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ARTICLES

Attending with Shame to the Animal Crisis: On the Contributions of Murdoch and Deleuze to a Politics of Sight

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Abstract

In *Animal Crisis: A New Critical Theory* (2022), Alice Crary and Lori Gruen diagnose a crisis in human–animal relations, emphasizing its political nature and critiquing the limited scope of orthodox animal ethics. They propose an "ethics and politics of sight" to confront this crisis, drawing on Iris Murdoch's philosophy of attention. This article argues that while Murdoch's account of attention provides insight into the perceptual dimension of this crisis, it does not fully address its political and emotional aspects. Murdoch's focus on personal improvement ignores the structural roots of moral misperceptions, limiting its applicability to a collective politics of sight. Moreover, the lack of a systematic account of the emotional dimension of attention undermines her explanation of the latter's transformative potential. Therefore, this article applies Gilles Deleuze's concept of shame to extend Murdochian attention to include emotional and political dimensions. By analyzing the role of shame in moral perception, this article contributes to debates on how emotions affect ethical human–animal issues and moral thought and practice more generally. Specifically, we argue that shame provides a critical perspective on the normative infrastructure that determines society's relation to animals by rendering visible aspects of the shameful and the intolerable behind a façade of normalcy.

Keywords Shame · Moral emotions · Attention · Animal ethics · Iris murdoch · Gilles deleuze

Introduction

In *Animal Crisis: A New Critical Theory* (2022), philosophers Crary and Gruen diagnose human–animal relations as "a crisis of catastrophic proportions" (p. 1). Orthodox animal ethics has not fully addressed the political nature of this crisis due to its

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focus on suffering, dignity, rights, and individual action. A firm grasp of the social and institutionalized violence—not only on animals but also on humans and the environment—at its heart is necessary. This partly involves an "ethics and politics of sight" (Crary & Gruen, 2022, pp. 113–119) that brings otherwise invisible oppressive structures into view.[1] Crary and Gruen suggest that Murdoch's moral philosophy, particularly her concept of attention, can assist with this. Murdoch explains that humans tend to project themselves onto the world and fail to see the moral reality properly. Attention counteracts this by bringing others into view in a way that reflects their individual nature, helping to overcome the perceptual distortions produced by our "fat relentless ego" (1971, p. 51).

This article explores Murdoch's concept of attention regarding a proposed politics of sight. Drawing on Panizza's (2022) interpretation of Murdoch's concept of attention as a form of moral perception, we argue that Murdochian attention enables comprehension of the *perceptual* dimension of the animal crisis, thus contributing to a politics of sight. We also argue that Murdochian attention fails to comprehend a politics of sight in two important aspects: (1) it largely ignores the *political* implications of attention, and (2) it does not sufficiently credit the *emotional* dimension of attention. These deficits can be further characterized as follows:

(1) According to Murdoch, "In moral life the enemy is the fat relentless ego" (1971, p. 51). Moral progress is primarily a matter of *personal* improvement, requiring us to fight to overcome our egoistic tendencies and the resulting perceptual distortions to obtain a clear vision of moral reality (a precondition for moral action). However, Murdoch neglects how certain stereotypes and perceptual distortions (e.g., racism, speciesism, etc.) are structurally rooted and must be resisted as social and political phenomena. We refer to this as the *political deficit*.
(2) Besides describing attention as a "just and loving gaze" (1971, p. 33), connecting attention with love, Murdoch is not concerned with explaining how emotions relate to the process of unselfing, through which the fat relentless ego is overcome. We refer to this as the *emotional deficit*. If emotions provide ways of knowing what matters (morally) in a situation (Schmid, 2017), then attention as a moral perception (i.e., as a way of seeing what matters morally) will generate or be motivated by the corresponding emotions. To successfully attend requires the right kind of emotions. For example, to attend to an injustice (i.e., to perceive it *as* an injustice) requires feelings of indignation or

[1] The term "politics of sight" was conceived by Pachirat in his autoethnography *Every Twelve Seconds. Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight* (2011), which Crary and Gruen (2022) draw upon. What Crary and Gruen find compelling—as do we—about Pachirat's politics of sight regarding animal suffering that is intentionally hidden from public view (e.g., in slaughterhouses) is the idea that seeking maximum visibility and transparency is an insufficient or potentially misguided solution. For example, witnessing the suffering and slaughter of an animal—"For who could stand the sight?" (Pachirat, 2011, p. 253)—does not guarantee a consumer's conversion from factory-farmed meat to a vegetarian or vegan diet. This leads Pachirat to postulate the "need for a context-sensitive politics of sight that recognizes both the possibilities and pitfalls of organized, concerted attempts to make visible what is hidden and to breach, literally or figuratively, zones of confinement in order to bring about social and political transformation" (2011, p. 255).

outrage, while to attend to something shameful (i.e., to perceive it *as* shameful) requires feeling shame. Such recourse to emotions achieves two things: First, it concretizes and develops Murdoch's otherwise abstract and lifeless concept of attention and its demands. Second, emotions help make sense of Crary and Gruen's politics of sight, providing the means to know what morally matters and having an essential role in making moral issues visible (including those concerning human–animal relations).

