

Il tema: Antropocene e post-antropocene

Politics in the Anthropocene: Non-human Citizenship and the Grand Domestication

La politica nell'Antropocene. Cittadinanza non umana e la grande domesticazione

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Abstract. The article has two aims. First, it provides a view of why the standard liberal-democratic political theory is unfit for the Anthropocene. Then, it defends two claims: that the fittest politics for the Anthropocene is to be fully non-anthropocentric and that the best model of a non-anthropocentric political theory is to be grounded in the notion of 'ecological citizenship', which can be easily extended to non-human living beings and even to non-living objects, such as ecosystems. The latter claim is defended by endorsing and enlarging Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka's views of animal citizenship rights and by putting forward a view of the Anthropocene as an age of massive domestication of non-human nature.

Keywords: anthropocene, politics, anthropocentrism, citizenship, domestication, Sue Donaldson, Will Kymlicka.

Riassunto. L'articolo ha due scopi. In primo luogo, spiegare perché la politica liberal-democratica tradizionale è inadatta alle condizioni dell'Antropocene. Quindi, difendere due tesi: la teoria politica più adatta all'Antropocene dev'essere totalmente non antropocentrica e il miglior modello di teoria politica non antropocentrica si fonda sulla nozione di 'cittadinanza ecologica', che si può facilmente estendere agli esseri viventi non umani e persino a oggetti non viventi, come ad esempio gli ecosistemi. Quest'ultima tesi viene difesa riprendendo ed estendendo la teoria di Sue Donaldson e Will Kymlicka sui diritti di cittadinanza degli animali e descrivendo l'Antropocene come età della domesticazione massiccia della natura non umana.

Parole chiave: Antropocene, politica, antropocentrismo, cittadinanza, domesticazione, Sue Donaldson, Will Kymlicka.

1. Introduction. The Anthropocene as a Political Issue

According to many, the Anthropocene is a state shift of the Earth system, which may amount to a novel geological age and a rupture in the functioning of the Earth system.¹ From the geological point of view, the Anthropocene is supposed to be a novel geological age, i.e., a time in which relevant changes occur at the stratigraphic level. However, geologists are still discussing (at least) two issues: first, whether at the stratigraphic level relevant changes are really occurring, and whether they are substantial enough to label a new geological age; second, when and where these changes happened.²

However, a non-geological definition of the Anthropocene can be framed – and it has been framed.³ According to this definition, the Anthropocene is a new epoch in which the size of human impacts on non-human nature is unprecedented, and the state-shift of our world mentioned in many discourses about the Anthropocene amounts to this novel and increased impact of humans on non-human nature.⁴ So understood, the Anthropocene is the epoch in which the usual equilibrium between nature and society, or nature and culture, changes, in at least two ways. First, it is no longer the case that the working of human society can happen on the background of an unchanging, inert, and inexhaustible nature. Second, it is no longer the case that the standard conceptual distinctions between non-human nature and society or culture hold. Indeed, most of the natural resources on which human societies have been based in the last two centuries are doomed to deplete, the environmental impacts of the fossil fuels-based economy are increasingly dangerous for human beings, and the pervasive impacts of humans on non-human nature made the latter more a human creation than an independent force. This new cultural and social condition is unprecedented, and this very fact licenses calling it a new social age.⁵

¹ Davies, *The Birth of the Anthropocene*; Ellis, *Anthropocene*; Lewis and Maslin, *The Human Planet*.

² Zalasiewicz et al., *The Anthropocene as a Geological Time Unit*.

³ Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, chap. 1; Horn and Bergthaller, *The Anthropocene*; Merchant, *The Anthropocene and the Humanities*.

⁴ Rockström et al., “Planetary Boundaries.”

⁵ I’ll come back to this topic, i.e., a socio-political definition of the Anthropocene, in §2 below. See also the references in that section. I thank an anonymous referee of this journal for having

Of course, there is no logical connection between the social definition of the Anthropocene and the geological understanding of it. Or, at least, there is no biconditional implication. While, if changes at the stratigraphic level are so great to authorize labelling a new geological age, then social changes could be relevant as well; the contrary does not hold. It is possible that the increased human impacts on non-human nature, despite being relevant, are not enough to set a new geological age.⁶ However, for our present purposes, I assume that a social definition of the Anthropocene is plausible, whatever the decision will be about the Anthropocene as a geological time unit.

According to many, the change deriving from the increasing human impacts on Earth is also a matter of politics, for at least two reasons. First, the Anthropocene and its consequences are *anthropogenic*, i.e., they have been caused by human (collective) action.⁷ Indeed, in the Anthropocene, humans act as a planetary geological force (much like the biosphere in the Earth system dynamics), thereby going beyond their biological standard behaviour in pre-Anthropocene conditions. In the Anthropocene, humans become a geological *power*, i.e., a collective agent able to willfully affect the conditions of life on Earth. Politics is the realm where human collective and individual action and power lie, and political theory is the field in which it is to be assessed. Hence, the Anthropocene is a subject of politics and of political theory.

Second, the consequences of the Anthropocene will deeply, and often negatively, impact our associated life and its settled forms. Indeed, the Anthropocene is an unprecedented and deep change in human history and condition.⁸ Thus, the Anthropocene is a political problem and a political theory issue. The Anthropocene is not only a new geological age (if it is, as this is still a contested claim, as said above). It is also a new social and historical epoch, a real ‘epochalypse’.⁹

pushed me to clarify at this stage what a socio-political definition of the Anthropocene would amount to.

⁶ I thank an anonymous referee of this journal for having attracted my attention to the lack of logical connection between the geological and the sociological definitions of the Anthropocene.

⁷ Braje and Erlandson, “Looking Forward, Looking Back.”

⁸ Chakrabarty, “The Human Condition in the Anthropocene”; Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, chap. 1.

⁹ Ellis, *Anthropocene*, 130. On the discussion concerning the Anthropocene as a geological period, Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 6–7; Zalasiewicz et al., *The Anthropocene as a Geological Time Unit*. On the debates concerning the nature of the Anthropocene and the very notion of ‘Anthropocene’, Altvater et al., *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?*; Bonneuil and Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene*; Malm and Homborg, “The Geology of Mankind?” On the distinction between a geological and a social Anthropocene, Haff, “The Technosphere,” 138.

