

CURRENT ISSUES OF ANIMAL ETHICS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

DECEMBER 13–14 2024, FACULTY OF ARTS, MARIBOR

AKTUALNA VPRAŠANJA ETIKE ŽIVALI

MEDNARODNA KONFERENCA

PROGRAM IN POVZETKI

13. IN 14. DECEMBER 2024, FILOZOFSKA FAKULTETA UNIVERZE V MARIBORU

EDITED BY / UREDILI_E:

Tomaž GRUŠOVNIK, Urška MARTINC, Branislava VIČAR



Univerza v Mariboru

Filozofska fakulteta

Oddelek za filozofijo

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor /

Oddelek za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Mariboru

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Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor /
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13-14 December, Maribor, Slovenia /
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International Conference
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AKTUALNA VPRAŠANJA ETIKE ŽIVALI

Mednarodna konferenca
Program in povzetki

Organized by / Organizatorja: Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor /
Oddelek za filozofijo, Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Mariboru; University of Primorska, Faculty of
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PROGRAMME / PROGRAM

FRIDAY / PETEK, 13. 12. 2024

Room 0.2 / Predavalnica 0.2

Zoom: <https://upr-si.zoom.us/j/99789259878>

12.00–12.30 Welcome Speeches / Pozdravni nagovori

Full Prof. Dr. Tomaž GRUŠOVNIK, Head of the Conference / vodja konference

Assoc. Prof. Ddr. Joca ZURC, Vice-Dean for International and Promotional Affairs at the Faculty of Arts, UM / prodekanica za mednarodno dejavnost in promocijo Filozofske fakultete UM

Asst. Prof. Dr. Smiljana GARTNER, Deputy Head of the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts, UM / namestnica predstojnika Oddelka za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete UM

SESSION 1 / SEKCIJA 1

Chair / Vodi: Tomaž GRUŠOVNIK

12.30–13.00 **Hrvoje JURIC**: *Tko su životinje? Znanje i neznanje, arogancija i bioetički senzibilitet*

13.00–13.30 **Josip GUĆ**: *Participativna moralna odgovornost spram životinja*

13.30–14.00 **Reingard SPANNRING**: *Lifelong Learning for a Just Transspecies Society?* (Zoom)

14.00–14.30 **Ulrike SCHMID**: *Contribution of Austrian Textbooks to the Stabilization of a Normative Anthropocentric Perspective* (Zoom)

14.30–15.00 Coffee Break / Odmor

SESSION 2 / SEKCIJA 2

Chair / Vodi: Urška MARTINC

- 15.00–15.30 **Marjetka Golež KAUČIČ:** *Animals in Disasters*
- 15.30–16.00 **Vesna LIPONIK:** *Etika živali kot problem: primer živalskega upora*
- 16.00–16.30 **Branislava VIČAR:** »Mala prebivalka, mala preživela«: subjektivizacija podgane v izbranih literarnih delih
- 16.30–17.00 **Suzana Marjanič:** *How to Look at/Think of Animals/ Non-Humans: Animals as Tourist Props/Attractions in Croatia (Zoom)*
- 17.10–17.30 Coffee Break / Odmor

SESSION 3 / SEKCIJA 3

Chair / Vodi: Josip GUĆ

- 17.30–18.00 **Bruno ĆURKO:** *Razvijanje etičke svijesti kroz filozofsku raspravu o ljudsko-životinjskim odnosima*
- 18.00–18.30 **Bara KOLENC:** (Ne)zgodovinskost živali: misel – nemisel, dolžnost – nedolžnost, delo – nedelo
- 18.30–19.00 **Tomaž GRUŠOVNIK:** *Critical Animal Pedagogy, Paulo Freire, and the Education of the Oppressors*
- 19.30 Conference Dinner / Večerja (Cantante Café / Restavracija Cantante, Ul. Pariške komune 37, 2000 Maribor)

SATURDAY / SOBOTA, 14. 12. 2024

Room 0.2 / Predavalnica 0.2

Zoom: <https://upr-si.zoom.us/j/99789259878>

SESSION 4 / SEKCIJA 4

Chair/Vodi: **Branislava VIČAR**

9.00–9.30 **Smiljana GARTNER**: *Razčlovečenje človeka vs. počlovečenje živali: ali sta lahko etika skrbi in ekofeminizem v pomoč?*

