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The Significance of Speciesism Studies to Racism Studies

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Content

Introduction

The mission of the present essay is to outline areas in the historical study of racism, in which the picture is inevitably incomplete without serious reference to the attitudes and practices of people towards nonhuman animals. A short essay cannot tell the history of speciesism-related racism and should not suggest any new historical revelations; at best, it can sketch the most promising areas of research, based on a survey of several existing studies and pointing out some of their achievements, weaknesses and potentials. Naturally, some of the analysis relates to broader issues, from the connection of speciesism to any form of social prejudice and oppression against humans, to the basic methodological problem of comparing historical phenomena.

There are many good reasons to mention speciesism alongside racism, as well as other forms of human oppression. Some of these reasons are commonly acknowledged in animal liberationist literature, yet they provide no apparent relevance to the present essay, as a short review reveals. First, the history and sociology of racism is better known to readers, so it serves as a model for understanding speciesist phenomena. Second, the morally motivated critiques of racism are more common and epitomize greater social and intellectual efforts, thus they serve as models for a moral critique of speciesism. Third, fighting racism has been more widespread and successful, so the history of struggles against racism provides a model for confronting speciesism. And fourth, sentiments against racism are more consensual, hence they may be aroused and used as a rhetoric against speciesism.

All these points are well-known to any advocate of nonhuman issues, and consequentially many texts that criticize speciesism appeal to racism and other widespread forms of human oppression, and many more use conceptual tools that were developed in such contexts. In short, referring to racism is very important to the anti-speciesist movement (although it should not be overestimated: many forms of nonhuman animal oppression are unique and therefore addressing them through human oppression models ends up with overlooking or misunderstanding them). In any case, my task in the present paper is outlining the relevance of speciesism to racism and not the other way around, which is another subject.

Searching for the significance of speciesism studies to racism studies may lead to a methodological drawback of using animals as absent referents. Carol Adams points at the common degradation of nonhuman animals when connected to human issues:

> "The animals have become absent referents, whose fate is transmuted into a metaphor for someone else's existence and fate. Metaphorically, the absent referent can be anything whose original meaning is undercut as it is absorbed into a different hierarchy of meaning; in this case the original meaning of animals' fate is absorbed into a human-centered hierarchy." (Adams 1990, 42)

Any critical discourse of racism, occupation, etc., which has not been engaged by an animal liberationist agenda, may include comments about some human groups being "treated like animals". The "animals" in such comments may be spiciesistly ignored as significant beings: the utterance is taking such treatment of animals for granted, morally speaking, and it includes no serious inquiry into how "animals" are actually treated.

The moral shortcoming of such expressions is a matter for another discussion (nevertheless, I doubt whether one may bother to explore historical details of nonhuman animal exploitation without any direct moral motivation). However, the issue here is historiography. If some speciesist attitudes and practices are suspected as models, precedents, causes or collaborations regarding some form of human exploitation, then it is essential to study those attitudes and practices in detail (without any denial whatsoever that speciesism deserves fully serious attention even if no connection to *Homo sapiens* issues has been established). In that respect, there is no "speciesism" but "speciesisms", since attitudes and practices change with concern to different species and socio-historical circumstances.

Structural Similarities

The most common claim for a speciesism-racism connection is resemblance. There are countless similarities between speciesism and racism, as well as other forms of human oppression. But resemblance is a weak type of connection, since every two phenomena may seem similar in some aspects. Indeed, in the case of speciesism and racism, many similarities are striking. Branding, for example, has been widely used to mark appropriated cattle in a similar manner to the way human slaves were marked in America (Spiegel 1996, 28-29, 31; Jacoby 1994, 92). Yet without meticulous historical tracking of both practices, none of them could be claimed to affect the other for certain, and understanding the one cannot be claimed with certainty to be essential for understanding the other. Similarly, if capitalism is claimed to be the driving force behind both the slave trade and the livestock trade in and out of the New World (Nibert 2002, 35-37), mutual historical influence is not a necessary conclusion. Yet the few studies that attempt to examine speciesism and racism together tend to pay no attention to possible

historical influences and rather point at mere similarities, sometimes in technical details and more often in fundamental structure.

Nevertheless, similarities may be highly important epistemically, as a tool of reflection. I do mean here much more than the Lévi-Straussian, widely cited notion of nonhuman animals as "good to think" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 89). My point is not "animals as symbols" (namely absent referents) but considering some animals in specific circumstances, perceived as a social group and as a possible model for human groups. Clearly, a claim that a speciesist practice and a racist practice share similar incentives and structure does not demand mutual influences in the historical reality, yet it may be argued that understanding any of these practices remarkably enriches our understanding of any other. One field provides concepts to be applied in the study of the other field; such use may be anachronistic, yet at the same time it unravels overlooked aspects of the field in question. But is considering similarities always insightful? I will leave that question open and concentrate on the most apparent insightful similarities.

