



Our Hen House Podcast: Transcript for Episode 703, Interview with Aiyana Goodfellow

Jasmin Singer: Welcome to Our Hen House, Aiyana!

Aiyana Goodfellow: Hi. Thank you!

Jasmin: I am excited to chat with you. You are quite the multi-hyphenate, and I know that you describe yourself as a writer, liberator, and delinquent, so I wanna start there. What do you mean by that?

Aiyana: Writing is something that I've done and enjoyed all my life in various formats.

More recently enjoying it in nonfiction with the couple of books I published. I'm a liberator. My personal philosophy is that we can only be responsible for our own individual liberation. We can't be responsible for the liberation of others because that leads to saviorism. So instead, I try to live my life in alignment with my values and my morals and hope that my thoughts and actions can inspire other people and engage us in collective conversations around freedom.

And I'm a delinquent in that I am a rebel in support of youth liberation. Delinquency is a philosophy that I developed to describe how we can reclaim the idea of misbehavior from adult supremacy. I'm a young person. I'm currently 17, but I think I came up with that when I was 15. Delinquency is about reclaiming the idea of misbehavior and something I think can be liberating for people who were labeled bad kids and good kids.

Jasmin: Wow. There's a lot to untangle there, but I love the way you look at that. I love your worldview so much. And your animal advocacy and your veganism seem to be part of this much broader worldview. So is that right? And if so, can you tell us about the ways they intersect?

Aiyana: Yeah, definitely. I began my journey in radical politics and ideology understandings through animal liberation and animal rights, and it's just kind of grown from there.

My work tends to focus on non-human animals and children because I find these are two of the most dismissed and misunderstood marginalized groups in society. Even among and within spaces where we're supposed to be radical and supposed to be inclusive, most of the time, non-human animals and children are rarely, if ever, acknowledged.

Jasmin: Both very, very marginalized communities, very unprotected, by and large. I totally agree with you, and I like the way that you put that.

You went vegan at just 11 years old. I think a lot of people who are listening to this will be envious of that because many of us wish we had gone vegan earlier. What was that like for you?

Aiyana: I wanted to go vegan earlier. I never enjoyed the idea of eating animals. It never made sense to me.

But my family collectively went vegan when I was 11, and literally within a week or within two weeks, began attending activism events. I think that I've grown a lot in terms of my politics and my ideology since then. But I'm really grateful for the experience and the learning that those opportunities offered me.

Jasmin: So tell us about your book, *Radical Companionship: Rejecting Pethood and Embracing Our Multi-Species World*. Great title, by the way.

Aiyana: Thank you. Whenever I write it out, I always feel like it's so long.

Jasmin: But it gets across what it needs to, and it's incredibly compelling.

Aiyana: Thank you. *Radical Companionship* is a book I wrote about our relationships to non-human animals.

I find that many vegans and animal rights activists tend to talk about the role or experience of the pet as something we should be kind of working towards achieving for other non-human animals. There's a lot of comparison between, for example, farmed animals or animals exploited by (the) entertainment industry or fashion industry to pets and saying that, you know, "you wouldn't treat your pet like this," et cetera, et cetera.

We've all heard it. What I wanted to explore and examine was the fact that this is not something aspirational. The development of pethood as a role in society extends beyond non-human animals and is all about your proximity to the oppressor.

For example, in the book, I talk about how white women's proximity to white men offers them the role of pethood. Or light-skinned, like other Black people who are light-skinned, have proximity to whiteness and, in extension, white supremacy. Pets are only quote-unquote treated better because they have a proximity to humans, but we still don't respect them.

We still engage in domination and ownership over them, and that relationship is not liberatory. It's still based in oppression. And so I explore both how the role of pethood or animals colonized into pethood, which is the phrase I use in the book, how animals colonized into pethood are oppressed.

But I also explore how we can build something called radical companionship. Which is what I think is a liberatory way of engaging with non-human animals of all kinds, especially in particular those who live with us in human homes.

Jasmin: Wow. So radical companionship, are you framing that in a way that is directly related to human animals and non-human animals?

Aiyana: Yeah, I think, honestly, radical companionship exists in many forms and many names. I guess like symbiosis is kind of one of them. All animals can practice radical companionship. Radical as in rooted, as in grounded, as in coming from the roots, but also, I think from a human ideological political perspective, radical in the sense of our politics, in the sense of our ideologies.

Jasmin: You were just talking about radical companionship, and I'm totally with you and kind of, sort of sticking with that subject. You have said, "All animals create. Art is a practice of nature and essential to the success of all and any," that's just such a beautiful way of putting it.

Can you expand on that?

Aiyana: Yeah. I think that artistry is animality, and animality is artistry. We look at the world around us, including ourselves, as humans, we see creativity in its many forms. One of the forms of creativity that I love is writing. But I think animals as a whole are so incredible because we have so many different talents and skills, and abilities. I don't think that we take enough time in a capitalist society to stop and recognize all of the beautiful forms of expression.