When probing the use and limitations of Murdochian attention regarding a politics of sight, we explore the link between attention and emotions. Some traditional ethical theories strongly focus on reason at the expense of other ethical factors, such as emotions, relations, particularities, and context. This approach introduces several problems, including what Kheel terms "truncated narratives" (1993, p. 255). Through abstract, principle-based reasoning, this form of ethical argumentation detaches us from our actual moral experiences and practices and thus fails to provide practical moral guidance. Addressing this and other shortcomings, alternative approaches emphasize particularity and context, such as feminist care ethics, neo-Aristotelian ethics (Midgley, 2002), and phenomenological ethics (Oftedal & Harfeld, 2020), while other approaches—some even departing from forms of "orthodox animal ethics" (Monso & Grimm, 2019)—argue against an excessive focus on reason.

Murdoch's moral philosophy, which is a form of Platonic realism, is manifold and does not neatly align with any dominant approach within 20th-century ethics. Arguing against the prevailing idea in moral philosophy that "morality resides at the point of action" (1971, p. 15), Murdoch was particularly interested in the importance of the inner life to morality. However, while her philosophy had an early influence on the development of care ethics and particularism, emotions did not have the same importance for her as they would later have within these approaches. While these approaches are more concerned with emphasizing emotions as a corrective to the dominant principle-based reasoning, Murdoch sought to orientate moral philosophy's focus *away from* existentialist and behaviorist conceptions of will and action *toward* the inner moral life and the role of perception. Emotions had only a minor role in this project.

While our focus on emotions may suggest they are above and against reason, we consider emotions as neither having epistemological primacy nor as completely distinct from reason. Rather, emotions and reason are interconnected, with emotions guiding reason; for example, by making what is important to a subject salient (De Sousa, 1987). Emotions signal to a person what matters to them, what is of value, and what is worth (or vital) attending to, etc. As such, emotions are rational; they do not oppose rational deliberation but provide it with content. Moreover, emotions motivate action (cf. Döring, 2007).[2]

To critique and extend Murdoch's attention, we first describe what is at stake in the animal crisis. Thus, Sect. "Ventilation Shutdown: A Glimpse of Institutionalized

[2] While Deleuze's terminology does not correspond with the discourse on emotions in the analytical tradition, his concept of affect overlaps relevantly with the understanding of emotion outlined here.

Human–Animal Violence" discusses a so-called "ventilation shutdown" that took place at an Iowa factory farm, in which thousands of pigs that had become expendable due to a supply-chain breakdown during the COVID-19 pandemic were killed. This illustrates how a lack of attention is partly constitutive of this crisis and how Murdochian attention as a moral perception can facilitate understanding of the crisis. However, we argue in Sect. "Attention as Moral Perception: Iris Murdoch and Animal Ethics" that Murdochian attention is of limited use regarding a politics of sight because it does not provide sufficient resources to determine the political dimension of the crisis and the role of emotions in attending to it. This means having the right emotions as a response to the crisis and attending to the social and political mechanisms that sustain it.

Sect. "Supplementing Murdoch to Comprehend the Animal Crisis" describes a different form of moral perception that features the necessary emotional and political aspects—namely, the concept of shame used by Deleuze's politics of sight. Drawing on Deleuze's comments on Primo Levi's concept of the shame of being human, we argue that shame enables a moral perception of what is shamefully intolerable (cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; O'Donnell, 2017). Showing how shame directs attention to a moral deficit provides a robust example of how to extend Murdochian attention through emotion. Moreover, as shame is a response to the shameful social, political, and economic infrastructure that determines mutually detrimental human–animal relations, it has the critical political sensitivity needed for a politics of sight proposed by Crary and Gruen (2022).

Ventilation Shutdown: A Glimpse of Institutionalized Human–Animal Violence

Following a tip-off from an employee at Iowa's largest pork producer, Iowa Select Farms, *The Intercept* news organization documented a horrifying incident that took place in May 2020: the slaughter of thousands of pigs—in a manner deemed cruel by many experts—that were commercially unprofitable following the breakdown of supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic (Greenwald, 2020). Due to slaughterhouse closures, the company used the most economically beneficial approach available by killing the pigs using a so-called "ventilation shutdown." This procedure consists of turning off a barn's ventilation system and infusing the barn with steam, killing the pigs through suffocation and hyperthermia. It takes approximately 65 min to progress from the first signs of increased respiration (around 54 °C) to the pigs being silent and still (cf. Baysinger et al., 2021, p. 420). During this period, the animals are conscious and suffer from heat stress, which ultimately causes death—with less oxygen in their blood, the animals gasp for air. However, some pigs can survive this procedure: A case study in the United Kingdom showed that 100% mortality was not achieved even after 16 h (cf. Greenwald, 2020). Accordingly, Iowa Select employees equipped with bolt guns killed the surviving pigs the following morning. However, owing to the sheer number of pigs, it is conceivable that some surviving animals remained unnoticed and were subsequently either crushed by bulldozers or buried alive (cf. Greenwald, 2020).

