

Diet, Consciousness and Ethics.

Convergent Praxis in the Animal Rights and Vegetarian Writings of Henry Salt and Agostinho da Silva

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Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*.¹

1. Introduction

In this article, based on our reading of some of the principal publications of Henry Stephens Salt (1851-1939) and Agostinho da Silva (1906-1994), we compare the political, philosophical and practical approaches employed by these two “food militants” to raise public awareness and promote attitude change regarding human diet and animal welfare.

Henry Salt, the English philosopher, social reformer, human and animal rights activist, and populariser of vegetarianism advocated a meatless regime not simply as a dietary option, but above all as part of a philosophy capable of transforming prevailing social values through education, conscientisation, behavioural transformation and policy reform. Simultaneously ethically based and pragmatic, his writings and political agitation aimed to respond to the political, economic and cultural issues raised by what he called the “great food questions” of the day.

Agostinho da Silva, the Portuguese philosopher, educator, essayist and Christian mystic, propelled the ethics of food into the public arena both in his own country and in Brazil. His visionary utopian perspective allowed him to raise important philosophical questions on a wide range of issues, including human nutrition and the ethical treatment of animals, and to propose remedial measures at both the individual and societal levels.

2. The Utopian Ethics of Henry Salt: From Animal Rights to Vegetarianism

2.1. A Biographical Overview

Henry Stephens Salt was a radical journalist, prolific essayist on ethical and political issues, a committed social reformer, literary critic and biographer, and an amateur naturalist. His journalism strongly reflected his socialist beliefs, and he wrote regularly on issues such as landlordism, land reform, poverty, workers' rights, and the prison system. His politics were socialist, his analytics materialist, his ethics embraced all species, and his strategy for social change employed propagandising and political lobbying in equal measure.

The social preoccupations that would occupy Salt for the rest of his long life began to coalesce after he graduated in classics from Cambridge University and became a teacher at Eton College, one of Britain's elite private schools, only for him to conclude that Eton was just a microcosm of wider Victorian society. Having endured the institution for almost ten years, appalled by the cruelty, gluttony, boorishness and snobbery that lay beneath the thin veneer of refined academicism, he resigned his post and moved with his wife Catherine to rural Surrey. There, he adopted the simple rural life recommended by Thoreau, devoting himself to writing on ethics, animal rights and vegetarianism, and to campaigning for greater public awareness and more appropriate government policies.

Salt first found himself attracted to the ideas of the fledgling Fellowship of the New Life, a small discussion and study group composed of ethical socialists, many of whom – influenced by the writings of Tolstoy, Thoreau and the Italian liberal catholic priest Antonio Rosmini – advocated pacifism, vegetarianism and a simple lifestyle. At their meetings, they discussed how best to morally regenerate society by perfecting the individual as a prelude to perfecting society as a whole. However, while content to learn more about pressing social issues and discuss potential solutions, he was eager to see social change materialise, and later gravitated towards the newly-formed Fabian Society² that had split away from the Fellowship, more eager to actively promote social change than to merely debate it in the abstract. By becoming a member of both organisations, Salt satisfied both his deep interest in humanitarian ideas and his eagerness to promote concrete social reforms.

In contrast to the Fellowship, the Fabians aimed to work towards the transformation of society through popular education, agitation and organisation (to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw's slogan) using, more specifically, public debate and political lobbying to achieve their aims. The Society initially tolerated a plurality of ideological positions among its members, and there were early disagreements between supporters of anarchist-inspired local collectivities and Marxists advocating state socialism. By the turn of the century, however, the Fabians had committed themselves to gradual social change and policy reform, to be achieved using "the existing institutions [and] party and parliamentary machinery", so that subsequently socialism could be legislated into existence, based on the nationalisation of key industries, improved wages,

municipal ownership of urban utilities and free public education and training (Diniejkó n.d.).

Driven by his all-embracing view of humanitarianism, his conviction that the gravest social problems of the day were all intimately interconnected, and his frustration over the myriad organisations involved in dietary reform and animal rights, Salt formed the Humanitarian League in 1891 and acted as its Honorary Secretary for almost thirty years.³ He hoped to attract all the disparate struggles for social reform – by vegetarians, antivivisectionists, campaigners for animal rights and more humane prisons, anti-colonialists and anti-imperialists – under a single global aim and organisational banner, that of humanitarianism. The League's initiatives aimed to promote – through debate and the diffusion of information – a greater and more active awareness of the common kinship existing between all sentient creatures and, in particular, to lobby Parliament for the more rigorous application of existing legislation on animal welfare, the extension of such laws, a complete revision of criminal law and the prison system, and the establishment of an education system based on the duty of benevolence towards all our fellow beings.

Notwithstanding his intensive work with the League, Salt remained a Fabian until the turn of the century; however, believing that imperialism could provide the means to propagate internationally the model of governance to which the Society attributed such strategic importance for the attainment of socialism, during the Boer War, its members voted narrowly in favour of the British invasion of the Transvaal. In response, Salt – among many others, including suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst – resigned. Thereafter he concentrated all his energies on informing and educating the public about the ethical incoherence between human eating habits and the rights of animals, collaborating closely with many other supporters of radical social reform,⁴ and pressuring government to enact legislation to eliminate or at least mitigate the contradictions involved.

2.2. The origins of Salt's animal rights advocacy and ethical vegetarianism

Henry Salt shared with the American polymath Thoreau and the English poet Shelley an intuitive belief that Nature is inherently harmonious, that all sentient beings are sacred, that resistance is only legitimate if non-violent, and that the individual (and ultimately humanity) is perfectible. His socialist world view was inseparable from the principles that underpinned his early espousal of Thoreauvian simplicity, his staunch support for animal rights, and commitment to vegetarianism (Clark & Foster 2000: 468).⁵ In his view, for society to become as civilised as it was habitually claimed to be, the two main forms of human violence had to be abolished – that which we inflict on animals (by means of stock breeding, slaughter, blood sports and zoological gardens) and those which pit human against human, specifically socio-economic inequality, corporal punishment and war (Dardenne 2014: 13).

Salt differed from the majority of intellectuals of his day in that he did not regard late Victorian Britain as the epitome of civilisation. In his memoirs, written in the aftermath of the First World War and the Great Depression, he warns the reader that:

if present conditions [are thought to correspond to...] civilisation, we might well incline to despair; but if we are [...] living (as I think) in a still primitive period of savagery and barbarism, hope in the far future need not wholly be abandoned (apud Dardenne 2011: 14).⁶

His concept of what constituted a civilised society was an extension of his ideas on humanity's ethical evolution rather than the conventional wisdom that civilisation could be measured in terms of material, technological or cultural advances. Accordingly, he defined a humanitarian attitude as "a protest against all tyranny and desecration, whether such wrong be done by the infliction of suffering on sentient beings, or by the vandalism which can ruthlessly destroy the natural grace of the earth" (apud Dardenne 2014: 47).

Salt's diagnosis of the social ills of his day led him to conclude that the wealth, power and hegemony enjoyed by the owners of capital was only made possible by their exploitation of the labouring classes and the impoverishment and hunger it caused. Moreover, he went much further than many of his radical contemporaries by confessing himself unable to distinguish between those "who live selfishly on the labour of others" and "those who pamper a depraved appetite at the expense of [...] animal suffering", insisting that those who called themselves socialists would never fully realise their aim of creating a society that was truly humane unless and until they rejected animal cruelty and embraced vegetarianism.⁷

Salt's politics were socialist, his analytics materialist, his ethics embraced all species, and his strategy for social change employed publishing and political lobbying in equal measure. With remarkable utopian foresight, given the ideological conjuncture in which he was writing, he persistently raised serious issues in the public mind regarding the flagrant asymmetries in the rights "enjoyed" by different communities depending on their race, gender or species. Most prominent in Salt's legacy are the pioneering works in which he polemicised against the myriad forms of animal cruelty that custom and tradition had legitimised, actively advocating vegetarianism as both a viable strategy and an ethical choice for individuals and society at large. Throughout his long life, Salt took pains to systematically present the public and politicians with practical proposals that could, in his view, lead to the eventual reform of humanity's attitudes and behaviour and, in particular, restore harmony to our relationship with the animal kingdom and the natural world.