Art is communication. Communication is an essential part of revolution. It's what allows us to organize. It's what allows us to inspire. It's what allows us to love, to stay connected, to build care and community among each other. I founded the organization called the Anti-speciesist Arts Collective, which later became the Anima Arts Collective, and then now I reused that name to form the Anima Print, which is a new publishing house. But when it was still the Anti-Speciesist Arts Collective, that was a really important value, acknowledging how art is animal and animal is art. And I am always an advocate for the idea that humans should, rather than trying to achieve humanity as defined by white supremacy and oppression, where it's like a cis person, an able-bodied person, there are so many specific ways that we are supposed to be human and be correct in that humanity. Rather than aiming for that kind of humanity, I think we should double down on animality and connect sideways almost, if that makes sense, with other the animals and with the world around us, rather than reaching up for this idea of like equality of oppression.

Jasmin: So how does animal advocacy and anti-speciesism fit into an anti-colonial stance for you?

Aiyana: I think that they are inseparable. Speciesism and animal oppression has been exaggerated, expanded on so many levels through colonialism. Because with colonialism came even higher levels of exploitation of human and non-human animals, which led to capitalism, which adds onto that even more exploitation of humans and non-human animals.

So I think that we have to acknowledge the route to, as far as we can get back in history, to understand where animal oppression comes from. And I won't claim that I am super knowledgeable about that because there's always more to learn, but what I do know is that the exploitation of animals has always existed in tandem with the exploitation of marginalized humans.

For example, or even other parts of nature, like even just the image of enslaved Black people picking cotton. Or how horses are used in war or how dogs are used by police to support their violent agendas. Does that make sense?

Jasmin: Yeah, absolutely. And I know that you've also said that the history of the animal rights movement's coalition building has been erased and that culture has not been and is not currently continued by modern, mainstream vegan activists. How can that be rectified?

Aiyana: I think this can be rectified by a development of true ideology. I think because we live in a carceral world where people are afraid of being seen as a

bad person, they perform goodness rather than developing a real ideology, a real politic for themselves. And then what happens when you are performing goodness rather than trying to live in alignment with your own morals and values is you don't really have a mind of your own. You're just performing whatever you think is going to be socially acceptable. I think there are a lot of people in the mainstream vegan movement who just follow along with whatever the people with the most power and platform are telling them to think and do, rather than developing their own understanding of the world.

And I've been there, like, where you can get very stuck in your echo chamber and develop this hatred and anger towards the rest of humanity without understanding that animal exploitation doesn't exist in isolation to all other kinds of oppression. This is what I mean when I talk about anti-speciesism needing a decolonial approach and vice versa because in the same way that humans are connected to the world around us...I use the phrase the world around us instead of nature because I don't like the word nature and the separation that it causes, but in the same way that we are connected to everything else, all other oppressions are connected to the oppression of non-human animals. Denying this only does non-human animals a disservice.

It only does us a disservice. It only stops us from developing real politic, a real praxis. And I think that doing so, for me, has helped me become a better, more aware, more grounded individual and has allowed me to truly have a mind of my own instead of following a crowd, whether that crowd claims to be for freedom or not.

Jasmin: I have so many questions. How would you define white veganism, and how is the term useful, and, if I'm understanding some of the things you've written, sometimes not useful?

Aiyana: I think white veganism, essentially, is the performative goodness of white people in the realm of veganism. I think many white people use veganism as a way to make themselves feel better about how they exist in the world, to make themselves feel like a good person rather than somebody who truly does good things.

I think that white vegans tend to be closed-minded in that they are not open to critique. They struggle with self-development. They struggle with the evolution that is necessary to be a radical and revolutionary thinker, practitioner, person. I think that white veganism takes what veganism was I think meant to be, which was something inherently political, depoliticizes it, and develops it in alignment with the violent ideologies of capitalism. Something that's centered around profit and centered around product rather than true liberation.

I think that there are a lot of white vegans who would not be vegan if they could not so easily engage in saviorism because non-human animals and humans speak different languages, and therefore non-humans are less able to ask humans to be accountable, to make clearer demands.

I think white culture can be very entitled because it is the dominant culture in society, and therefore white people can be very entitled. The easiest oppression to be entitled, to feel good about yourself without actually changing anything about you fundamentally, without actually really changing your life, and have this sense of entitlement and superiority over others, the easiest place to do that is through veganism, or so we can assume through the existence of white veganism.

I think that white veganism is an interesting term because it acknowledges the ways in which white supremacy is a manipulation of what veganism was supposed to be, intersect those kind of ideas.

However, you know, vegan as a term was invented by a white person, and The Vegan Society themselves are quite problematic. So, you know, it's not necessarily incredibly inaccurate to say that veganism is potentially inherently questionable. But I think it's important to acknowledge that white veganism doesn't necessarily just refer to white people who are vegan because anybody can perpetuate white supremacy.

