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RESENHAS

# ZOOPOLIS. ANIMALS IN BIOPOLITICS: REVIEW OF *THE BIOPOLITICAL ANIMAL*, ED BY FELICE CIMATTI AND CARLO SALZANI

## *ZOÓPOLIS. ANIMALES EN LA BIOPOLÍTICA: RESEÑA DE* THE BIOPOLITICAL ANIMAL, *ED. POR FELICE CIMATTI Y CARLO SALZANI*

## *ZOÓPOLIS. ANIMAIS NA BIOPOLÍTICA: RESENHA DE* THE BIOPOLITICAL ANIMAL, *ORG. POR FELICE CIMATTI E CARLO SALZANI*

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**Abstract**
What do animals have to do with biopolitics? *The Biopolitical Animal*, edited by Felice Cimatti and Carlo Salzani, tries to answer this question through the work of thinkers including Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Achille Mbembe. In this review the authors aim to underline the main issues of the book, through all the essays that compose it.

**Keywords**
Biopolitics; Giorgio Agamben; Michel Foucault; governmentality; animality.

**Resumen**
¿Qué tienen que ver los animales con la biopolítica? *The Biopolitical Animal*, editado por Felice Cimatti y Carlo Salzani, intenta responder a esta pregunta a través del trabajo de pensadores como Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben y Achille Mbembe. En esta reseña, los autores buscan subrayar las principales cuestiones del libro, a partir del conjunto de ensayos que lo componen.

**Palavras clave**
Biopolítica; Giorgio Agamben; Michel Foucault; gubernamentalidad; animalidad.

**Resumo**
O que os animais têm a ver com a biopolítica? *The Biopolitical Animal*, organizado por Felice Cimatti e Carlo Salzani, busca responder a essa questão por meio do trabalho de pensadores como Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben e Achille Mbembe. Nesta resenha, os autores procuram destacar os principais eixos problemáticos da obra, a partir do conjunto de ensaios que a compõem.

**Palavras-chave**
Biopolítica; Giorgio Agamben; Michel Foucault; governamentalidade; animalidade.

What do animals have to do with biopolitics? *The Biopolitical Animal*, edited by Felice Cimatti and Carlo Salzani, tries to answer this question through the work of thinkers including Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Achille Mbembe. The book is a tapestry of different essays articulated into three parts but it has a coherent structure in its whole argument.

One of Foucault's definitions of biopolitics is that of a bio-power operating through governmental *dispositifs* working over all living beings. It actually is "the attempt, starting from the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race".[1]

Biopolitics does not simply negate and kill, but shapes lives and pushes to death those who cannot be normalized. This formula does not necessarily imply that the bodies subjected to the mechanisms that manage life are exclusively human.

Cimatti and Salzani explain the book title, *The Biopolitical Animal*, by claiming that

> Animality lies at the very heart of biopolitics, hence the relationships between human and nonhuman animals are fundamental to understanding the mechanisms and the essence of biopolitics itself. [...] But animality is central in a much more fundamental way, namely because it constitutes the 'limit possibility' of life, human and nonhuman, in the grip of this very biopolitical calculation (p. 4).

Given these premises, the editors propose an affirmative, anthropo-decentralised biopolitics that opposes governmental technologies in the direction of an animal liberation.

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In "*Turning Back to Nature: Foucault and the Practice of Animality*" Matthew Calarco affirms that most of Foucault's oeuvre remains anthropocentric and that the philosopher was generally not interested in animals.

Nonetheless, Calarco argues that biopolitics should not be dismissed as it can be employed to study the mechanisms that govern animal life in institutions like factory farms, zoos, and experimental laboratories. It is therefore possible to search a way out of anthropocentrism towards an affirmative biopolitics by reinterpreting Foucault.

> That Foucault's work should be characterised as being 'by and large' anthropocentric but not entirely or dogmatically so, speaks to the fact that his work stands in a complicated relationship to anthropocentrism. For, even as Foucault often turned his back on both the ontological reality and violence carried out against nature and animals, his work also indicates a keen awareness of the ways in which those human beings who do not accede to the subject position of the human (and it would be fair to say that this 'set' of beings constitutes his primary concern) exist in a series of complex and overlapping relations with nonhuman others of various sorts. (p. 24).

[1] Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of Biopolitics*: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 317.