This incident is illustrative of the animal crisis, not only the horrors experienced by (industrially) farmed animals but also its invisibility. According to Crary and Gruen (2022), obscuring or denying—through various social mechanisms—much of the human violence inflicted on animals contributes to this crisis, meaning that making this misery visible is an essential task. Moreover, Crary and Gruen emphasize that it is not only a matter of bringing what is hidden to light but also seeing through the manifold deceptions that actively distort the truth (e.g., the marketing strategies of industrial farming that "actively draw attention to their practices, insisting on their claim to 'modern' and 'humane' credentials;" Crary & Gruen, 2022, p. 115).[3] To help resist these distortions and misrepresentations generated by powerful social structures, the authors call for a "politics of sight" as a central resource, drawing upon Iris Murdoch's concept of attention (Crary & Gruen, 2022, p. 118).

Attention as Moral Perception: Iris Murdoch and Animal Ethics

Arguing against the philosophical tradition that states our will and outward actions are the hallmarks of morality, Murdoch's attention reconfigures morality normatively and descriptively (1971, p. 33). Murdoch argues that this traditional view misses the point:

> At crucial moments of choice much of the business of choosing is already over. The moral life, on this view, is something that goes on continually, not something that is switched off in between the occurrence of explicit moral choices. What happens in between such choices is indeed what is crucial. (1971, p. 36)

While moral life cannot be switched off, attention *can* be—and most often *is*—switched off. Inattention or "fantasy"—Murdoch's preferred term—is "the 'natural' human state" (Panizza, 2022, p. 31). Attention is rare because it requires effort to overcome the habits and fantasy that keep us inattentive. Murdoch characterizes fantasy as "the proliferation of blinding self-centered aims and images" and holds that "most of what is often called 'will' or 'willing' belongs to this system" (1971, p. 65). Therefore, the work of attention must be theorized as linked to what Murdoch calls "unselfing," which is intended to counteract the forces that entangle us in self-absorbed illusions that distract from reality. The ego and its interests prevent us from seeing clearly and need to be removed, and "Attention is the effort to counteract such states of illusion" (1971, p. 36). Murdoch states that she uses attention "to express the idea of a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality" (1971, p. 33). She then argues that such a gaze is "the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent" (1971, p. 33). Panizza considers Murdochian attention to be understood "very broadly as a truth-seeking

[3] Regarding this example, it may be reasonable to ask which mechanisms account for the possibility that the killing of pigs by ventilation shutdown may be much more readily condemned—once it has come to light—than if they (and poultry) had suffered via the standard procedure of carbon dioxide stunning.

engagement of the individual with reality" (2022, p. 24), where ego's fantasies are the primary obstacle to truth. Thus, attention reveals the world (and other individuals more specifically) to be morally valuable.

Attention as a form of moral perception plays a fundamental role in moral agency because this requires a clear view of what matters morally. Murdoch explains this by stating, "I can only choose within the world I can see, in the moral sense of 'see' which implies that clear vision is a result of moral imagination and moral effort" (1971, pp. 35–36). As Panizza states:

> What we do depends on what we see. And what we see is partly up to us. This, in a nutshell, is Murdoch's lesson on attention and action. We harm those we see as enemies, not those we see as friends. We eat what we see as food, not those we see as fellow living creatures. (2022, p. 42)

Therefore, the stakes of overcoming our fat relentless ego become clear: while we are caught up in it, our moral agency is limited by our restricted moral field of vision that guides our actions. Moreover, we can see how Murdochian attention can fulfill an important function in Crary and Gruen's politics of sight; for example, in the ventilation shutdown case, it was *attention* that enabled the whistleblower to see the pigs as morally valuable beings. To successfully attend to them, the whistleblower overcame several barriers that ensure pigs are only seen in ways that serve the company's interests. Attention enabled them to see what mattered for the pigs, bringing the animals' perspective into focus rather than human economic interests and the pigs' status as profitable bio-machines.

Importantly, not all misconceptions relate to the ego or should be dealt with on an individual level. As Panizza stresses, "Social, political, and economic forces are at work all the time to direct, thwart, and blunt our attention" (2022, p. 156). However, we argue that Murdochian attention focuses on the obstacles to perception that relate to ego and does not fully consider those at the social level. Murdoch did not sufficiently consider how certain misrepresentations can be attributed to the influence of the social sphere;[4] therefore, her explanation of attention lacks a relevant political awareness, creating a political deficit for Crary and Gruen's politics of sight.

The Political Deficit in Murdoch's Conception of Attention

Murdoch has been criticized for failing to consider socially mediated distortions of perception (cf. Blum, 2012, 2022). While Holland (2012) and Clarke (2012) have suggested that she was aware of these influences, Panizza argues that Murdoch's

[4] When stating that Murdoch was not concerned with the influence of the social sphere, we do not claim that Murdochian attention is inherently individualistic. Rather, Murdoch presents attention in primarily individualistic terms. As Clarke (2012) shows, the potential to perceive oppressive social patterns is implicit in Murdoch's attention. However, this needs to be explicated and foregrounded. A similar view is expressed by Hämäläinen, who states, "Developing the structural criticism latent in the notion of unselfing requires only a tiny step forward: that of paying attention to the social/structural roots of some of our biases" (2015, p. 753). Murdoch does not take this step forward.