2.3. A Plea for Vegetarianism: ethics, awareness and social reform

The eponymous chapter in this collection of essays⁸ is notable for its pioneering exposition of the rational arguments against a carnivorous diet. Salt argues that vegetarianism can be justified on four grounds – economic, nutritional, aesthetic and ethical. Not without humour, he proceeds to inventory the reasons why one might make such a choice, refuting one by one objections based either on so-called common sense or simple prejudice. Consistent with the social reforms he championed, Salt begins by highlighting the economic advantages of the vegetarian diet for the British population, the majority of whose breadwinners – whether they were factory

and workshop employees or self-employed artisans and service-providers – earned too little at that time to afford an omnivorous diet based on animal protein. Elsewhere in this collection of essays (Salt 1886: 113), Salt answers the accusation that his advocacy of vegetarianism served to legitimise low wages, perpetuate income inequality and generalise social deprivation; he points to the good health of those who adopt vegetarianism voluntarily as proof of the non-pecuniary advantages of a meat-free diet. He subsequently extends his advocacy of vegetarianism beyond the economic and social to encompass aesthetic and ethical justifications, enumerating the deleterious and degrading impact on the observer's aesthetic sensibilities when confronted by the sight of the carcasses of dead animals hanging in a butcher's shop, the plaintive sounds of livestock being delivered to the slaughterhouse, or the strong aromas of animal flesh being prepared for the table. Indeed, he goes as far as to claim that "the greatest and most unerring argument in favour of vegetarianism is [...] the utter absence of 'good taste' in flesh-eating, which is revolting to all the higher instincts of the human mind" (*idem*: 12).

Salt scrutinizes and deconstructs the commonest argument made against vegetarians, namely that such an ostensibly eccentric diet is neither sufficiently nourishing for physical labour nor possesses the necessary nutrients for intellectual work.⁹ He berates the detractors of vegetarianism for this double stigmatisation, doubly refuting it by reminding them that the peasantry in many countries ate little if any meat (albeit mainly due to their poverty) and – certainly with the English romantic generation in mind – that many notable writers and poets had willingly rejected meat-eating. In a style that could be defined as proselytising militancy, Salt reviews other common objections to vegetarianism, such as that made on physiological grounds by sceptics claiming that "comparative anatomy [...] shows distinctly that the human teeth and intestines are constructed with a view to the digestion of flesh, and not of vegetables" (*idem*: 74) and thus that it would be flying in the face of Nature if "unnatural" vegetarianism were to become a universal practice.

These criticisms and their corresponding refutations are more fully and systematically developed in a later essay (Chapter VII of the collection) entitled "On certain fallacies", in which Salt seeks to demonstrate that the commonest objections to vegetarianism, rather than being based upon rationality, have their origins in the deeply-rooted prejudices of the "British mind" (*idem*: 73). He proceeds to identify and refute eleven of what he considers the most prevalent fallacies regarding vegetarianism, providing his own apposite and often caustic riposte in each case: (1) our teeth and digestive tract were designed for meat-eating; (2) we must eat meat, as our climate is too cold; (3) vegetarianism obliges us to over-intellectualise rather than simply enjoy our diet; (4) it is an unfounded belief; (5) it is selfish, inconveniencing and causing concern to our family and friends regarding our health and sanity; (6) no suitable materials exist to replace the skin, bone, fats and oils of animal origin used to manufacture everyday products of first necessity; (7) to abandon so many animals to conflict, starvation and death would amount to cruelty; (8) an animal's life devoted to providing food for humans is better than no life at all; (9) vegetarianism is against Nature; (10) vegetarians repudiate all taking of life, when sometimes it is unavoidable; and, finally, (11) vegetarianism rejects what the Scriptures allow.

Erudite and cultured, Salt frequently quotes literature to bolster his arguments discrediting the carnivorous diet and the customs and consciousness it represents. This strategy is elegantly deployed, for example, by quoting both Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet when demanding that the claims of vegetarianism be taken seriously and tested scientifically (*idem*: 19)¹⁰ and his Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* to confirm the deleterious effects of meat consumption on mental processes (*idem*: 46-47).¹¹ He paraphrases lines from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* to warn the neophyte of the tribulations of adopting a vegetarian lifestyle (*idem*: 91),¹² refers to a passage from Keats's poem "The Eve of St. Agnes" to denounce the immorality of the flesh-eater's diet (*idem*: 23),¹³ and recalls that in Thomas More's *Utopia* hunting for recreational purposes simply did not exist (*idem*: 95).

Throughout Salt's collection of essays, his critique of the carnivorous diet is relentless, and he even upbraids some of its detractors for not going far enough. For example, while critical of the St George's Society, founded by art critic John Ruskin, for its qualified repudiation of animal cruelty, he deployed Ruskin's aesthetic doctrine on morality and beauty (*idem*: 37)¹⁴ as a key device in defence of the vegetarian diet. Indeed, in his essay "Good Taste in Diet", it provides Salt with a pretext to remind readers that "the beef was once an ox, the mutton was once a sheep, the veal was once a calf, and the pork was once a pig" (*idem*: 33).

In "Some results of food reform", Salt enumerates some of the beneficial consequences of the reformed vegetarian diet (*idem*: 40), namely the elevation and refinement of our aesthetic and moral sense, the exercise of a healthier lifestyle – including abstinence from alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. Indeed, the need for both the rich and the "lower orders" to practice moderation based upon education and a plentiful supply of nutritious non-meat foodstuffs, is a prerequisite – a necessary but not sufficient precondition – for the social reform to which his utopian humanism aspires.

At an economic and social conjuncture in which the population growth, rural-urban migration and widespread impoverishment stemming from the industrial revolution called for structural rather than legislative responses, in his short essay "Vegetarianism and Social Reform", Salt makes the vegetarian diet central to his call for social reform. He remained unconvinced as to the efficacy, and deeply preoccupied as to the ethics, of many of the proposals to relieve the pressure on food supplies, strongly influenced as they were by Malthusian principles and what were to become social Darwinist and eugenicist thinking – such as measures to encourage sexual abstinence, postpone childbirth, and promote emigration, along with technological solutions to enable perishable goods to be more widely traded, thanks to the "floating mortuaries [...] by which the carcasses of sheep are preserved in the antipodes and brought to our shores" (*idem*: 112). Given the abundance, diversity and nutritional quality of vegetarian fare, and due to the ethical superiority inherent in frugal and simple eating habits, Salt believed that the only rational and sustainable way of meeting the world's growing food needs was to radically move human consumption away from meat products. However, this dietary revolution would need to be integrated into a wider set of complementary reforms also aimed at constructing a more just society.