It is important to stress that the study of racism may not have much use for comparisons with speciesism when considering a speciesist practice, which is less developed than the racist one. For example, cultural oppression in colonized countries may be compared to human interruptions and controls of animal traditions in invaded wilderness. But our conception of cultural colonialism is by far more developed in the human case and needs no support from the less developed critique of wildlife interruptions. Nevertheless, there are numerous fields of comparable oppressions, which are by far more developed against nonhuman animals. A few of these comparable "speciesisms" are essential to the understanding of parallel "racisms".

Forced scientific experiments may be the most prominent example. Even without applying to direct historical connections between experiments on both groups, the resemblance is striking. Note, that the history of coercive and bluntly harmful experiments on humans in the modern era is scattered into isolated historical episodes. Contrarily, coercive and harmful experiments on nonhumans are widespread, consecutive, systematic and legitimate throughout the technologically developed countries, and therefore these experiments are mostly unlike human experiments in scale, kind and supporting social systems. Nevertheless, any general discussion of human experiments inevitably uses animal vivisection as a familiar model of horror, an actual prototype of what may become to any human group may it be marked as available for unrestrained vivisection. The details and accuracy of knowledge about animal vivisection is not important as long as no strict historical connection between experiments on both groups is claimed. It is a matter of images and concepts more than a matter of reality. Therefore the bioethical discourse may choose any case of horror that excites human fears, out of the immense inventory of real animal experiments, alongside the rather sporadic cases of experiments made on prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, poor blacks and institutionalized people. Indeed, patented, genetically modified humans for specific disease susceptibility are far-fetched science fiction; but the fact that there is an actual industry of such mice implies that the fiction is scientifically possible. Hence in a sense it is socially possible as well.

Manipulation of heredity is another example. Again, even without acknowledging direct historical connections between eugenics and the “improvement” of animals in agriculture and other exploitative disciplines, and without extensive knowledge of artificial selection, the

resemblance is too striking to be ignored. The violent history of eugenics in the first half of the twentieth century and the contemporary threats of genetic interventions in humans under commercial conditions do not conclude the entire range of criticism and fears. The manipulation of animal hereditary traits for human caprices and economic interests (external "thoroughbred" features, high "production" of meat, eggs and milk, tamed nature, etc.) is common knowledge; hence it may serve as a model of horror. But unlike animal vivisection, the violence of artificial selection in nonhuman animals is rarely acknowledged outside the animal rights / animal welfare discourse – the harm is not apparent to the uninformed and the biased mind. In addition, eugenics in its worst forms never went beyond methods that resemble a relatively primitive stage of agricultural artificial selection: encouraging reproduction in the favorites and sterilizing and "culling" the unwanted (Friedlander 1995; Kuhl 1994). Therefore the concept of scientifically and commercially designed groups of people is not on the mind of eugenics' critiques. Only once the subject arises in futuristic thought, then the model of artificial selection of nonhumans in agriculture and the like is bound to dominate the discourse.

The use of human bodies as raw material for human consumption or as other consumer products may seem as the ultimate example of enlightening speciesism-racism resemblance, but it is not quite so. Even more than the previous example, the reification of nonhuman animals' bodies is so far beyond human oppressions, that the speciesist model is hardly applicable. Cannibalism has been rare and sporadic in history (Askenasy, 1994), and industrial use of victims' bodies was very limited even by the Nazis (Arad 1987, 109). Conversely, nonhuman animals, domesticated and wild, are objectified into raw material by the trillions. Some of the violence here is evident; therefore any notion of the human body as a consumable material is bound to be conceived in the light of models of human treatment of other animals. Yet there is

no noticeable race-related discourse of that kind. Representations of systematic human body consumption are found in contemporary western culture mainly in fantastic alien invasion images. The unity of humanity as opposed to all other animals is hardly ever breached, even as a thought experiment. It appears mainly as a loose metaphor, when describing victims in terms of "like lambs to slaughter", but these metaphors relate to the killing of Jews and other people, not to the motivation for the kill and the uses of their dead bodies.

We see that a speciesist practice may provide indispensable tools for thought about the extreme possibilities of violence against human groups, but viable examples are rare. If the practice against nonhuman animals is too similar to a practice against humans, it may not teach us anything unique; and if it is too unlike the practice against humans, we can hardly conceive the later in terms of the former.

