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Vegan Amoralty

An Egoist Nihilist Critique Of Speciesism

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Third: “permission” is already being challenged in this text. The text argues at that the system of domination maintains itself partly through the ideology of permission — the claim that what is legal is permissible, that what is normal is acceptable, that what is economically convenient is justified. The egoist anarchist position rejects the entire framework of institutionally conferred permission. It does not confer a different kind of permission in its place. It refuses the concept of permission altogether: the recognition that the self does not require permission to refuse, and equally does not require a new set of permissions to participate in any available form of domination. There is no loophole. The egoist who refuses domination does so not from compulsion but from the recognition that the logic of domination is the same logic wherever it appears, and that accepting it anywhere is accepting it everywhere.

The amoral position, in short, does not say “nothing matters.” It says “nothing requires external authority to matter.” The difference is the difference between nihilism as despair and nihilism as liberation — between the collapse of meaning and the recognition that meaning arises from within rather than being imposed from without. The pig in the gestation crate matters — not because a moral law says so, and not because the egoist has been told to care, but because the recognition of what the cage is, and what the animal inside it is, is the recognition that no amount of moralist framing can prevent. The refusal that follows is the free act of a self that has recognized what the system is and decided, by their own will and for their own reasons, not to participate in it.

chic rather than deontological, utilitarian, or what have you — may require clarification.

This position is sometimes read, by those who encounter it without full attention to what it actually says, as a kind of permission: as if the rejection of objective moral facts, the refusal of moral authority, the insistence that no external code has claim over the self — as if all of this licensed a kind of “anything goes” conclusion in which the individual is free to participate in whatever domination they find convenient, because the anti-moralist position has removed the moral prohibition. This reading is incorrect, and in several ways.

First: the anti-moralist, anti-realist position does not hold that domination is neutral. It holds that the identification of domination and the decision to refuse it do not require appeal to objective moral facts. The domination is real. The suffering is real. The extraction and the confinement and the reproductive violation are real. These are not moral facts in the metaphysical sense the anti-realist is rejecting. They are material facts about power, about bodies, and about what is done to them. The anti-moralist anarchist refuses participation in domination not because a moral law requires it but because the recognition of domination is the recognition, and the refusal follows from the recognition by the logic of the egoist’s own interest and will.

Second: the rejection of moral authority does not eliminate consequences. The consequences of participating in the system of industrial animal agriculture — the material support provided to the system by every purchase, every consumption choice, every normalized participation — are not contingent on any moral framework. They exist regardless of whether one believes in objective moral facts. The pig is no less confined because the consumer does not believe in the objective wrongness of confinement. The ecocide is no less happening because the environmental participant does not accept utilitarian calculus. Consequences are not moral constructs. They are material realities.

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categorically different from harm to human beings — is already in place as the unexamined premise. The cultural argument piggybacks on this premise. It does not defend the practice on its merits; it deflects examination of the practice by claiming a cultural exemption whose force depends entirely on the prior acceptance that animal harm is a category apart. Once the prior acceptance is removed — once the analysis this text has conducted from its opening pages is allowed to land — the cultural argument collapses. If animal suffering matters, if the pig in the gestation crate experiences something, if the deer dying from a poorly placed arrow experiences something, then the cultural framework that sanctions these practices stands in the same relationship to the harm as the cultural framework that sanctions female genital mutilation stands to that harm: as a real and meaningful context that neither licenses the harm nor removes it from ethical examination. Culture explains. Culture does not excuse.

The demand for consistency cuts both ways. If the appeal to culture is decisive in the case of animal harm, it must be decisive in every other case — and those who invoke it in the animal context must be prepared to defend, on the same grounds, every other cultural practice that human rights frameworks have rejected. If it is not decisive in every other case — and it demonstrably is not — then it is not the principle doing the work. Speciesism is the principle doing the work. And speciesism is exactly what is being questioned.

AMORAL, NOT “IMMORAL”: CLARIFYING THE ANTI-MORALIST POSITION

The anti-moralist, anti-realist position articulated here — the position that veganism does not rest on objective moral facts, that it is not a moral imposition, that its grounds are egoist and anar-

Honor violence, the criminalization of homosexuality, the denial of medical care on religious grounds to children, the use of corporal punishment in children's education

— all of these are or have been cultural and religious practices with centuries of tradition behind them. The appeal to culture does not function, in any of these cases, as a conversation-stopper. It is treated as one consideration among several, and it is routinely overridden by the judgment that the harm being inflicted is real and that the cultural sanction for it is insufficient to license it.

