

# Animal Autonomy E-Reader edition farangis



## Edition Farangis: Animal Autonomy E-Reader 3

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Animal Agency and Morality .....3

What is Animality, and what it isn't .....3

When speciesism feeds speciesism and why nonhuman-animal-allies  
should not fall for unproductive rhetorical twists .....5

A nonhuman-inclusive vegan economy? Where to start .....7

## Animal Agency and Morality

IS “MORAL AGENCY” NOT A VALID CRITERION FOR CLASSIFYING DIFFERENT FACETS OF ANIMALITY?

The idea of “moral agency” assumes similar anthropocentric allocations in terms of biological and cultural markers, such as the conservative species-hierarchical hypotheses about have all done in their approach to nonhumanity.

The construction of “morality” as an act should however ideally draw on non-anthropocentric perspectivic angles, to enable itself to touch upon the grounds of the large spectrum of co-existential modalities.

Questions:

- 1.) Which features, abilities and attributes are typically assumed as making up “animal agency” and, respectively, as typically making up “not-animal-agency” and “human agency”?
- 2.) On which criterions do these classifications and assumptions base?
- 3.) What would a map of “animal agency” look like from a nonanthropocentric perspective?

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## What is Animality, and what it isn't

You are at risk of engaging in rhetorical branding if:

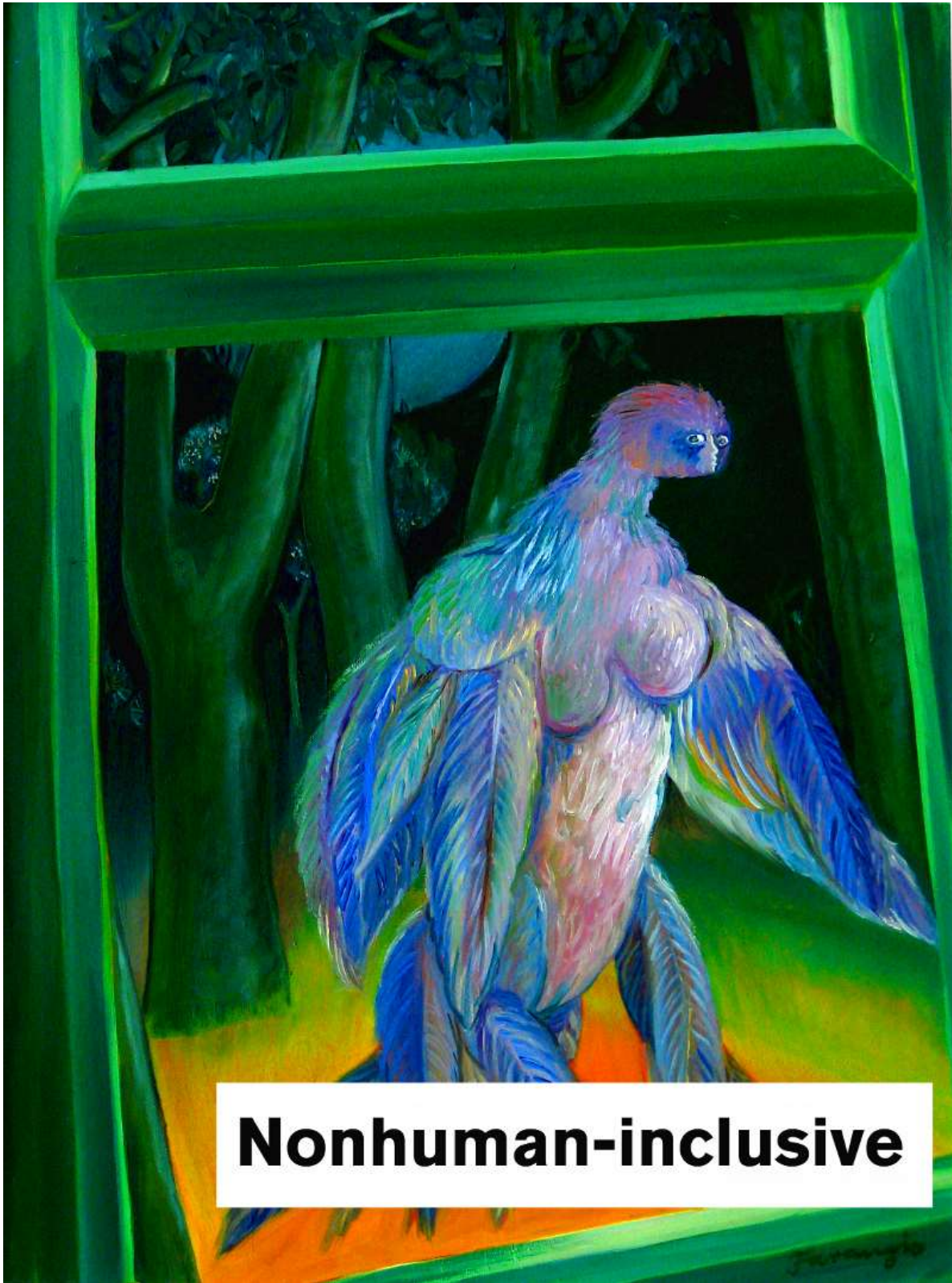
... ANIMALITY equals:

pigeonholing nonhuman animal “otherness” and/or diverseness, in (philosophical, religious, scientific, biologicistic, aesthetic, anthropologic) terms of excluding zoopolitical spaces of animal autonomy.

... and if HUMANITY amounts to:

“we”, the “Homo sapiens”.

A new discourse needs fresh approaches – not just a new labelling system for an ongoing current of stable moral fallacies.



# Nonhuman-inclusive

# When speciesism feeds speciesism, and why nonhuman-animal-allies should not fall for unproductive rhetorical twists

Two debates, the same problem with speciesist rhetorics blurring out a reasonable, coherent discourse.

- A.) The (unfortunately) highly controversial debate about Halal and Kosher slaughter methods.
- B.) The ‘humane meat’ marketing campaigns, using Animal Welfare as the as a vehicle for their sales boosting.

In both these speciesist segments – the one religious, the other one more plain-culturally based – you face an upholding of speciesist ideological tenets, additionally to the front-fight of defending a speciesist practice.

Why are we discussing these two examples of speciesist praxes?

Pro-arguments defending these two praxes, that are finding their basis in cultural reception, have permeated the Animal Rights debate to some extent in outreach strategies in regards to multiculturalism and culture – assuming “traditions” to be static and unchangeable societal phenomena/entities, immune to continuous ethical historical progress and change.

The Problem of rhetorical twists permeating the AR discussion in the case of A.):

The basic argument from an AR side defending religious slaughter methods, as no less “cruel” than pre-stun methods, goes that Nonhumans suffer either way, conditions in slaughterhouses might even be worse, at least as bad, and that all slaughter must stop.

Usually missed in this string of argumentation is a more detailed critique why e.g. slaughterhouses such as those designed by Temple Grandin are for example “as bad” as religious slaughter methods: So called “humane” slaughter methods have to be criticized and critically examined in their own respect.

*The argument against the relativization of ‘different speciesist practices’ as in the case A.) from an AR position can be:*

Why are we fighting to be able to film abuse in factory farms, when in the end of the day the comparably more abusive form of “handling” does not make any difference at all? After all we are always trying to alleviate any comparably more “extreme” forms of injustices and utmost violence in a situation where we can’t stop speciesism overnight. We do that, alongside with campaigning for veganism (...)!

The trap with religious animal killing practices is that the degree to which killing becomes a deed of “good” is mostly being overlooked let alone critically discussed. Can you really expect strict believers to end killing Nonhumans, if it’s on behalf of an “almighty God” who decrees you to do so?

From an AR point of view we would say that no religion/religious tradition/belief whatsoever must come before either Animal Rights or Human Rights, equally and in a just and equal manner.

The Problem of rhetorical twists permeating the AR discussion in the case of B.):

Anecdotal example: A German animal advocacy group advertised for “humane meat” with the slogan: “For a life before becoming meat”

([http://www.provieh.de/downloads\\_provieh/01\\_ki\\_schweine.pdf](http://www.provieh.de/downloads_provieh/01_ki_schweine.pdf), accessed 5.5.2014), the same slogan had been used by the Austrian Green Party (<http://www.gruene.at/europa/2-welle>, accessed 5.5.2014).

The problem from the AR side in dealing with similar rhetorics being that cultural tenets of speciesism are not questioned, nor what strategies are effective at such given contexts. Strategies and analyses seem to fall short in favor of a short-term mass-movement idea and behaviour within the AR community:

- There is no clear line drawn towards impacts of that what comes along as cultural heritage
- Activists fight against the symptoms, not the cultural roots of speciesist rhetorics that enable speciesist practices to be culturally active.

