

ÖVERSÄTTA !

läser å antecknar ur Sarinahs avhandling.

Autism and Animism

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored autistic presence
s generates a perspectival multiplicity that challenges
the dominant medicalised approach, further underscoring the heterogeneity
of human cognition BLI EN FISK BLIEN FISK MED FISKARNAS UTSATTHET
and embodiment, and providing new ways of conceiving of human relationships
with more-than human world.

4.2 Statement on methodology FISKARNAS SPRÅK FRÅGETECKEN

An animist perspective highlights the relevance of autistic perspectives
across different and diverse RISKEN MED FISKEN
areas of scholarship, increasing its visibility, and decentring dominant
(individualist) paradigms BE-LONGING
that enforce a singular model of being and presenting. Broadly, animism is
the belief that every thing in the universe is alive, or possesses some
kind of life force, agency, or vibrancy. Graham
Harvey, commenting on contemporary uses of the term, explains that animists
are 'people who
recognise that the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human,
and that life is always VÄRLDEN ÄR FULL AV FOLK OCH SÅ. MEN MÅSTE FISKEN
VARA EN PERSON FÖR ATT VARA VÄCKA RELATIONEN ÖGAT MÖJLIGT
lived in relationship with others.'¹ Under this

Vibrant matter... ;

ÖVERSÄTTNINGEN SOM VIBRERANDE MATERIAL

o European humanism, and are therefore located in the
same anthropocentric tradition.² New materialism and posthumanism are
nascent areas of inquiry,
emerging in European and American academies at the turn of the twenty-first
century in response SUBJEKT VS SUBJEKTIV VS SUBSTANS VS SUBSTANTIV DET ÄR
NÅGOT MED SUB SUBMARIN UNDER UNDER UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE UNDERSTANDING YOU
RELATION AV å jag fattar SOM NAMNGIVANDE
to Enlightenment values of autonomy, reason, and scientific empiricism,
which, under a humanist
paradigm, are hailed as effective concepts for understanding the
relationship between 'the' human
subject and the rest of the world.³ DIFFERENCE IN DIFFERENCE
Animism, on the other hand, derives from various cultural practices and
belief systems developed over centuries.⁴ While, at least in Western
cultures, it is most associated with North American VEMS ÖGA KOLLAR PÅ DJUR
Å NATUR Å KÄNNER EN CONNECTION HUR SOM EN FETISCH MEN VAD SKULLE MAN ANNARS
GÖRA

Indigenous onto-epistemologies, animism and animistic beliefs are practiced
around the world, PYSSLA LITE
and are vital to many cultures, traditions, and religions.

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commonly understood as a spiritual belief, synonymous with religion.
However, as various critics observe, this interpretation ignores its
contributions to 'ways of knowing, social structures, and
systems of thought', which may or may not, and to differing extents, have a
spiritual emphasis.⁶

The dismissal of animism as a 'serious' and valid form of knowledge is
highlighted by Anna Fisk: NAMNETTTTTTTT ANNA FISK ÅÅÅÅÅÅÅÅ

[w]hile western romanticizing of the spiritual wisdom of the indigenous may
appear benign relative to other forms of cultural imperialism, emphasis on
indigenous ways of knowing in religious terms can be seen as contributing
to the subordination of these world-views.⁷ JAA

Understanding all Indigenous cultural systems, values, and practices as purely spiritual ignores JAA their epistemological and ideological resonances, setting them apart from what is considered, MEN VAR ÄR GRÄNSEN FÖR GUD FÖR TRO FÖR ÖNSKAN FÖR HOPPET ÄR INTE POLITIKEN OCKSÅ RELIGION RELATION ÄR INTE through a Western lens, 'civilised' and 'rational' forms of intellect. This fuels what Mary Douglas MYTERNA calls 'the myth of primitive piety', or the 'popular thinking about us [presumably white European EN CIVIL or North American readers], the civilised, and them [various Indigenous cultures], the primitives, NAIVITRTEN SOM FORM SOM KRAFT FRÅGETECKEN that we are secular, sceptical [...] and that they are religious.'⁸ In her study of N

