



The Political Animal: Special Issue of SubStance, Issue 117, 37:3 (2008)

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In the variegated history of the philosophical definitions of man, one has survived since it has been given the status of the self-evident. The definition in question comes from Aristotle's *Politics*: "the human is a political animal" (1253a3). There is something indisputable about this characterization: humans are, indeed, the most social of animals – they are denizens of the *polis* with its institutions and laws, its rulers, judges and generals. It would be difficult to contend that any other animal has recourse to the political as much as the human.

Aristotle's *Politics* need not be surrendered to the strictures of humanism. It remains amenable to the new schema for the political animal that we are sketching here. Each article collected in this issue responds – in its own way and by establishing its own protocols – to the exigency of the animal as it was formulated in Aristotle's *Politics*. Each article is an act of response, a moment of interruption.



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