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Antibiologistic Antispeciesist Animal Sociology: Environment and Nonhuman Animals (2). No Nonhuman Animal is an Agricultural Issue

Speciesism is not alone the institutionalized killing it's also the ritualized killing. In fact they are the same.

Antispeciesist Animal Sociology

No Nonhuman Animal is an Agricultural Issue

The visualization of speciesist spaces of objectification of animals is important, so that we can witness the cases and take action against them. However, making them visible does not guarantee that all people will become aware of the possibility of feeling, thinking and acting empathically towards their fellow earthlings. Some people do not feel empathy in places where it is assumed that everyone here should have empathic intelligence. On the contrary, there are enough segments within human societies that culturally propagate an offensive form of speciesism or approve of others doing so.

As people who are ethically affected by the visualization, as witnesses of speciesist violence, we should ask ourselves: What do we convey, when we recognize a capital site of institutionalized speciesism, but when in our discussion of it, we let the many other places where speciesism takes place on a daily basis, move behind the industries of mass killing, and thus let the other places disappear from seeing the *overall problem*?

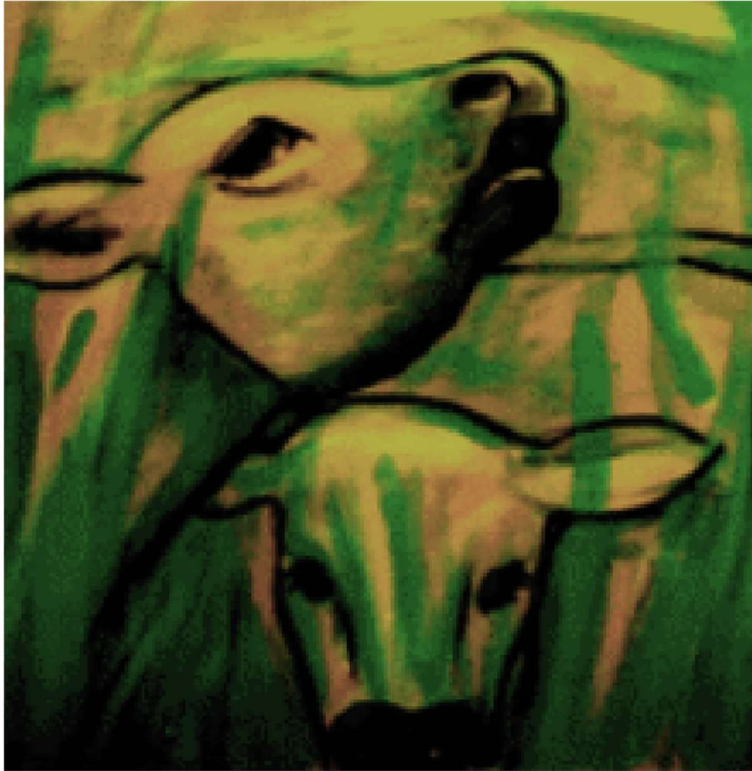
The fact that humans have *industrialized* animal murder, manipulating the reproduction and life of animals in this process physically and mentally violently, has a history, and this history in turn has social and psychological backgrounds and causes.

Animals are not an agricultural issue. But when they are caught by the industries, many of their defenders tend to leave them in that context perspectively. Probably because there, in the large agricultural industries, all the most horrible places of animal oppression finally converge in the act of a fully industrialized, perfected and quantitatively no longer graspable theriocide. Yet every animal murder is part of the whole problem.

A reason for specializing animal defense in the area of agribusiness could be to perhaps unintentionally leave animals within the framework into which society has catapulted them.

If we make speciesism a predominantly agricultural issue, we will not further differentiate the characteristics of these “non-areas” of human societies. We do indeed state: “Animals have to

be brought out of there”, and “agrarian culture has to be something else”, but we do not see why our society has created the large and the small spaces of complete ethical devaluation of nonhuman life in the first place. For some of us, this is perhaps no longer a question at all. The question: “Why is this done to nonhuman animals?”



But the actions are so unspeakably horrible that the question of the cause stays always in the room, “why is this one animal individual, exactly that one, murdered here and now ... and processed into ‘food’, and conceived as such ... “.

Animal issues must, in our opinion, be treated in more emancipatory terms, i.e. in a language of making those devaluation mechanisms visible that lead to the fact that animals can be thematically settled in these places at all – as a mere “factor”, next to food and economy as in the environmental discourse for example. The devaluation mechanisms that cumulatively lead to the fact that animals had been physically located under these conditions in the first place in a speciesist-dominated world ought to be deciphered.

Equally, we should be able to express, in progressive terms, where animals should actually be. And this also means that they cannot remain alone on our mental map in the context with agribusiness. However, it is remarkably rare to talk about the creation of habitats for the animals that we associate with the topic of agro-industries. We hope for the save “islands” for the affected nonhumans in this world, but where do these groups of nonhumans stand as a whole?