Because it is something that is developed within all of us, and therefore, not all white vegans are white. I think at a point I was definitely giving white vegan energy. I'm very grateful and glad to say that I have grown beyond that very, very much. Does that answer your question?

Jasmin: Yes, very much so.

Do you see a distinction between, let's say, the institutional vegan movement and the animal liberation movement? What I mean when I say institutional, you know, the more known influencers, the more known media outlets, the ones that maybe people who are already vegan think of as opposed to, like when the *New York Times* writes an article about veganism where maybe it's reaching a broader audience.

Do you see those as two different things, or do you see them as wrapped up together?

Aiyana: Yeah. Okay. I would definitely say there's a big difference, I think in the intentions and the approaches of those two ways of approaching this. I think that what you call institutional veganism is and will always be problematic and, quite frankly, a waste of time for non-human animals.

Clearly not for humans because they're profiting off of it, and that's why people are engaging it. That's why people like Earthling Ed and Joey Carbstrong and... God, it's been a while, don't think about them that much. I forgot all their names... But those sorts of people are engaged in this world, quote unquote, for the profit and for the money.

I have seen it firsthand, especially with the British people in particular, because I'm in Britain, or England more specifically, or London even more specifically than that. I have to say London because I can't claim England; I've rarely left London. So there's a big difference between engaging in something for the sake of profit and careerism versus true liberation for and support of animals.

I think that animal rights and the animal liberation movement aims to actually make a difference to the lives of animals through direct action, through hunt sabotaging, through a myriad of much more radical and effective forms of activism. I think they're completely different in terms of the ideology that they're really building on and who they're aiming to affect the most because I think that institutional veganism is wanting to affect the masses through a vegan capitalism standpoint, if that makes sense.

And animal rights and animal liberation are trying to affect the lives and realities of non-human animals.

Jasmin: And there's a lot of divisiveness, obviously, within the animal protection movement. Our Hen House is basically a community of people who are working to change the world for animals, more so than, you know... we're not vegan advocates, specifically. I mean, we're vegan, but we're focusing on animal liberation. And the folks that we have interviewed for the past, you know, 13 and a half years are working to do that in a variety of ways.

And every single week, when we're talking to someone, they seem to have a different perspective and a different place that they're coming from, which I personally find inspiring when looked at from a thousand feet high because it makes me feel like I have no idea the right way to work toward changing the world for animals and we need a multi-pronged approach. But what do you think about that?

Like do you think there is a right way? Do you think there is a wrong way? Do you think that there are like a billion variables in there? What are your thoughts?

Aiyana: It's a really interesting question. I definitely think there are wrong and right ways to go about things. I definitely think the wrong way is white veganism.

I definitely think the wrong way is institutional veganism. I think the right way can take many forms, but fundamentally it is truly centered in and grounded in changing the realities of non-human animals. It is grounded in understanding the depth to which speciesism exists and how it exists as part of all oppressions, and how many oppressions are based on or use speciesism as almost a metaphor for other oppressions. For example, let me think of an example, might be a good idea. So Carol J. Adams mentions this in *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. The phrase “they treated me like a piece of meat” exists and this metaphor, a piece of meat, references non-human animals’ oppression without directly acknowledging it.

And I think this happens in so many forms of oppression. Point being, yes, I do think there are wrong ways and right ways. And the right ways are able to evolve over time and become different right ways. But they're always grounded in the same goals and the same values.

Jasmin: Yeah. I think that's really well said, and I agree that like, despite the fact that every week we have someone else coming on, there are definitely people who, in retrospect, I'm like, “Well, maybe that wasn't the best decision to highlight,” but...

And then oftentimes I learn something, and so it's not like I am, as the co-host, going to necessarily agree fully with everyone. That's been an interesting challenge, too, just as a media outlet because we also don't wanna become a homogenous space where we're just uplifting certain voices and not others, but at the same time, we do wanna uplift certain voices and not others. So that's something that has changed throughout the years.

Aiyana: Do you ever question somebody when you disagree with them?

Jasmin: Oh yeah, definitely. Definitely. You know, it's strange to be...I work in media in another capacity as well when I'm not here. I work for a radio station that is an NPR station. With that role specifically, I have to be even more, I wanna say, you know, just coming to it for a fresh slate as a curious person, not

necessarily pushing through my perspective. However, media has changed in that of course, media people have opinions, like of course, we're coming from a perspective. I have to be more careful there.

Whereas Our Hen House is like a podcast that I co-founded, so I have more of an ability to, you know, to speak my mind. We do a rigorous research process before we bring people on. And you know, recently, we had someone come on who was...who...something didn't happen in the research, and I was in the middle of the interview with him, and I realized he wasn't vegan.