However, the Anthropocene is neither a traditional political subject nor a standard problem of politics. Indeed, Anthropocene politics is a radical departure from the political traditions settled in the Holocene. Of course, the Holocene hosted a panoply of different political forms, and the State-based, post-Westphalian politics standardly considered in political theory belongs only to a small fraction of the Holocene. In what follows, I argue that the political forms, and above all the political theories that have been standard during the last two centuries are unfitting to the new conditions we face in the Anthropocene.¹⁰ (Of course, this is a further ungrounded generalization. In the last two centuries, different styles of political theories flourished. For present purposes, I am assuming that these differences can be neglected.) I call the standard form of politics and political theory which we need to discard the ‘Holocene politics’, to emphasize that the new politics, the Anthropocene politics, is motivated by the epoch change in front of us. (I say more on the Holocene politics in the next sections.)¹¹

In this article, I defend two claims. First, a political theory for the Anthropocene should be fully non-anthropocentric, i.e., it should give full moral standing to non-human beings.¹² Second, a non-anthropocentric politics for the Anthropocene should focus on the relations between humans and non-humans and this could be done by applying the notion of ‘citizenship’ to non-human creatures and ecosystems and by extending Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka’s view of animal rights to other living beings and ecosystems, thereby framing a theory of ‘ecological citizenship’.¹³ The politics of the Anthropocene should be a politics for non-human citizens. Contrary to what many claim, the Anthropocene should mark the end of anthropocentrism. The Anthropocene has been the age of Man (chauvinism intended!), but it should become the age of the recognition of non-humans, the age of the demotion of human beings from centre stage.¹⁴ I defend these claims by giving a view of the Anthropocene as the age when the relations between humans and non-human nature took the shape of a Grand Domestication. The latter has obvious ethical and political consequences, that a politics for the Anthropocene should duly consider.

¹⁰ I focus mainly on political theory. On environmental politics, Dobson, *Environmental Politics*.

¹¹ Thanks to an anonymous referee for this journal for having pushed me to clarify my notion of ‘Holocene politics’.

¹² On anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism in environmental ethics, Attfield, “Beyond Anthropocentrism”; Thompson, “Anthropocentrism. Humanity as Peril and Promise.”

¹³ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*.

¹⁴ On the unavoidability of anthropocentrism in the Anthropocene, Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, chap. 2. On Anthropocene and chauvinism, Haff, “Purpose in the Anthropocen,” 55; Haff, “The Technosphere.”

The paper develops as follows. In §2, I show why the traditional liberal-democratic politics that has been standard in the last two centuries (from now on, ‘Holocene politics’) is unfit for the Anthropocene and why a politics for the Anthropocene should be fully non-anthropocentric. This argument for a fully non-anthropocentric Anthropocene politics rests on Dipesh Chakrabarty’s well-known four theses on history after anthropogenic climate change.¹⁵ Drawing on Chakrabarty’s theses, I put forward four theses about how politics should look in the Anthropocene. In §3, I defend the view that a non-anthropocentric politics fitting the Anthropocene condition should be based on the idea of non-human, or ecological, citizenship. This section articulates the idea of the Anthropocene as the age of the Grand Domestication of non-human nature and of the ethical and political consequences of it. §4 concludes.

2. Politics in the Anthropocene

In this section, I defend two claims. First, Holocene politics is unfit for the Anthropocene. Second, the Anthropocene demands a fully non-anthropocentric politics. In the next section, I will claim that the best non-anthropocentric politics for the Anthropocene should be based on the notion of citizenship – a non-human, or ecological, citizenship.

2.1. *Holocene politics is unfit for the Anthropocene*

Holocene politics rested on the following assumptions:

1. *Nature is outside politics*: The state of the Earth system is a mere background condition of politics, whose stability and endurance are not at risk and are not impacted by human action. Natural laws are not political laws, nor can they be changed by political acts of will. Human deeds and human societies occupy centre stage, and natural environments, the background. Hence, non-human nature lies outside of political theory, nor is it a political problem¹⁶
2. *Agency*: Political communities are constituted by political agents, i.e., by human beings who initiate and conduct political action and whose interests are what matters politically. These agents are mutually accountable

¹⁵ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, chap. 1.

¹⁶ On this assumption, its credentials and its functions, Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*; Latour, *Politics of Nature*.

3. *Responsibility*: Individuals can be regarded as uniquely (causally and morally) responsible for certain outcomes and accountable for them
4. *Politics is artificial or cultural*: Because of 1.-3., politics lies in the realm of culture, human artifice, and social construction, and it is insulated from the mechanics of nature, and political theory is a social or human science, to be distinguished from the natural sciences that provide the best descriptions available of non-human and (a part of) human nature.

The Anthropocene challenges the above assumptions. In the Anthropocene, the natural conditions of politics are unsettled, and the equilibrium that led to the current stability of world politics is doomed. The Anthropocene had an impact on current liberal-democratic politics and on some of its deficits. In addition, liberal-democratic politics itself can be a cause of the rupture of the natural equilibrium of the Holocene. As Dipesh Chakrabarty famously intimated, “the mansion of modern freedoms stands on an ever-expanding foundation of fossil-fuel use.”¹⁷ In the Anthropocene, nature is no longer outside politics.

In the Anthropocene, agency chains become dispersed, indirect, and globally diffused: the unintended consequences of collective human actions on the natural environment and their feedback make the conditions of politics and associated life more troubled and unstable than ever. In addition, the impact of political action on nature is unprecedented, and human political agents and natural non-agents are increasingly entangled. We are no longer inhabitants of the planet but Earth-changers, or world-makers.¹⁸ In the Anthropocene, “the fate of nature has come to depend on the ‘goodwill’ of humans”, and “the Earth system itself has acquired a moral force”: the dormant forces of the Earth system have been activated by an unprecedented human power.¹⁹ If humans, their behaviour, and human societies are the main subject matter of politics, now politics becomes the history and a study of how humans changed their world. In the Anthropocene, politics is no longer a purely human or social science. It is also natural history, as it were, or a view of the place of human beings in the natural world.

Moreover, in the Anthropocene, new forms of agency emerge. Collective agents – human collectives, such as multinational corporations, global political and economic institutions, and non-human entities, such as eco-

¹⁷ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 32. On the responsibility of standard politics and political theory and culture for the ecological crisis, Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*; White Jr, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” On the history of fossil fuel-based economy in the Anthropocene, and its impact on democratic politics and its deficits, Malm, *Fossil Capital*; Sachs, *Common Wealth*; Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*.

¹⁸ Ellis, *Anthropocene*, chap. 1; Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 62; Lynas, *The God Species*.