9.30–10.00 **Urška MARTINC**: *Koncept superorganizma v etiki živali*

10.00–10.30 **Priscila Gulič PIRNAT**: *Etika živali in prava v babilonski in grški antični misli – Kaj se lahko naučimo?*

10.30–11.00 Coffee Break / Odmor

SESSION 5 / SEKCIJA 5

Chair / Vodi: **Tomaž GRUŠOVNIK**

11.00–11.30 **Boris VEZJAK**: *Porphyry, De Abstinentia and Arguments for Vegetarianism*

11.30–12.00 **Friderik KLAMPFER**: *'Meat Is Here to Stay' Assessing the Merits of Some Recent Criticisms of Ethical Veganism*

12.00–12.30 **Urška JENČIČ**: *Carnophallogocentrism – The Formation of (Human) Identity through Consumption of the (Animal) Other(s)*

12.30–13.00 Conference Closing / Zaključek konference

Abstracts / Povzetki

Bruno Ćurko

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Cultivating Ethical Minds: Philosophical Dialogues on Human-Animal Relationships

This presentation explores the potential of combining the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CoPI) and Socratic Dialogue as complementary pedagogical methods for fostering bioethical sensitivity in students. CoPI, derived from Charles Sanders Peirce's concept of the "community of inquiry" and adapted by Matthew Lipman for educational contexts, encourages reflective thinking and collaborative dialogue. Socratic dialogue, characterized by a systematic approach to questioning, challenges participants to identify underlying assumptions, confront biases, and hone critical thinking skills. Both methods provide a robust framework for bioethics education that emphasizes moral reflection and empathy. By engaging students in philosophical dialogue, educators can address contemporary ethical issues, such as ecological crises and human-animal relationships, from a bioethical perspective.

The presentation will include concrete examples of workshops with children and adolescents that focus on raising awareness about their relationship with animals. These workshops use interactive and dialogical approaches to encourage critical thinking about the ethical treatment of animals and to foster empathy. The practical applications illustrate the potential of these methods to cultivate critical thinking, moral awareness, and ethical decision-making skills in early education.

Smiljana Gartner

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Dehumanisation of Human Animals vs. Anthropomorphization of Non-Human Animals: Can Ethics of Care and Ecofeminism be the Solution?

The system of domination associated with an oppressive conceptual framework can lead to the non-humane actions, what we can witness in the current war zones. It is easier to take this step if we first dehumanize people, thereby deepening the dualistic relationship of human vs. other into a relationship of a specific human vs. other, which allows: disrespect, exploitation, torture, abuse, plundering, and killing. Therefore, we should not accept claims that dealing with ecology, animal rights, the rights of the oppressed, and the ethics of care is a "woman's" issue that is thus irrational, unimportant, and inferior. In the broad field of ecofeminism, it is unanimously accepted that disrespectful, non-caring and cruel treatment of anyone or anything (people, animals, all living and non-living nature) is a morally wrong act. However, does this imply that within ecofeminism and the ethics of care, if we want to be humane, we must anthropomorphize all involved? Does this mean that omnivores adhere to the aforementioned dualism and are consequently speciesists? In this paper, we argue that anthropomorphizing non-human animals, as well as dehumanisation of humans, can also be an inhumane act.



Marjetka Golež Kaučič

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Animals in Disasters

In this paper, we discuss the issue of animals in catastrophic events, focusing particularly on the floods that occurred in August 2023, which affected a large part of Slovenia. Drawing on insights and concepts from critical animal studies, we examine the positions of various animals during such disasters in the Anthropocene epoch—an era marked by unprecedented human impact on the Earth’s ecosystems. Despite this context, animals are still predominantly treated as property or commodities rather than as individuals with agency.

Through an analysis of catastrophes, we highlight the differing positions of animals—companion, farm, and free-living—in relation to humans. We also explore the roles of anthropocentrism and speciesism, which assign hierarchical and differential value to animal species, even in times of disaster. We argue that human, animal, and plant agency are deeply interconnected within the broader world, and we advocate for the adoption of “non-rapacious ethics.”