"battle for clear perception, even the one against the force of convention, seems to be fought primarily at the individual level" (2022, p. 69). Indeed, Murdoch identifies ego as the *primary* cause of perceptual distortions. As such, she associates it with fantasy and neurosis, closing off the subject from reality (cf. Holland, 2012, p. 262). Thus, neurosis as frightful self-centeredness contrasts with attentive, emotional openness guided by the object of attention.

However, ego is not the only source of fantasy, and Murdochian attention does not adequately challenge the social and cultural distortions that critical theory is supposed to resist. In Murdoch's view, the central task of the moral agent is to engage in a process of unselfing—through attention—that reveals unfiltered reality as it truly is, reducing moral progress to the individual level. Thus, Murdoch's explanation of attention as moral perception threatens to collapse the critical dimension of moral agency into mere *self*-criticism and fails to provide the *social* criticism required by Crary and Gruen's critical animal theory.

Murdoch's approach can be defended given her commitment to perfectionism and concomitant pessimism vis-á-vis politics, but this cannot repair her fatal separation between moral and political. As Blum remarks, "the whole point of Murdoch's moral philosophy is to point the way to a moral perfection for which individuals can and should strive" (2022, p. 428). However, the same cannot be expected from politics in Murdoch's view as "a final acceptance of imperfection and incompleteness is built into politics in a way in which it is not built into personal morals" (Murdoch, 2011, p. 6) and because "Society must be thought of as a bad job to be made the best of" (Murdoch, 1993, p. 368). Hämäläinen adds that Murdoch's "paradigmatic transformative quest is the spiritual rather than the political one," which is a "limitation from the point of view of feminism, and social and political struggles more generally" (2015, p. 756).

Murdoch was aware of the social influence on the individual, stating, "we may properly reflect upon our conditioning, our deep prejudices, our received ideas, etc. I mean 'consciousness' in a common sense understanding of 'where we live'" (1992, p. 304). However, while aware of this influence, her analysis remains focused on the individual in abstraction from it. As Blum (2012, 2022) and Nussbaum (2012) contend, Murdoch fails to sufficiently account for the social influence on our moral formation and, thus, omits an appropriate social critique of these influences.[5] As we have described, clear perception is thwarted not only by distortions at the individual level but also by socially and culturally entrenched distortions. While Murdoch provides rich insights into the former, an adequate analysis of the latter is missing from her writings; as Blum points out, "Murdoch does not recognize this as a task relevant to her moral philosophy" (2012, p. 318).

However, this does not mean that Murdoch was not a political thinker. Indeed, she is often considered a political thinker (cf. Blum, 2012, 2022; Antonaccio, 2012;

[5] Nussbaum provides a similar critique to Blum, stating, "There are major gaps in Murdoch's philosophical vision. She seems almost entirely to lack interest in the political and social determinants of a moral vision, and in the larger social criticism that ought, one feels, to be a major element in the struggle against one's own defective tendencies. Her examples, and her characters, are almost always undone by something universal about the ego and its devious workings, almost never by prejudice or misogyny or other failings endemic to a particular society at a particular time" (2012, p. 267f).

Browning, 2018, 2024) and was a member of the Communist Party as a student. More recently, Browning has devoted a book-length study, aptly titled *Iris Murdoch and the Political* (2024), to substantiate that Murdoch was a profoundly political thinker. However, it is possible to be a political thinker without being a political theorist. As Mason argues, Browning successfully substantiates the—rather uninteresting and uncontentious—claims that "Murdoch is 'personally political'" and that "there are interesting political dimensions to Murdoch's literary writing" (2024, p. 2). However, Browning's interesting claim—addressing those who criticize Murdoch as apolitical—that "Murdoch is a political theorist" is debatable. In a similar vein, Blum claims that "politics never became a major focus of Murdoch's philosophical work," even when "political concerns do make their way into her philosophical work in several essays, and then in an important chapter in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*" (2022, p. 424). While it may be correct that Murdoch was not a political theorist, we merely argue that she did not sufficiently address the political dimensions relevant to attention. Murdoch's focus on the individual rather than the social supports our argument, as a politics of sight, as proposed by Crary and Gruen (2022), maintains that attention at the individual level is not sufficient and that it must also operate at the social level.

It can be argued that as political structures can be internalized, they can be addressed at the individual level. However, unjust social and political structures are in place, and it is insufficient to address them only at the individual level because of the limited potential to effect change. As Bowden points out, "in society-wide constructions of 'reality', as… seen in the example of gender relations of subordination and oppression, it is unlikely that a movement from within the self alone can provide the liberation necessary for moral attention" (1998, p. 70). A central question for a politics of sight to address is: what enables people to be so reluctant to bring their behavior in line with their beliefs? Part of the answer lies in the existence of social structures that enable collective disavowal, which must be dismantled and transformed to improve the situation for (industrially farmed) animals.

