



Neo-vegan perspectives – 4

Neoveganism, pluralism and anti-speciesism

(draft, 23rd of July 2010)

It should be normal for Animal Rights people (with that I mean people primarily or partially interested or active in the global Animal Rights movement) to accept different positions, without assuming that divergence would harm the cause. No need to say that exempt from such a form of mutual tolerance would be people who claim to be AR but practically advocate theories and practices harmful to nonhuman animals (euthanasia of “stray” feral animals, “humane” slaughter, hidden forms of speciesism ...).

I often notice that there exists a self-prescribed narrowness in parts of the AR movement which hinders the necessary plurality of expressed opinions for the cause. Naturally people hold different opinions about issues, especially when it comes to the details of something that

could be described as a newly established consciousness as we have and develop it in the human-nonhuman animal relation today.

Why should Animal Rights be exempt from a highly diversified discussion such as we normally expect and have it practically on every other big ethical, political and rights issue?

Finding the truth (the acceptable truths of many insights) upon which to build a reasonable common ground that reflects the needs of reality, finding a suitable and fruitful political and also legal language needs a full discourse made up of all our individual opinions. When we take our individuality away from our political agency (speech, thought and action) in our daily lives, we lose exactly that which enables us to make progress. Progress is plurality - the exchange of many powers and how they can synergize.

It's understandable when you take a look at the Animal Rights movement at its single place in history, possessing a newly understood form of an extended "beyond-social" interspecies context, that people are likely to assume that they would need to follow a school of thought or political opinion. In reality though Animal Rights is a phenomenon as fundamental as Human Rights, so basic and immediate to the individual existence that every person can become clear about her own understanding of basic rights terms in a valid way and that every person can figure out herself how she weighs out what's right and what's wrong in her own "common sense" rights terms.

The relation towards nonhuman animals is ultimately an immediate one, it's a social connection in a new, antispeciesist way. And I think we should take it as such, if we truly are for human and animal liberation.

On a basis of accepting the presupposition that
A.) we can relate to nonhuman animals in a reasonable way obviously, and
B.) that the relation to nonhuman animals can thus be handled from the individual human in a similar way in which an individual human can assess human rights issues by applying her own common sense,
we can take our position of defence when we are addressing the "speciesist lobby", which usually argues that there exist decisive barriers between the "values" of human and nonhuman animal life, a notion established on the premise that humans have the right to simply give the animal world their definitions - in all detail (the result of which is mass murder on the biological argument).

We as Animal Rights persons can constructively and positively relate to nonhuman animals, and we side with their interests from our position as fellow (human) animal beings. Practiced anti-speciesism to its best level is an ongoing learning process which makes us mature and responsible as human beings. Our engagement and fight for the legal and earth-political rights to live, to possess habitat, to be a rights holder under nonhomocentric terms, will re-establish the integrity of an ongoing existential relationship we have with nonhuman animals.