Structural changes would be ineffective without a shift in mentality among both consumers and professionals, argues Salt. In "Medical Men & Food Reform", he affirms that it is essential to transform the attitudes of professionals, all of whom have been trained according to an epistemological paradigm neither given to openness nor tolerant of criticism by lay people. The need to change the attitudes of the mass of the population with regard to animals is dealt with in the essay "Sport", in which Salt rehearses a thesis that was to be more fully developed in his 1894 book *Animal Rights*. He invokes the principle of humanitarian sympathy for the entire animal kingdom as a means of deconstructing the arguments of those who condone leisure pursuits that cause pain and/or death to animals in the name of entertainment. In Salt's view, the fact that hunting and fishing for pleasure endows humans with a range of impressive skills cannot justify these "brutal and degrading" practices (*idem*: 96). He finds nonsensical the claim that blood sports provide opportunities for people to enjoy the majesty of Nature, and asks why the same benefits cannot be enjoyed without sacrificing animals: "The dynamiters¹⁵ who cross the Atlantic to blow up an English town might on this [same] principle justify the object of their journey by the assertion that the sea voyage brought them in contact with the exalting and ennobling influences of the Atlantic" (*idem*: 98).

Towards the end of his reflections on the bloodiness of sport, Salt praises the insights to be found in the essay "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts", in which Thomas de Quincey "humorously treats of murder – much as the sportsman affects to regard sport – as an honourable profession, giving scope to the highest art and dexterity of handiwork, and ennobling the character of those who practise it" (*idem*: 99). Adopting again his trademark ironic hyperbole to expose the hypocrisy of those who simultaneously romanticise and brutalise the animal world, in his essay "The Philosophy of Cannibalism", written in response to the press scandal provoked by two cases of deceased humans being eaten so that others might survive (*idem*: 102), Salt feigns incomprehension at the "squeamish and sentimental" scruples displayed by meat-eaters, since "cannibalism is not only a branch of that great flesh-eating system of diet of which [carnivorous humans] are upholders, but it is beyond doubt the most logical and fully developed realisation of the principles on which that system is based" (*ibidem*). By presenting cannibalism as a special case of humanity's generalised zoophagy, Salt employs black humour to stress the serious point he is making.

Salt also charms the reader by drawing on mythology, anthropological accounts and literary quotations from Classical Antiquity¹⁶ to justify his categorising of cannibalism as one of humanity's "time-honoured institution[s]" (*idem*: 102). He almost outdoes de Quincey by hypothesising that cannibal tribes might seek to justify their own "dietetic peculiarities" (*idem*: 104) by arguing along lines similar to those habitually used by defenders of meat-eating when they assert the impracticability of a vegetarian world, such as:

"It has always been so"; "It is the [...] rule of our society"; "Our medical men approve of it"; "We are strong and healthy on this diet"; "It is [...] the law of Nature"; "It is much kinder [...] than to leave them to die of a lingering old age"; "The world would be over-run with old and sick people if we did not eat them"; "It is [...] necessary at times to take life"; and "We must [...] not give way to humanitarian sentiment" (*idem*: 104-105).

Salt even compares the alleged sale of human flesh in the markets of primitive New Britain with the exhibition of animal carcasses in the commercial establishments of the supposedly civilized “old Britain”, and urges his readers to meditate on the paradox of our deploring, on the one hand, the “dog-like perversity of appetite which prompts men to glut themselves with food at once disgusting and degrading, while they neglect or despise the pure and simple gifts scattered everywhere by the bountiful hand of Nature” (*idem*: 110).

Taken together, Salt’s essays provide a detailed justification of a dietary regime that, in addition to claiming to be healthier than one based on animal protein, forms a key component of the multi-faceted humanitarian strategy adopted by Victorian utopians for the complete reform of British – and perhaps even world – society.

3. The Utopian Metaphysics of Agostinho da Silva – From Expanding Consciousness to Embracing Vegetarianism

3.1. A biographical overview

Between the ages of 16 and 18, da Silva worked as a journalist for the *Comércio do Porto* newspaper, writing articles in which he often conducted a classical dialogue on key issues of the day, juxtaposing his own views with those of imaginary characters of his own invention. Da Silva graduated in Classics at Porto University and was awarded his doctorate only a year later. He was already collaborating with the literary magazine *Seara Nova*, of which he was soon to become a mainstay. In 1935, having found work as a secondary school teacher, he was dismissed after four years for refusing to provide a sworn declaration – as required of every Portuguese public servant by the Salazar government’s “Cabral Law” – that he did not belong to any unapproved organisation. As a matter of conscience, he refused and, aged 29, was prevented from pursuing his career in the public education system. Subsisting on his meagre earnings as a writer and private tutor, he co-founded in 1939 a civic and cultural association and dedicated the war years to writing and publishing educational material for the general public, targeting in particular the poorer, less well-educated members of Portuguese society.

Following his arrest – allegedly for expressing anti-Catholic religious views that Salazar’s secret police interpreted as indicative of communist or anarchist involvement, his brief detention in Lisbon’s Aljube prison, and a period of internal exile in the Algarve, he finally opted for self-exile in Brazil. There he taught at various universities and worked to promote popular awareness of the ethical issues raised by the increasing pace of the country’s modernisation. In 1969, when Salazar was replaced as head of the Portuguese government, da Silva returned home, devoting himself first of all to cooperativism, a passion he had inherited during his work with António Sérgio at the Antero de Quental Pedagogical Centre, and subsequently, after the 1974 Revolution, in the agrarian reform process that had been set in motion when farmworkers in the Alentejo Region occupied uncultivated or underutilised estates to form collective farms (*Unidades de Produção*

Colectivas), a movement that, from 1977, Portugal’s increasingly conservative governments took pains to stifle. Until his death in 1994, da Silva continued to deliver his libertarian message, remaining highly critical of the Church, the education and welfare system, and what he considered Portugal’s premature adoption of mainstream Western governance and party politics.¹⁷ Today da Silva is remembered as one of the key dissident philosophical voices in twentieth-century Portugal – respected by some for his unsettling and outspoken utopian spirituality, reviled by others for the danger his “heresies” presented both to the Catholic hierarchy of his day and to his more subservient co-religionists.

3.2. The crisis of philosophy and the pursuit of consciousness

In Agostinho da Silva’s “Tomada de Consciência” [“Gaining Awareness”], the penultimate of the fifteen essays that make up his collection *Só Ajustamentos* [Only Adjustments], it is not the origin, purpose or even the unity of life and consciousness – seen as a long, complex cosmic process precisely regulated by physical laws – that he attempts to problematise. Rather, his purpose is to diagnose what he sees as an existential crisis that, from the standpoint of his Joachimite¹⁸ thinking, presages an era in which the expansion of humanity’s consciousness would allow active religious aspirations to prevail over abstract philosophical representations of the world. Thus, in the essay, his main intention was to focus on the specific cognitive and existential crisis of individual and collective consciousness characterising a given stage in the evolution of humanity.

In contrast to mainstream approaches, da Silva plays down the extent and relevance of the principal symptoms of cultural crisis in the scientific, ontological and moral spheres, basing his explanation on three arguments. The first, along Platonic lines, is that science (in the broadest sense of the term) continuously pursues its vocation of refining our objective knowledge of the world of phenomena and, in doing so, reveals to us the laws of nature “as they eternally and non-spatially manifest themselves in time and space” (da Silva 1962: 86). His second argument, rooted more in Stoicism, contests the thesis that a traumatic wartime conjuncture capable of “undermining the mildest of wills” (*idem*: 87), far from exposing the bankruptcy of the human character, demonstrates the strength and capacity for resistance of people “as ordinary as any of us [who today ...] suffer uncomplainingly and stand ready to continue doing so” (*ibidem*). In his third argument da Silva deploys a twofold perspective: on the one hand, he reasons that the apparent superiority of collective moral life in the past – not only in Ancient Greece and Rome but also in the Christian Middle Ages – derived from people’s instinct for survival in a hostile and often precarious world, triggering the emergence of forms of state willing and able to impose discipline by regulating individual and collective behaviour and by devising and applying the corresponding sanctions; on the other hand, da Silva concludes that historically, whenever people have had the freedom to be creative, humanity’s moral standards have indeed progressed – albeit only marginally (*ibidem*).