In his renowned seminar *The Courage of Truth*, Foucault himself pointed toward an exit strategy by moving beyond an exclusive focus on human life. "Yet, there is an important exception to this anthropocentric trend found in Foucault's late work on the Cynics." (p. 28) In this text, he examines the life of the Cynics, whose ethical model was nothing less than the life of dogs. For the Cynics, the idea that a man can embrace the scandalously free life of an animal rests on the fact that man is (in such a way that tradition has made problematic) an animal himself. In opposition to all previous tradition, the Cynics "were routinely characterised as dogs" (p. 31) precisely because they looked at the dogs as an example of authentic life.

In Calarco's view, solving the issue of man's animality could indicate a way for a "turning back to nature" (p. 35).

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In "*Community and Animality in the Ancient Cynics*," Vanessa Lem continues Calarco's reflections on Foucault's seminar *The Courage of Truth*. For her, the Cynics explore the divide between the human and the animal, affirming that human language is insufficient to express singularity, which is the irreducibility of life to abstract concepts (p. 43).

Diogenes does not call himself a human being, and "not a citizen, but a creature" (p. 46): a singularity of embodied life. For Foucault, embracing a Cynic lifestyle implies adopting a nomadic life in exile and radical poverty, as well as following nature by adopting the form of life of the dogs.

"The affirmation of nature as the highest source of value and truth, in the Cynics, comes hand in hand with the search for a community that is not based on the immunising separation between nature and culture" (p. 48).

Lemm concludes that the Cynics seek to develop a relationship to nature which is not built on mastery but on exposure to others and vulnerability. This paradoxically ends up revealing a new form of power grounded in autonomy and independence. "Diogenes was highly critical of contesting the separation of nature and culture, *physis* and *nomos* reflected in the (religious and political) customs instituted in the *polis*" (p. 51). "Rather, the Cynics follow the animals in quest for a free use of the body teaching us how to transform our bodies into 'pure means'" (p. 54), concludes Lemm following terminology typical of Agamben and Benjamin.

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In "*Biopolitics of Covid-19 and the Space of Animals: A Planetary Perspective*", Miguel Vatter connects Covid-19's new forms of biopolitical control to spherology and species-egalitarian approaches to medicine.

Spherology is a discourse which envisions space as a milieu which is actively created and transformed by organisms. In Vatter's view, spherology is a helpful tool to examine the intertwining of biology and technology in contemporary biopolitics.

This is especially relevant in light of species-egalitarian medicine, which understands humans as intrinsically enmeshed in a network of horizontal relations with other animals, bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

Vatter adds that our modern, immunitary notions of belonging and home-making derive from European imperialism and colonialism, which are in turn informed by the emptiness and the primacy of the outside generated by post-Copernican cosmology.

In a nod to ancestral *nomoi*, Vatter suggests that a planetary politics for the Anthropocene might take the form of a new planetary *nomos* where organisms and their milieu are caught in a dialectical relation of habitability.

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In "*How to Chirp Like a Cricket: Agamben and the Reversal of Anthropogenesis*" Sergei Prozorov focuses on opportunities to fill the gap between human and animal language in the contemporary "post-truth era".

His reflections are rooted in Agamben's analysis of language as an "anthropological machine" by which the human subject is ontologically constituted by exclusion of the animal voice. While being excluded, this voice is foreclosed within human language. It is for this reason that Agamben designates it the Voice or "the bare voice."[2]

In Agamben's view the human being does not possess "language as such but rather a faculty of language, a potentiality for speech" (p. 79). But where does this power come from? The power of human language arises from the suspension of the animal voice.

"The removal of the animal voice leaves the human being in a purely negative, 'hollowed out' structure that Agamben terms Voice. This capitalised Voice should not be confused with the natural sound of animal voice" (p. 83), in this sense it is a "bare voice", a voice hollowed out of language.

For Agamben, human systems of signification find their genealogy in the original juridical/religious mechanism of the "oath". An exclusive characteristic of human language is that it works like a curse, as what is at stake in an enunciation is not simply its truth but the very life of the subject.

In his interpretation Prozorov states that:

> The anthropogenetic process of subjectivation by oaths and curses is thereby reversed into a plenitude of speech that, however, no longer has anything at stake in it, that does not even think while it speaks, just like the cricket. [...] Rather than return to the origin, we arrive at a place before the origin, before any scission and any articulation between the living and the speaking (p. 86).

