

What Savages We Must Be: Vegans Without Morality

Flower Bomb

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~ New morals, Same governance ~

“Morality is common sense ideas that we can all agree on. We need to expand morality to include non-human animals.” -Logic commonly found in the vegan movement

Most movements who attempt to make social change en masse rely on the “appeal to morality” tactic as a primary method of gaining support. For example, “Meat is Murder” is a common catch phrase within the animal rights movement. This catch phrase relies on the assumption that all people are against murder since, by the same logic, murder is morally reprehensible. But this assumes that there is a singular, universal morality that guides everyone’s decisions when, in reality, it may have different interpretations to some, and only guide those who embrace it to begin with. For example, some self-proclaimed moralists defend the violent manifestations of patriarchy; others advocate white supremacy and many moralists support violence towards non-human animals. “Common sense” is only common to those who make up the membership of a specific group, who feel the need to universalize its principles. But “common sense” does not apply to others outside that group who have self-interests that run contrary to its assumed collective “good”. Often times, it is not a lack of morality that is problematic but the very existence of morality; the set of principles and values independent of the complexity of self-interest, which externally guide and justify one’s actions.

Anthropocentrism is the belief that human beings are the most important entity in the universe. Anthropocentrism interprets or regards the world in terms of human values and experiences. The term can be used interchangeably with humanocentrism, and some refer to the concept as human supremacy or human exceptionalism. -Wikipedia

Anthropocentric morality provides the justification for a wide range of eco-destructive and domesticating disasters. Representing a worldview that constructs the human/animal dichotomy, anthropocentrism is reinforced by a capitalist-industrial society that requires the large-scale death and destruction of wildlife in order to exist. The “righteousness” of human domination provides the socio-political normalization required to pacify any potential for emotional outrage against this systematized violence. So between vegan morality and anthropocentric morality, which one is “right”?

Moral nihilism is the meta-ethical view that nothing is morally right or wrong. There are no moral features in this world; nothing is right or wrong. Therefore, no moral judgements are true; however, our sincere moral judgements try, but always fail, to describe the moral features of things. Thus, we always lapse into error when thinking in moral terms. We are trying to state the truth when we make moral judgements. But since there is no moral truth, all of our moral claims are mistaken. -Wikipedia

Morality is a social construct that does not represent a universal truth, nor the interests of all people. While also failing to account for the complex circumstances in which moral-based decisions are impractical, morality limits the scope of decision making and individual action. Therefore, in order to condition morality on a mass scale, rigid obedience is required which necessitates an equally rigid violent apparatus to enforce it.

Obeying morality of any type requires putting aside individual experience and personal motives of self-interest. This also means disregarding the pragmatic considerations con-

cerning the practical consequences of one's morality-based decision. In society, morals are socially conditioned in order to maintain a standardized system of beliefs. This system discourages individualist thinking and questioning of not only that system, but of the foundations of authority in general. The primary method for this discouragement is to advertise a desired belief as a "common sense" or normality that "everyone" knows or follows. This immediately places the "group" above the "individual". With individual self-interest, one might refuse to obey without questioning, therefore group-think is socially reinforced to discourage individual responsibility, creativity, and thinking for one's self. Examples of the deployed socialized hostility towards individualism include labelling those who assert their individuality as "selfish" or "egotistic" and therefore undesirable.

A movement that moralizes veganism means instituting another social system that would enforce new morality-based laws and norms. Not only would this require an (ironically) violent apparatus for reinforcement, but would still come without a guarantee of a more "peaceful", "compassionate" capitalism. As long as there are systems of governance, (including the contradictory "compassionate capitalism") there will be rebels. As long as there are laws, there is corruption within the apparatus itself that enforces them. As both a historical and contemporary social project attempting to create peace and compassion on a mass scale, moralism has failed.

~ **Beyond morality: no government can ever give us freedom** ~

Anarchy is the absence of government and absolute freedom of individuality. -Wikipedia

The same apparatuses of coercion that reinforces morality (religion, the state, etc.) are the enemies of freedom. While one might say these institutions could reinforce the vegan morality that would liberate non-human animals, these same institutions require individualist subjugation to their collective "good". But their good wouldn't be a "good" of my own; it would be their thinking over mine, empowered by its assumed "universal truth". This is the same logic of control and domination that is used by those who dominate and consume non-human animals. Guided by the values of human supremacy, there is a sense of entitlement that positions them above question. The same apparatus that conditions morality holds that "beyond question" position. But as an individual, not only do I question it, I reject it all together.

My individualism is empowered by self-interest and informed decision-making. My refusal to surrender my mind to the "collective good" of consuming the flesh and secretions of non-human animals is a reflection of my own rebellion. Along with the inspiration from other individual vegans I realized the power of thinking independently, selfishly, and egotistically – against the mass society whose normalized traditions and values conflict with my interests. As an individualist, being vegan is practical in extending individual autonomy to non-human animals. My refusal to socially reinforce their commodity status allows them the natural right to exist as their own autonomous individual selves, the same way I would expect to be respected by others. I refuse to individually participate in the mass normalization of their domination.

Anarchy, for me, means individual negation to laws, order, and systems. This anarchy not only opposes both vegan and anthropocentric morality but morality all together: morality being the abstract form of governance that attempts to subjugate my individuality. My veganism requires no external governance to enforce or guide it. It is an individualist choice that reflects the consistency and practicality of living my life against authority.