The question of needed habitats concerns animal existence in general in an anthropocene world in which there is less and less space that is not already planned as a resource by humans for their own use. The idea and practice of special habitat and protective refuges must become the idea of *communal eco-socially compatible habitats* as a whole.

Unspaces or places that ought not exist

Noticing animal-un/ethical “unspaces” (‘unthinkable and unbearable’ places) should therefore not only concern the large agricultural enterprises, but each case of speciesist killing and “keeping” nonhuman animals has to be brought into focus from principle, and at the same time be regarded as priority of acting for spatial justice towards nonhumans.

This can be another accompanying problem of a separating focus on agribusiness in the animal rights movement: we often overlook how much speciesism takes place in how many different places and on how many different levels, and how these support each other in the omnipresent occurrence of speciesism – as nonhuman negation – and it thus makes up an almost unalterable construct in the “human-animal relationship”.

We can try to tear down these solid walls wherever we encounter them, as we confront *animal hatred* in all its different forms. Among animal rights activists one should be able to assume that everyone agrees that speciesism is a reality and an expression of *injustice* towards animal life. For example, we don't simply fight against the view of animals as “edible” because we would not suspect any other reason why animals started to be killed as “edible” in the first place. Rather, we assume that people are well aware that they are breaking an – unwritten and even if non-anthropocentric – ethical taboo, the moment they deliberately end another beings life by force and for reasons of self-interest. *If we would not assume this, we would have no real answer to our own thoughts and feelings as animal rights activists (we assume that humans are or can at least be ambivalent about ethical issues).*

Alone, some argue, “consuming ‘meat’ is no longer necessary today and many animals feel pain and are sentient to the degrees depending on ...” (sentiocentrism), which in our opinion, above all in this combination, is an argument which seems openly apologetic. Yet even then we do assume that it would be ethically better to recognize other living beings *as subjects*, and thus not to subject them to our supposed interests in objectifying ways. And so the question of the reasons why the majority of human societies categorically deny these others, their subjective existence, or why they are not interested in the whole problem ethically and morally in an inter-species-social way, continues to exist.

If we pick out the topic of agribusiness as an ethical field of dispute in the present, we are dealing with a gigantic symptom in this place, a place where external speciesist legitimizations and normalizations collide with the actual experience of billions of victims. And in each of these murders of these victims, the endless questions about the underlying cause gape up, because there is no answer to the question of this “why?” either for the victims or for the allies of these victims. And that is exactly why we have to find out: *“What actually makes humans speciesists?”*

We don't understand it – we can't explain it, it just is, and there are no plausible reasons for animal murder from our point of view. We do not feel like speciesists. We can reproduce the superficial, pretended logic that a speciesist system keeps ready to answer. But we are in need of a critical analysis, because the system itself cannot show a non-speciesistic perspective on its own actions and existence.

In the great centers of systematic animal murder, we find the same causes, that equally, as in any other places and in other violent forms existent in our anthropocene societies, represent the ethical catastrophes accompanying human history.

Secondarizing questions of *injustice towards Nonhuman Animality* amounts to downplaying the anthropocene faunacide

We might be able to formulate animal rights (animal liberation ...) better if we can give a name to the *fundamental injustices* that display themselves in human thinking/action in speciesism:

It is not enough to criticize the agribusinesses of our mass societies by focusing on the problem complexes of ecological damage, sustainable food production and better forms of economy as the focal points, it is in fact about the sheer topic of speciesism. These are the places where the issues converge, but in principle the same issues converge wherever the catastrophic effects that “humans” have on their environment and their nonhuman animal inhabitants are in question.

One should remember that speciesism is deliberately ignored and downplayed in predominantly speciesist societies. And at the same time, speciesism takes place wherever the anthropocene average contemporary ‘Homo sapiens’ dominates. Be it in the position as a ‘consumer’, be it in opinions which are ‘commonly held/endorsed’ and with which we shape “our” societies. A fundamental rethinking, thematization, questioning of speciesism is needed in order to take all problem complexes with them, that represent places of speciesist action/attitude – and this currently turns out to be less popular than stereotypical slogans against known, clearly defined enemy images and easily identifiable culprits.

Out of sight, with no viewpoint

In order for the field of activism “defending animals in relation to the problem of agro-industries” to continue to be addressed as such separately, many areas on our map of speciesism become faded out as less important and aren’t contextualized – despite the fact that the connections between various focal points illustrate the characteristics of the problem and its systemic immanence in society:

- Animals on small farms (we obviously do not mean sanctuaries here)
- Individual animals that are killed for “consumption/use”
- Hunting, hunters and the idea of hunting pretending to be anthropologically constituting the incidence of “being human”
- Animal experiments and also animals as objectified “specimens” for culture and research
- problems affecting wild animals – non-invasive, “invasive” animals, animals killed in fence hunts, keeping “wild” species, animals in circuses, animals in zoos, captive breeding for conservational purposes
- The theft of habitat (“nature as a human domain”)
- The slippery-slope of “domesticated-“/”wild” animal species
- Problems of further “domesticated” animals: donkeys, horses, rabbits, ...