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ANIMISM OCH DETTA SOM ÖVERSÄTTA RELIGION SPIRITUAL POLITIKEN VARDAG LEVA SOM PRATET RIKTAS

New animism, therefore, does not refer to a specific form of more-than-human relationality or sociality. Instead, it draws on complex networks of knowledge deriving from various cultures and disciplines, to encourage more ethical and respectful relations with others, both human and nonhuman, whose perspectives have been suppressed, ignored, or disbelieved in the project of Western modernity.¹⁹ DETTA ANG VAD JAG TÄNKT PÅ

While new animism is a useful framework for exploring autism, studying autistic and Indigenous communities together brings dangers of appropriation, distortion, and misinterpretation, especially when writing from a white, European academic and cultural standpoint, as this author is doing.

These dangers are amplified when the authors studied are not themselves Indigenous, as is also the case. To this author's knowledge, there are no literary accounts on animism by openly autistic or neurodivergent Indigenous authors, and research papers and other scholarly perspectives on the intersections between Indigenous and autistic experience, written from Indigenous perspectives, are severely lacking.²⁰ The

DET ÄR NÅGOT MED DETTA DET FARLIGA VAD KAN JAG GÖRA VAD I DETTA KAN DEN MÖJLIGHETEN ÄR VÅLD OCH VAD ÄR EN MÖJLIG INGÅNG VAD ÄR OK VAD ÄR SKADA SKADAS NÄR ÄR DET FARLIGT ATT INTE VETA VAD SOM ÄR VAD

ATT ANVÄNDA DIAGNOSENS ORD

Manning och Deleuze.... det vilda och det härliga härlighetens fara. Risk. ???

Ontology ;

Another Word for Colonialism', Zoe Todd critiques the structural violence of academia perpetuated by scholars who leave out Indigenous philosophies in discussions of entanglement, more-than-human engagements, and other organising discourses in new materialism and posthumanism. In the article, Todd recount..

tion.'³¹

Yet, while Todd critiques the Eurocentrism of new materialism and posthumanism, at no point does she dispute their significance or advocate for their demise. Rather, she highlights their

ethical obligations to engage more directly with nondominant perspectives, 'citing and quoting Indigenous thinkers directly, unambiguously, and generously.'³² Much could be achieved if different disciplines worked together to address shared concerns, such as environmental justice and the relational nature of being, but this requires 'attention to the structural realities of the academy.'³³ This echoes Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's statement that 'Western liberatory theories can be very useful to Indigenous scholarship [...] when they are considered within [...] Indigenous thought. ÄR DETTA EN ANNAN PERSON SOM HETER MANNING ÄN ERIN DET ÄR NÅGOT MED NAMNEN DET ÄR EN SLUMP OCH ÖDE ELLER MUSSFÖRSTÅ systems.'³⁴ Finally, Dolleen Tisawii'ashii Manning argues that being sensitive to Indigenous ontologies, their spiritual resonances, and their suppression not seen only as theories, emerging alongside, for example, Rosi Braidotti's zoe or Giorgio Agamben's biopolitics, but as 'deriv[ing] from pre-contact lifeways, developed over thousands of years. HUR MUSSFÖRSTÅ PÅ SÄTT SOM HJÄLP in relation to specific geographies, locations, and ecosystems.'³⁵ NÄR MUSSFÖRSTÅ GÖR VÅLD The call for a more culturally diverse and dec

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4.5 Object attachment and animism: beyond the medical model

The latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the DSM-5, states that, to receive an autism diagnosis, a person must display 'persistent deficits' in three areas of social communication and interaction, coupled with 'at least two of four types of restricted, repetitive behaviours'.⁴¹ Three of the four descriptors provided mention relationships with things or elements in the environment. The first item in the list is 'stereotyped or repetitive [...] use of objects' such as 'lining up toys or flipping objects'; the third is 'highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus' such as 'strong attachment to or preoccupation with unusual objects'; and the fourth mentions 'unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment' such as 'excessive smelling or touching of objects'.⁴² The claim that 'object attachment' is common in autism is not itself controversial: explored below, many autistic authors point to a more expansive and diffuse form of sociality, where personhood and/or agency is extended to things and environmental phenomena. However, the belief that these attachments are symptoms falling short of an ideal social standard rather than valid ontological positions, is contestable. Conveyed through out, the perceived deficits of autistic forms of relationality stem from movements and trends in Euro-American psychiatry that impose rigid beliefs about bodily boundaries and social practices, idealise autonomy and self-sovereignty, and consider economic productivity a universal measure of health and wellbeing.

4.6 'Thing' versus 'object'

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is important to define the use of 'thing' versus 'object', as usage varies across contexts. In the present discussion

JAG TÄNKER ÄVEN PÅ MARX MATERIALISM

though they are sometimes deployed interchangeably.⁴³ While 'thing theory' emerged in response to commodity capitalism, and is therefore associated with humanmade entities, this discussion does not make any strict distinction between organic and inorganic entities: 'thing' can refer to a rock or a vegetable, an air particle or a car, anything that does not - in the Western humanist sense - possess a mind, life, or spirit.⁴⁴ The distinction between 'thing' and 'object' derives from Bill Brown's seminal article 'Thing Theory', where 'thing' describes how humans are shaped by their encounters with the 'inanimate.' Brown writes that [t]he story of objects asserting themselves as EN HUND SOM HETER THING things [...] is the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation.⁴⁵ While 'object' de

OM POESI

ore generally, poetry was chosen because it is a privileged medium for exploring the resonances and relationalities humans share with the more-than-human world. As Jonathan Bate argues, poetry has, throughout the ages, created space for communicating with others unlike us, WORD WORLD because it does not so much represent relationality, but embodies it in its form: WORD MATERIAL poesis in the sense of verse-making is language's most direct path of return to the WORD RELATION oikos, the place of dwelling, because metre itself - a quiet but persistent music, a WORD ENCHANTMENT recurring cycle, a heartbeat - is an answering to nature's own rhythms, an echoing WORD ATTACHMENT of the song of earth itself.⁵⁸ WORD AS THING Thus, poetry opens ground for tentative ruminations on interconnectedness and coexistence, because its form is dynamic, polyvocal, and multiplicitious (rather than instructional or mimetic). WORD AS MODUS Similarly, Peter Boyle states that poetry, as well as music, 'do not tell us about things - they place YES YES YES us inside them.'⁵⁹ This lends itself to a literary format that is 'capable not merely of mirroring our perceptions of the world - as everyday language does - but of delivering new perceptions, WORD AS MATTER new realities.'⁶⁰ Deborah Bird Rose, echoing Plumwood's call for philosophy to '"converge with much of poetry and literature"', argues that poetry allows us to recognise our complex interdependencies by accommodating other voices.⁶¹ Poetic modes of writing, she contends, allows us to 'vivify, to leap across imaginative realms, to connect, to empathise, to be addressed and to be brought into gratitude.'⁶² Again quoting Plumwood, she adds that 'to "make room" for others, one must do more than represent.'⁶³ With this considered, this chapter is not intended to suggest that only autistic writers can be animistic. Rather, it brings autistic perspectives on the world into a much broader and far-reaching tradition of poetic animism, which ca

Returning to work in posthumanism, and introducing an animal studies framework, the final

chapter of this thesis further delves into human-nonhuman relationships in autistic self-advocacy literatures. Drawing on Temple Grandin's *Thinking in Pictures* and Dawn Prince's *Songs of the Gorilla Nation*, it considers how autistic embodiment and perception can advance a new frame work of interspecies relations, disregarding categories of sameness and difference, and emphasising feelings of shared vulnerability, empathy, and community. While Grandin's work is often hailed as a model for exploring such relationships, the following discussion rejects this, suggesting DETTA that she uses her authoritative status as an animal empath and autistic self-advocate to justify and advance categorical distinctions between humans and animals and abled and disabled individuals, and to speak on behalf of those she writes about. Prince's memoir, on the other hand, offers ATT TALA FÖR an alternative pathway, as she does not attempt to overwrite others' experiences, but emphasises UR OFÖRSTÅET SKRIVA her vulnerability and perceptual limitations to create space for different viewpoints to interact and UR NAIV PERIFERI coexist. Like the poets considered in this chapter, this decentres any singular (humanist or individualist) perspective, pointing