¹⁹ Hamilton, *Earthmasters*, 2; Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 85; Latour, *Facing Gaia*.

systems, the biosphere, and non-human species – are now centre stage. Indeed, what earlier appeared as mere behaviour (for instance, the behaviour of non-human animals, plants, artificial intelligences, or even of the ‘technosphere’) now increasingly qualifies as full-fledged acting.²⁰ Finally, merely possible agents – for instance, future people – acquire relevance since our actions can have dangerous and pervasive impacts on them.²¹ In the Anthropocene, the Earth system at large becomes a political actor, nature itself acts as a political agent.²²

In the Anthropocene, standard collective action problems, such as the tragedy of the commons and other issues concerning public goods or voting, acquire a planetary and an intergenerational extension. On the one hand, no one can fix the global environmental problems of the Anthropocene by acting alone, nor can they do it by activist influence on others; on the other hand, it is the cumulative impact of billions of single actions (such as consuming, driving, and so on) that creates the most dangerous environmental harms. This holds for the individual actions of people but also for the individual actions of companies, groups, states, and generations: most of the individuals cannot prevent the most dangerous environmental effects of the cumulated pattern of conduct of which some of their actions themselves are a constituent part.²³

Moreover, while anthropogenic processes cause environmental damages, no one is individually responsible for them. The causal chains are manifold, multiscale, indirect, and loose. They are often a matter of chances, tipping points, and background conditions. The Anthropocene is a matter of species’ action, not of individual or limited group action. Some of the most dangerous events in our future are the unintended consequences of various and seemingly innocuous events in the distant past. Individual action and responsibility happen, and are lost, within a sea of agency, where non-individual, non-human, and human entities join a complex network of causes and cumulative, non-linear effects. This makes the standard conception of political responsibility no longer viable in the Anthropocene.²⁴

²⁰ On animal and plant agency and their political impact, see Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*; Hall, *Plants as Persons*; Marder, *Plant-Thinking*. On collective and corporate agency, List and Pettit, *Group Agency*. On the agency of the technosphere and non-human agency in the Anthropocene, Haff, “Purpose in the Anthropocene;” Haff, “The Technosphere.”

²¹ De-Shalit, *Why Posterity Matters*; González-Ricoy and Gosseries, *Institutions For Future Generations*; Mulgan, *Future People*; Page, *Climate Change, Justice And Future Generations*; Schefler, *Why Worry About Future Generations?*

²² Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 3; Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*.

²³ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 37; Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*; Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 129; Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time*; Malm, *Fossil Capital*.

²⁴ Pellegrino, “Robust Individual Responsibility”; Jamieson, “Climate Change, Responsibility, and Justice”; Malm, *The Progress of This Storm*; Pattberg and Zelli, *Environmental Politics*

Given the above, in the Anthropocene the traditional dichotomies between political theory (and social and human sciences) and natural sciences blur. In the Anthropocene, human beings become planetary geological agents, while keeping their political agency – indeed, political agency becomes planetary agency. In the Anthropocene, an increasingly large part of nature is human-made, as politics has been used to be (regarded) in modernity. Moreover, human history and politics impacted and will be impacted by planetary processes.²⁵ Hence, in the Anthropocene the long geological history mixes up with the short human political history, the human timescales will interact with non-human timescales in the same historical flux, and different, or even divergent, points of view are necessary to deal with planetary events.²⁶ In the Anthropocene, we are part of the background of our history, and the background is no longer inert or unchangeable. Our action goes along with the impersonal operation of natural forces, and the effects of both are mixed. Moreover, the speed of nature's changes is increased, and when certain tipping points are overcome, irreversible changes follow.²⁷ Therefore, politics and political theory need to deal with the political consequences and relevance of issues (such as climate change, the impacts of human technology on non-human nature, and so on) traditionally considered the exclusive field of the natural sciences. In the Anthropocene, world politics becomes the politics of the world, understood as the politics of the planet we live in. In the Anthropocene, politics needs to access the level of Earth System thinking.

In the Anthropocene, global and domestic liberal democratic institutions are very often gridlocked. Due to the global nature of current environmental problems, cooperation among states and new global institutions is absolutely necessary. But the working of the existing global institutions, as well as the creation of new ones, is increasingly difficult as short-term interests diverge, and long-term interests are unable to affect daily politics. Domestically, many relevant nation states are gridlocked by veto players determined by constitutional arrangements and political practices that originated in the last two centuries, in the post-Westphalian part of the Holocene, and are now unfit for the levels of flexibility and

and Governance; Powers, "Individual Moral Responsibility"; Sinnott-Armstrong, "It's Not My Fault."

²⁵ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 27.

²⁶ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 6–7, 10–11, 15, 26; Kelly, *Politics and the Anthropocene*, 5; Malm, *Fossil Capital*, 17; McNeill and Engelke, *The Great Acceleration*; Steffen et al., "The Trajectory of the Anthropocene."

²⁷ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 29. On tipping points, Barnosky et al., "Approaching a State Shift"; Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*; Lenton et al., "Tipping Elements"; Lenton and Williams, "On the Origin of Planetary-Scale Tipping Points"; Rockström et al., "Planetary Boundaries."

international cooperation required in the Anthropocene. There is a striking contradiction between a global economy and divided political societies across the world. The Anthropocene makes contradictory requests to liberal democracies. On the one hand, it needs more cooperation and flexibility in governance, which may be obtained with less democratic and more centralized political procedures. On the other hand, the Anthropocene makes new political subjectivities (even non-human ones) emerge, thereby requiring new and larger procedures of democratic representation and interests' composition.²⁸

In virtue of the above, politics and political theory can no longer be the same in the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene requires us at least to update, but possibly to change radically, our views of the nature of politics, as well as of the kind of values and norms that politics deals with, and of the *demos* and the forms of government. As Clive Hamilton remarks, "the Anthropocene rupture will require original political thinking."²⁹ Standard forms of politics and political theory, as they have been developed and established in the last two centuries of human history, are unfit for the Anthropocene. Holocene politics is short-termist, too focused on nation-States and on human societies, and blind to the interaction of human collective behaviour and non-human nature's working. Moreover, it totally neglects the value and the demands of non-human subjects. This made it unfit for the new age.

2.2. Four Theses About Anthropocene Politics

Some have proposed substantial changes in Holocene politics to deal with the new features of the Anthropocene. For instance, according to some authors, like global climate change, the Anthropocene is a consequence of globalization, and it needs new global political institutions and new global policies, the only things able to ensure coordinated global action. Then, a politics for the Anthropocene should rely on the lessons learned in dealing politically with climate change, lessons concerning the intra- and intergenerational tragedy of the commons related to mitigation, and adaptation and the need for long-sighted global institutions able to promote international agreements and their enforcement.³⁰ The model for Anthropocene politics should be the Montreal Protocol and the

²⁸ In the previous paragraphs, I borrowed from Dryzek, *The Politics of the Anthropocene*; Hale, Held, and Young, *Gridlock*; Jamieson and Di Paola, "Political Theory for the Anthropocene"; Sachs, *Common Wealth*; Wainwright and Mann, *Climate Leviathan*.