While da Silva provides a detailed refutation of the idea that there is a generalised crisis afflicting the spheres of science, ontology and morality, he does this principally with a view to directing our attention to the emergence of another recurrent crisis – that of philosophy itself. This crisis, he assures us, is not due to its inadequacies as the main foundation and driving force in our understanding of thinking, being and doing, where its performance has shown no real signs of structural weakness or collapse, mainly because its aims and procedures have remained fairly coherent. Rather, philosophy is in crisis because it has proven powerless (as an intellectual vocation) and/or ill-equipped (as a discipline) to deliver answers to the three great unanswered questions posed, respectively, by epistemology (how is new knowledge discovered?), ontology (why does our suffering persist?) and ethics (why do the lives we live diverge so much from our moral aspirations?) (*idem*: 88). Thus the “awareness” in the title of da Silva’s essay refers not only to an acknowledgement that there is a crisis – perhaps even a terminal one – in philosophy as practised in both academic and lay contexts, but more importantly to the recognition that what we have long taken to be “purely religious aspirations” could actually be achieved (*idem*: 89).

Drawing also on texts on which da Silva was working at the time he was writing *Só Ajustamentos*,¹⁹ and at the risk of simplifying the exegesis of what is a complex topic, we will first try to identify the existential implications of more and more people pursuing and encountering the spiritual meaning of life, which he saw both as an outcome of the crisis of philosophy and as essential to developing the awareness of which he spoke. Da Silva’s desideratum that humanity might develop a greater sense of spirituality has, at its core, the need to cultivate unconditional love for *all* life, as inspired by Christ’s example and, as its teleological horizon, the “intimate and ultimate truth that permeates everything and makes the coexistence of [...] order and fraternal love possible” (*idem*: 51). Moreover, a future society characterised by greater spirituality resonated both with da Silva’s firmest article of faith – the ontological perfectibility of *all* life – and with his mystical-utopian conviction that Portugal’s history and the maritime vocation of its people would play key symbolic roles in bringing this about.

It is possible to identify three inter-related and interacting teachings that reflect and summarise not only da Silva’s vision of an ideal world, but also, we believe, the main vectors of the personal code of conduct to which he tried to adhere throughout his life. The first vector warns us that in our pursuit of awareness we should guard against the insidious spread of routine and the growth of the unconscious acts and attitudes that, if constantly repeated, sterilise the spirit and prevent new “experiences being available to all in a future organization [of society]” (*idem*: 29). These experiences are not necessarily associated with the alterations in our state of mind caused by sensory stimulation, but with the level of consciousness with which each of us deals with the tasks at hand.

People who, when getting dressed, do not even think about what they are doing [...] even in such a small act are submitting to habit and, as a result, will delay the advent of heaven. There you have it: it is not habit that gets us into heaven; heaven is attained because every day we treat every act as if it required, at every moment, all our intelligence, all our attention, all our will (*idem*: 94-95).

The second vector in the pursuit of awareness requires us to overcome the duality of contemplation and action in our conduct. This would only be possible, concluded da Silva, once a common order had been established on a universal scale, based upon the experience of voluntary “pilot communities”²⁰ designed to promote the conscious combination of these two aspects of our conduct. His conception of such communities draws less on contemporary Catholic congregations such as those envisaged by Foucault, and rather more on the materialisation of his own unflinching hope that technology could contribute to liberating us from our status of “simple animals of labour” (*idem*: 17), equipping us to occupy the resulting leisure time creatively, giving us “the kind of life that people in their natural state had once enjoyed [...] thereby permitting an astonishing fusion of the two Greeces, classical and romantic [...] in which lie the origins of our religious communities [...] the only example of true communism” (*idem*: 65). Da Silva sees this fusion as providing an environment in which beings may not only act contemplatively but also contemplate actively (*idem*: 45). In order to avoid accusations of inconsequential daydreaming, or unfounded wishful thinking, da Silva exemplifies this dialectic by referring to two apparently banal everyday occurrences:

It is inconceivable that there is no-one who, at some point in history, or at some point in their life, has not looked at the sky and the sea and felt engulfed in love; likewise, there can be no-one [...] who has never embarked, their mind fully-focused, upon some task that, with clarity and intelligence, they deemed essential. For this is [what it means] to act; everything else is just reflexes or simply work – and work, whatever the extent of our freedom may be – is always slavery (*ibidem*).

The third vector enunciated by da Silva – oft-repeated in the text of *Só Ajustamentos* and elsewhere in his wide-ranging writings – is that, once routine has been dissipated, alienating habits abandoned, the tedium of performing our everyday tasks removed, enlightenment gained through our boundless gratitude for the gift of life and for our deeper understanding of its mystery, then saintliness must be the guiding principal if the “life of each of us in its entirety is to be sanctified” (*idem*: 57). Taking the life and teachings of Christ as the transformational path from the *homo civilis* of the Greco-Roman city of the past to the *homo fraternus* of the future City of God, da Silva arrives at the notion – which, admittedly, may appear somewhat eccentric – that *everyone* has the potential to become a saint. While he admits that “today, few Christians would take sainthood as their primary objective”, he exhorts his readers to actively pursue saintliness in their lives, rather than dismissing it as a remote hypothesis relevant only to a few.

3.3. The personal ethics of vegetarianism: examples from myth and anthropology

The roots of da Silva's freely-taken decision to adopt a vegetarian diet himself and, through his politico-social interactions and pedagogical initiatives, to discreetly advocate vegetarianism to a wider audience, lie in the enlightened, resolute, unselfish, mystic and utopian nature mission to which he had devoted his life, that of promoting among others an expanded and more active awareness of humanity's place in Nature and the cosmos.²¹ He exhorts us to live our lives guided by an alert, de-routinised consciousness such that our every contemplative act consecrates and sanctifies Nature – including the animal world – in all its complex interdependence. However, da Silva adds, humanity must first gain this awareness if some future Golden Age (in the classical tradition) or earthly paradise (in Jewish-Christian thought) is to be established, where harmony would again prevail between all beings in Nature. We may infer the durability of this happy equilibrium, he says, from what we know of the way of life of indigenous peoples (e.g. the Amerindian tribes of Brazil)²² before they encountered Europeans.

Drawing on his knowledge of the Greco-Roman literature and myths, da Silva presents his own interpretation of how it was that human communities lost their original state of sacred and primordial harmony and became societies in which dissent and disorder prevailed and had to be subject to civil regulation. On several occasions in his writings, he suggests that the loss of humanity's pristine state corresponds to the abandonment of frugivorous food and the introduction of animal sacrifice. His explanation of this ontological fall,²³ i.e. the shift from a unique cultural paradigm and the attendant decline in intra- and inter-species solidarity and the resultant rise in violence – socially sanctioned or otherwise – points to a key biological factor, that of hunger.

At some point, as the fruits of the forest became scarcer, humanity would have turned to animals for food [...]. Instead of the perfect and pacific contact with nature that is only possible with a fruit-based diet, by [adopting] hunting and fishing, humanity had declared war on nature (*idem*: 178).