Now observe what happens when the exact same structure of argument is applied to the harm inflicted on animals: culture says this is acceptable. Suddenly the argument acquires a force it never has in the human context. Suddenly the cultural framework is treated not as one consideration to be weighed against others but as the decisive, conversation-ending fact. To challenge a cultural practice of animal killing is — in this specific context — framed as cultural imperialism, as arrogance, as the imposition of Western values on communities with different traditions.

The selectivity is total. And the selectivity is the confession.

The argument is not being made on principle. If it were made on principle, it would be applied consistently — it would be used to defend female genital mutilation and child marriage and honor violence with the same force and the same immunity from challenge that it claims for practices of animal killing. No one who invokes culture to defend the slaughter of animals also consistently invokes culture to defend female genital mutilation. The argument is not a defense of cultural diversity. It is a specific exemption created for one category of harm and applied nowhere else. The category it exempts is the category in which animals are the ones being harmed.

This selectivity has an explanation, and the explanation is the ideology of speciesism that this text has been examining throughout. The cultural argument works as a conversation-stopper specifically in the case of animal harm because the underlying assumption — that animal suffering matters less, that harm to animals is

WHY THE SYSTEM NEEDS VEGANISM TO BE MORALITY

The system needs veganism to be framed as morality because morality can be dismissed. Morality can be debated. Morality can be subjected to philosophical scrutiny and found wanting. Morality can be relativized, complicated, and ultimately neutralized. But refusal cannot be dismissed. Refusal is not a claim about objective moral facts. It is a withdrawal of consent. And the withdrawal of consent does not require justification. It requires only the recognition that one is participating in something and the decision to stop participating.

This is why the conversation always shifts to morality. When someone says, "I don't eat animals," the response is almost never, "What do you know about animal agriculture that makes you refuse to participate?" The response is, "Why do you think it's morally wrong to eat animals?" The shift is immediate and automatic. The refusal is transformed into a moral claim, and once it is a moral claim, it can be subjected to all the rhetorical moves that neutralize moral arguments.

But the refusal is not a moral claim. The refusal is a pragmatic recognition that animal agriculture is a system of domination and a decision to withdraw consent from participation in that system. This recognition does not depend on moral realism. It depends on observation. And the decision does not depend on moral duty. It depends on one's own judgment about what one is willing to participate in.

The system cannot allow this understanding to take hold. Because if veganism were understood as refusal rather than morality, it could not be dismissed on metaethical grounds. It could not be neutralized by appeals to moral complexity, moral relativism, moral imperfection, or moral priorities. It could only be confronted on its own terms: as a withdrawal of consent from a system of dom-

ination. And this confrontation would require the system to justify itself—to explain why the domination is legitimate, why the killing is necessary, why the consumer should consent to participate.

The system cannot provide this justification. So it ensures that the question is never asked. It ensures that veganism is always framed as morality, always subjected to moral scrutiny, always dismissed on moral grounds. The framing is not accidental. It is strategic. It is the primary mechanism by which the system protects itself from examination.

This is why the metaethical distinction is the key. Once you understand that veganism is not morality—that it is ethics, that it is refusal, that it is Negation, that it is the withdrawal of consent from domination—the entire landscape changes. The rhetorical moves that neutralize moral arguments no longer apply. The demand for moral justification is revealed as illegitimate. And, again, the question becomes: What does this system do, and do I consent to participate in it?

EGOISM AND THE DESTRUCTION OF “SPOOKS”

“I also love human beings, not just a few individuals, but every one. But I love them with the awareness of egoism; I love them because love makes me happy, I love because love is natural to me, it pleases me. I know no ‘commandment of love.’ I have fellow-feeling with every feeling being, and their torment torments me, their refreshment refreshes me too; I can kill, not torture, them.” — Max Stirner

Max Stirner, in *The Unique and Its Property*, introduced the concept of the “spook”—an abstract ideal, a concept, a fixed idea, a value that people treat as if it were real and binding, even though it exists only in their minds. Morality, in Stirner’s analysis, is the ultimate spook. It is a phantom that people sacrifice themselves

— has been performed on young girls for centuries and is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious frameworks of many communities. The argument that “this is our tradition, our cultural identity, you have no right to challenge it” is an argument that is available, structurally, in exactly the same form as the argument used to defend cultural practices of animal slaughter. Western governments, human rights organizations, and feminist activists do not accept it. They treat the harm inflicted on the child’s body as morally decisive regardless of cultural context.

The cultural argument is rejected. The harm is the issue.

