

A FEARLESS INDOMITABLE
WOMANHOOD
A FEARLESS INDOMITABLE
RACE."
WILLIAM ROONEY.

WHAT IS CULTURAL CHANGE?

Too often we confuse cultural change with individual awareness or education.

30 years ago in France, if you told people about factory farms and slaughterhouses, they would routinely reply: "But animals don't suffer". Today, no one uses that argument. People have changed, but they don't know it, they don't realize it, and it's not a thousand or a hundred thousand or a million people, it's almost everybody. In fact, they haven't changed, it's the culture they're immersed in that has changed, and this can be seen in the long-term evolution of a number of institutions.

Cultural change occurs on a societal level. It does not necessarily use the same tools as individual persuasion.

Act Up used actions that were very shocking at the time, but in ten years they managed to change Western culture around AIDS and LGBT people. The suffragettes' political

struggle was victorious because it was successful in terms of cultural change (the right to vote was won after the movement had ceased to hold the balance of power).

Launching a cultural offensive means occupying the field of cultural representations. It means feeding it with new ideas, representations and affects, and being constantly present on the various social stages.

All forms of action can serve this purpose if they are designed to do so.



An action by Act Up Paris in 1993, which marked the fight against AIDS in a very puritanical and homophobic France: the Obelisk at Place de la Concorde covered with a gigantic condom!

In ten years, Act Up has radically changed the social acceptance of LGBT people ...

To find out more about cultural change



WHY IS THIS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT?



As far as all sentient beings are concerned, what is at stake in our endeavors is not simply the improvement of their conditions of exploitation, or even the end of their exploitation. What is at stake is a long-term redefinition of our relationship to animals in general, including wild animals.



The suffering of wild animals is immeasurable, has been going on for 500 million years, and will continue for the next 600 million years if humans do nothing to change the course of events. I think it's fair to talk about S-risk - except it's been there forever, right in front of our eyes.



Endless suffering (which is what I equate it with), if it has the slightest chance of being reduced or eliminated, must be made a priority goal (ideally to which all other goals are subordinate?). It must be given a large part of our energy.



There is a very good chance that it will be the cultural change projects that will have the greatest impact and possibly determine the long-term future (the philosophers of the Enlightenment enabled the overthrow of the Ancien Régime in France, for example). I think that in all things, we should favor approaches that promote the emergence of a non-speciesist, sentientist world. And our various strategies for improving the lot of animals should be judged in part by this criterion: do they support, and to what extent, the cultural shift toward a sentientist civilization?

Yves Bonnardel