According to da Silva, having committed this abomination of killing what hitherto had been inviolable, human beings felt compelled – perhaps by their fear of losing the protection afforded them by certain totemic animals or by the gods the community worshipped – to devise a way of assuaging individual and collective guilt and atoning for the brutal violation of the sacred meaning of life. Drawing, apparently, on the theories of his former university teacher Teixeira Rego,²⁴ da Silva surmises that ritualised animal sacrifice would require a deity or deities to share in the responsibility for the act.

Having struck down the first [animal], they felt the horror of their crime, for they had killed a companion, a friend, and their first instinct would have been to flee. The gods were forced to take part in the feast, so that the perpetrators could be forgiven (*idem*: 165).

In order to suggest how the slaying of animals may have developed a religious form, da Silva refers to the primordial Greek propitiatory rites in honour of Zeus, in which their death was re-enacted: the striker of the fatal blow takes ritual flight, ritual accusations are levelled at the celebrants (to whom the meat is distributed), and even the bloody utensils are ritually condemned (da Silva 2005: 165). Regardless of the validity of his explanation – in which the principle of human solidarity with all living creatures is supplanted by a lethal antagonism to them, and human compassion falls prey to the cunning of governance – it illustrates the extent to which da Silva, even at a tender age, was beginning to develop a spiritual consciousness that recognised and respected the sacred quality of all forms of life. The fact that one of his numerous popular educational texts²⁵ specifically addressed the ethics and economics of human nutrition and implicitly advocates a vegetarian diet, also supports the idea that vegetarianism was an integral part of the holistic ethical stance he had gradually developed over the years.

From species-based exceptionalism to non-species-based inclusion: onwards to a new Golden Age?

Evidence of da Silva's profound concern for the animal world is not restricted to the content of some of his educational booklets, the entomological research he conducted in Brazil, or his well-known affection for cats, but can also be found in the series of children's radio broadcasts he made in 1939, which included lectures on wasps, the fox and prehistoric animals.²⁶ Judging from a passage in his July 12 broadcast, in preparing himself to talk about Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence as applied to all living beings, da Silva had learned that early in his life the founder of the Indian state had also adopted on ethical rather than cultural or religious grounds a diet that did not depend on sacrificing the lives of any animal.²⁷

However, what is at issue is not so much the moment of da Silva's epiphany – the moment he realised that the preservation of human life does not require the systematic liquidation of animal life – but rather the intuitive process, supported by philosophical, theological, mystical, aesthetic and political arguments, by which da Silva came to understand the sacred unity binding all forms of existence together and began to speculate that it might be possible for life to be celebrated again in this way if the harmony characterising the Golden Age could be restored. Furthermore, he came to believe in the possibility that, by means of our voluntarily increasing and expanding our awareness, a selfless order could be re-established in which non-human animals would no longer be incarcerated for the purposes of becoming human food.

In 1947, during his self-imposed exile in Brazil, da Silva wrote and distributed the seven-page quasi-manifesto *Alcorão* [The Koran], summarising in 30 points the relationship between God, the universe, life and humanity (Santos 2014: 50-52). From these "bullet points", da Silva deduces the principles that might underpin the restoration of Golden Age harmony, and stresses a key prerequisite for such a fully-redeemed and seemingly property-less society: "For the fortunate, united in God, there is but a single regime of non-property, whether it be material goods, animals,

women or children” (Silva/Pedro 2007: 72).²⁸

In his varied efforts to convince others to choose, on ethical grounds, a frugivorous diet, da Silva never proselytised, either in print or in practice. Moreover, his opposition to totalitarian solutions was absolute, for he recognised that because dietary regimes are culturally determined and generate deeply embedded habits and psychophysical dependencies, they are very resistant to restructuring or reform by edict. In fact, in his 1942 educational booklet *Nutrição Humana* [Human Nutrition], he proposes measures, including a rationally-balanced omnivorous diet, conducive to a food regime that was more humane and could promote the eradication of hunger. Pragmatically, in his argument he takes anthropocentricity for granted or, as expressed in the terms used today in the animal rights debate, he adopts a “speciesist” position.²⁹ At the time da Silva was writing *Nutrição Humana*, and despite his conscious personal decision to opt for a vegetarian diet, he clearly understood that, given the stage of material and spiritual development humanity had reached, the more practical way forward was to advocate the very best in food production, distribution, education and information, so that basic healthy nutrition could be achieved on a global scale. Once that goal had been achieved, in line with his utopian-millennarian thinking, he saw humanity evolving towards a higher stage of awareness of the sanctity of *all* life, in which it would be feasible to totally eliminate the senseless animal suffering entailed in satisfying part of humanity’s food needs.

In his capacity as a “thinker of worlds yet to be” – to use the felicitous expression coined by Paulo Borges³⁰ – on at least two occasions, tensions obtrude both between da Silva’s idealist and pragmatic vision, and his speciesist and non-speciesist thinking. In his essay “Serve, Create, Pray” in *Só Ajustamentos*, he notes that, while the sea is considered an inexhaustible source of food, our exploitation of it is a prime example of our misuse of material and human resources that could be used elsewhere to improve human welfare, raise awareness to and sanctify our unconditional love of all life. Yet he complains that fishing remains technically primitive, and that “scientists are only just beginning to understand the nutritional value of plankton”,³¹ seemingly suggesting that the sacrifice of lower orders of life could be deemed an acceptable temporary compromise (*idem*: 32).

However, this duality in da Silva’s thinking also reflects the fact that different degrees of consciousness and distinct levels of empathy for sentient life may coexist, at both the individual and collective levels. His understanding of this nuance is patent in *Proposição* [Proposition], another of his more rhetorical texts (da Silva 1989). Published in 1974 – and like his *Alcorão* manifesto, albeit more programmatic in structure and political in tone – the document discusses in practical terms the principles on which a just and prosperous society could be founded. In it, da Silva observes that, when discussing the raising of animals,

we ought to choose the protein source that is the cheapest and the most appropriate for each people. I must stress, however, that an equivalent vegetable protein is always available. Animals exist in the world to be our companions, not our slaves and victims (*idem*: 623).

Generally speaking, we can see that da Silva’s approach to the vegetarian diet has two distinct aspects: one regarding consciousness, the other relating to time. Concerning the former, da Silva recognizes the need for a conscious renewal of the way we represent the world, which challenges routine and habit both spiritually (by sanctifying all life) and axiologically (by way of a revolution in our customs). With respect to the latter, da Silva regards the universal adoption of a vegetarian diet as legitimate because he believes it to have been the basis of our original state of plenitude, when humans lived in harmony with each other and with all animals. In his view, re-adopting the vegetarian diet constitutes a redemptive act with respect to the ontological fall that occurred in some remote and undefinable *illo tempore*, due either to cataclysmic shortages of the vegetation that had hitherto been humanity’s sole source of sustenance or to the transition from a nomadic lifestyle based on the gathering of wild fruits, vegetables, honey, mushrooms and similar items, to one dependent on settled agriculture in which the raising of livestock and/or the cultivation of crops predominate.

Again, in line with his utopian-millennarian logic, and by way of the idealist Joachimite concept of the “messianic nation” that he often applied to Portugal, da Silva recognises the material and cultural constraints that may delay our achievement of a social order displaying a level of ethical consciousness that ensures the rights of all animals are respected. Today, that same idealism can be interpreted in some of the innovative eco-ethical concepts that have emerged in the transdisciplinary discipline of food studies, in which the natural, human and social sciences explore in partnership the relationships between food and the human condition. Indeed, one of the main avenues currently being pursued by scholars in food studies concerns the nexus between the evolution of humanity’s relationship with food and the development of an all-encompassing ethical consciousness.