Forced marriage — the practice of requiring individuals, predominantly girls and young women, to enter marriages without their meaningful consent — is likewise embedded in long-standing cultural and religious traditions across numerous communities worldwide. When it occurs in Western nations, it is criminalized. When Western governments encounter it in the countries they have influence over, they treat it as a human rights violation requiring intervention. The cultural argument — this is our tradition, our community practice, not yours to judge — is not accepted as a sufficient defense. The harm is the issue.

Child marriage — marriage before the age of legal consent — is practiced in dozens of countries with direct roots in long-standing cultural and religious frameworks. The argument that this practice is culturally embedded and therefore beyond external ethical challenge is an argument that no serious human rights framework accepts. The harm is the issue.

The subjugation of women through social partitioning — the restriction of women’s movement, dress, speech, education, and participation in public life through systems of enforced social norms backed by religious authority — is an ancient and widely distributed cultural practice. When it appears in its most extreme forms, Western societies characterize it as oppression regardless of its cultural depth or community sanction. The cultural argument is not accepted as a decisive response. The harm is the issue.

designed to prevent: What does this system produce, and do you consent to participate in it?

THE CULTURAL EXCEPTION THAT ISN'T: ON THE SELECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF TRADITION

The appeal to culture is one of the most rhetorically powerful defenses of animal exploitation available to the dominant discourse, and it is among the most selectively applied arguments in the entire arsenal. When someone challenges the practice of factory farming, the consumption of animal flesh, the wearing of animal skin, the use of animals in entertainment — the invocation of culture arrives with the speed and force of a closing argument: This is our tradition. This is who we are. This is our heritage, our way of life, our cultural identity, and you have no right to challenge it.

The argument has a surface plausibility. Culture is real. Tradition is real. The ways in which communities organize their food practices, their relationships to land and animals, their seasonal rituals and collective identities, are genuinely meaningful and genuinely varied. To dismiss all of this as mere habit would be both arrogant and analytically wrong. No one in this text has argued for that dismissal.

But the appeal to culture is not, in practice, a genuine defense of cultural diversity or a principled commitment to respecting the self-determination of communities. It is a selective rhetorical weapon, deployed exclusively in the service of defending practices that harm animals, and never — with consistent, principled regularity — in defense of any other cultural practice that causes comparable harm to human beings.

Consider what the cultural argument is never used to defend.

Female genital mutilation — practiced in cultures across sub-Saharan Africa, parts of the Middle East, and some Asian commu-

to, that prevents them from recognizing their own will as the only legitimate source of action.

For Stirner, the only thing that matters is the ego—not in the petty, mean-spirited sense of selfishness, but in the sense of self-ownership, of your own will as the measure of your actions. And crucially: other egos matter too, not because morality demands it, but because you encounter them, they are real, and your power is always exercised in relation to them. The egoist recognizes that they live in a world with other egos, other wills, and the question is not “What does morality demand?” but “What is the actual situation, and how do I navigate it in accordance with my own understanding?”

“If I am thoroughly an egoist, then I recognize the ego of others and the desire of that ego to not be controlled or dominated. I own nobody, and nobody owns me. This social relationship does not constitute a form of politics. Politics implies social governance guided by an external authority. My lifestyle is an anti-politics — rejecting all anthropocentric power and authority constructed to govern my social interactions with other animals. My refusal to view non-human animals as ‘food’ for consumption can easily be understood as a primal expression of this anti-authoritarian lifestyle.” — Flower Bomb, Egoist Vegan: Some Thoughts on an Individualist Animal Liberation

From an egoist perspective, the question of veganism is not moral at all. It is: Do I wish to participate in a system that reduces other sentient beings to instruments? Do I wish to fund, through my consumption, the brutally violent industrial machinery of animal agriculture? Do I wish to carry within my body the consequences of choices made by others on my behalf? The answer an egoist gives is likely to be: No. Not because egoism demands universal compassion. Not because the suffering of animals is an objective moral fact. But because the egoist recognizes that they are not separate from the world they participate in. They recognize that domination structures—the logic that justifies the reduction of animals to meat, of the natural world to resources, of life itself

to extractable value—are the same logic that dominates the egoist themselves. To refuse to participate in animal agriculture is, for the egoist, to refuse one mechanism of the domination structure that constrains their own freedom. This is not altruism. This is not moral duty. This is the recognition that the spook of “hierarchy is natural” and “domination is justified” must be shattered everywhere it appears, because everywhere it appears, it limits the egoist’s own power.