Thus, even if there is a socially sensitive pattern perception implicit in Murdoch's attention, this only goes so far. If this is brought to bear on a politics of sight through Murdoch, as Crary and Gruen (2022) envisage for their critical animal theory, then it is not only necessary to explicate this socially sensitive dimension of attentive perception (which Murdoch neglected) but also make the social patterns revealed a suitable target of critique (beyond the purview of Murdoch's individual). While Murdochian attention goes a long way toward removing perceptual distortions, it fails to select a suitable target for critique from the perspective of Crary and Gruen's critical animal theory. Solving the animal crisis requires a politics of sight that tackles perceptual distortions on the social infrastructure level, such as stereotypes, norms, shared values, shared beliefs, and shared practices.

The Emotional Deficit in Murdoch's Conception of Attention

Before considering Deleuze's concept of shame, we reflect on what we call the *emotional deficit* in Murdoch's attention. The Introduction notes that Murdoch was criti-

cal of existentialist and behaviorist conceptions of will and action and tried to show the importance of the inner life of the moral agent to morality. However, we argue that emotions are largely omitted from Murdoch's attention. Bowden succinctly comments that "Murdoch's understanding of attention remains dependent on an appeal to a detached, intellectual sensibility… her over-riding distrust of the 'selfish empirical psyche' leaves the impression that the emotional dimensions of attention are purged of their worldly origins and engagements" (1998, p. 65).

Antonaccio identifies Murdoch as one of the thinkers who have noted that to be a self means asking questions about the good, and claims that her defense of a cognitivist theory of emotions is indebted to Murdoch (2001, p. 129). However, it is conceivable that her theory mainly relates to Murdoch's platonic idea of (love for) the Good, taken up as a critical principle in her theory of emotions, as Murdoch has much to say about love and the Good but ignores how emotions mediate our relationship with objective value. Love has a central role in Murdoch's philosophy, particularly attention, which is understood as a just and loving gaze (cf. Velleman, 1999). Indeed, given that love connects us to the object of attention—functioning as a condition *sine qua non* for seeing the other as they truly are—any act of attention must be guided by love. However, such love is general and unspecific. It can explain—through its orientation toward the good—a continued effort of attending, but it cannot alone account for the specific emotional quality that attending to someone or something has. For Murdoch, the problem is that "just and loving attention simply will progressively reach towards the perfection of a direct connection with the reality of the world" (Bowden, 1998, p. 66). Therefore, Murdoch does not sufficiently consider—in the context of a person's perfectionist moral quest—the role of emotions in mediating access to objective value.

As Bowden notes, Murdoch's "Platonic inspired understanding of the shadowy unity of truth and virtue is manifest.… For all her attention to the immense complexity of human interactions, she seems to assume that the connection between ethical attention and reality will be self-evident in its expression of the coherence and unity of the persons in the world" (1998, p. 66). Therefore, it appears that Murdoch's neglect of emotions may be due to her presupposition of the unity of truth and virtue or, in other words, her commitment to what Deleuze has criticized as the "image of thought" (Deleuze, 1994).

According to Deleuze, while philosophy has sought to establish itself as a presuppositionless science, it has failed to do so time and again because it has continued to import a pre-philosophical, commonsensical body of content as a framework for thinking. This content takes the form of the *everybody knows* and consists of the supposition "that thought is the natural exercise of a faculty, of the presupposition that there is a natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth or an affinity with the true, under the double aspect of a *good will on the part of the thinker and an upright nature on the part of thought* [original emphasis]" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 131). The key elements of this image of thought are common sense, good sense, and the model of recognition, which provide a method for thought, with common

sense enabling a harmonious collaboration of the faculties and good sense marking thought's capacity to attain truth.[6] According to this model:

> Thought is supposed to be naturally upright because it is not a faculty like the others but the unity of all the other faculties which are only modes of the supposed subject, and which it aligns with the form of the Same in the model of recognition. The model of recognition is necessarily included in the image of thought, and whether one considers Plato's *Theaetetus*, Descartes's *Meditations* or Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, this model remains sovereign and defines the orientation of the philosophical analysis of what it means to think. (Deleuze, 1994, p. 134)

Given Plato's strong influence on Murdoch, it is not surprising that her writings contain expressions of an (implicit) commitment to the model of thought that Deleuze criticizes, such as "The idea of absolute, as truth and certainty, is contained in ordinary exercises of cognition, it is already inherent in the knowledge which suggests our duty, it is *in* our sense of truth" (Murdoch, 1993, p. 304). Regarding the image of thought, Deleuze states, "thought formally possesses the true and materially wants the true" (1994, p. 131). This also applies to Murdoch's view, as a clear perception of reality is attained simply by reason's or thought's natural affinity with truth. From the perspective of the image of thought, any obstacles to knowledge are only accidental or empirical (i.e., external to thought). In contrast, Deleuze wants to show that "Cowardice, cruelty, baseness and stupidity are not simply corporeal capacities or traits of character or society; they are structures of thought as such" (1994, p. 151).