That's a pretty big thing for us to miss. And so I wound up just talking to him about it, you know, like, and it wound up being an interesting opportunity, I think, to kind of showcase the way to have these conversations. And he was very, very open to it. He wasn't defensive about it. And I think by the end, he had also shifted some perspectives, and maybe we also showed different ways of having that conversation, which of course, varies as well.

But yes, and I will say probably not enough. We probably do not push back enough. And so that's also something I'm learning, especially at Our Hen House, because I can here. Whereas at, like the radio station I'm at, not always, you know, I can't necessarily. And that's a cut-up interview, whereas this is a long-form conversation.

Yes.

Aiyana: Well, if you disagree with something I'm saying, I'd be very interested.

Jasmin: Okay. Alright, cool. Thank you. So far, I haven't, I'm just learning from you and very interested in the way that you're framing things. I mean, I think I've been thinking these issues through for a long time, and you know, that also makes it particularly interesting for me to hear from a younger person because you're bringing in a whole different perspective, a whole different lived experience.

And I'm constantly learning from younger people and from older people as well. You know, like Mariann and I, my co-host, we have nearly a 30-year age difference. And so, yeah, so having like a 40-something and a, you know, 70-something-year-old and now bringing on a 17-year-old, those are the dialogues that I really enjoy. But I will definitely push back if I disagree.

I will go back to what you said about veganism, like what I was calling the institutional vegan movement. Cuz I agree with you. I am anti-capitalist, you

know, but I also exist in the world, so I also exist in a capitalist society, trying my best to show my values.

I have also worked for VegNews for many years, and now I'm just an editor at large, which is an honorary title for the most part. **announces emphatically** Despite everyone who pitches me every day, I can't do anything about your pitches, people!

So I don't always agree with, you know, just kind of ultimately pushing people to purchase products, and yet I recognize that when VegNews was started 21 years ago or near maybe 22, at this point, it was the only outlet of its kind and it was deliberately trying to create a vegan equivalent of some of the other food magazines you see out there. When I was the senior editor there, I was able to get in some really interesting gritty pieces about, like, the ethics of dieting, the ethics of school lunch programs, the ethics of anti-fat bias, things like that.

And Richie Bowie, who's the senior editor now, is also very much of the same mind. And so there are really, really compelling pieces in there that go far beyond just like consumerism. So I guess I see it as a good thing as well because people are going to be distracted by the cupcake on the cover and pick up the magazine and open it up and learn about some issues about race and how they intersect, perhaps, in a very convoluted, well fucked up way, I'll just say, with veganism.

And so that's something that that person is being distracted by the cupcake on the cover, they never would've known. That's the article. So again, I'm the one going on the tangent now, but I'm saying that I think sometimes those types of vegan advocacy or vegan outreach, or whatever you wanna call it, have layers within them that can be challenging in a good way for your average consumer. What do you think?

Aiyana: I do think that's the case. Things can be definitely be sneakily hidden in, in a good way, within things. I think I wasn't necessarily imagining that in particular with institutional veganism, but I understand how those things can be part of that definition.

Yeah.

Jasmin: Right. Well, I'm the one who brought up VegNews because it's the frame of reference I have. I know in the UK there, Plant-Based News is very different in that it really gets very much into more issues of liberation. Sometimes also some like, what do you call it? Like tabloid type things as well.

Aiyana: Yeah.

Jasmin: Which, you know, God bless, but. Anyway, I'm bringing us back to Aiyana. I'm bringing us back, so I enjoy chatting with you.

Alright, next time I'm in London, I'm taking you out for an oat latte, and we're gonna have all of these discussions in person, although...is oat...Is oat milk your thing or...? Cuz I'm still a soy person myself.

Aiyana: I mean, I am a soy...I am a soy boy.

Jasmin: Okay. I really, okay, good.

Aiyana: Yeah. All the way!

Jasmin: It gets a bad rap, but I'm like...You know what happened to soy milk? Oat milk came in as the cool bigger sister. And, like the marketing was great, but soy milk is fine, you guys! soy milk.

Aiyana: Yeah. I feel like it tastes better too.

Jasmin: Yeah, totally. Now that we're definitely on the same page.

So Black veganism is an important movement in the US, and for at least some people, it's part of an anti-colonial stance. Is that, by and large true in the UK as well?

Aiyana: I think so. I wouldn't claim to speak for Black vegans in particular, and honestly, the word vegan is something that I use more for convenience of explanation than identifying with the word.

I generally prefer to just say antispeciesist. I think with the people that I tend to engage with who are often non-animal aware radicals if that makes sense. Or, you know, the speciesist left, shall we say, to use a commonly used phrase. Yeah. I find saying anti-speciesist intrigues people more because they're like, "Aha, what is this oppression I haven't heard of yet?"

Because I think that people have preconceived notions around the word vegan and vegans and veganism, but that's, you know, it doesn't always work out.

Jasmin: The speciesist left. You said that's a commonly used phrase, but I don't think I've heard it. I like it. I'm gonna use that!