Tomaž Grušovnik

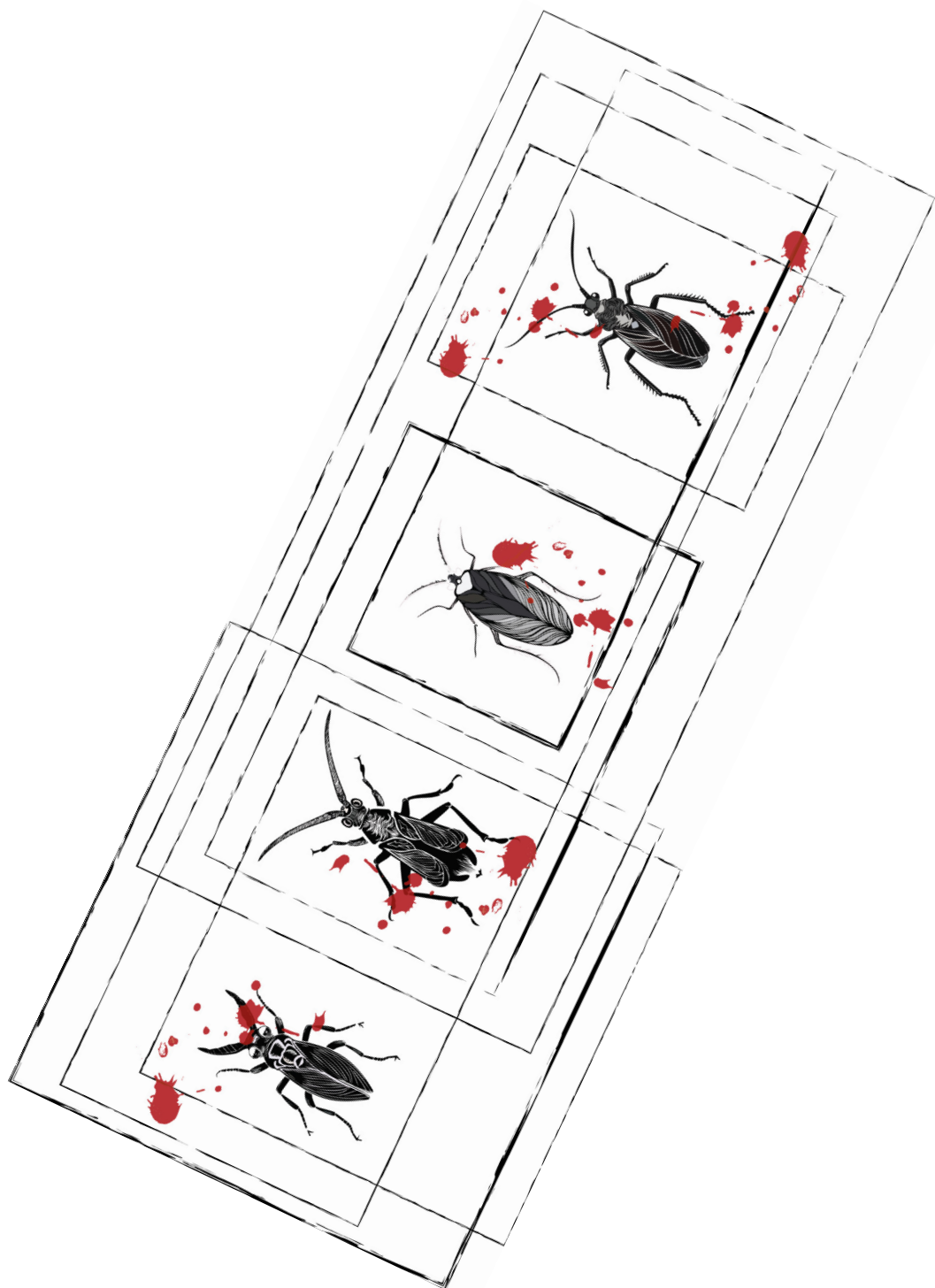
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Critical Animal Pedagogy, Paulo Freire, and the Education of the Oppressors