Prozorov holds that, just as contemporary society is caught in a permanent state of exception where rights are suspended, so too in language as a medium of communication it has become impossible to take an oath – to pronounce the truth.

> If we are no longer capable of distinguishing between truth and falsity in our speech acts, then who or what are we when we speak? If the trite words we now speak resemble the natural languages of animals, does this mean that we also become animals? (p. 88).

[2] Salzani, Carlo; Castanò, Ermanno. Unattainable Humanity: Notes to Giorgio Agamben's The Human Voice. *(des)troços: revista de pensamento radical*, Belo Horizonte, v. 6, n. 1, p. e56590, jan./jul. 2025.

The condition which some critics have called "post-truth society" enables human language and animal voice to finally overlap. In a context where extinction seems a tangible possibility, Prozorov sees a new path in a return to where humanity "has never been" (p. 84): the origin of language in the voice of our animality.

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The central idea of "*Animality and Inoperativity: Interspecies Form-of-Life*" by Sherryl Vint argues that we are in need of an "affirmative biopolitics", a new metaphysics of subjectivity which is grounded upon premises of mutuality and interdependence. "The figure of the animal lies at the heart of analysis of biopolitical governance" (p. 92).

In Agamben's view becoming human is not an event that was completed once and for all in the past, but rather it is an event that never stops happening, differentiating the human from the animal and producing remnants in "bare life".

From his standpoint Esposito "suggests that we should rethink politics and community from the point of view of what all life shares in common. His affirmative biopolitics is a biopolitics of relation, a politics of the affirmative potentiality of *zoè*, not one concerned with the special province of *bios*" (p. 97). Immunity in Esposito is what prevents relationality, so he suggests that its opposite is "community": the commonality" of an "inappropriable" form-of-life.

Esposito agrees that we should rethink politics and community from the viewpoint of what all living beings share: the affirmative potentiality of zoè. Against the immunitarian dispositif of biopolitics, this potentiality lies in relationality, commonality, and inappropriability.

For Vint, we need to imagine an ecological mutuality as a kind of community that must "necessarily be decolonial as well" (104). "Indigenous ways of thinking of subjectivity and governance have been disrupted and repressed by colonial occupations which forced Indigenous people to live within Western knowledge structures" (p. 101).

In a simultaneously decolonial and communitarian path, we could fine a political model in those cultures Eduardo Viveiros de Castro calls native and ancestral.

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"*Restraining Biopolitics: On Dino Buzzati's Living Animals*" by Timothy Campbell investigates Dino Buzzati's literary attunement to crossings of the biological threshold of modernity, paying close attention to "*The Slaying of the Dragon*" and *The Tartar Steppe*.

In "*The Slaying of the Dragon*", the exactitude and repetition of media representations transform the dragon from a magical creature into an animal that can be slayed. This condition denies her the sanctity of a face and the recognition of her shrieks as expressive of an 'I'. On the other hand, *The Tartar Steppe* outlines how Drogo's life is stolen by the dispositif of the Fort, which appropriates his intimacy with its dazzling "crevices, its golden sunsets, the martial sounds of trumpets and slowing down of time" (p. 126).

Campbell argues that both of these works invite careful restraint in the face of biopolitical power's tightening grip, where both monsters and animals are sacrificially turned into bare life through insidious mediatic instruments.

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In "*Cages and Mirrors: Mr. Palomar and the Albino Gorilla*" Serenella Iovino discusses Italo Calvino's tales, where animals' behaviour is recognised as cultural due to their nature as semiotic creatures.

This is particularly visible in an episode of Mr. Palomar where Calvino describes the zoo life of an albino Gorilla. The Gorilla is kept in a state of boredom and vacuity akin to a semiotic desert, "without a world" (p. 135) a description which recalls Heidegger's association of boredom with an essential trait of human nature (as Agamben recalls in his *The Open*).

Palomar, who is an outsider, partially views the Gorilla as an extraneous creature, while also recognising the animal's condition of solitude as similar to his own. For Iovino, both species have the existential need to live in a world of meaningful signs.

Pointing to the Gorilla's state of dejection as he plays with a tire in his otherwise deserted cage, Iovino asserts that zoos are colonial institutions made to engage exotic "others" (we should remind that also "human zoos" existed) where animals are materially disempowered and turned into bare life.