It is conceivable that the type of consciousness that da Silva contemplated – relational rather than regulated by an anthropocentric and individualistic conception of the world – could contribute to challenging humanity’s prevailing hegemony over the natural world. In the context of today’s globalised and increasingly post-industrial society, this expanded awareness would oblige us not only to extend the ethical sphere of action to other species in nature and to the natural world as a whole, but also to transcend the spatiotemporal horizons that often limit our thinking to our immediate locality and to the next few generations. As Julia Abramson asserts (2012: 374), any consideration of the duality between “food and ethics in the broadest sense must encompass as its object or objects, kindness, right action and the good life relative to all spheres, phases, aspects and circumstances of food, its production and its consumption”.

4. By Way of a Conclusion. Salt & da Silva – An Intersecting Praxis?

Our aim in this article has been to trace the evolution of the praxis of two early protagonists in the vegetarian and animal rights movements, even though they represent different generations and their work was conducted in geographically distant corners of Western Europe. A number of striking similarities and a few significant disparities emerge from our comparative reading of works by Henry Salt and Agostinho da Silva on questions of vegetarianism and animal rights (explicitly in the former's case, implicitly in the latter's), especially when seen against the backdrop of their particular biographies, the distinct cultures they inhabited and the specific conjunctures in which they waged their campaigns. This comparison is also revealing with regard to the practical impact that their ideas and examples had during their lifetimes, and the extent to which their concerns still resonate in contemporary debates on food ethics, animal welfare, environmental conservation and the "mindfulness" that can be gained from cognitive training.

If it is true that the revolutions in technology and the consolidation of capitalism were instrumental in bringing about the industrialisation of food production and the massification of its consumption, it is equally true – though less frequently recognised – that these key events of the nineteenth century also gave enormous impetus to the exploration of philosophical and practical alternatives to the unequal, divided, alienating and philistine society that had emerged in Western Europe. As Émilie Dardenne notes for Britain, "laicism, trade unionism, socialism, feminism and the return to nature all developed in response to the strict social organisation of Victorian liberalism" (Dardenne 2011: 15).³² Even as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, the uneven geographical distribution of industrialisation, trade, technology and imperial power was there for all to see. Britain and the USA and, to a lesser degree, France and Germany, were advanced, industrialised and vying for supremacy at the very centre of international capitalism, while Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece remained relatively backward, largely agrarian and semi-peripheral. Such differences did not prevent these countries' respective elites from presumptuously considering themselves civilised.

In Portugal's case, in the urban centres at least, dissenting voices similar to those identified by Dardenne could be heard, despite – or perhaps in part as a result of – Portugal's decline from dynamic world maritime power to passive semi-peripheral bystander. By the time the Republic finally replaced the monarchy in 1910, the cities of Lisbon and Porto had become significant centres of libertarian socialism and anarcho-syndicalism, anti-clerical sentiment was rife, feminists and suffragists of all persuasions were pioneering civic initiatives in health and education, and increasing numbers of people adhered to the causes of pacifism, environmentalism and vegetarianism. By the mid-1920s, a regime that was even more conservative and authoritarian than the monarchy had been installed, forcing heterodoxy and dissent back into the shadows. Spring had come late, and ended quickly, just as it would after the Carnation Revolution 50 years later.

If we look at our two philosopher-activists from the perspective of the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, with humanity facing so many new challenges – both

existential and, inevitably, ethical – and with so much remaining to be achieved on the issues that had preoccupied both Salt and da Silva decades before, it is tempting to conclude that their writings and initiatives produced few tangible effects.

In Britain, the pressure exerted by Salt's Humanitarian League, both alone and in partnership with like-minded organisations, undoubtedly helped to achieve a small number of legislative advances – corporal punishment made exceptional in prisons (1898) and the Royal Navy (1906), legal due process improved (1912) and the use of feathers for fashion purposes outlawed (1921) – few were related to dietary ethics or animal welfare. Salt's holistic humanitarian approach and the actions of the League were no match for the power of the pro-war discourse emanating from parliament (including the neophyte Labour Party) and from the capitalist press, which blunted any impact Salt's ideas might otherwise have had on the level of consciousness among the population at large. Ultimately, notwithstanding the massive loss of human life occasioned by the 1914-1918 war, the Humanitarian League – in its own way as wedded to gradualism, reformism and parliamentary democracy as the Fabians who had so disappointed Henry Salt – proved incapable of redirecting popular aspirations. Parliament, having reneged on its promise to build a post-war Britain fit for heroes, seemed hardly likely to contemplate a better future for non-human animals.

In Portugal, prior to his exile, da Silva's writings on human nutrition and food ethics as well as his protagonism after his return from Brazil, appear to have left even fewer traces. Three years before da Silva was beginning to write his encyclopaedic series of booklets aimed at promoting popular education, the *Sociedade Vegetariana de Portugal*, according to the initial findings of the *Alimentopia* research project,³³ had ceased to espouse the radical ideas on which it had been founded and was increasingly associated with the authoritarian state. Moreover, communitarian lifestyles were difficult to sustain when all cooperative activities were state-regulated, alternative spiritual paths – whether rooted in Christianity or not – were frequently denounced and demonised by the all-powerful Catholic church and, in a country still profoundly rural in character and culture, the introduction of legislation to protect domestic animals, livestock and other creatures in captivity was either looked upon unfavourably or as a low priority.

There are numerous intersections between Salt and da Silva with respect to the values they held dearest, the paths their careers took and the praxis they developed. Both were utopians and millenarianists³⁴ *sensu lato*, humanitarians in the non-speciesist sense of the term, and dedicated supporters of non-violent social change. Moreover, both were classical scholars who had become teachers unwilling to conform, initially pursuing careers in journalism, adhering early to Thoreauvian ideals of simplicity and frugality, revering all the living beings in Nature, deploying similar propagandist and pedagogical methods to popularise their views, and seeing attitude change as the crucial factor in banishing cruelty and violence forever.

It is from the political-philosophical standpoint that the greatest divergence appears to be visible, at least on the surface. In his self-penned funeral oration, Salt described himself ideologically as "a rationalist [... and] socialist" (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472, citing Hendrick, 1977: 1-2), while da Silva's praxis is perhaps best characterised as idealist, libertarian and millenarianist. However, it is problematic to accept such labels at face value without putting them in their religious context.

Regarding the spiritual dimension of their praxis, again a marked degree of divergence initially seems to be the case. Salt claimed to be an atheist, and an ethical rather than a Christian socialist, who followed Epicurus and Lucretius in reasoning that:

the universe is ruled by wholly natural laws, and that mankind is free to work out its own destiny, undisturbed by any supernal guidance. [...] The soul dies with the body, and [...] the after-life [...] is but a fable and a dream” (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 470, citing Salt 1912: 10).

He was not, however, without a mystical side. He believed in an all-encompassing force binding all living things together in Nature – a force that would underpin a truly humanitarian society if, individually and collectively, we would only recognise and respect it. As he explained:

I wholly disbelieve in the present established religion; but I have a very firm religious faith of my own – a Creed of Kinship, I call it – a belief that in years yet to come there will be a recognition of the brotherhood between man and man, nation and nation, human and sub-human,³⁵ which will transform a state of semi-savagery [...] we have today] into one of civilization, when there will be no such barbarity as warfare, or the robbery of the poor by the rich, or the ill-usage of the lower animals by mankind (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472, citing Hendrick, 1977, 1-2).