For veganism to be logically consistent with animal liberation, it must be anti-authoritarian. From this point forward, the totality of capitalist, industrial civilization must be called into question. Being vegan and pro-capitalist is a contradiction since the full functioning of capitalism requires large-scale exploitation of natural resources, subsequently destroying and wiping out entire eco-systems. Capitalism requires the expansion of technological industrialization to accommodate the demands of mass society. Mass society requires the ever-expanding displacement of wildlife to house the growing human population. Civilization is rooted by agriculture which is predicated on the basic formula of taking more from the land than putting back. This results in irreversible damage to all eco-systems that directly affect non-human animals.

To be vegan and pro-statist is a contradiction, since veganism aims for animal liberation, while the State is the antithesis of liberation – reinforcing laws that utilize physical force to coerce all beings into compliance. The common denominator with the State and vegan morality is the shared positions held as “universal truths” above the individual. Both coerce; one mentally and the other physically. Both compliment each other’s intentions on conditioning “the masses”, and both encourage the disregard for individual self-interest, creativity, and self-responsibility.

If the basis of animal liberation is freedom, empowering a governing agency to enforce moral-based laws upon individuals is a contradiction. It reinforces speciesism through the division of human and animal; if humans are in fact animals, and the vegan aim is animal liberation, why wouldn’t “human” animals liberate themselves from the same shackles of both speciesism and governance as well? Speciesism is reinforced through human supremacy, and if human supremacy is to be dismantled socially, animal liberation applies to everyone. From this point of view, government is not needed for granting rights: the right to bodily autonomy and equality comes with the dismantling of governance – both the governance of morality and statism.

It is not a morality that governs my actions, but rather an individualist desire to wage war upon all systems, moral or not, that attempt to subjugate me and destroy the earth I require to survive. My decision to become vegan did not come from a vegan morality or a new law prohibiting me from consuming flesh and secretions. It came from ungoverned free thought which helped me view society in a critical way, discovering pragmatic ways of enacting my own project of liberation. My vegan anarchist praxis is a shared affinity with the non-humans who fight against the constraints and torture devices of modern technology, slaughterhouses, and the human-made hell of industrial society. There is no God, government, or morality to save us. Only our individual selves, the decisions we make and the actions we take.

~ **Arming the will to survive with attack** ~

Savage (of an animal or force of nature) fierce, violent, and uncontrolled. -Wikipedia

One common tenet of morality is the commitment to non-violence. As an individualist, I find violence to be useful in some circumstances, and impractical in others. But it is this open-ended utilization of violence that morality-based non-violence prohibits. When it comes to animal liberation (or from the statist perspective, animal rights), veganism is often advertised as a “cruelty-free”, “no harm done” or “non-violent” movement. This not only ignores the historical examples of successful animal liberations through violence, but it also promotes a limited range of strategic activity. The reinforcement of a non-violent morality discourages the use of violence against the institutions and individual agents of speciesist domination. Human supremacy utilizes every and all avenues of violence to maintain its control. To limit the arsenal of resistance to mere defence rather than incorporating attack is to strategically limit the range of possibility and potential in advancing animal liberation. When animal liberation is confined to the legal arena of statism, the agency of individual insurgency has been surrendered.

Within mass society, speciesism is not just confined to grocery stores; it is also embedded in the social and cultural traditions reinforced by individual participation. Therefore, individuals socially reproduce the normalization of non-human animal abuse, control, and domination. And while some of these individuals might emancipate themselves from the speciesist mindset of human centric entitlement, others might embrace and defend it. Therefore, violence becomes a necessary task carried out by those individuals who refuse to stand by and allow the social reproduction of anthropocentric morality and practice.

I find affinity with those of the wild that struggle against the machinery of industrial society and those who fight to defend the ecological habitats within which they survive. The need for intensified confrontation with speciesism is one that encompasses an anti-authoritarian strike against the ideology and institutions of capitalism, the state, and anthropocentric morality. Beyond mere legislative reform, animal liberation from this perspective necessitates the destruction of all cages and apparatuses that physically captivate non-human animals. Simultaneously, a war waged against the forces of “human” animal captivity and enslavement opens avenues of exploration beyond the superiority complex - the role and identity of “human” as distinct from animal and wildness.

Through spontaneous ruptures to the civilized order, vegan savagery asserts resistance through attacking the foundations that produce enslavement. From non-participation to feral insurgency, anarchy is the personification of any individual with the courage to become wild against domesticating subordination.

But vegan savagery is more than just violent veganism: it is the celebration of life against the laws of morality, civilization, control, and domination. It is the refusal to internalize the capitalist-industrial view of others as mere objects to exploit, consume, or enslave. This allows individuals to define themselves as their own autonomous beings, armed with the agency to attack those who attempt to subjugate them.

As a vegan anarchist, my fight for freedom is parallel with the struggles fought by the wild since the dawn of industrial society and civilized domestication. What savages we must be - fighting for freedom with every breath, reclaiming our lives through every act of violence against the machines of social control and domination! While the movements of morality continue to ignore the vital reality of amoral violent necessity, some of us continue to wage

war against speciesism with nothing more than a fire for freedom in our hearts. In solidarity with the wild, and in defence of the ecological terrain I call home, my fight is fierce and ungovernable. Toward veganism beyond morality, toward industrial collapse and total liberation!

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