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Hopping across the boundaries of pest and pet, rabbits resist unequivocal biopolitical categorisation. In "*Bunnies and Biopolitics: Killing, Culling and Caring for Rabbits*", David Redmalm and Erica von Essen examine the multilayered interactions between these animals and municipal hunters, wildlife managers, and rescuers in Sweden.

The authors discuss Donaldson and Kymlicka's designation of rabbits as "denizens," namely, individuals who "live within the state and must obey its laws, but they do not have the full rights associated with citizenship" (p. 158). Donaldson and Kymlicka suggest that we embrace the in-between nature of rabbits' social status and develop non-violent forms of coexistence.

For Redmalm and von Essen, this biopolitical framework provides a valuable yet non-exhaustive contribution to discussions about rabbit protection. They argue that a further possibility lies in loving, alterity-embracing experiences of human-rabbit cohabitation, put forward by organisations such as the House Rabbit Society.

This practice, with its compromises and intimacies, may open up avenues for an affirmative multi-species biopolitics.

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"*Deading Life and the Undying Animal: Necropolitics After the Factory Farm*" by James K. Stanescu reports that during the Covid-19 pandemic millions of animals were "euthanised" even if their bodies could not be sold as meat.

Stanescu concludes that farm animals are always "already dead".

> We have life, but only insofar as it is already death. So, in contradistinction to the figurations of the living dead, the ghosts and zombies and Muselmänner of Derrida and Agamben, we have deading life. If the living dead are beings that should be dead but were somehow alive, then animals in the factory farm are beings that should be alive, but are already dead (p. 176).

For this reason, Foucault's famous formulation of biopolitics as making live and letting die is insufficient to describe the reality of factory farms. In those places, animals can only live their deaths, a paradoxical figure that Stanescu calls the "deading life".

"The concept of deading life explains why so many animals were still slaughtered even if their bodies could not be sold, because they are simply already corpses, and room must be made for the next animals" (p. 177).

This concept is inspired by that of "necropolitics" by Achille Mbembe, which expands Foucault's thoughts on biopolitical sovereignty so to provide a supplementary understanding of how life is governed in post-colonial societies under global capitalism.

> The necropolitical reverses Foucault's famous formulation – now we are in a situation of letting live and making die – but somehow we have not returned to the classical model of sovereignty as Foucault describes it, but what we have is a superimposition of sovereignty onto the biopolitical. The necropolitical is not oppositional to the biopolitical, but a supplementary understanding of how life can be organised in certain situations under 'neoliberal global capitalism.' (p. 179).

Stanescu points out that when power becomes bio-power, resistance becomes the power of life. Simply staying alive becomes a resistance strategy to deading life, the latter of which negates animal subjectivity. Such strategy is advanced by Animal Liberation activists, who free animal individuals from factory farms.

> The alternative to deading life is the undying, the life that always escapes the stratagems and violence of necropolitics. It is only as earthlings together that we get out of the current crises. No spaceships, no arks, but perhaps just a simple social promise. A promise we make to fight for there to be a tomorrow, together (p. 186).

This form of life is a life that always escapes the stratagems and violence of necropolitics, which is the very logic of capitalism. Only this form of life can give us hope for a tomorrow, together with all living beings.

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Dinesh Wadiwel is the author of "*Factory Farms for Fishes: Aquaculture, Biopolitics and Resistance*", where he provides a biopolitical analysis of aquaculture.

For Wadiwel, human relations with fishes are one of the central conflicts occurring at a planetary scale, as the number of slaughtered fish is higher and faster-growing than that of farm animals.

The intensification of aquaculture holds a key role within the history of capitalism and biopolitics, as it requires the development of mass techniques to contain, manage and slaughter sea animals.

Wadiwel applies the paradigm of economic studies on chicken to fisheries. According to these studies, the widespread availability of cheap food is an essential element for the development of global capitalism.

Like a concentration camp, factory farming ensures the continuous production of animal commodities by generating a concentrated biopolitical violence through the establishment of a juridical zone of exception. This explains the relation between capitalism and biopolitics.

"The commons of the sea is now not the only zone of exception for the production of fish for food; more prominently today the sea enclosure is now preferred as a means for the concentrated production of bare life" (196).