On one hand “humane slaughter” advocacy has moved “down”, in terms of Animal Advocacy ideals, to some of the “stricter” Animal Welfare organizations, like the CIWF with for example their recent campaign “Better-Chicken.org”: it seems that such welfarist pro “humane meat” campaigns throw the baby out of with the bathwater, since instead of trying to seek alleviating suffering from the fundamental injustice of speciesism, i.e. the goal of ending speciesism overall as a target, they are of course prolonging speciesist culture.

However, AR advocates who do distance themselves from such campaigns, seem to fail to address (analytically and strategically) how important it is to target the functionality of speciesism and its rhetorics in the plain culturally-based sense:

- AR places its critique more at the sociological and the psychological level, not as much on the anthropological and cultural level, and when it does it does it at least not with a clearly distanced view.
- A question would be e.g.: how is the argument “I only buy organic humanely slaughtered meat” faced by the mainstream AR-scene? Why is this norm within society, which occurs even on culturally / anthropologically critical perspectives, tolerated in terms of rhetorics within the AR community? The only argument to confront such a statement is positivistic asking for veganism and asking people to stop ‘killing animals for food’, yet such statements are not met on a profoundly critical level towards the oppressive functionalities and causes of speciesism in society.

This type of statement has to be contextualized with how a culture works and how the individual takes a role within this cultural setting for instance.

## A nonhuman-inclusive vegan economy? Where to start.

Human society annexes every ‘natural’ space, primarily through societal economic processes.

‘Nonhuman Animal Rights’ thus will have to cover all spaces on the globe – within human communities and within the natural environment overall.

In regards to creating a ‘nonhuman-inclusive vegan economy’:

1. First of all we should address the history of ‘rule and possession’.

a.) Different economic models have been historically existent. Which components came into play for forming current economical models (i.e. the capitalist economies and socialist inspired economies) in pure economic terms, politically, socially ... ?

b.) Which forms of political rule went along with ‘ownership’ and ‘dominion’ (annexation of ‘nature’) as economic factors? And what created the basis of legitimization in rule, such as in: monarchies, democracies, tyrannies, as grounded for example on: religion, ideology, philosophy?

c.) How did forms of ‘rule’ and ‘authority’ interact with exploitative contractualist agendas such as imperialism, colonialism, nationalism?

An aspect to highlight: Legitimization falters or ends where the ‘entitlement’ for ‘rule and possession’ excludes and comes into conflict with interests / rights of other human beings, other animals and the ‘natural’ realm / ‘nature’.

2. Secondly we should see how ‘economy’, as a societal material construct, and ‘nature’, as an borderless/undefined space, conflict.

a.) What stands at the center of the conflict between our human-centered economic matrices (as systems of ‘rule and possession’) versus ‘natural’ and autonomous life? What are core reasons for conflict? (The reasons might stand alongside the questions of legitimization.)

b.) Society’s inability for groundbreaking political change, and the inability for change on the private scale (in the individual’s life in society) as being part of society, extends the “need”/desire for the legitimization of ‘dominion’/‘rule’, exploitation and destruction – it otherwise leads to destructive form of a rebellion of collective egotisms probably (...).

*What can be alternative forms of economic societal organization?*

3. How does nonhuman-inclusiveness and veganism – as entailing some of the key aspects needed to form a pacifist eco-consciousness – offer *ways out of economic systems* that utilize ‘nature’, nonhumans and “powerless” humans, in different degrees, as resources or as in the case of humans, as partly involuntary collaborators?

a.) Discuss the need for veganism to become aware of its own politicalness, in problem-solving and problem-creating terms.

b.) The core of veganism, taken as a social revolutionary ‘movement’, mainly differs from other liberation movements because of its primary focus on nonhuman animal exploitation and nonhuman animal murder / zoocide ... .

Economic ethics or non-ethics:

Where does profiteering from (or/and voluntary collaboration with) ecocide and zoocide mainly begin?

How are humans affected today by the consequences of economically driven ecocide and zoocide, ethically?

How do you think should nonhuman-animal-allies and ethical vegans work against ecocide and zoocide, despite the “vegan revolution’s” minority constellation within society?



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