²⁹ Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 15.

³⁰ Gupta, *The History of Global Climate Governance*; Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time*.

Paris Agreement: international governance mechanisms and institutions should address human alterations of the Earth system. The solution to the Anthropocene problems lies in global government, global institutions, and global regulation.³¹

This general view has been spelled out in many (sometimes contrasting) ways. Some authors claim that a politics for the Anthropocene should provide political and market incentives for better distribution of environmental goods and sustainable development. The primary means for this are global political cooperation, more flexible and long-sighted political institutions, and/or the development of mass movements promoting environmental protection goals and the global redistribution of environmental goods. Some claim that putting environmental rights into national constitutions or a global constitutional arrangement is the best way to implement a politics for the Anthropocene. Protection goals are necessary to preserve 'ecosystem services' for humans.³²

Others saw the Anthropocene (labelled as the Capitalocene) as the most recent and the worst outcome of commercial capitalism, colonialism, and racism, emerging in the commercial societies of the seventeenth century with the European colonization of the Americas. The exploitation of nature and the spoiling or waste of the Earth, which are the main features of modernity, are consequences of the exploitation of workers and the deep inequalities of modern capitalism. The rapacious attitude to nature is a counterpart and a result of patriarchal chauvinism. Responsible for our current ecological crisis is not the species, but male, Western, modern capitalists. Nature has been considered separate from Society, inert and subaltern, as a mere resource without limits and available at no price (this is the idea of 'cheap Nature'), and through the dominion of Nature (and the underlying Cartesian ontological dualism), the dominion of subaltern classes and women, with its accompanying inequalities and injustices, has been established. Capitalism originated in the web of life: nature affected capitalism, and capitalism affected nature. Humans are inextricably entan-

³¹ A taxonomy of pre-Anthropocene environmental political theories is in Dryzek, *Politics of the Earth*.

³² Dryzek, *The Politics of the Anthropocene*. On sustainable development and global political cooperation as a model of Anthropocene politics, Sachs, *Common Wealth*. On the role of limits, Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 132. On environmental justice and environmental citizenship, Di Chiro, "Environmental Justice and the Anthropocene Meme"; Dobson, *Citizenship and the Environment*; Holifield, Chakraborty, and Walker, *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Justice*; Hayward, "Ecological Citizenship"; Sandler and Pezzullo, *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism*; Schlosberg, *Defining Environmental Justice*; Walker, *Environmental Justice*, Amirante and Bagni, *Environmental Constitutionalism in the Anthropocene*; Barry, "Towards a Green Republicanism"; Collins, *The Ecological Constitution*; Kotz, *Global Environmental Constitutionalism*; May, *Global Environmental Constitutionalism*.

gled with nature, and nature is necessarily blended with humans. A politics of the Anthropocene should be emancipatory politics, where social justice and freedom will be achieved both for humans and non-human nature, with awareness of their necessary blended metabolism. Environmental justice goes hand in hand with social justice and the discarding of the current capitalistic production modes.³³

The views above rest on the assumption that the Anthropocene politics should be a kind of green or emancipatory democracy. Some doubted that democratic regimes and procedures can be fit to the Anthropocene. According to some authors, the Anthropocene needs coordinated action, far-reaching and long-sighted planning, some sacrifices of the wealthy and present people to the benefit of poor or disadvantaged present and future people, efficient coordination to deal with the tragedy of the commons at various levels, and across generations, dealing with vast bodies of complex information. This goes against many features of democratic politics as we know – its short-termism, its dependence on voluble and ignorant constituencies, its liability to irrational biases, and its difficulty in managing complex information. Hence, we can successfully cope with the Anthropocene only by establishing an authoritarian regime of experts and enlightened élites, able to push people to coordinated action towards certain specific goals. In the Anthropocene, any government, even a harshly authoritarian one, is better than anarchy – where the Anthropocene's anarchy is not merely civil war, but civil war derived from the shortage of natural resources and worsening of the world's natural conditions.³⁴

The views above share anthropocentric grounds. Even when they advocate respect and protection for non-humans, this is mostly grounded in the instrumental value of the latter for humans. It is my contention here that these common anthropocentric presuppositions make these views unfit for the Anthropocene. A politics for the Anthropocene needs to be fully non-anthropocentric. This conclusion straightforwardly derives from a correct view of what the Anthropocene is and of its implications. The best view of the Anthropocene as a social phenomenon, and of its impacts on human culture, can be found in Dipesh Chakrabarty's four theses on the impact of the Anthropocene on history as a discipline.³⁵

³³ Benton, *The Greening of Marxism*; Foster, *Marx's Ecology*; Foster, *The Ecological Rift*; Klein, *This Changes Everything*; Malm and Homborg, "The Geology of Mankind?" Malm, *The Progress of This Storm*; Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*.

³⁴ Flannery, *The Weather Makers*; Lovelock, *A Rough Ride to the Future*, 119–20; Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, 62–65; Radcliffe and Campling, *Green Politics*; Shearman and Smith, *The Climate Change Challenge*; Wainwright and Mann, *Climate Leviathan*.

³⁵ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 24. Here, I do not embark on a detailed assessment or interpretation of Chakrabarty's theses, which have been extensively discussed since their orig-

Chakrabarty's four theses are the following ones:

1. in the Anthropocene, the humanist distinction between natural and human history collapsed
2. the idea of the Anthropocene severely qualifies humanist (i.e., whiggish) histories of modernity/globalization
3. the age of the Anthropocene requires us to connect the global history of capitalism with the history of humans as a species
4. the above theses show that the current understanding of history (i.e., the Diltheyan model of historical writing) has limits and should be discarded.³⁶

From the claims above the following theses can be derived:

- 1*. in the Anthropocene, the standard distinction between human politics (constituted of supposedly intentional human conduct in the realm of human freedom) and non-human behaviour, or events in the realm of natural necessity, collapsed³⁷
- 2*. the idea of the Anthropocene sets limits to the standard humanist and progressive view of politics. The non-human enters politics, and its flourishing may often contrast (and it often contrasted) with human flourishing
- 3*. the Anthropocene requires us to connect more closely human political communities and politics – whose main characters are capitalism and States – with non-human collectives and politics – whose main characters are evolution, co-evolutionary paths, niches, and the prospect of species extinction. The Anthropocene needs a non-humanistic and not exclusively human politics. It makes necessary interspecies politics, despite that in many cases, human interests contrast with non-human ones
- 4*. the above theses show that the current understanding of politics (i.e., the model of Holocene politics) has limits and should be discarded.