In contrast to Murdoch's avowed Platonism, Deleuze's project in *Difference and Repetition* (1994) seeks to overturn the Platonism that breaks with recognition as the model for thought.[7] According to Deleuze, the image of thought traps thought in clichés and representations that remove us from reality. Thought through recognition is not yet thinking. Crucially−and in contrast to Murdoch−Deleuze places affect at the core of thinking since there must be an encounter, a shock to thought, to wrest it from its stupor. The difference produced by this encounter can only be sensed at first because it does not obey common sense, (i.e., there is no prefabricated category for it). As such, affects such as shame are essential to the process of attaining (moral) knowledge because they provide a shock to thought and suspend readily invoked clichés. In summary, while Murdoch appears committed to what Deleuze criticizes as the image of thought−which explains why she does not assign emotions a vital role in the process of attaining knowledge−Deleuze considers affect essential for creating thought that shatters the oppressive clichés of our time.

[6] "Good sense determines the contribution of the faculties in each case, while common sense contributes the form of the Same" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 134).

[7] However, Deleuze's intention is not to reverse the hierarchy of reason and affect to establish affect's normative primacy over reason. Rather, it shows how true thinking forms from an affective encounter. To presuppose the elements of the image of thought mistakenly casts the transcendental after the image of the empirical.

Supplementing Murdoch to Comprehend the Animal Crisis

By identifying significant parallels with Murdochian attention as moral perception, we argue that Deleuzian shame acts as a form of attention or moral perception whose critical dimension, in contrast to Murdochian attention, directly targets the social and political spheres. In Deleuze's view, shame is the result of successfully attending to what is shameful in the world. As such, it shares features with Murdochian attention—most importantly, its nature as a form of moral perception. This is not obvious, as the orthodox understanding of shame conceives it as a response to being *seen* or *judged* by a real or imagined other (cf. Sartre, 1978). However, Deleuzian shame comprises a form of *seeing* what is shameful or intolerable. We argue that it is this socially critical dimension that makes it apt for a politics of sight. Moreover, we show how shame as a moral emotion manifests the relevant emotional dimension of attention—which Murdoch's account does not fully address.

Comparing Attention in Murdoch and Deleuze

Like Murdoch, Deleuze highlights the role of *perception* and rejects a narrow focus on will and action. As Marks argues, "Deleuze avoids prescribing and predicting political action, preferring instead to concentrate on the need to transform our perceptions of the world.… This commitment to what one might call a politics of perception is a constant in Deleuze's work" (2003, p. 116). When commencing an inquiry by asking, *What is to be done?* or *What is the right action?*, you forget that the choice of options is predetermined by the selfish interests of ego projected onto the world (as Murdoch would put it). Deleuze shares this view, arguing that as our interests shape our perception of the world, we usually see only what matters to *us* rather than to others. Following Bergson, Deleuze (like Murdoch) thinks that we usually do not attend to the world but rather to our way of living our worlds. This is typically a way of being inattentive insofar as we are governed by habits that distance us from the perceived object (cf. Bergson, 2005). Murdochian attention and Bergsonian attentive recognition both bring the perceiver closer to the reality of the object rather than seeing the world through clichés. However, unlike Murdoch, Deleuze emphasizes the *affective* nature of this process, providing a shock to thought as an affect that *forces* us to attend. Moreover, Deleuzian attention reveals something that appears *intolerable* to the subject. It is in this critical dimension of attention vis-á-vis the normal that Deleuze's politics of sight is rooted.

Deleuze's Politics of Sight

Deleuze's thinking embodies a genuine "involuntarist politics" (cf. Zourabichvili, 2017; O'Donnell, 2017). As Marks (2003) and Zourabichvili (2017) argue, this politics is inherently a "politics of perception" in which affect has an epistemologically foundational role. You do not begin to think (critically) unless thought is provoked by a violent encounter with a sign. Moreover, thought does not uncover a preexistent truth. Rather, such an encounter presents a problem, being an affective encounter with a problematic field that redistributes numerous

categories, such as the interesting and the uninteresting, the significant and the insignificant, the important and the unimportant, and the tolerable and the intolerable. Such an encounter, being disturbing and disrupting, enables us (perhaps for the first time) "to *see the intolerable* [original emphasis] in our present situation" (Aarons, 2012, p. 12).

This means that the terms of the current situation and the possible alternatives that appear from within the current point of view become unlivable. For Deleuze, it is at the point at which thought is forced into being that an ethically and politically relevant potential for change is generated. Correspondingly, it is *here* that the value of an involuntarist politics of sight lies, as it "forces us to *see* that which we do not wish to perceive" (O'Donnell, 2017, p. 22). Deleuze's politics of sight emphasizes that seeing the world in a way that is not dictated by the exigencies of our situation enables us to see what we do not wish to see. Both Murdoch and Deleuze are critical of will. However, while Murdochian attention can join us to the world as it is only if the will of ego is displaced, for Deleuze, seeing clearly is a function of breaking with the way we normally think and act.[8] Deleuze's critique of "doxa" and "common sense" (1994, p. 134) requires that seeing clearly must break with ideologically determined habits of thought and action. Thus, Deleuzian attention features an inherent political element absent from Murdochian attention. While Murdochian attention yields an increasingly adequate and truthful perception of an object, Deleuzian attention does not bring us closer to the world without simultaneously estranging us from it—by calling into question what *everybody knows*—in an ethically and politically emancipatory sense.

