identified traits were characteristic of the socialist approach to animal protection of the late 1800s. This approach, I expounded, was very much a product of its time, in that the socialism that emerged and prevailed in Britain by the end of the nineteenth century was predominantly *ethical* in nature, whilst also being open and flexible enough to accommodate the wide range of opinions and ideas that were circulating at the time. As a result, the ideological links perceived by pro-animal socialists between their political beliefs and their concern for nonhumans tended to relate to ethical socialist *values*, specifically inclusive justice, kinship, and a new morality based on vegetarianism, anti-

materialism and purity. This is not to say that they only discussed these values and nothing else. They also saw the importance of addressing issues such as capitalism – specifically the role of profit in animal exploitation – and class, and touched on many of these themes in their work. Nevertheless, their writings on these topics were superficial at best, partly as they lacked the theoretical understanding necessary to examine these issues in greater detail (many struggled to get to grips with Marxism, or chose not to even bother attempting to understand it in the first place). Since it is these issues that liberal animal ethics has failed to address, as previously argued (thereby rendering the liberal approach inadequate), any alternative approach *must* be able to deal with these issues effectively. Thus, I concluded that, although ethical socialism provides a useful moral imperative to care about nonhumans, it cannot, on its own, constitute a valid alternative to liberalism (which has already mastered the moralising aspect of animal ethics).

Concluding the historical analysis, chapter four left the late nineteenth century and moved to the 1970s and '80s, to investigate some ostensible practical links between socialists and animal protection in the form of Trotskyist animal rights campaigner Henry Spira, and the British Labour Party. As well as providing background information, chapter four highlighted the relevance of ethical socialism to contemporary animal ethics; given that the ethical socialist approach to animal ethics was largely a product of its time, and that most of its core values are absent from the contemporary discipline (including the few existing socialist-inspired approaches, which tend to employ Marxism as opposed to any other branch of socialism), it might appear a rather idiosyncratic approach. Yet, chapter four demonstrated that many of the core ethical socialist values permeated the work of twentieth century pro-animal socialists (even though they subscribed to a different branch of socialism). This reinforces the conclusion that ethical socialism *does* have something valuable to offer the discipline, even though it does not, on its own, offer a comprehensive alternative to liberal animal ethics.

It was clear, then, that ethical socialism would not, on its own, suffice, as a socialist animal ethic would need to address the gaps left by liberalism – namely, a critique of capitalism and an account of agency, race and class in relation to animal exploitation. However, given its other merits (providing a moral imperative to care about nonhumans, and its originality to the discipline), it would have been unfortunate

to abandon the approach entirely. Instead, I proposed examining the usefulness of a *merged* socialist approach, one that combined ethical socialism with a more Marxist/post-colonial analysis. This seemed particularly apt given Marxism's traditional association with the issues requiring investigation (capitalism, class, agency, etc.). Moreover, despite their outward differences and tensions (concerning issues such as strategy, for example), at the core of Marxism is a similar commitment to the ideals of brotherhood and solidarity; combining the two is not, then, so implausible.

With this in mind, the rest of thesis focussed on applying a Marxist analysis to the issues neglected by liberalism (and ethical socialism), beginning with a critique of capitalism in chapter five. The starting point for this enquiry was that, although it is often suggested (by those addressing the animal question from a socialist persuasion, especially CAS scholars (Nibert, 2002; Torres, 2007; see, for example, Best, 2009)) that capitalism is inimical to animal advocacy, seldom is this claim substantiated. In order to test its veracity, I began by examining the role of capitalism in the history of animal exploitation. Based on consideration of contemporary Marxist approaches, as well as the intimations of the nineteenth century ethical socialists, I decided to examine four key areas in which capitalism appears to negatively impact on nonhuman animals: 1) profit (and the associated vested interests of those involved in animal exploitation), 2) commodification, 3) capitalist production and the 'politics of sight', and 4) alienation and embodiment. Examining these areas allowed me to then address one of the key questions that has been largely neglected by animal ethics – whether the problem is actually *industrialism*, rather than capitalism. I concluded that, although industrialism certainly has a role to play in exacerbating animal exploitation, capitalism should not get away scot-free. This is because capitalism also concerns the issue of ownership, and collective ownership *would*, I argue, have a profound effect on (reducing) animal exploitation, for three main reasons: 1) one could posit that, not being forced to work in animal industries, few people would actively choose to undertake this work, 2) production for need rather than exchange would eliminate mass production (therefore the scale of suffering in factory farms), mass marketing of animal products, and commodity fetishism (making the production process more transparent, and therefore linking back to point one), and 3) production for need would go some way to addressing the issue of profit, which, I concluded, has arguably the most significant impact on animal exploitation of all the areas previously examined. Since liberalism and ethical

socialism are both ill equipped to engage with such an economic analysis of capitalism, this strongly suggests that Marxism has an important role to play in a fused socialist approach to animal ethics.