The theses above are implicated (even if not logically entailed) by Chakrabarty's original theses. If natural history, i.e., the history of Earth and the forces acting on it, is no longer distinct from human history, as humans are now a geological force, then human politics (i.e., the inten-

inal appearance; Dube, Seth, and Skaria, *Dipesh Chakrabarty and the Global South*; Emmett and Lekan, "Whose Anthropocene?"

³⁶ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 26, 31, 35, 43.

³⁷ Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 51–52.

tional behaviour of humans in governed societies) is no longer distinct from human action as a species. In the Anthropocene, the unintended consequences of human politics (for instance, its consequences on the environment and future generations) are to be considered a proper political topic, as well as the subject matter of a science of the by-product of human activities.³⁸ Since human intentionality and awareness are no longer necessary features of political action, then events and pieces of non-human conduct can also be considered genuine political actions.

The supposed progress of political freedom caused the current ecological crisis, being based on intensive fossil-fuel consumption: this is an instance of the general claim conveyed by theses 2 and 3 above. Applied to politics, this view amounts to emphasizing that Western liberties and their triumph had detrimental impacts not only on non-Western people or subaltern agents but also (and greatly) on non-humans and ecosystems.³⁹ Human politics harms non-humans, and human progress often amounts to regress for non-humans. And this is thesis 2* above. Of course, thesis 2* is not a straightforward consequence of thesis 1*, nor is it a direct counterpart of Chakrabarty's thesis 2. It might be argued that, even though the human species is now one of the forces of nature, due to its unprecedented impacts on Earth, this does not amount to harming, or better to wronging, anyone. For nature is inert, it is a mere thing, and non-human animals or other sentient beings have no moral standing. Thus, harm to them is not a wrong. Only human agents, or moral agents understood as reasonable persons capable of being autonomous sources of ends, can be entitled to justice. So, the very concept of a non-anthropocentric political theory and politics is a non-starter, and thesis 2* above is false.

There is no space here to rebut these objections.⁴⁰ For now, it is sufficient to say that the view that animals have moral standing is increasingly endorsed by theorists, and also by common sense morality. Indeed, this view is reflected in current policies.⁴¹ Moreover, there is an emerging trend to consider plants and ecosystems as sources of interests, or as having a good of their own.⁴² Thesis 2* rests on these views, which I do not defend here, simply taking their initial plausibility for granted.

³⁸ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 34; Malm, *Fossil Capital*, 11.

³⁹ Sachs, *Common Wealth*, chap. 6.

⁴⁰ Baxter, *A Theory of Ecological Justice*, chap. 6, provides answers to these objections.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5; Cochrane, *Sentientist Politics*; De Grazia, *Taking Animals Seriously*; Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*; Garner, *A Theory of Justice for Animals*; Zuolo, *Animals, Political Liberalism and Public Reason*. On policies, see art. 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

⁴² Baxter, *A Theory of Ecological Justice*, chaps. 5-6; Calvo, *Planta Sapiens*; Hall, *Plants as Persons*; Marder, *Plant-Thinking*; Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics*, chap. 5.

A rupture with the standard humanist history of politics is also implicated by the above, in three senses. First, in the Anthropocene, politics is no longer a humanistic discipline or a social science, but it is more and more related with the natural sciences. (This is another corollary of thesis 3 above.) Second, a politics focusing on the progressive advancement of humanistic values, i.e., of the good for human beings, is no longer enough in the Anthropocene because in it, politics should necessarily consider the good of non-human living and non-living beings, even allowing that sometimes the latter can prevail over human good. Third, in the Anthropocene, politics is no longer an exclusively *human* story. There is a political history of the planet. Anthropocene politics is Gaian or planetary politics.

Thesis 3 above is the view that the consequences of the Anthropocene can be understood only by looking to “humans as a form of life”, or to “life in the human form,” and to “human history as part of the history of life on this planet,” or better by connecting human social life, and its capitalist and globalization structure, with the history of humans as a species, as a universal *Anthropos* – the so-called ‘deep history’ of humankind, or better, a planetary history.⁴³ Thesis 3* above extends this view to politics (and draws the consequences of thesis 2*) by claiming that dealing with the consequences of the Anthropocene requires us to see non-humans as political partners and collectives, and their behaviour and life as a form of political life.

Theses 2* and 3* vindicate the idea that a politics for the Anthropocene cannot but be a fully non-anthropocentric one, by giving non-human beings full political status and entitlements. If these theses are true, then a politics for the Anthropocene cannot be anthropocentric.

Some non-anthropocentric models of Anthropocene politics have been recently put forward. For present purposes, we can distinguish two broad approaches. According to justice biocentrism, the community of justice should be extended, as all living beings can be holders of justice entitlements, and pollution, exploitation, degradation, and climate change are instances of misdistribution. Ecological justice is interspecies *justice*, i.e., the justice of the relations between humans and the rest of the world in sharing Earth’s material space. Different kinds of relations between different types of human and non-human beings give rise to different spheres of justice, and different kinds of entities have different kinds of entitlements to environmental resources.⁴⁴

⁴³ Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History*, 36; Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*, 4, 61–62, 118, 119; Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain*; Zalasiewicz et al., “The New World of the Anthropocene.”

⁴⁴ Baxter, *A Theory of Ecological Justice*; Gleeson and Low, *Justice, Society and Nature*; Wienhues, *Ecological Justice and the Extinction Crisis*.

According to neo-materialism, the Anthropocene urges us to rediscover the common vitality, or the agency, running across the different entities on the planet. There are no different species, there is no human uniqueness, but rather a common life shared by each living being. This life is a continuous phenomenon, supervening upon both supposedly living and non-living beings. This is the real truth of the Darwinian evolutionary theory. This unity of life across different forms entails a democratic approach. No rankings and value differences can and should be established. Agency is not an exclusively human feature: agency can be distributed across nature – at least if seen as a matter of actants' role and network of actors. There is no human nature, but rather human nature is the outcome of interspecies mutual relations, where humans define and are defined, domesticate and are domesticated by non-humans. The Anthropocene is the age of hybrids or symbionts, of 'weird' and 'uncanny' mixtures of humans and non-humans, of new kinds of objects and subjects – hyper-objects and hypo-subjects. The Anthropocene is the realm of multiple ontologies, where the boundaries between nature and culture, and the extent of personhood, can be traced in various ways.⁴⁵

The views listed above are fully non-anthropocentric, as they enlarge the sphere of politics and political subjects to non-human living beings and even to non-living beings such as ecosystems and the entire planet. As such, these views fit the Anthropocene condition. In particular, they conform with theses 2* and 3* above, and this makes them specifically suited to the Anthropocene.