For these reasons, the fishing industry has turned to aquaculture techniques in closed systems which enable total control over the population. Within these systems, surveillance technologies and artificial intelligence are used to control nutritional, behavioural, and environmental factors to give efficient inputs, reduce human labour, and maximise profits.

Wadiwel claims that biopolitical total control does not negate the possibility of new pathways of resistance, even for fishes in closed systems. This claim stands against the harrowing fact that today, it is not the Panopticon but "the fish factory farm perhaps represents the full realisation of the biopolitical dream of the factory farm itself as an idealised model of domination. This is a dream to establish an environment where inputs to production are perfectly calculated to ensure maximum profitability; the body of the animal is the site for this bare calculation" (p. 201).

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In "*Imagining Liberation beyond Biopolitics: The Biopolitical 'War against Animals' and Strategies for Ending It*" Zipporah Weisberg discusses Wadiwel's work *The War Against Animals*.

Weisberg highlights that, according to Wadiwel, the war against animals is both a violent appropriation of their bodies and their conversion into value, thus bringing together Foucauldian and Marxist perspectives.

The war against animals can be understood as a leading front of global production as well as a biopolitical mechanism which supplies animal flesh to the world through the means of industrialised slaughter.

Weisberg critically examines Wadiwel's suggestion that veganism could work as a form of "counter-power," claiming it is insufficient to interrupt the systematicity of the biopolitical industrial machine.

She also points that Wadiwel does not examine other existing forms of "counter-conduct", such as those of animal sanctuaries and interspecies communities.

Sanctuaries are radical manifestations of resistance that break human sovereignty and disclose new ways of being-with other animals. In Foucault's words, they are "heterotopias," places where people can have an "animal relation with animals" rather than a human-like relationship with them (as Deleuze argued). Indeed, some sanctuaries are explicitly committed to the embracing of radically inclusive paradigms, like those advanced by the LGBTQ+ community.

Moreover, Weisberg deems Wadiwel's proposal for the war against animals to be momentarily suspended in a daily truce to be more symbolic than effective. The author indicates wide-scale-nonviolent civil disobedience as a more promising alternative, dismantling power through actions such as global struggles.

> Wide-scale nonviolent civil disobedience in the form of the occupation of institutions governing the violence could be an effective tactic. Mass sit-ins or 'die-ins' in the offices of the ministries of agriculture could be organised on the same day across the globe. (p. 227).

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In "*Animal Magnetism: (Bio)Political Theologies Between the Creature and the Animal*", Diego Rossello explores the theory of animal magnetism or mesmerism.

In his view, thinking about mesmerism paves the way for a political theology of democracy that emphasises "fluidity, affect and contagion" (p. 244), making it particularly suited to the Anthropocenic age.

Rossello begins by delving into radical approaches to political theology, where increasing attention is directed towards the more-than-human scale. This development finds its departure points in Jacques Derrida's animal and Eric Santner's creature and is further developed by Kari Weil and Jane Bennett. If Weil understands Mesmer as a precursor to ecocritical thought, Bennett writes about the contagiousness of sympathy from a new materialist lens.

Highlighting the connection between theology and the juridical foundations of sovereign power, Rossello agrees with Santner that the theory of animal magnetism was attuned to the historical "shift from monarchy by divine right to popular sovereignty" (p. 242). This claim's veracity, he adds, is independent of the scientific legitimacy of mesmerism.

Posing itself as an alternative to theories of disenchantment and secularisation, Rossello's contribution invites us to consider animal magnetism as life among humans and across the human-animal divide "an alternative, enchanted, yet not hierarchical, form of connecting life among humans and across the human-animal divide" (p. 247).

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"*Creaturely Biopolitics*" by Carlo Salzani departs from Kant's famous metaphor that human beings are made out of "crooked wood" and need civil society to administer right by the law.

For Salzani, Kantian "crooked nature" simply indicates the animal aspects of human life. In Kant's view, we are born as crooked creatures and become truly human only through education.

"The dichotomous opposition of straight/crooked can be read through a Foucauldian lens and fits perfectly into Foucauldian categories" (p. 254).

The opposition between straight and crooked can be called a "biopolitics of rectitude". Following Adriana Cavarero's argument, human civilisation originates in the adoption of an upright posture. This definition of the human as linked to verticality excludes non-human animals and those disqualified humans in virtue their non-conforming traits.