Paulo Freire's emphasis on the pedagogy of the oppressed has often been applied to the question of education for animal rights (Ralph R. Acampora, Lauren Corman, Richard Kahn, Anne Bell, and Constance Russell), which figures prominently in Critical Animal Pedagogy (CAP). In the CAP literature, the analogy is almost universally drawn between Freire's oppressed and abused animals. The standard interpretation is that just as one must help liberate oppressed peoples, one must use Freire to help liberate oppressed animals. However, this may not be the best way to apply Freire to CAP, since animals cannot be politically liberated in the sense of achieving their political autonomy like oppressed people. This is also seen in Freire's anthropocentric early work, where human freedom is often conceptualized and understood precisely in opposition to animals and their deterministic existence. Indeed, I argue that CAP would benefit more from taking seriously Freire's observation that both the oppressed and the oppressors must be educated in order to achieve conscientization and humanization. Thus, Freire's application to CAP could be better understood as the question of educating the oppressors, namely the humans who exploit the animals. Thus, CAP could perhaps build on a rich literature of educating the oppressors.



Josip Guć

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Participative Responsibility Towards Animals

This paper posits that moral responsibility toward animals cannot be constrained to a mere notion of direct responsibility; rather, it must be contextualized within the framework of participatory responsibility. This is the case in nearly every moral context; however, its particular relevance is evident in our treatment of nonhuman beings. All forms of animal mistreatment involve multiple responsible human subjects, whose responsibility may not align with the directness of their actions that impede the animals' self-realization. Moral responsibility should be reflected in a consideration of a subject's capacity to act and their ability to understand the moral implications of their actions. In this analysis, it is important to consider the ways in which our actions are influenced by economic imperatives and cultural inputs. This implies that ethics should take much more account of the broader perspective than it has hitherto done. The central question addressed in this paper is as follows: What are we responsible *for* when we are responsible *towards* animals?

Priscila Gulič Pirnat

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Animal Ethics and Law in Babylonian and Greek Ancient Thought - What Can We Learn?

This presentation explores the ethical and legal conceptualisations of animals in ancient Babylonian and Greek civilisations and examines how these early societies viewed animals in their cultural, spiritual and legal systems. The Babylonian perspective is analysed through the Code of Hammurabi and religious texts that demonstrate the role of animals as property and symbols of the divine order. In contrast, Greek thought, represented by philosophers such as Aristotle and Plutarch, offers a more diverse account that reconciles utilitarian views with proto-ecological insights. By comparing these traditions, the presentation attempts to uncover the fundamental attitudes towards animals that shaped later moral and legal frameworks. Finally, it considers what contemporary animal ethics and animal law can learn from these ancient paradigms to promote a more inclusive and just worldview.

Urška Jenčič

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Carnophallogocentrism – The Formation of (Human) Identity through Consumption of the (Animal) Other(s)

I am interested in the role animals and meat specifically play in the formation of (human) identity, and why the appeal to change our practices regarding animals, specifically eating meat, is met with such resistance. I explore the relations of violence, sacrificial structures and consumption schemes between the man and the animal through the prism of Derrida's concept of carnophallogocentrism, the mechanism of becoming an anthropocentric Western subject. The term *carnophallogocentrism* is an attempt to name primary social, linguistic and material practices that enable becoming and the continuous existence of the Western subject — how the rational, speaking, masculine and meat-eating is privileged in the construction of “universal” meanings, institutions and subjectivities. The identity of the carnophallogocentric subject is not stable — it requires constant repetition of certain practices and formations of meaning, among which eating meat (both real and metaphorical or symbolic) or consumption is the pervasive form of relating with the world. Achieving the stability of identity, therefore, depends on various and ever-emerging methods of consolidating one's own identity through negation and exclusion, and the sacrificial ingestion of everything that might threaten its clarity and dominance. The removal of meat(-eating), therefore, presents a threat to the clarity of categories of meaning and the centrality of the patriarchal structure, or the structure of the Western subject, constructed as separated from and superior to nature.