The argument I am giving here in favour of a non-anthropocentric politics of the Anthropocene can be spelled out as follows:

- i. The Anthropocene is a specific condition, where the traditional assumptions of Holocene politics no longer hold; then,
- ii. a new form of politics and political theory is needed, based on new assumptions;
- iii. one of these assumptions is that non-humans (be they non-human animals, or other sentient or even non-sentient beings, such as ecosystems) are to be considered when taking political decisions. To put it otherwise, these beings or collectives have moral standing, and this give them the status of objects of political concern; as a consequence,
- iv. a politics for the Anthropocene should give acknowledgment to non-human entities; a politics for the Anthropocene should be fully non-anthropocentric.

⁴⁵ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*; Coccia, *Metamorphoses*; Descola, *Par-delà nature et culture*; Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*; Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*; Morton, *Hyperobjects*; Morton, *Dark Ecology*; Morton, *Humankind*; Morton and Boyer, *hyposubjects*; Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*; Youatt, *Interspecies Politics*.

The two approaches listed above meet the requirement set by the anti-anthropocentrism argument. However, in the next section I argue that a view based on the notion of ‘ecological citizenship’ is the most plausible in the Anthropocene.

3. Ecological Citizenship for the Anthropocene

Justice biocentrism and neo-materialism rest on a common assumption, i.e., the idea that non-human sentient and non-sentient entities have moral *status*, and that they should be objects of political concern in virtue of their moral standing. This assumption may be problematic under many respects, as already said in § 2.2. However, here I take this assumption for granted. Nevertheless, these views are not fully fitting the Anthropocene condition.

Justice biocentrism focuses on the distribution of environmental resources to human and non-human beings, while most of neo-materialists focus on the inclusion of non-human beings in the democratic discourse and processes of representation in human politics. Despite these views being fully non-anthropocentric, they still miss capturing a specific feature of the Anthropocene, and this makes them not fully fitting for the Anthropocene. An unprecedented human impact on non-human nature is the main distinguishing feature of the Anthropocene. Of course, environmental degradation is (and has been for many years now) the main upshot of human impact. Then, it might be argued that the Anthropocene is not a real novelty: it is only the exacerbation of the ecological crisis that we are facing since a century, at least. But it is my contention that the Anthropocene, whatever its real starting point is, brings about a novelty which is ethically and politically relevant. First, in the Anthropocene the impact of our collective actions has an *unprecedented size*. Second, this size makes the difference, because humanity is no longer an agent acting on the background of natural forces and events, but it acts as a new natural force, as a novel cause of unprecedented changes in non-human nature. Climate change is a case in point, here. Climate changes have always happened on Earth. Since their appearances, hominins and later humans have cooperated with the forces of nature in favouring or slowing down these changes. It might be argued that agriculture and deforestation contributed to certain climatic changes. However, it was not the case that humans were a unique cause of these changes. What marks the current changes, instead, is their fully anthropogenic origin, i.e., the fact that they have been brought about by collective human action, the latter being a unique cause of them.

If the view above is correct, the impact of humans on non-human nature in the Anthropocene can be compared to human domestication of animals and plants. (I will come back to this issue in § 3.1. below.) It is a relation where human agency impacted non-humans, and sometimes this impact was harmful. This makes the relation between humans and non-humans in the Anthropocene ethically and politically relevant in a different way, as compared to the Holocene condition. Starting from this premise (in the Anthropocene, humans harmfully impacted non-humans in an unprecedented way), I defend two claims. First, a politics for the Anthropocene cannot be limited to issues concerning the just distribution of environmental resources and the political representation of nature;⁴⁶ rather, it should take into account the ethically and politically relevant relations between humans and non-humans. Second, the best way to give a political view of the relations between humans and non-humans in the Anthropocene is by developing a view of non-human citizenship. Some clarifications are needed, though, on the premise for these views, i.e., the claim that the relations between humans and non-humans in the Anthropocene can be compared to human domestication of non-human nature. To this I turn in the next sub-section.

3.1. *The Anthropocene Grand Domestication*

As said, the Anthropocene is the age when the human impact on non-human nature reached an unprecedented size. This impact had several forms. It was a matter of environmental degradation of ecosystems, as well as of harming non-human animals in various ways related to environmental degradation, for instance with the destruction or deterioration of certain ecological niches, that caused losses and damages to flora and fauna settled in these niches. In the Anthropocene, then, humans caused non-humans to lose their habitats, to suffer various injuries, sometimes even to extinguish them. However, what is most typical of the Anthropocene is that the human impact very often determined irreversible changes in ecosystems and in non-human animals and plants living in them. The human impact on the Anthropocene can be compared to a gigantic domestication of the Earth. This is not only a metaphor. It might be argued that in the Anthropocene humans reproduced on a large scale the domestication processes they performed as a species since their very

⁴⁶ An anonymous referee for this journal took my view (in a previous draft) as a theory concerning the political representation of nature. Indeed, it is my contention that a politics for the Anthropocene is not simply a view of the representation of nature. Evidently, the first version of this article was unclear on this.

appearance on Earth. Of course, this claim depends on the meaning of ‘domestication’ we assume.

In recent discussions, ‘domestication’ took different meanings, and the very term had many different overtones in various disciplines.⁴⁷ To present purposes, we can single three meanings out.⁴⁸ Domestication can be *constitutive*, when it determines the breeding and other in-born characteristics of some animal and vegetal species. It can be *locational*, when it is a matter of animals and plants living (and having their habitat) in ecosystems greatly or fully affected by human activities. It can be *dispositional* or *behavioural* when it is a matter of certain conducts of animals or plants, namely, their being aggressive or fearful towards human beings, and so on. (Notice that the latter kind of domestication usually goes together with the first. Constitutively domesticated animals display certain patterns of behaviour, even though this is not necessarily the case. Sometimes, humans can create supposedly wild characteristics by purpose – for instance, aggressive dogs. Likewise, supposedly wild plants, for instance weeds, can be created, or artificially spread, for human purposes. This meaning of ‘domestication’ is not involved in my discussion below, though.)