Aiyana: Oh yeah. Common in my life!

Jasmin: Yeah. But also fascinating to me because when you said that you might lead with, I'm antispeciesist as opposed to a vegan. I just had this thought that the person you're talking to might be intrigued as opposed to being like, "Oh, are you gluten free?"

Which, you know, like that's a whole other conversation.

Aiyana: But yeah, I think it establishes it as a like speciesism as an oppression, but also anti-speciesism as a stance. For example, I recently was working... cause I do acting, so I was working on a film set with some people who said they were vegan but really weren't because they didn't believe in activism of any form, especially not direct action.

They didn't know about the Animal Liberation Front, and they were happy to eat honey like randomly. I really don't understand people who do that. But veganism has become a capitalist term that refers to like diet, and people really use it with complete disregard or ignorance towards politics and ideology and values and morals. And people really just edit it to suit what they are willing to do as a human. However, far they're willing to go to make themselves feel like performed goodness.

Jasmin: Yeah. Yeah. I think I can see myself using anti-speciesist more in...you know, when I'm around the speciesist left, which is, frankly, at the radio station where I work.

Which, you know, NPR is a very liberal environment in many ways. And yet, I mean, and I'm at a member station in Rochester, New York, and I don't know, let's see, are there any vegans there? I don't know if I know any vegans there, so I like that a lot. The way you're framing it.

So vegan advocacy is not just focused on animals but also on health and climate, and food security. How do you feel about pro-vegan advocacy that leaves out the animals.

Aiyana: Pro-vegan advocacy that leaves out the animals is like bootlick-y. These people are trying to, I feel, in many ways, suck up to the speciesist left and say, "But look, look at us. We have range. Look at the other things we care about. We also care about the things that you care about."

And I get it because people are likely to be more receptive to that. But if you're completely leaving out non-human animals, rather than just hitting them with the animal bang, like once you get 'em understanding of the overall politic, then you are doing animals a disservice.

You can't be leaving people out. That's the whole point of being a politically rounded people, is that no one gets left behind. That you are aware and consistent with your politics, and non-human animals cannot be and should not be sacrificed. I definitely think that talking about these other things that are related to anti-speciesist and decolonial politics that don't necessarily get focused on are really great and really helpful because, you know, the more you know, the more you learn is wonderful. But to leave non-human animals out is just embarrassing and ridiculous.

Jasmin: *laughs* Lemme mark that clip. On my end, I mark clips I like.
Aiyana laughs Let me mark that clip. Okay.

So what about strategy? Like, where does that come in?

Because, of course, I'm not even sure saying I agree with you will give enough credit to how adamantly and vehemently I agree with you on that. However, there are times when I'm talking to someone that it is very obvious to me that if they understood the human rights side of not consuming animals, they would be more likely to stop consuming them.

But so I might strategically choose to not bring up the animals when I'm talking about it. Of course, that's on the outs... That's what I'm saying. What I'm thinking is different, but like where does that come in for you? Strategy?

Aiyana: Strategy is very important. Strategy is the backbone of successful activism, I think.

I think that using strategy in a conversation like that can definitely be helpful. I have definitely used strategies similar. I think when you said, "leave out the non-humans," I imagined someone never bringing it up. I definitely agree with an approach where you bring up other things that people are more likely to be receptive to and then, you know, bring up not human animals later.

But I do feel that they have to be part of the conversation, and I think it feels different, and it's a lot more difficult when it's an oppression where you have the privilege, but personally, I'm at a point in life where if I have to argue with you

about mine or someone else's right to be alive and right to be safe, to have rights, to be seen as a person on a basic level.

If that has to be a whole discussion for you, if you have to be convinced, then you're gonna die with the old world. And I'm not gonna grieve you because we're building a new world, and like quite frankly, we don't need you.

I think it can be different, though, when it comes to non-human animals because I can't speak for them, and I think that morally I'm required to do and put in more effort to fight for them to speak up in what I feel is solidarity with them to try and get people to understand and see them and recognize them as the animals that they are.

I do find it difficult because I'm very much a person who's like, if we're not on the same page, I'm not gonna drag you onto it. You have to walk. I can't be responsible for your own liberation, your own liberatory understanding. If you're not willing to put the work in when there is so much education in every conceivable format available to you at the touch of your fingertips, and you haven't already done that, you haven't already been curious, or you're not already engaging on some level, I truly don't have time for you,

Jasmin: But there had to have been a moment where you walked over there. I mean, there had to have been...unless you were born this way, which I doubt.

I mean, you've clearly been thinking this through for a very long time, so tell me a little bit more about your own journey to these understandings.