For his part, da Silva’s religious beliefs were also heterodox, to say the least: his diagnosis of society’s ills and his millenarianist vision of the future were grounded in a Joachimite eschatology that was simultaneously mystical and practical. Da Silva had no compunction, it seems, in expressing his heterodoxy not only through his educational booklets, where the polemical *O Cristianismo* [Christianity] (1942) appeared alongside much less contentious writings on more mundane areas of knowledge, but also through other literature that he often distributed during speaking engagements, such as the brief but provocative *Doutrina Cristã* [Christian Doctrine] (1943). From the latter text, Pereira (2017) selects three “heretical” aphorisms that he believes would have particularly antagonised the Church hierarchy and may ultimately have contributed to da Silva’s “excommunication”:

“(1) It is not blasphemy – instead of speaking of God – to speak only of the Universe in which Spirit and Matter form an indissoluble whole”. “(2) The highest vision we can have of God, we who form only a part of the Universe, is of Intelligence and Love; the fundamental sin we commit is to limit our Intelligence or our Love”; “(3) God does not demand we worship Him: we pay homage to God, we enter into full contact with the Universe, when we develop our Intelligence and our Love: a laboratory, a library, a school, a workshop – these are all temples of God; we too are temples of God – the most beautiful of all. We can all be priests, because we all have the capacity for intelligence and love” (Cf. Pereira 2017).

Finally, both convergent and divergent elements can be detected in the views of Salt and da Silva regarding the practicalities of promoting greater individual and collective dietary awareness. Their respective philosophies and interventions place both of them – uncomfortably perhaps – between the proselytising pamphleteer and the imperturbable reformist. Salt was a lapsed Fabian, but his commitment to the non-violent struggle for social change, his belief in the efficacy of education and patient persuasion, his confidence that the Humanitarian League could become a natural home and “united front” for myriad “single-issue” organisations, and his faith in the good intentions of legislators, left him marooned between reform and revolution. Da Silva shared many of the same values, yet his direct experience of authoritarianism both at home and in his adopted Brazil obliged him to be more sceptical of all institutions of power and more radical – even revolutionary – in both his thinking and in his proposals for reform, particularly in the sphere of education. These and his other libertarian traits did not prevent da Silva from being appointed to important public office both in Brazil and Portugal, arguably leaving him better placed to influence the reform “from the inside”.

In the new belief system that Salt designated a “Creed of Kinship”, there would be “compassion, love [and] justice for every living creature [...] constituting] a true civilization, a society in which all harmless and healthy life shall be free to develop itself unrestricted and uninjured” (apud Dardenne 2014: 52, citing Salt 1893: 26) and, as a result, there would be “no such barbarity as warfare, or the robbery of the poor by the rich, or the ill-usage of the lower animals by mankind” (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472, citing Hendrick, 1977: 1-2). In da Silva’s vision, in order for humanity to scale these heights, we must transform ourselves into beings “whose duty, destiny and purpose are that of full freedom; full for each one of us, full for all others, full for animals, full for plant-life, full perhaps even for the pebble and the mountain” (da Silva 1999: 262-263).

The elements of idealism and pragmatism – and the suggestion of a contradiction – evident in the praxis of both Salt and da Silva can also be found in their respective ideations of humanity’s progress towards the Golden Age. Both recognised that to liberate humanity from want and violence required the gradual evolution of human consciousness and behaviour towards a deeper sense of community, a stronger defence of justice and greater recourse to cooperation. Yet both also acknowledged that our most pressing material needs must be satisfied if any significant expansion of human consciousness and empathy towards other living creatures is to be achieved. In their reflections on and commendations for private conduct and public policy, neither Salt nor da Silva managed to completely square this circle, nor were they able to clearly identify the precise steps that are required, both individually and collectively, if the Golden Age is to be brought to fruition.

Both concluded, albeit implicitly, that while we may only “find our way by walking it”, each of us nevertheless requires guidance that comes not only from within, but also from our efforts to devise forms of education, association and organisation that are fit for purpose, fashioned to liberate humanity rather than enslave it, designed to revere animal life rather than exploit it, crafted to protect nature rather than destroy it. It is in this respect that the convergences between Salt’s militant and proselytising views on vegetarianism and animal rights and da Silva’s

perhaps more idiosyncratic perspectives should be understood. They are the outcome of the historical-cultural agency reflected both in their respective decisions to consciously enquire into the primary needs of human nutrition from an ethical and scientific perspective, and in their concretely utopian mode of conceiving and of practising these values. Each, in their own not so dissimilar way, aspired to hastening the time when, the fruit of our all-embracing compassion, humans and non-humans could live sustainably, in a world without suffering.

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Notes

1. The quote is from Chapter 3, of Dostoevsky's novel, "Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima", section (g) "Of Prayer, of Love, and of Contact with other Worlds".
2. By the turn of the century the Fabian Society had become a key element in the formation of the Labour Representation Committee and, ultimately, the constitution of the Labour Party.
3. See Brett Clark & John Bellamy Foster (2000) and Émilie Dardenne (2011; 2014), on whose publications the authors gratefully drew for some of the details of Salt's biography and philosophy.
4. Among his circle of comrades could be counted the artist and designer William Morris; Eleanor Marx, writer, activist and disseminator of her father's work; the writer and dramatist George Bernard Shaw and the "Anarchist Prince", Peter Kropotkin, among others.
5. The text of this short play was originally published in *The Vegetarian Review* of February 1895, 52-63.
6. The English translations of all quotations from Dardenne's studies and from da Silva's own writings (from the original French and Portuguese, respectively), are ours.
7. The article appeared as early as 1886 in the periodical *To-day*. Cited in Hendrick, G. (1977: 52) and referenced in Clark & Foster (2000: 469).
8. The collection *A plea for vegetarianism and other essays* was originally published in 1886 by The Vegetarian Society, based in Manchester, England. In its preface, Salt makes it clear that two of the essays (appearing as chapters I and VI, respectively entitled "A Plea for Vegetarianism" and "Sir Henry Thompson on Diet") had been previously published in the periodical *Time* (the former in February 1883 and the latter in January 1886) and that the remaining eight essays had appeared at different times in the *Food Reform Magazine*, *Dietetic Reformer* and in The Vegetarian Society's own annual publication.
9. There is a popular Portuguese adage deprecating any dish not containing meat: "peixe não puxa carroça" (i.e. you can't pull a cart on a diet of fish).
10. Salt says: "When charged with fanaticism [...], the Vegetarian may well retort, in the words of Hamlet 'It is not madness that I have uttered: bring me to the test.'" (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 4).
11. "I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that [it] does harm to my wit" (William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, act 1, scene 3).
12. "The early career of a Vegetarian is indeed often a veritable 'Pilgrim's Progress'. He meets [...] such characters as Mistrust, Timorous, and Ignorance [and] Mr. Worldly Wiseman, the representative of Society, is always at hand with his plausible remonstrances. Even the dreadful [demon] Apollyon himself, in the form of the family physician, occasionally bestrides the path of the bold adventurer, with his awful and solemn warning – 'Prepare thyself to die.'"
13. Salt asks if "the fruits and cereals of a vegetarian meal might well find mention in the purest and most delicate poem, could the same be said of the repast of a flesh-eater? What are the dainties which Porphyro, in Keats's poem 'Eve of St. Agnes', 'heaps with glowing hand' for his love [...]? They are 'candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd, manna and dates', and other 'delicates' which would rejoice the soul of a Vegetarian. What would have been the effect on the poem, if [...] he had heaped beef-steaks and mutton-chops" onto his lover's plate?
14. Salt considers Ruskin's aestheticism to be the only "true worship of the beautiful [because it ...] does not regard only the perceptions of the senses, but admits the consideration of the moral and the humane".
15. The dynamiters referred to here are the Irish Fenian "skirmishers", who were often based in the United States, and whose bombing campaigns literally took the Irish struggle for independence to the British mainland.
16. Salt points to Homer's account of Polyphemus, the giant who ate the companions of Ulysses, and to the passage in Book III of the *Histories* in which Herodotus describes Central Asian tribes (such as the Issidones) that ate human flesh, though it is unclear whether this practice consisted of hunting members of other communities for food or the ritualised, reverential consumption of their own relatives.
17. Our biographical sketch of da Silva draws heavily on Franco (2015a) and Franco (2015b).
18. According to this view, first developed by the medieval philosopher Joachim of Fiore, human consciousness necessarily undergoes an ontological-spiritual transformation as part of its predetermined historical progress towards a state of terrestrial grace.
19. The title of his 1962 collection of essays reflects da Silva's conviction that there was no compelling reason for him to alter his agreement with the philosophical formulations he had encountered in Joachim de Fiore's work some 20 years before. To underline their relevance to him and to meeting the challenges society faced, only a few additional minor comments were required, but these were "only adjustments", nothing more.
20. In the terminology of contemporary utopian studies, these would be called "intentional communities".
21. For one of the most eloquent testimonies of da Silva's decision to adopt a vegetarian diet, see A. Ruben (1969: 86-87).
22. Da Silva refers to reports from nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnographers and travellers who reported having discovered "small populations in Africa, Oceania, America, and Asia, living an existence [...] that corresponded in all respects to how the Ancient Greeks described the earliest humans" ("The Latin Comedy", 1946/47, in his *Dispersos*, 178-179). Regarding the mission of Brazil's newly-established Protection Service, he writes: "A new era has begun for the Brazilian Indian, a time to no longer see them as savages, but as one of the creatures that best exemplifies universal love – love for animals that are not made slaves, that are made companions through and through, helping them when in need, but not domesticating them with food and shelter, nor depriving them of their true nature. The Brazilian Indian knows that birds are meant to fly, to depart and to return freely, and he knows it because he loves Nature – the plants, mountains, rivers and stars that he enshrines in myths – as does any human being, any woman if free of oppression, and any child if free of mistreatment" (in da Silva 2001: 104).
23. Both in his essay on the religious function of the theatre in Ancient Greece ("A Religião Grega", first published in 1930) and in the preface to his translations of Terence and Plautus (1946/47), da Silva views the adoption of a carnivorous diet as the expression of this ontological fall.
24. Teixeira Rego taught at the University of Porto's Faculty of Letters. The ideas contained in his *Nova Teoria do Sacrifício* [A New Theory of Sacrifice] were developed over a number of articles he published