A problem with the image of thought—with the dogma of *everybody knows*—is that it legitimizes oppression: Cisney aptly comments:

> Recognition as the model of thinking fundamentally serves as a justification for systems of oppression currently in vogue. Throughout history the most horrific acts have almost always been founded upon the assertion of *everybody knows*. For instance, at various moments in time, *everybody knew* that people of African descent were naturally inferior to people of European descent; that Jews were parasitic greed-mongers; that women were naturally emotional creatures, incapable of thinking or behaving rationally; that non-human animals could not feel pain, and so forth. (2014, p. 51)

For example, speciesism not only dichotomizes humans and animals but also naturalizes the distinction between pets and livestock (*Nutztiere* in German, which literally translates as "animals for use"). As such, we become insensitive or indifferent to certain animals and anthropomorphize others. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari (1992) provide several cases of "becoming-animal" that occur, among other things, in the face of animal suffering. What is important is that in becoming-animal, you are *affec-*

[8] These two ideas are complementary. As Deleuze's critique of the dogmatic image of thought indicates, there is a strong emphasis on social distortions in Deleuze's writings. Murdoch tends to focus on distortions that arise from our character, leaving conventions underexplored. In other words, they focus on different obstacles to *seeing clearly*.

tively touched and transformed in a way that enables the animal to become something other. For example, Deleuze and Guattari consider the becoming-rat of Hofmannsthal's protagonist Lord Chandos witnessing the death struggle of several rats (1992, p. 327). Given that rats are a species of animal, empathy for which *everybody knows* is misguided, the transformative potential of becoming-animal in the face of the norms dominating human–animal relations is aptly illustrated here. Crucially, we claim that a similar potential may be attributed to becoming-pig, becoming-chicken, etc., which we may undergo when experiencing shame before their human-induced suffering. It is because an affect like shame can disturb how we conventionally relate to farm animals and their suffering that O'Donnell (2017) and Marx can proclaim that "Shame is already a revolution" (1967, p. 204).

We can now see how affect contributes to a politics of sight. To account for attention's political potential, we must recognize the role of affect in criticizing the thought of our time. For Deleuze, such a critique of the status quo can begin with feeling shame.

Shame as a Critical Perception of the Political

Shame enables Deleuzian attention to reveal the intolerable in the world. Contrasting with accounts of shame that focus on negative evaluations of the self against certain norms or values, Deleuze considers shame to be an affect of the encounter with the intolerable (or shameful) in the world. As O'Donnell notes, it is a means of *seeing* the intolerable: "I become ashamed when my gaze turns outward and I see how things are and what is happening, such that what was previously invisible is suddenly seen as intolerable" (2017, p. 2). As shame can shatter conventional ways of seeing the world, it harbors politically emancipatory potential that marks it as a "proto-political and proto-ethical affect" (2017, p. 7).

While Deleuze and Guattari borrow the term "shame of being human" from Primo Levi, they alter the conditions of its emergence. They claim that we experience shame not only in the extreme situations described by Levi but also "in insignificant conditions," stating, "The ignominy of the possibilities of life that we are offered appears from within. We do not feel ourselves outside of our time but continue to undergo shameful compromises with it" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 107–108). This indicates that the experience of shame forms from the perception of an unlivable reality. The critical power of shame, making it apt for Crary and Gruen's critical theory, consists *precisely in the fact* that it problematizes and affectively makes unlivable the current form of life by testifying to the intolerable within it. O'Donnell relates to this by stating, "when shame overcomes us, and shame is only ever involuntary, its intensity makes it impossible to remain indifferent" (2017, p. 9).

In contrast, the animal crisis is characterized by indifference. This is partly because *everybody knows* that *farm animals* may be used in ways that *pets* cannot. We farm and consume pigs but not dogs. In this context, shame's function as an affect makes the ashamed person aware of their responsibility for or complicity with the causes of the farm animals' plight. Shame pierces the indifference and shamelessness of speciesistic habits and clichés that enable us to tolerate the intolerable (O'Donnell, 2017). As such, shame restores our capacity to be affected by the plight of animals,

inviting critique of the sociopolitical and economic structures that make us apathetic and blind to (certain) animals.[9]

As Crary and Gruen argue, the problems their critical theory must contend with to address the animal crisis do not exclusively consist of the invisibility of the structures of oppression. For example, in the case of "humane-washing," industrial farms do not simply hide the reality of their animals' lives; rather, they "mislead" and "distract" (2022, p. 115). While these strategies make it more difficult to develop an adequate idea of animals' lives, they do not simply hide suffering but also disavow it. Humane-washing and other misleading strategies must be seen as part of the collective mechanisms of denial—many of which are widely known but systematically disavowed. Mannoni's (1969) formula of fetishistic disavowal, "Je sais bien, mais quand même" ("I know very well, but nevertheless"), can characterize the structure of denial operating in the animal crisis. This disavowal enables us to cope with the reality of animal exploitation by permitting us to act *in spite of* our knowledge of it. We highlighted strategies of downplaying or denying violence against animals in our discussion of the ventilation shutdown; for example, by portraying the event as an unavoidable economic necessity. In addition, the company's rhetoric about "euthanizing" the animals sought to portray the pigs' deaths as more harmless than they factually were. Furthermore, those responsible shifted the focus from the animals by depicting themselves as the victims of an allegedly unjustified attack by the whistleblower and other critics.[10]