Aiyana: I think I, cheesily, always considered myself an animal lover, and almost my whole life grew up vegetarian. And was always curious about veganism. I never understood why eggs and dairy were different on some level, but then also on another level, I kind of excused it by the fact that I like the taste of these things. This opinion that I've formed at the moment where for most other oppressions, probably all oppressions, other than maybe speciesism and ageism, and sometimes transphobia...like if I don't have the energy to debate someone's existence with you, and I'm part of that community, and it's draining me because I am having to debate my own life with you, then I'm, I'm going to disengage. But if it's somebody else I'm discussing with you or even like within transphobia like I'm queer, I'm not binary, but I'm a very privileged queer person.

I am probably not the people who are going to be targeted by the growing anti-trans law and bullshit that's happening in the UK and obviously also happening

in the US, so I do feel I have more of a duty to talk about those things. But I think this is just a new opinion I formed to protect my own peace and mental stability because otherwise, it becomes too exhausting.

But, I think for most of my life, I have been that person who has gone out and argued and spoke up where I feel like I could, and I would be listened to or I could make myself be listened to. But yeah, I think I'm trying to diversify my approaches and be more aware of the situation I'm in. Does that make sense?

Jasmin: Yeah, absolutely. I have a question, and I'm not sure how to articulate it, so bear with me, but that... So do you ever feel like some vegans confuse anti-speciesism with anti-veganism? Meaning, I have witnessed, and you know, not recently necessarily, but I have witnessed people feeling as though they themselves are marginalized because of their veganism as opposed to losing sight of the reason they're vegan in the first place.

Aiyana: Interesting. I don't think I've seen this opinion. So people feel that they are marginalized through being vegan?

Jasmin: Yes, and I'm not, of course, I'm not talking about the overlapping issues, so I'm certainly not talking about like people of the global majority being ostracized within the white vegan movement, which is absolutely true. And you know, something that we have covered many times here, and we'll continue to.

But I'm talking specifically about veganism being seen as a marginalized class when it's like, I'm not vegan for me. I mean, I happen to get some benefits from it, but that's not my driving force. And I think it's the same for probably most of our listeners, if not all of them.

So I'm just curious. So you haven't encountered that?

Aiyana: No, I haven't. And just to clarify one more thing. So people are saying anti-speciesism is anti-vegan. As in, vegans are a marginalized group?

Jasmin: Yes. Yes, it happens. I have seen it happen.

Aiyana: In what way?

Jasmin: In what way? Like people feeling as though they're mistreated as vegans because of the choices they're making to (pronounces S chew) eschew animal products. I recently realized I've been saying that word incorrectly, but I

think it's (pronounced correctly) eschew, and I've been saying S chew, but it's eschew. Okay. Now that we've concluded the dictionary part of the interview...

So yeah, like, for example, someone will walk around...and maybe this is actually related to saviorism now that I'm thinking about it...

Aiyana: I think this sounds so ridiculous and embarrassing! And I just wanted to make sure I was understanding it correctly before I jumped into judgment. If this is vegans thinking that they are marginalized as vegans like they're an oppressed group, an oppressed class.

Jasmin: Mm-hmm. Yep.

Aiyana: Honestly, God, this is why people don't understand veganism.

This is why people continue to like be shitty towards animals because they don't understand what we're saying because people are engaging in saviorism. That is as if white people who are supposedly anti-racist were like, "Oh my God, I'm an anti-racist white person. I am oppressed too." No, you're not.

Allyship requires you to give things up. If you are not losing out in some way, you could probably go harder with your allyship because the marginalized communities that you're an ally to are losing and grieving disproportionately in ways that we, that you, could never comprehend. So everything that you lose, everything that you give up in allyship with whatever marginalized community you're being an ally to, that's a win!

That does not make you oppressed; that makes you in solidarity. That is what you should be doing. And if allyship has not changed your material reality, has not changed your relational reality in some way, you're probably not going as hard as you can. So people feeling oppressed. This is the feeling that being an ally is difficult, is hard, is requiring you to put in effort.

That does not mean you're oppressed. That means you're in solidarity with the oppressed. And I'm not gonna say that people who are in solidarity, you know, can't also be harmed by the state for being in solidarity. But I would not consider that oppression or marginalization. I would consider that allyship, and it could mean that you're doing the right thing, or it could mean that you have like a massive saviorist ego that you need to get in check. Or it could be both, but either way, you're not oppressed.

Jasmin: Yeah. Ugh. Okay. I marked that clip too, so...

Aiyana: You're probably ringing it all up!

Jasmin: Well, yeah. Well, good. I mean, not good, but good, but you know what I mean...

Yeah. I'm glad to have been able to articulate that. I'm not sure I ever have before, and I'm grateful to have done that with you.

You have written about anti-carceral advocacy as it relates to pedophiles. How about as it relates to animal abuse?