- between 1912-1915 in the journal *Águia*, which were later published together in book format by “Portuguese Renaissance”. It was in this collection of essays that he challenged Catholic attempts to reconcile Darwin’s evolutionary theory and the Book of Genesis and, in doing so, linked the decline of humanity with the advent of the ritual sacrifice of animals. (cf. Carvalho 2015: 125-137).
25. *Nutrição Humana* [Human Nutrition] was just one of the 96 educational booklets that together formed da Silva’s multidisciplinary collection *Iniciação - Cadernos de Informação Cultural* [*Initiation — A Beginner’s Guide to Culture*], entirely conceived, produced and marketed by him between 1940 and 1944 (These texts can be consulted on www.agostinho.da.silva.pt). Six of his booklets are devoted to the morphology and the behaviour of bees, flies, spiders, eels, beavers and sharks, suggesting that his feelings of fellowship with the animal kingdom extended well beyond those creatures that were, at the time, considered to be endowed with the highest levels of neurosensory complexity. Moreover, during da Silva’s self-imposed exile in Brazil, he undertook applied entomological research at the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz in Rio de Janeiro, co-publishing between 1952 and 1954, two studies on insect life. On this phase of da Silva’s life, see the chapter entitled “O Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Niterói e Itamarati” in Franco (2015a: 395-403).
 26. The original intention had been to produce radio lectures devoted to a wider range of creatures, including the beaver, lion, tiger, elephant, hippopotamus, seal, whale, chameleon, ant and bee (Franco 2015a: 253-266). The educational purpose of these lectures was subsequently enshrined in the formal aims of the Antero de Quental Pedagogical Centre, a civic and cultural association of which da Silva was a founding member. The group, formed in 1939, met regularly at the home of the social philosopher, cooperativist and politician António Sérgio and, in addition to da Silva, included the writer, archaeologist and ethnographer José Castelo Branco Chaves, the journalist and literary critic Álvaro Salema de Araújo, and the businessman, art collector and philanthropist Fernando Rau, among others.
 27. Cf. Franco (2015a: 291). According to Gandhi himself, he embraced vegetarianism “by choice”, rather than as a passively absorbed cultural practice, only after reading Henry Salt’s *A Plea for Vegetarianism* (Dardenne 2014 *idem*: 52). From a political rather than ethical perspective, Gandhi had previously looked forward to the day when all Indians could enjoy sufficient national autonomy, cultural freedom and material prosperity to become meat-eaters, should they so wish.
 28. That is, no-one may exercise property rights over goods, animals or persons. Predictably, perhaps, in his listing of various subcategories of the “un-ownable”, animals take precedence over women and minors here; however, ranking goods before living beings seems inappropriate for the type of spiritual communitarianism da Silva was proposing.
 29. We use “speciesist” in the sense originally given to this term by the psychologist Richard Ryder (in his contribution on the use of animals in scientific experiments in Godlovitch *et al* (1974) and subsequently developed by the philosopher Peter Singer (1975: 7), as denoting “a prejudice or bias in favour of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species”. In essence, Singer considers that “just as it is not ethically permissible for a higher degree of intelligence to confer on some human beings the right to use other human beings for their own benefit, so there is no valid moral ground for humans to use animals for their own ends”.
 30. Cf. Epifânio 2007: 7-9.
 31. There is, however, a misunderstanding on da Silva’s part here. The drifting organisms we refer to as plankton had long been identified, by the German scientist Victor Hensen, as microscopic *animals* (zooplankton) and plants (phytoplankton). While interested in science, this detail must have escaped da Silva who, had he known, would certainly have accorded plankton the same respect and protection as any other living being, and not have suggested they be exploited for the exclusive benefit of humans.
 32. Indeed, the turn of the century provided such fertile ground for protest movements of all kinds, that it was not unusual to find activists who embraced a number of causes, making it possible, for example, for them to be simultaneously ethical socialists, atheists with an interest in mysticism, antivivisectionists who ate meat, and scientists with a tendency towards spiritualism (apud Dardenne 2011: 17).
 33. *Alimentopia* is the acronym of the ongoing project *Utopia, Food and the Future: Utopian thinking and the construction of inclusive societies – a contribution from the Humanities*, funded by the FCT, the Portuguese public agency supporting science, technology and innovation.
 34. Unconventionally, Salt’s eschatology associates the ultimate Golden Age with the advent of authentic “civilisation” which appears more like a state of the spirit than of the material world, since it does not require the demise of the nation (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472). Da Silva’s millenarian vision draws heavily on the medieval Joachimite notion of an ultimate Age of the Holy Spirit and on the seventeenth-century writings of Father António Vieira. It is worth stressing that Vieira, Fernando Pessoa and Agostinho da Silva all identified the Portuguese nation as having been given the mission, in a sense, to lead the rest of humanity in that direction.
 35. Here, the term “sub-human” presumably refers to non-human sentient life.