NÄR HAR MAN RUBBATS IN MOT CENTRUM

connect with and care for those who do relate to or interact with the world in the same way as them. ANIMAL PERSON

Over the past thirty years, animal studies and disability studies have been challenging conventional notions of subjecthood, embracing modes of thinking and perceiving that cannot be encompassed by current conceptual paradigms. As Kari Weil notes, both fields are concerned with JAG ORKADE INTE LÄSA MER NU

'ways of knowing that appear to work outside th[e] processes of logocentric, rational thinking JAG ÄR RÄDD

that have defined what is proper to the human'.¹

In the Western tradition of ethics, morality, and

legal theory, subjecthood is determined by a person's ability to reason, which means possessing

language, self-awareness, autonomy, the ability to imagine a future, and a concept of death.² As

¹Kari Weil, 'Killing Them Softly: Animal Death, Linguistic Disability, and the Struggle for Ethics', *Configurations*, 14, 1-2 (2006), 87-96, 87.

²See Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2017), pp. 67-68.

5.1. INTRODUCTION 144

many animal studies scholars point out (some of whose arguments are explored later in the chapter), these narrow criteria are inadequate when applied to various nonhuman species, whose ways

of living, being, and communicating cannot be measured against anthropocentric or humanist coordinates. As previous chapters posited, this reason-based model of subjectivity is also inadequate

when pondering the diversity of human embodiment, as authors including Baggs, Bissonnette,

Mukhopadhyay, Williams, and Wolfond demonstrate how characteristics associated with autism

that are currently pathologised - absence of spoken language, (inter)dependence, nonnormative

bodily comportment, lack of conceptual or symbolic thinking, and so on - are alternative forms

of being-with-the-world rather than markers of diminished subjectivity.

These similar theoretical

positionings highlight some productive crossovers between animal studies and disability studies that are expanded on in this chapter. Drawing on two memoirs, Grandin's *Thinking in Pictures* and *OM GRANDIN OCH KÄNDISSKAPET...*

tarring Claire Danes. While *Emergence* details Grandin's childhood, adolescence, and early struggles for acceptance and understanding, *Thinking in Pictures* focuses more on her adult life and career, after she 'emerged from her inner world' to become a 'successful professional, a world leader in her field.'²⁷ In *Thinking in Pictures*, Grandin explains how her atypical cognition and embodiment - her visual thinking, sensitivity to touch, difficulty gauging bodily boundaries, and other characteristics associated with autism - allow her to assume the subjectivity of nonhuman animals, cattle in particular. These traits have, in Wolfe's words, 'given her a special understanding of how nonhuman animals experience the world, one that has enabled her to design animal holding and processing facilities that are far more humane'.²⁸ According to Wolfe and others, Grandin's writing provides a much needed bridge between human and nonhuman perceptual worlds, while positioning autism as a positive difference.²⁹ However, while *Thinking in Pictures* provides interesting insights into how Grandin's own mind works and how she interprets animal behaviour, her accreditation as the world's most famous autistic person and a renowned animal behaviourist means that, in academic and mainstream DETTA, OEMOTSAGD discourses, her perspectives on autism and animal subjectivity are often uncontested. This is despite her belief that nonverbal forms of autism should be eliminated, and her morally a

JAG TÄNKER PÅ DIALOGEN OCH FÖRSKJUTNINGEN ATT MYCKET MÅSTE SÄGAS OCH DET SAGDA HAR MOTSATSER