Hrvoje Jurić

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Who Are the Animals? Knowledge and Ignorance, Arrogance and Bioethical Sensibility

The aim of this paper is to problematize still dominant view on non-human animals as objects, which can be found even in the theories that promote animal rights on the basis of certain characteristics such as anthropomorphically conceived sentience or consciousness. Instead of trying to answer the question “What are the animals?”, believing arrogantly that we are able to acquire reliable knowledge on non-human animals, we should start to ask “Who are the animals?”, i.e. to admit that we will never know it, but we can (and should) try to find other ways to approach non-human animals, to understand the meaning of their existence and, on that basis, to recognize and respect inherent purpose, value and dignity of their lives, probably by nurturing the “bioethical sensibility”. In that sense, we will rely on some developed concepts such as Albert Schweitzer’s “reverence for life”, Tom Regan’s “subject of a life”, and Arne Næss’s “self-realization”.



Friderik Klampfer

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‘Meat Is Here to Stay’**Assessing the Merits of Some Recent Criticisms of Ethical Veganism**

After a decade of being on the offensive, dominating discussions on our duties towards, and with respect to, non-human animals, ethical veganism (EV) is now experiencing something of a backlash. A number of books have come out in recent years (Bramble & Fisher 2015, Chignell, Cuneo & Halteman 2016, Fisher 2020, Milburn 2023, Abbate & Bobier 2024) which defend some variant of omnivorism and/or continued, albeit limited, participation of animals in food production. What is new and philosophically interesting about these criticisms is that unlike criticisms from a more distant past, today’s critics of ethical veganism readily accept the premises of the argument for EV but refuse to conclude that we ought to adopt a strictly vegan diet.

In the paper, I first provide a brief overview and then assess the merits of some argumentative strategies intent on avoiding the conclusion that morally speaking, we ought to abolish the use of animals in food production, as well as stop buying and eating meat and animal products. In the course of that, a number of so-called bridging principles are scrutinized that in the critics’ opinion fail to show our complicity in animal farming as an instance of culpable wrongdoing and establish veganism as a moral duty proper rather than, say, simply a morally worthy or commendable choice. The challenge to ethical veganism is real, I contend, but manageable.

Bara Kolenc

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The (Un)Historicity of Animals: Thought - Nothought, Duty - Innocency, Work - Nonwork

In dialogue with Oxana Timofeeva's book *The History of Animals* (2018), which explores the animal's own historicity through which the space of its freedom opens up, this paper will address three moments of this opening up through the dialectical pairs of thought – nothought, duty – innocency, work – nonwork.

Vesna Liponik

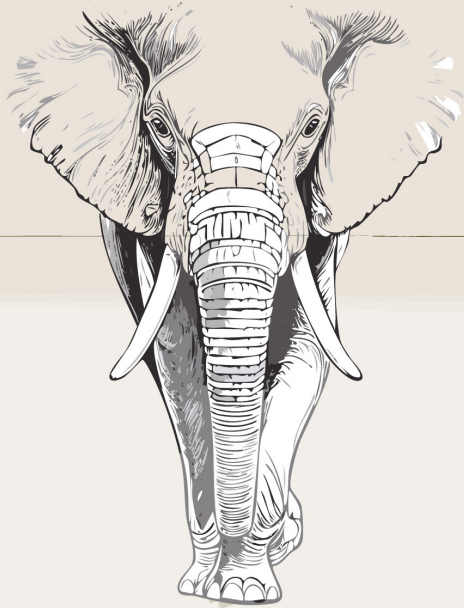
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Animal Ethics as an Issue: The Case of Animal Resistance

What if the most important current issue in animal ethics is animal ethics itself? What if animal ethics has reached an impasse? In recent years in particular, a number of scholars in animal philosophy have raised this question. These discussions have been conducted primarily in the context of attempts to think of the animal question not only as an ethical question, but as an ethico-political or, at its core and from the outset, a political one.

If the richest tradition of reflection on human-animal relations emerged in the field of ethics and simultaneously produced two central ‚fronts‘ in this field, namely welfarism and abolitionism, both ‚fronts‘ collide despite enormous differences between them, as Fahim Amir (2018) emphasises, or rather remain stuck in the treatment of animals as victims. Animal victimhood occupies a privileged position in the entire history of thinking about human-animal relations. The emphasis on the victimization of animals in animal scholarship (and advocacy) is a consequence of the particular historical position of animals and the enormous systemic and epistemic violence to which they are subjected.