The final themes that I discussed in chapter six were class, (political) agency, and strategy. Despite their huge significance for the movement – how we go about achieving lasting change on behalf of nonhumans – these issues have been largely overlooked by the discipline. Yet, these questions are familiar territory to Marxism; thus I postulated that this might be one of the other areas that a fused socialist approach would be perfectly suited to addressing. I began by examining the problems with the implicit liberal, and explicit ethical socialist, strategy for change, which focuses predominantly on personal moral transformation (and convincing others through moral persuasion alone). This is problematic because it suggests that animal ethics is a matter of personal prejudice, rather than being worthy of political intervention. It also does not take into account the socio-economic and political barriers (including issues of race) that might prevent individuals changing their personal consumption patterns (to be more aligned with their ethics). Moreover, because it tends to promote a focus on consumerism, it also excludes large sections of the population who cannot actively take part in consumption trends (such as the working class, the “Third World Proletariat”, etc.). Yet, I also pointed out that the ethical socialists of the nineteenth century, unlike liberal animal ethics, were aware of, and tried to address, these issues, primarily by emphasising the similar interests of the working class and nonhuman animals. Guided by this insight, I then investigated whether the working class might, in fact, be the most effective agent for change on behalf of nonhumans. This involved setting out the reasons why the working class should care about nonhumans – essentially, that both are exploited in similar ways by capitalism, and that animal exploitation impacts negatively on the working class (more than any other social class); not only in terms of the exploitation of human workers in animal industries, but also in terms of suffering the brunt of pollution caused by animal industries and ill-health caused by a diet primarily focussed on animal products, which has been targeted (by government policies, food corporations, etc.) especially at the working class. Furthermore, in developing countries, poor people are forced off their land by large corporations to make way for cattle ranching, soy production (for animal feed), and so on.

Having investigated the reasons why there might be a solidarity of interest between the working class and nonhumans, in the final section of chapter six, I then turned the reader's attention to the related argument (put forward by Jason Hribal (2003, 2007, 2010, 2012) in particular) over whether or not nonhumans should actually be seen *as part of* the working class. Despite the obvious problems with this argument – namely, that not all nonhumans labour, that their exploitation is significantly different from human workers, and that they do not appear able to *collectively* resist – I concluded that this proposition certainly warrants further research, given that it would be a valuable stepping stone towards granting nonhumans certain positive rights (which would, of course, vastly improve their lives, as well implicitly acknowledging their status as beings worthy of such consideration).

Overall, then, applying a fused socialist approach to the questions of class, agency and strategy allows us to acknowledge that, while moral persuasion still has an important role to play, we need a more political strategy if we are to achieve significant change on behalf of nonhumans. While the ethical socialist preference for living by example will always be a valuable tool in the animal liberation movement, we need to recognise that this alone is not enough to bring about rapid and sustained change, particularly as there are many sections of the population who are excluded by such a strategy. By combining this approach with the Marxist analysis of class and agency, we gain a valuable insight into the ways in which we might move forward effectively as a movement – for example, by making more of an effort to involve animal industry workers as allies in the case, or by acknowledging that the current strategy has led to the movement being branded as white, middle class, and elitist, and making a concerted and transparent attempt to address this. These issues have a significant impact on the way we 'do business' in animal ethics, and yet the current liberal approach is inadequately equipped to deal with them. In contrast, the merged socialist approach I have presented in this thesis is ideally suited to dealing with such questions, whilst, at the same time, retaining the essence of animal ethics: a moral imperative to care about nonhuman animals.

This is not to say that the approach I have outlined here is, by any means, exhaustive or definitive. Obviously further research is needed on a variety of areas, not least the problem of rights; what is the place of rights in such a fused socialist animal ethic? I briefly examined the socialist critique of rights in chapter one (that rights are

meaningless without structural equality, that rights theory does not take into account structurally-induced vulnerability or social relations, and that rights are designed to protect individuals from one another), and several of the issues that relate to *animal* rights more specifically (that there is no one to whom responsibility can be assigned, and that often rights conflict). However, I also embellished the ethical socialist approach to rights in chapter three, which, admittedly, was indecisive on the topic, but did not rule them out altogether. At the other end of the spectrum was Trotskyist Henry Spira, who was resolutely in favour of rights for nonhumans *and* humans. Finally, in the discussion of whether nonhumans may be classed as part of the proletariat (in chapter six) I concluded that the benefit of this approach is that it paves the way for granting special positive rights to nonhumans. We could certainly envisage, then, a place for rights, even in a more Marxist-inspired animal ethic (though this might require some reformulation of rights theory in light of its ostensible shortcomings). Nevertheless, it seems prudent to bear in mind Marxism's concluding judgement on the topic: that, ultimately, in a socialist utopia rights would simply be unnecessary. Perhaps the insight that this merged socialist animal ethic offers, then, is that, while rights might be a useful stepping stone towards granting nonhumans (and humans) basic protections, they should not be regarded as an end in themselves (which, in itself, would have a huge impact on the campaigns and strategies of the movement), for, in a society founded the values of kinship, solidarity and empathy, the idea of having to protect ourselves against the interests of others would seem absurd, a relic of more barbaric times. Such is socialism's vision for the world; a veritable Utopia for humans and nonhumans alike.

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