The Anthropocene greatly expanded locational domestication. As Bill McKibben famously claimed, the Anthropocene is the age of the end of nature, i.e., the age where wild spaces (understood as pristine nature, or completely untouched ecosystems) disappeared from Earth.⁴⁹ If so, some animals and plants, as already said, literally lost their ecological niche. This may yield three possible outcomes: i. adaptation, ii. maladaptation (i.e., imperfect adaptation, or adaptation at a suboptimal level of well-being, as compared to previous adaptation), iii. no adaptation, i.e., extinction. It might be argued that, assuming that animals and plants have a good of their own (and this is the assumption about the moral status of non-human beings I have often mentioned in this article), ii. is a wrong to them. It is not clear that iii. is also wrong to individuals or to groups, as it might be argued that complete extinction does not harm the members of the extinct species. However, the extinction of species can reduce biodiversity, and this in its turn may have several effects on remaining species. As a consequence, when locational domestication leads to extinction, then it may be regarded as harmful. Then, in expanding locational domestication, the Anthropocene is an instance of harmful relationship between humans and non-humans.

The Anthropocene increases constitutive domestication, as well. Or at least, some of the ways in which humans impacted non-human nature

⁴⁷ Cassidy, “Introduction: Domestication Reconsidered.”

⁴⁸ Palmer, “Animal Ethics in Context,” 63-7.

⁴⁹ McKibben, “The End of Nature.”

in the Anthropocene involves constitutive domestication. For instance, mass domestication of animals for the sake of massive meat production is mainly based on constitutive domestication of animals. Intensive agriculture, also, may be seen as a kind of massive constitutive domestication of plants, as it is based on the selection of certain varieties within species. However, it is far from clear that constitutive domestication is a harm to the domesticated species (even though it may be harmful to wild species, that can be crowded out by new domesticated ones, whose occupation of places and appropriation of food is warranted by human help, as it were). Indeed, domesticated animals can gain from domestication, in terms of chances to live, and of better conditions of living. It might be argued that, had it not been for certain human purposes (i.e., food production or other human-related usages), certain non-human individuals would have not lived. Assuming that living is better than not living, domestication can be a positive advantage for domesticated animals. Of course, this holds when the living conditions of animals and plants are good enough. Mass meat production is often led by keeping animals in very bad conditions. Intensive agriculture and monoculture may be detrimental to biodiversity, and to certain species, whose survival can be threatened by the privileging of the unique species that are farmed by humans. However, even assuming that domesticated animals and plants have good lives, constitutive domestication may create dependency and vulnerability. Their good lives heavily depend on human action. They can be unable to survive outside of a relation with humans (they lack self-sufficiency), and their very existence depended on human projects. Their dependency is permanent, enduring, and lifelong.

Three patterns of domestication, or co-existence, have been distinguished in recent debates: mutualism (both parties benefit from the relations), commensalism (animals or plants benefit, humans do not lose), contramensalism (animals or plants benefit at the expenses of humans). Animals' and plants' well-being depend on humans in each of these patterns. Even in contramensalism, if humans take measures to stop the situation where animals or plants can parasitize them, very often the latter will be seriously damaged, for lack of viable alternatives – think of scavengers led to starving due to human migration and abandonment of towns.

As a consequence of the above, the Anthropocene can be understood as a ground for increased constitutive and locational domestication of animals and plants. However, there is another sense in which Anthropocene is a factor of domestication. The above patterns of domestication do not exhaust the modes in which human action can have an impact on non-human nature. Human activities can change the situation even when domestication as described above does not occur. Human-driven modifi-

cations of the habitat of wild animals does not make them domesticated, but still changes their condition, for better or worse. As Claire Palmer clearly intimated, there is a ‘contact zone’ between animals and humans that is wider than the place in which domestication happens.⁵⁰ These kinds of impacts of humans on non-human animals are increasingly frequent in the Anthropocene. Indeed, the Anthropocene can be seen as the age where this pattern – human action modifying ecosystems, and this modification having an impact on animals and plants within the modified ecosystems – became ubiquitous. Assuming that this mode of human impact is a kind of domestication, the Anthropocene can be seen as a sort of global, or grand, domestication of non-human nature.

In the Anthropocene, then, the traditional patterns of human domestication of animals and plants increased their extent and frequency. Moreover, in the Anthropocene the human modifying impact on ecosystems increased its extent and frequency, with enhanced effects on flora and fauna. As I will claim below, the relations between humans and non-humans embedded in the Anthropocene Grand Domestication are ethically and politically relevant in obvious ways.

3.2. *The best political answer to the Anthropocene: Non-Human, or Ecological, Citizenship*

As said in the section above, domestication can make domesticated animals or plants worse off or vulnerable to human actions. This fact has obvious ethical and political consequences. When an agent has a relation to a patient, whose outcome is that the latter is harmed or made vulnerable, the agent has specific duties. The agent has corrective justice, or reparation duties, when the relation is harmful. She has assistance duties when the relation makes the patient vulnerable or dependent.⁵¹

This thought has been used in animal ethics literature to mount a case for the claim that humans have differential obligations towards non-human animals, depending on their relations with them. Humans have stronger obligations to fully domesticated animals and weaker, or even no obligations at all to wild animals. For instance, Claire Palmer defended the so-called *laissez faire* view, i.e., the claim that we have no duties towards wild animals, while we have duties towards semi- or fully domesticated animals, and those duties are directly proportional to the degree of our contact with them. We can also have duties of reparation towards

⁵⁰ Palmer, “Animal Ethics in Context,” 66-8.

⁵¹ There is a discussion about whether failed assistance amounts to harm. I do not consider the details of this discussion here.

wild animals, Palmer claims, when our past behaviour damaged them in significant ways and our intervention is not counterproductive.⁵²

Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka took Palmer's relation view as their starting point to extend to animals the notion of 'citizenship'.⁵³ Their main idea is that the standard animal rights theory can be better supported by seeing animal rights as citizenship rights, of various strength and scope, correlative to different relational duties towards different kinds of animals. Donaldson and Kymlicka's reasoning is as follows:

- A. *Animal rights*: since they have sentience and consciousness, animals have inviolable rights not to be used as mere means for human purposes and goods;
- B. *Relational duties*: even if animals have a unique moral standing, their rights yield different duties for humans, depending on the different relations humans have with different kinds of animals. In particular, i. *domesticated animals* live a life closely connected with humans; their well-being has been negatively affected by, and now depends on, human behaviour and social cooperation with humans; they have capacities to have and express a subjective good, to participate and to cooperate. As a consequence, they should have full *membership rights*, i.e., rights of residency, the right to have their interests counted when determining the collective or public good of the community, and the right to shape evolving rules of interaction. ii. *Liminal animals*, i.e., the non-domesticated animals who live among us, should be granted *denizenship*, i.e., rights of residency short of full citizenship. iii. *Wild animals*, whose existence does not depend on, but can be adversely affected by, humans, should have *sovereignty rights*, i.e., rights to their own territory and autonomy on that territory; rules of international justice should regulate the interaction between human communities and wild animals' communities.⁵⁴

Donaldson and Kymlicka's view rests on the idea that certain relations and interactions, some of them symbiotic, between humans and animals have moral relevance, as they negatively affect animals' well-being, and they can be rectified by making the terms of these relations just, fair, and mutually beneficial for both humans and animals. This view overlaps with Palmer's view of the human relations with non-human, even though Palmer makes no use of the notion of 'citizenship'.