Disavowal of the animal crisis is also enabled by norms of attention that structure our perceptions (Eliasoph, 1998; Zerubavel, 1997). These include our perceptions and our emotions, which are regulated through norms that delineate what we should feel in a given situation (Hochschild, 1983). These dominant norms can conjunctively determine an impersonal worldview that in the context of human–animal relations (implicitly) discriminates between unjustified and justified uses of animals. Thus, as our discussion of the ventilation shutdown suggests, certain practices are generally perceived—based on the prevalent norms—as inflicting unnecessary suffering on animals. Therefore, they are more readily condemned than practices involving the use of animals for human consumption because they are seen as sufficiently justified.

Returning to shame, we can see its specific value in the previous example. Norgaard (2011) explores mechanisms of denial that enable avoidance of guilty feelings regarding behaviors that negatively affect climate change. We think that something similar occurs in the denial of the animal crisis. If denial of the shameful oppression of animals is socially organized, the eruption of shame—testifying to the otherwise

[9] However, this is not guaranteed. Given shame's ambivalence, it may also lead to turning away from shamefulness. While the experience of shame may also manifest in a negative way—what Thomason (2018) calls the "dark side" of shame—such failure is not exclusive to shame. For example, Panizza (2022) notes the difficulty of sustaining attention in the face of animal suffering. The success of attention, like shame, is contingent and never guaranteed.

[10] A similar strategy underpins the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (2006), a United States federal law that criminalizes certain forms of animal activism, thereby creating "a political line in the sand, a demarcation that separates acceptable forms of activism (e.g., petitioning, voting, permitted marches, etc.) from those strategies and tactics deemed as terrorism" (Grubbs & Loadenthal, 2014, p. 184).

discretely ignored violence—impedes or prevents us from acting as if it did not happen. Murdoch's attention is not sufficient for a politics of sight because it ignores the mediating role of emotions in pursuing an adequate perception of reality.

Disavowal enables us to act in ways that contradict our knowledge. Crary and Gruen (2022) reflect this when noting that it is not what is done to animals that "prompt[s] people to intervene to stop the cruelty and violence" (p. 114). They argue that something else is required "that would include an appropriate sensitivity to a range of circumstances and attention to the relevant political structures and relations of domination" (2022, p. 114). The concept of shame is useful here because it disables the pretense of the "as if" that characterizes denial of the animal crisis. Pfaller (2022) recounts a structurally analogous story of a Trobriand Islander who committed suicide when his incestuous relationship was publicly denounced. Importantly, Pfaller notes that the community had already known about this relationship before the denunciation. However, the denouncement meant that it was suddenly no longer possible to deny the truth. The eruption of shame to a hitherto known but denied shameful reality marks the point that the "as if" can no longer be upheld. For the animal crisis, the breakdown of denial may also follow the exposure of a scandalous and shameful reality—as in the whistleblowing of the ventilation shutdown—that is widely known but denied.

Conclusion

Following Crary and Gruen's call for a politics of sight to address the animal crisis, we explored the promise of Murdochian attention and found it lacking in two regards. First, it does not sufficiently consider the social nature of certain perceptual distortions. Second, it does not adequately theorize the emotional dimension of attention. Given its political and emotional deficits, Murdochian attention cannot adequately address the animal crisis, which requires politically sensitive and emotionally engaged approaches. Seeking to extend Murdoch's attention toward this purpose, we considered the concept of shame rooted in the thoughts of Deleuze. In Deleuze's view, the value of shame is in revealing what is intolerable or shameful in the world, which helps to disable the social denial organized around it.

We have limited our inquiry to the potential of shame to address the animal crisis. However, shame is one of many emotions that could prove fruitful. Emotions such as anger, disgust, guilt, and contempt can be involved in moral concern (Kasperbauer, 2015). While emotions typically figure in debates on animal ethics only vaguely, with discussions mostly limited to empathy (cf. Gruen, 2015; Aaltola, 2012), our analysis of shame in ethical human–animal issues advances this discussion by providing a robust example of a hitherto largely neglected emotion. Moreover, shame—in contrast to other emotions—is a particularly fruitful resource for a politics of sight. For example, while sadness can be an adequate response to the perceived suffering of animals, you can be sad about this suffering even if you are not responsible for it. In contrast, shame inherently points toward our responsibility for or complicity with it. As shame relates to the causes of suffering, which for farm animals encompass socio-

political structures and mechanisms (e.g., laws, language, advertisements, etc.), it also is a political affect. Thus, it may not only contribute to changes at the individual level (e.g., consumer behavior) but also—through a critique of the sociopolitical conditions—enable structural change.

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