Aiyana: I wrote an essay called, *What is the Abolitionist Response to Pedophiles Part One*. Part two was written by my friend, Eshe Kiama Zuri. It's essentially an essay that explores ageism in relation to patriarchy, in relation to child sexual abuse, and what an abolitionist response to all of that could be. I feel like I just made the title longer in the explanation. *both laugh*

I think one of the overall points that I was making was that there was this narrative within the abolitionist community that we should aim to not dispose people. Like a cultural culture is essentially a culture that disposes of people who have caused harm. And throws them in a cell, in a prison, in a hole, kills them even, and does not give opportunities for accountability and also does not give communities opportunity for real healing because the quote-unquote criminal justice system does nothing to offer healing, does nothing to offer real justice and does not make society better, just punishes people for bad decisions or decisions that the state doesn't like.

And many people have interpreted this to, in response to abusive relationships or abusive people, to say that, "We shouldn't dispose of these abusers. We shouldn't completely cut them out of our communities. We should try and work with them to offer them accountability." But accountability as a whole is like liberation, something that must be chosen. It must be consensual.

You can't force someone to be free in the same way you can't force someone to be accountable. And the majority of abusers, because abuses are pathology, abusers are offered power through society, potentially through social roles that they hold, for example adult, for example man, for example white, for example, middle class, et cetera, et cetera.

These powers give people the ability to abuse other people, and because it's connected to wider systems of oppression and marginalization, people aren't gonna give that up voluntarily for the most part. And this isn't to say that the

root of abuse is oppression and that marginalized people can't be abusers or that people aren't violent because of many other factors, because that would be untrue.

But I think it acknowledges more of like social depth and analysis to which we can look at abuse and violence.

Jasmin: So do you feel like there is a place for animal abusers to, to make amends and to, like, should we, as a society, deal with animal abusers?

Aiyana: I think that animal abusers are people.

I think these things are very similar, but I think they're kind of different because I would make more of a comparison between white people and speciesists than I would to like pedophiles and speciesists. Well, child sexual abusers and speciesists. I mean, they're all violent.

Your question kind of sounded like to me, you know, what do we do about animal abusers? What do we do about speciesists? It sounds like, what do we do about white people? White people and speciesists are everywhere. I think there are multiple approaches that we can take to respond to them.

I think that the most effective way to deal with any kind of oppression or any kind of violence is honestly to support and uplift and liberate the survivors of said experience. So how do we respond to white supremacy? We support the empowerment of Black people and Brown people. How do we respond to child sexual abuse?

Well we protect children. We build communities of safety, of strength. How do we respond to animal abusers and speciesists? We uplift, we support, we create sanctuary and liberation for non-human animals. I think that the marginalized group has to always be the priority. And then with whatever other resources, then we can assign that to the reforming recountability, et cetera, of the people who are creating the violence.

And I think that's kind of what more radical animal rights and animal liberation aims to do. A lot of it is about supporting non-human animals and being in solidarity with non-human animals, specifically. As opposed to focusing more on going out into the streets and doing outreach. And I'm not saying that going out into the streets and doing outreach and doing this work to hold people accountable is ineffective, but accountability is a choice.

People have to make that step forward. People have to make the choice. I ran a course once called Creating Cultures of Accountability and Animality through what used to be an organization called the Antispeciesist Arts Collective. And we talked about these things. We talked about what it means to be accountable as humans to non-human animals.

We talked about the process of over-accountability, where we're taking on the weight of the world on our shoulders. Where we can slip into saviorism, and we talked about under-accountability, people who are in denial of their part in the exploitation of non-human animals. People who are defensive about their exploitation of non-human animals.

The majority of people that I talk to about veganism, about anti-speciesism, whether or not they already have developed some radical politics, tell me that they feel bad about eating animals or feel bad about wearing leather, for example. I've never heard anybody that I've actually sat down and had a proper conversation with who has told me that they feel good about these things.

And this is because when we exploit non-human animals, we are exploiting ourselves. We are exploiting, denying, suppressing the animality within ourselves because however much energy we spend creating this chasm and this divide between quote-unquote humans and animals, as if we're completely different. There is a part of us that knows that we are animals because we're not minerals and we're not plants.

And so, does that answer your question?

Jasmin: Yes, very much so. Where does humility come in for activists, especially anti-speciesist activists? Because you know, this is something that you sound like you've been thinking these issues through for a very long time, and I think our listeners, to some extent, have as well. But we do get a lot of new activists, and then we get a lot of seasons activists as well.

And we're always trying to up our game, right? We're always trying to improve the way we're showing up for marginalized communities. I definitely understand why vegans have a reputation as self-righteous. I don't particularly feel self-righteous. I feel like I'm constantly trying to figure out how to align my worldview with my behaviors.

Can you speak a little bit about self-righteousness and humility and how that sort of dichotomy comes into play with your own activism?

Aiyana: Self-righteousness is something that will always grow as long as you foster a saviorist understanding and approach. As long as you believe that your opinion, your morals, and your worldview is superior, more important, the best, the more difficult you will find it to be humble and have humility and be a human being.