Salzani uses this framework to criticize biopolitics as a coercive force and to seek a way out towards the category of "creaturely biopolitics" (p. 254). Creaturely commonality is articulated through the materiality of embodied life. Against the biopolitics of rectitude, it could enable a biopolitics of vulnerability.

In order to define "creaturely life", Salzani also refers to Eric Santner's work. For Santner, creaturely life is predicated on an excess of meaning which disrupts traditional anthropocentric ideas. In sum, creaturely life cannot be easily domesticated because it names the "singularity": a state in which inappropriable creatures who resist any fixed categorization emerge.

> Distortion, crookedness, ab-normality (and, consequently, animality) are not deviations from an originary, natural, undistorted state (straightness) but rather the product of a contingent perspectival positioning, of a figuring, of a politics that captures and manages life according to apparatuses of verticality. [...] In opposition to this politics, distortion as mark of the creaturely in Benjamin's Kafka deactivates exceptionality by challenging hierarchisation and exclusion – a challenge that is brought (p. 264).

The solution to the enigma of singularity lies in Benjamin's interpretation of Kafka's works. Against Kant's depreciation of crookedness, Kafka's stories joyfully exalt a distorted reality which does not need to be straightened.

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The last chapter, written by Felice Cimatti, is "*A Dog's Life: From the Biopolitical Animal to the Posthuman*".

Cimatti's analysis focuses on a previously overlooked aspect of biopolitics, that is, the fact it is not about an external power that governs bodies. Rather, biopolitics is about the internal control exerted by the subject on their own body, so that every subject is the Panopticon of themselves.

> That is, politics blends with biology and medicine: political life – for example the question of civil rights – is indistinguishable from simple biological life, as in the case of the restrictive measures that have been imposed to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, which severely limit freedom of movement (p. 275).

Biopolitics is a technology of power that works by subjectivation, the construction of free and responsible subjects who accept to be controlled and governed. This results in subjects who masters themselves, mainly through the fundamental dualisms of mind/body and object/subject.

The "biopolitical animal," referenced in the book's title, is an animal whose internal constitution lays in separation.

> We can now paraphrase the somewhat ambiguous expression 'biopolitical animal' as an animal whose internal constitution is based on a radical separation between the 'controller' – the subject, which in turn is nothing but the internalisation of external political power devices – and the 'controlled' (p. 276).

For Cimatti, radical politics ought to deactivate the dichotomies intrinsic to the biopolitical animal, resulting in a unitary living being. The posthuman and the postanimal converge on the ground of an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings,

which permits the flourishing of a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity.

This understanding of the posthuman is close to what Gilles Deleuze defined as an "absolute immanence" or the "becoming-animal", "that is, the condition of animality" (p. 280)

"The phantasm of human exceptionalism cannot be so easily vanquished because its error is also its 'truth'. The human that declares the fallacy of its own exceptionality can do so only from the position of its phantasmatic centeredness" (p. 281).

In a circular return to the first topics discussed in the book, Cimatti concludes by noting that what is at stake in Foucault's last seminars (The Courage of Truth) is the Cynical life: a human life resembling a dog's life, in which ethics and ethology collapse into one another in a purely Deleuzian style.

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In his "*Afterword: Locating Race and Animality amidst the Politics of Interspecies Life*", Neel Ahuja praises *The Biopolitical Animal*'s potential in addressing the transborder crises of capitalist violence, climate change, and pandemics, building political proposals that ward off "the ongoing specter of fascism haunting the highly divergent poles of today's interspecies politics" (p. 298).

This notwithstanding, he invites us to be mindful of the limits to late Foucauldian viewpoints. In particular, he points to the contradictory role of animalisation in racial hierarchy, such as in cases where "animals are elevated by structures of power above people of colour" (p. 297). He is also mindful of how the term post-human may uncritically reproduce colonial theories of time and embodiment.

Ahuja encourages scholars to exercise caution in abruptly transcending humanist methods. Reversing the claim made by Foucault, Agamben, and Wolfe that species difference is at the root of modern racism, he asks the following question: What if "it is race that generates our notion of species?" (p. 297).

Whether from a humanist or post-humanist stance, the reader is invited to consider the animal question as central to biopolitics.