However, especially in recent years, there has been a significant shift in thinking about animal victimhood otherwise, more specifically in an inextricable connection with animal resistance. And this shift is taking place precisely against the background of a reflection on the animal question as a question that is not merely ethical. In this paper, therefore, we attempt to outline the main contours of these two inter-related epistemological shifts.



Suzana Marjanić

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How to *Look at/Think of* Animals/Non-Humans: Animals as Tourist Props/Attractions in Croatia

The paper examines the utilization and exploitation of animals as symbols and objects, essentially as tourist props/attractions in tourist cultural performance in Croatia. Examples include cultural performances –*The Alka of Sinj*, donkey races on the Adriatic coast and islands, and bullfights in Dalmatian Zagora. These various uses of animals within the realm of tourism are analyzed in the context of the clash between tradition and zooethics, acknowledging that these forms of animal exploitation stem from the folklore tradition of human dominion over animals (non-humans).

The titular question of this article is framed within a zooethical perspective, following in the footsteps of John Berger's visual culture and his essay "Why Look at Animals?" (1980), as well as the human-animal studies of Kari Weil ("Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?", 2012), exploring the application of the (new) zooethical paradigm in the context of the *animal turn*, e. g. *tourism's more-than-human turn*. This approach challenges the traditionally human-centered focus of tourism, instead emphasizing the interconnected relationships between humans and non-human entities, including animals, plants, landscapes, and even objects and technologies.

Urška Martinc

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The Concept of the Superorganism in Animal Ethics

This paper will discuss a part of a chapter in Philosophy for Children in Environmental and Animal Ethics: Critical Perspectives (Slovene original: Filozofija za otroke v okoljski etiki in etiki živali: kritične perspektive) by T. Grušovnik and U. Martinc. We will analyse the connection between animal ethics and environmental ethics for which we claim to be intertwined. We will verify standpoints that claim that humans are parallelly, and not hierarchically connected to the environment, which means we treat them as equivalent of animals and environment. We will introduce an upgrade of the chapter, analytically verifying certain cases where the concept of superorganisms is evident among organisms, which we will attempt to transfer to humans and their attitude towards animals. The concept of superorganism will be explained using selected cases. We will consider, through the prism of the superorganism, the possibilities of successful conceptual transfer to other areas, namely to animal ethics and environmental ethics. We will demonstrate the benefits and weaknesses of such conceptualisation in real world and attempt to show why such a concept could function as a successful one in defining an equivalence relationship towards animals and the environment.

Ulrike Schmid

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Contribution of Austrian Textbooks to the Stabilization of a Normative Anthropocentric Perspective

The article examines how Austrian biology textbooks for children aged 10 to 11 contribute to a speciesist perception of animals. Through critical discourse analysis, it explores how linguistic and visual representations of mammal species construct animals within a utilitarian, anthropocentric framework, emphasizing their utility to humans. Textbooks are influential tools in shaping societal norms and values, and in Austria, their wide distribution ensures a lasting impact on students' worldviews. Using methodologies from human-animal studies, the research analyses 19 textbooks approved up to the 2017/2018 school year. It identifies recurring strategies that either affirm, distance, or ambiguously depict animals. Affirmative representations, such as aestheticization or subjectification, portray animals as valuable or appealing based on human benefit. In contrast, distancing strategies like objectification and demonization reduce animals to resources or threats. For instance, squirrels are often trivialized through aesthetic framing, while deer, depicted as forest pests, are demonized and controlled.

The study reveals that the knowledge presented in textbooks is not purely scientific but influenced by cultural values. Emphasis is often placed on animals' economic roles, such as milk production, at the expense of other biological aspects, leading to a reductionist perspective. This approach perpetuates a speciesist worldview that marginalizes animal subjectivity.

The article calls for a more balanced and ethical approach in textbooks, incorporating animal ethics perspectives to foster a compassionate understanding of human-animal relationships. By moving beyond utility-based views, education could better reflect animals' intrinsic value in the natural world.