I think that we have to acknowledge that we can and should always be growing. I'm very, very excited to see how I might disagree with some of the points that I've made here in this podcast in a couple of years, or how I might cringe and think, "Oh, I should have said that, or I could have also said that." I'm so excited for the ways in which I'm going to blossom and bloom over the next 17 years of my life, and I hope that other people can be, too, because that's one of the most exciting things about revolution.

It's exhausting, and it's horrible to see the violence of the world around us, but simultaneously, how lucky are we that we get to take responsibility for our lives and we get to take action to create the world that we want to see? How incredible it is that we don't have to be passive and just accept things as the way they are.

How exciting that we can develop and grow and become not just good individuals, as we are now, but good elders for the young people who are coming up behind us or after us. I think that humility is the understanding that you have such incredible, incomprehensible impact on the world around you, and in so many ways, society has been set up so that you feel trapped in the bad decisions that you are sometimes forced to make.

But at the same time, you can make incredibly good decisions. You can be a deeply moraled person with strong values, with the good heart that you already have, that you already are aware of, is probably the reason that everybody is listening to this podcast, is because there is a part of you that wants to grow, that wants to learn.

I think humility is the understanding that you have all these impacts, but you are also like a teeny, tiny weeny person in the grand scheme of the universe. And also, your life kind of means absolutely nothing. And if you can comprehend even a piece of that, you'll start to move away from egoistical behaviors.

There are so many more non-human animals than there are humans, and there are so many ways that they exist and ways that they love, and ways that they think, and ways that they are. You don't have to take responsibility for all of

them. You just have to take responsibility for one animal who goes by your name, and that is the most beautiful and terrifying thing in the universe.

But it is what has helped me want to be in this world and want to change it.

Jasmin: Thank you for all of that. You have brought a lot into focus, and let me tell you, as someone who is also a writer, to your point about how you will disagree with yourself in a few years, yeah, that's gonna be really fun for the things that you have in print. I come to you from your future to tell you that, you know, my first book came out in 2016, and I stand by most of it, and then there are a few things where I'm like, "Oy vey. Why does that exist?"

But you know, whenever I've interviewed other authors, and every now and then, someone will come on and say, you know, "I just completely disagree with chapter seven of my book," blah, blah, blah, because. You know, I feel for them, but I'm also so grateful for them, and it makes it hard and compelling to read older books because I wanna know what was going on in that writer's brain at that time.

But I also recognize that they have probably evolved since then. So, yeah. And you're starting so young that, like you said, in a few years, what about in 20, 30 years? It's just gonna be fascinating cuz the world will change so much in that time.

Aiyana, how can people find out more about your work and support your efforts and follow you online?

Aiyana: You can learn more about my work at www.aiyanagoodfellow.com. You will find a list of all the products that I am running and involved in, for example, The Anima Print, where I am publishing my...well, firstly, The Anima Print is a Black-led, UK-based micro-publishing house, and through it, I'm publishing my second book, *Innocence and Corruption*, which explores the oppression of children.

And, of course, I have a little something about animals and animality in there, just as I do in my first book actually, because I talk about the oppression of non-human animals for most of the book. But there's also connections to ageism. So I just swapped it around this time.

Jasmin: Oh, cool. Yeah, I was going to ask you about that in bonus, but since you brought up *Innocence and Corruption*, can you just briefly talk a little bit more about what you mean by that and how it connects to non-animal attitudes?

Aiyana: For example, one thing that connects the oppression of non-human animals and children is the family structure. The family is (an) institution of violence in many ways. It can uphold capitalism, it can uphold patriarchy, and any other problematic and violent values that a family may have.

The family is often the place where we first learn to be violent towards non-human animals, but there's also a hierarchy within it where in a normative heterosexual or rather cis-hetero patriarchal family, the man is the head of the household. The woman is next in line as the wielder of power; she owns the children, and then the children own any non-human animals who live in the house.

And obviously, the non-human animals own nothing. They have the least power within that family structure. And human adults, humans and adults separately but within one identity, also engage in similar manipulations of love by combining love with domination and love with ownership, and love becomes conditional on the terms of said ownership and the terms of said domination.

Jasmin: And for your press that you are mentioning, are you taking submissions from anyone?

Aiyana: We will be taking submissions in the near future, probably from Autumn of this year. We're working on the publishing of *Innocence and Corruption* over the summer, and then we'll open up. But you know, if you wanna email, get ahead of the game, you're more than welcome to.

Jasmin: Where do people email?

Aiyana: People can find our contact details at theanimaprint.org, and you can find all the information about that through my website and follow me on Instagram @aiyana.goodfellow.

Jasmin: Amazing, Aiyana; thank you so much for sharing your wisdom with us and for engaging us in this dialogue. It was really eye-opening, and I'm looking forward to listening to it multiple times because I think I'm going to pick up something different each time. I so appreciate the time that you spent with us today.

Aiyana: Thanks for inviting me on. It was a cool chat.