⁵² Palmer, "Animal Ethics in Context," chaps. 5-6. Here, I do not linger over the details of Palmer's view.

⁵³ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*. Here, I do not linger over the details of Donaldson and Kymlicka's view, especially their controversial conception of citizenship.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 90, 169, 214.

Donaldson and Kymlicka develop a notion of ‘ecological citizenship’, where not only humans can have rights of citizenship and the relative duties, but also non-human animals can be citizenship-right holders. This goes beyond the traditional notion of ‘environmental citizenship’, where the provision and distribution of environmental goods were connected to traditional citizenship rights and duties.⁵⁵

However, Donaldson and Kymlicka passingly claim that their view cannot be extended to living beings different from animals or even to eco-systems. Here’s a relevant passage:

There are many good reasons to respect and protect nature, including instrumental as well as non-instrumental ones. But it is wrong to characterize these reasons as protecting the interests of orchids or other non-sentient entities. Only a being with a subjective experience can have interests, or be owed the direct duties of justice that protect those interests. A rock is not a person. Neither is an eco-system, an orchid, or a strain of bacteria. They are things. They can be damaged, but not subject to injustice. Justice is owed to subjects who experience the world, not to things. Non-sentient things can rightfully be the objects of respect, awe, love, and care. But, lacking subjectivity, they are not rightfully the objects of fairness, nor are they agents of inter-subjectivity, the motivating spirit of justice.⁵⁶

Here, Donaldson and Kymlicka echo the view according to which only sentient beings have moral status. As I said many times above, this view is now increasingly challenged. According to many recent views, plants have sentience and consciousness, and some plants can even interact and constitute communities.⁵⁷ According to some authors, ecosystems also have moral standing, as they have a good of their own.⁵⁸

An argument can be mounted in favour of a wider notion of ‘Anthropocene ecological citizenship’, where citizenship rights are held by and extend to non-human, non-sentient individual beings and collectives. The argument can go as follows.

- i. the Anthropocene is the age of the Grand Domestication, in which humans impacted animals, plants, and ecosystems by changing their original condition and nature;
- ii. the Anthropocene’s domestication is often harmful and vulnerability-originating for the domesticated animals, plants, and ecosystems;
- iii. harmful and vulnerability-originating relations establish duties of rep-

⁵⁵ Dobson, “Citizenship and the Environment.”

⁵⁶ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 36.

⁵⁷ Calvo, *Planta Sapiens*; Chamovitz, *What a Plant Knows*; Maher, *Plant Minds*; Trewavas, *Plant Behaviour and Intelligence*.

⁵⁸ Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics*, chap. 5.

- aration and assistance upon the agents whose action causes these relations;
 in virtue of i.-iii.,
- iv. in the Anthropocene, humans have duties of reparation and assistance towards animals, plants, and ecosystems which have been harmfully impacted by their action, or whose vulnerability depends on human causes.
 - v. These duties have differential scope, though. When human action had lesser, or no, impacts, reparation or assistance is not owed. In these cases, animals, plants, or ecosystems are entitled to respect, or to sovereignty, i.e., to no-harm or no-intrusion conduct.

‘Anthropocene ecological citizenship’ is the umbrella notion that covers the various layers of duties and rights connecting humans, non-human animals and plants, and ecosystems in the Anthropocene. Notice that Anthropocene ecological citizenship is not simply an extension of animal citizenship. The latter can be extended to plants, but it is not so clear that ecosystems can also be directly included. Plants can have the three levels of rights that animals have, according to Donaldson and Kymlicka. There are domesticated plants, and we can consider them members of our communities. This amounts to saying that they are entitled to full assistance, i.e., to full protection and care, and their well-being counts as animal and human well-being, at least *ceteris paribus*. There are wild plants – for instance, trees in forests – and we can consider them sovereign in their communities: we owe them non-interference, not active protection and care. There are liminal plants, i.e., non-domesticated plants living with us (weeds, for instance), and we can grant them denizenship rights, i.e., some less demanding form of protection.

Ecosystems are sites and conditions of morally relevant relations between humans, animals, and plants. This may be the ground to protect them in virtue of their instrumental or conditional value. This is of course far from constituting citizenship, denizenship, or sovereignty. Ecosystems can be granted a sort of sovereignty, if they are seen as intrinsically valuable in virtue of their organismic life and capacity to have a subjective good. This may require us to assign them some rights – for instance, rights to integrity and autonomy in the territories they ‘occupy’.

This view has it that the entire Earth system is a net of ethically and politically relevant relations. This relational citizenship rights-based view is the fittest model of politics for the Anthropocene, because it takes seriously the fact that the Anthropocene is the age of unprecedented human impact on Earth, an impact that changed and affected, often for the worse, the condition of non-human nature. Views exclusively focused on ecologi-

cal justice or non-human democracy are unable to account for the unprecedented quality of the relations between humans and non-human nature in the Anthropocene. An ecological citizenship political theory, then, is the best politics for the Anthropocene.

4. Conclusions

In this paper I claimed that the best politics for the Anthropocene should take into account the unprecedented human impact on non-human nature and its bad consequences for non-humans – an impact that can be regarded as a massive domestication project. As a consequence, a politics for the Anthropocene should acknowledge duties of reparation and assistance towards animals, plants, and ecosystems. I also claimed that a notion of ‘ecological citizenship’ is the best conceptual tool to acknowledge and ground these duties.

Of course, many details of this view need to be settled. Let me mention two of them, as a way of conclusion. First of all, I mentioned many times a necessary assumption of a fully non-anthropocentric politics, i.e., the view that non-human and non-sentient beings have moral status. This view still needs full defense, even though current scholarship contains many good arguments in favour of it. The growing scholarship on plant intelligence and on the Earth system sciences can be used to this purpose. Second, the notion of ‘ecological citizenship’ requires broader boundaries of citizenship, and a relaxing of some traditional requirements of citizenship status – such as full rationality, full representation, and so on. This reframing of the concept of citizenship (partially attempted by Donaldson and Kymlicka) should still be fully achieved and defended. However, it is my contention that the project of a political theory of ecological citizenship for the Anthropocene is a promising one.

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