- 'Bred' and 'traded' circle that serves as a legitimization to 'keep', 'trade' more animals from more "uncommon" nonhuman animal groups
- 'Untypical' animal species that are objectified and killed for human purposes, e.g. ostriches, octopus, horseshoe crabs ...
- Interventions in the lives of animals who humans regard as biologically distant, insects, invertebrates
- Animals that are only granted habitat for reasons of biodiversity or to serve human self-interest
- Speciesism in human culture-creating/consumptive areas, like 'art and speciesism'
- Speciesism as an edifice of thought in history, religion, natural sciences ...
- Euthanasia as normality instead of palliative help, veterinary ethos
- Speciesism and human rituals
- Bestiality, mutilations, spectacle, orgies of violence
- Discriminating against nonhumans by supposed "animal lovers"/people who pretend to be "loving/caring for" nonhuman animals while discriminating against them speciesistically, "mild/milder" forms if speciesism ...
- ...

(Regarding 'companion animals' and 'sanctuaries', it's important in all cases to differentiate between helpful and damaging behaviour of people towards nonhumans.)

Veganism as an ethical practice is often narrowed in the course (equally as with an own narrowing like "veganism equals food and consumer goods", "helping animals equals sharing vegan recipes, again equaling food topics and consumer behavior") to one *single expression* of societal speciesism. So it frequently comes to counterproductive standpoints towards of e.g. horse lives, giraffe lives, dog and cat lives and the animal lives, which are tortures and murdered in the large agro-industrial enterprises are weighed out against other victims of speciesism.

Whereby a considerable part of the vegan movement takes a crucial role in relation to the large "animal industries", to direct the viewpoint toward the total alienation of these places and to aim thereby an imagined future for the animals. It is then not only about the question of consumption with the solution "veganism" as endpoint, but implicitly it is always about the *further backgrounds and questions that have to be asked*. With this veganism as an idea describes a practical fundamental way of life, which can include all problems specified above. However veganism is "only" a practical partial aspect of acting against speciesism. There are enough vegans who despite their vegan praxis, are no explicit antispeciesists.

If you look at a broad and important intersection of animal rights activism, in the form of the countless petitions for nonhuman animals posted on the internet, which reveal the occurrence of extreme cases of "everyday speciesism", then you realize that it is not enough to speak in isolation about the industries that objectify and kill animals. Speciesism exceeds the dimension of a system. We need to be able to grasp the issue as a whole.

For many people today, the animal industries are more of a problem of what they contribute to in the course of their destructive actions. The animal industries are, however, first and foremost the places where animal lives are most violently taken. And in this context we should

understand them. We have recently discussed some dissonances between animal rights and environmental protection, and shortcomings of today's environmentalism from an animal rights perspective, in the previous Animal Autonomy Reader: Environment and Nonhuman Animals (1), https://farangis.de/reader/edition_farangis_animal_autonomy_reader_2020_2.pdf

Topics relating to speciesism, animal-derogation, faunacide put together. Our strategies for the practice:

- We make clear that we take a genuine standpoint of our own, we don't repeat slogans and ideas of others in line with trends
- Ethical attitudes are attitudes that one consciously takes. This also means that one does not have to try to convince others but rather *one represents one's own standing point, which can complement that of one another in meaningful ways.*
- Blogging, networking, communicating and/or working alone against speciesism contributes to the cultural discourses; art, music, creative writing in which you express thoughts, observations and opinions create new spaces of thought, ideas and practices.
- Following great masterminds stifles your own creativity. Generate own output to stimulate a variety of outputs from others too, with the goal of 'pluralism in practice'.
- We can draw important boundaries when others want to generate a jumble of speciesist and anti-speciesist content. We can analyze the attitudes of the other's positions in order to localize and understand where they come from and where they might aim at more clearly then. Speciesism often works by diluting and disintegrating anti-speciesist content, so it is helpful not to lose sight of one's goals.
- Recognizing the importance of self-creativity and of contextualizing social connectedness. Anastasia Yarbrough has written a very inspiring text on the subject of radical self-care as an animal rights activist:
<https://animalvisions.wordpress.com/2014/02/24/contemplating-radical-self-care-animal-rights-as-if-life-matters/> , <https://simorgh.de/about/tag/anastasia-yarbrough/>
- Aph and Syl Ko, as well as Breeze Harper and other authors and creative/thoughtful activists/authors (whom we also feature on our web project at www.simorgh.de) have developed highly inspiring approaches to quite differentiated angles of how we can thematize nonhuman animal related rights and ethics topics and topics related.
- We try to break down speciesist terminologies, e.g. the pitfalls of terms like "animal welfare", "humane"/"species-appropriate"
- Consistently contextualizing while seeing all the specifics



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