Stirner’s catalogue of spooks runs the full length of the civilization that produced them. The fatherland demands your blood. The state demands your taxes, your labor, your children, your compliance. Culture demands that you perform your heritage and suppress your deviations from it. The family demands your conformity to its roles, your subordination to its hierarchy, your sacrifice to its continuity. Society demands that you organize your life around its norms and expectations rather than your own desire and recognition. Religion demands your submission to an authority so total that it claims jurisdiction over your interior life. Nation demands that you kill and be killed for it. Race demands that you define yourself by what it says you are and police others who do not conform to what it says they should be. Progress demands that you sacrifice the present to an imagined future. Morality demands that you silence your own will in favor of rules that were not made by you and do not serve you.

To these Stirner would add, from the vantage of our present: gender demands that you inhabit a role, a presentation, a set of behaviors and desires assigned to your body at birth by people who knew nothing about who you would become — and that you enforce this assignment on others by enforcing its categories on yourself. Speciesism demands that you accept, as a foundational and unquestionable premise, that the capacity to suffer is less morally relevant than the accident of species membership — and that this acceptance be so complete that it requires no defense, no justifica-

The fact that it is applied only when the conclusion is “eating meat” reveals that the conclusion came first and the argument was assembled afterwards.

The actual logical structure of the argument, when made explicit, is: Some things that occur in nature are good. Eating meat occurs in nature. Therefore eating meat is good. The first premise is obviously true, the inference is obviously invalid, and the argument proves nothing. Things that occur in nature include cancer, parasitism, and death by exposure. Nature is not a moral guide. It is a description of what is, not a prescription of what ought to be.

There is a further irony embedded in this particular argument when it is directed at veganism from within an anarchist or primitivist context. The entire project of civilization — including the factory farm, the abattoir, the genetic modification of animal bodies for productive utility — is profoundly unnatural in the strict sense: it does not occur in nature; it is the systematic overriding and reconstruction of natural processes for human purposes. The person who argues that eating meat is natural while consuming factory-farmed chicken produced by a genetic variant that would have been impossible without human intervention, raised under conditions of confinement that have no analog in any natural ecosystem, processed in an industrial facility and packaged in plastic — this person is not making an argument about nature. They are making an argument about comfort, habit, and the desire to not be challenged. The naturalistic fallacy, in the specific form in which it is deployed against veganism, is not a philosophical argument. It is a psychological defense mechanism wearing philosophical clothing. Its function is not to establish a principle. Its function is to change the subject — to move the conversation away from the material reality of what animal agriculture is and does, and toward an abstraction (“nature”) that provides enough rhetorical cover to avoid confrontation. Recognized as such, it can be set aside without ceremony, and the conversation can return to the question that it was

natural in the normative sense — legitimate, appropriate, beyond ethical questioning.

The argument fails on multiple levels, but its most revealing failure is not logical. It is selective. The appeal to animal behavior is invoked exclusively — with a consistency so perfect it cannot be accidental — in defense of eating meat. It is never deployed in defense of any other behavior that occurs in nature with comparable frequency.

Male lions commit infanticide routinely upon taking over a pride, killing the cubs sired by their predecessors. This is adaptive behavior that occurs in nature. It is not offered as a defense of human infanticide. Male ducks, seals, dolphins, and orangutans engage in forced copulation as a documented reproductive strategy. This occurs in nature with regularity. It is not offered as a defense of rape. Many species, including chimpanzees, engage in cannibalism under certain conditions. This is natural behavior. It is not offered as a defense of eating other humans. Male spiders are frequently killed and consumed by females after mating. Parasitic wasps lay their eggs inside living caterpillars, which are then consumed from the inside by the hatching larvae. Hyenas engage in violent competition within litters, with stronger cubs sometimes killing weaker siblings. Nature is replete with behaviors that, if transferred to human social contexts, would be recognized immediately as atrocities.

No one cites these behaviors to argue that they are therefore acceptable for humans. The appeal to animal behavior is not, and has never been, a genuine principle of ethical reasoning. It is a rhetorical device deployed specifically and exclusively in the service of one particular conclusion: that eating meat is natural and therefore beyond ethical challenge. Its selectivity is its confession. If the argument were genuine — if the claim were that whatever occurs in nature is therefore legitimate — it would have to be applied consistently, and applying it consistently would produce conclusions that even its most enthusiastic proponents would find intolerable.

tion, no examination, no encounter with what it actually costs the beings on whose suffering it operates.