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Lifelong Learning for a Just Transspecies Society?

The paper starts with the vision espoused in the Faure Report on Lifelong Learning (UN 1972) that foregrounds an emancipatory perspective on learning during struggles for democracy and self-determination around the globe. The pillars “learning to be” and “learning to live together” seem apt for including nonhuman animals in learning spaces. However, the ensuing decades were characterised by an unfettered expansion of capitalism around the globe and a narrowing down of education to serve market interests. Hopes for creating inclusive societies were dashed as the marginalisation and exploitation of certain groups of humans and other species persisted.

Yet the over-functionalisation of humans and nonhumans in a neoliberal context may also help us recognise the pitfalls of traditional humanistic thinking about (human) education and empowerment. While following Biesta’s critique of the Freirean pedagogy that once inspired the Faure Report and applying it to nonhumans, the paper goes beyond Biesta’s solution. His suggestion of balancing the educational aims of socialization and professional training on the one hand with subjectification on the other is challenged by the view that the former effectively undermines the latter. Once trained to fit neatly into society it is virtually impossible to learn to be a subject and to live with other subjects.

Using the concept of a living and learning organism from evolutionary biology and everyday examples from human-dog and human-horse relationships the paper will explore what it means to be a subject, how humans are trained to ignore their subjectivity, and how humans constantly interfere with other animals’ subjectivity.

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Porphyry, De Abstinencia and Arguments for Vegetarianism

Porphyry was probably the first philosophical author who was aware of the argument from marginal cases: »We see that many people live only by perception, having no intellect or logos, and that many surpass the most terrifying beasts in savagery and anger and aggression: they murder their children and kill their fathers, they are tyrants and agents of kings. How can it not be irrational to think that there is justice between us and these, but none between us and the ox that ploughs, the dog that lives with us, the creatures that feed us with milk and clothe us with fleece? How can it not be wholly contrary to reason?« (De abstinencia, III. 19)

Following Daniel A. Dombrowski (2022), I will try to develop some evidence in support of the argument from marginal case in his philosophy, which has been defended by some contemporary scholars, including Peter Singer, Tom Regan and Dale Jamieson, especially in the light of its interpretations: is it more productive to understand it not as a case of the argument from marginal cases but rather as an argument from species overlap?

Although they share common features, they differ in emphasis and context, but both the argument from marginal cases and the species overlap argument are part of ethical reasoning used to challenge the moral distinction between humans and non-human animals. Porphyry's proof anticipates the modern argument from species overlap by emphasising the morally significant characteristics that humans share with non-human animals and by rejecting species membership as a valid moral distinction. His insights provide the philosophical background to contemporary animal ethics and the challenge to speciesism.

Branislava Vičar

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“*Little Citizen, Little Survivor*”: The Subjectivization of the Rat in Selected Literary Works

In addition to public discourse about rats, their literary and visual representations also influence societal perceptions. Although negative stereotypes that foster and reinforce social fear and discomfort dominate, some literary and visual representations (e.g., popular culture, street art) include positive narratives that can contribute to (at least partial) reshaping of cultural perceptions of rats.

The paper focuses on the relationship between humans and rats as represented in selected literary works, i.e., Anja Radaljčič's novel *prst v prekatu* (2024), and the poems *The Rat of Faith* (1987) by Philip Levine and *Little Citizen, Little Survivor* (1996) by Hayden Carruth. These selected works go beyond the patterns of anthropocentrically constructed traditions of human-rat relations. The representations of rats are positioned at the intersections of human and rat habitats, challenging the cultural imaginary in which rats predominantly bear negative connotations.

The analysis of the literary depiction of human-rat relationships focuses primarily on the processes of subjectivization of rats. It demonstrates that all the works in question perform a semantic shift: the perception of rats as formless entities, fear-inducing presences, or waste is replaced by an understanding of rats as subjects of their own experiences, as vulnerable bodies. This undermines dominant and unquestioned assumptions about rats and encourages readers to set aside preconceived notions and anthropocentric interests, instead reconsidering the realities of other living beings in a new light – beyond internalized anthropocentric biases.