Both of these are spooks in the precise Stirnerian sense: abstractions that claim authority over the self, that demand sacrifice of one's own recognition to the maintenance of the category, that place the concept above the individual and the system above the person. The man who performs compulsory masculinity in its most toxic register — the domination, the emotional suppression, the contemptuous distance from vulnerability, the demonstration of power through the consumption of animal flesh — is haunted. He is performing a spook. And the person who encounters a pig suffering in a gestation crate and thinks "but she's just an animal" is also performing a spook — allowing the categorical designation to override the direct evidence of their own perception. Both operations are the same operation. Both require the suspension of immediate recognition in favor of the authority of an abstract category. Both can be dissolved by the same movement of the mind: the refusal to let any category claim authority over what is directly before you.

Authority subjugates the individual, instilling in him a selfless ideal. An egoist, under any authority, is a dissident, a free-thinker who refuses to follow authority based on his self-interests. — Max Stirner (epigraph to Warzone Distro, *Black Flame: Self-Liberation Against Societal Conformity*)

INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHISM AND THE REFUSAL OF IMPOSED CATEGORIES

"The anarchist individualists do not present themselves as proletarians, absorbed only in the search for material amelioration, tied to a class determined to transform the world and to substitute a new society for the actual one. They place themselves in the present; they disdain to orient the coming generations towards a form of society allegedly destined to assure their happiness, for the simple reason that

from the individualist point of view happiness is a conquest, an individual's internal realization." — Emile Armand, *Individualist Perspectives*

Individualist anarchism operates from an adjacent but compatible premise: that imposed categories, enforced identities, and hierarchical arrangements are the fundamental problem, and that liberation consists of refusing to be sorted into their schemes. In this sense, anarcho-egoism is typically considered nearly synonymous with individualist anarchism. From this perspective, veganism is not about creating a new identity ("I am a vegan," as if this were a fixed property), but about refusing participation in a particular form of categorization and domination. Animal agriculture categorizes sentient beings as property, as things, as resources. It sorts the world into the edible and the inedible, the valuable and the disposable. Individualist anarchism refuses this sorting. It refuses to participate in the logic of categorization that treats sentient beings as mere things. Individualist anarchism is a tradition that emphasizes the absolute primacy of the individual will over any external constructs—such as state, society, morality, or ideology. (A core component of this philosophy, particularly in its egoist expression, is the rejection of dualism—the separation of the world into opposing, yet often codependent, categories like mind/body, sacred/profane, or individual/society, etc.)

"It is my desire and self-interest to resist speciesism, anthropocentrism, and civilization and the cruelty it forces onto many individuals, human and non-human animals alike." — Renzo Connors, *The Intersections Between Anti-Speciesism, Anti-Civilization, & Individualist Anarchy*

This refusal is not grounded in a moral identity. It is grounded in the recognition that the system that categorizes animals as property is the same system that categorizes humans into hierarchies of value, disposability, and usefulness. The same logic that says "this animal's life is worth less than my taste preference" is the logic that says "this person's life is worth less than profit" or "this group's

lives are less valuable than civilization's march." To refuse one instance of this logic is to refuse the logic itself.

"Veganism, like anarchy, isn't a system; it's an individual praxis of abstention and individual resistance against consumerist violence and civilization-induced destruction. Veganism is the individual anti-speciesist refusal to take part in all forms of exploitation and systematic extermination." — Renzo Connors, *The Intersections Between Anti-Speciesism, Anti-Civilization, & Individualist Anarchy*

Individualist anarchism does not demand that you become a "vegan activist" or that you identify as part of a movement. It demands only that you refuse to participate in a specific form of domination, not from moral obligation but from the recognition that it serves no one's actual freedom, least of all your own.

THE NATURALISTIC FALLACY AND THE APPEAL TO ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

"If anti-civ anarchists truly sense the natural of primal, how do their senses tend to cherry pick early human events for glorification and re-enactment like hunting, but not infanticide or rape? Imagine the lengthy list of behaviors modern humans could rationalize as 'natural' because 'early humans did it too', or because it fits the conditioned 'desire' to do so." — Ria Del Montana, *Absurd, Disingenuous Rationalizations of Ranting Humancentric Anarchists*

There is an argument — encountered so frequently in discussions of veganism that it has achieved the status of a verbal tic — that goes: but lions eat meat; but wolves kill prey; but animals kill each other all the time in nature; you can't argue against eating animals when nature itself is built on predation. This argument is called the appeal to nature, and in its deployment against veganism it commits what philosophers call the naturalistic fallacy: the inference that because something occurs in nature, it is therefore