Historical Continuities

Knowing and understanding some speciesist attitude and practice may obviously be essential to the study of racism if one could prove that they led to some specific racist attitude and practice. That is a tough demand and so far if has seldom been met. Critics of speciesism have been usually content to show mere similarities (sometimes overemphasizing them while ignoring dissimilarities), and their historical claims are often too general, loosely describing a speciesist phenomenon as prior to events against some human group but fail to specify a causative development of the one into the other. Additionally, the more numerous scholars of racism have tended to ignore speciesism, except for some occasional references to it as "absent

referent". Nevertheless, I believe that historical continuity or causality from speciesism to racism could be made by far more common than most contemporary scholars acknowledge.

The most ambitious thesis of relevant continuity defines speciesism as the continuous driving force behind a vast variety of human-to-human forms of mastery and violence. Such a thesis is promoted by Jim Mason (1997). Mason presents agriculture, and especially animal agriculture, as the break of humanity from nature, which led to a drastic deterioration in intra-human relations. The claim for a deep effect of animal domestication on all aspects of culture is based on specific historical and anthropological claims, but for Mason the hostility towards animality (which he terms "misothery") marks the fixed cultural horizons of agricultural society, a sort of collective subconscious that is present in every aspect of life. This sweeping – though compelling – thesis is more of a call to reconsider any aspect of human history than a historical study. Expectedly, Mason's book surveys secondary literature on numerous societies, times and places, without meticulous work on any of them. Beyond these difficulties, the value of such a general thesis is questionable when considering an analysis of specific historical events. Even if one is convinced that human hostility towards animality is historically constructed, still it is everywhere in agricultural societies, and therefore what can it reveal about specific events?

A more visibly viable approach to historical continuities relates to specific historical episodes. When speciesist attitudes and practices are imported into a racist sphere, we may expect the interest to lie in the historical moment of transition. That is the phase in which attitudes and practices towards humans are still evidently dependent on the import from speciesism, since

the new form of these attitudes and practices have not yet evolved into an independent sphere, molded by its unique actors and conditions.

According to Mason's thesis, the period of large mammals' domestication is the most dramatic "moment" of transition, which lasted for millennia (see also Thomas 1983, 46). Herder practices revealed the exact role of sexes in reproduction (Mason 1997, 122-23, 189-93), and the control of large animals, the search for new pastures and the concentration of wealth (characteristic also of plant agriculture) encouraged militarism, patriarchy and social hierarchy instead of the relative peacefulness, matriarchy and egalitarianism of pre-agricultural societies (Ibid., 137-46, chap. 6). Cultures from domestication onwards are also remarkably intolerant towards human Others, beyond their general aggressiveness. Animal breeder values leaked into human relations in the form of an obsession for "blood purity; and the hostility towards nature and animality in particular brought about hostility towards people that were regarded as closer to nature, with a strong inclination to project one group own "animality" onto other groups (Ibid., chap. 7).

More focused is the claim that large mammals' domestication gave rise to slavery: "one can interpret slavery as a little more than the extension of domestication to humans" (Jacoby 1994, 92); although the human upshot almost lacks artificial selection and body consumption (Jacoby 1994, 92-93, 95). The most compelling historical example is the closest to the historical moment of transition – in Sumer (Patterson 2002, 13; Mason 1997, 198-99; Jacoby 1994, 94). Based on data from the Sumerian temple-state of Lagash in the third millennium BC, Kazuya Maekawa (1979, 1980, 1982) revealed that weavers from among captured female slaves were often allowed to keep their daughters, who were later recruited into the weaving group. In contrast,

sons were castrated and sent to pull boats up the river. These practices follow closely the widespread treatment of cattle in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions: female calves were usually kept with their mothers for reproduction and milk supply, while most males were either slaughtered for meat or castrated and used for transport or ploughing. The similarity of practices is followed by some linguistic congruence. As the historian Yutaka Tani writes: “This is an interesting example of the application of cattle management techniques to the management of slaves” (Tani 1989, 198).

Another thesis claims that speciesism was a precedent to biologically based racism. The assumption is that a great moral divide between humans and the rest of nature, constructed in the Christian world over Greco-Roman and Jewish premises, was imported into human relations. Patterson, relying largely on Keith Thomas’ study of early modern England (1983), concludes:

> “The great divide between humans and animals provided a standard by which to judge other people, both at home and elsewhere. If the essence of humanity was defined as consisting of a specific quality or a set of qualities, such as reason, intelligible language, religion, culture, or manners, it followed that anyone who did not fully posses those qualities was ‘subhuman’. Those judged less than human were seen either as useful beasts to be curbed, domesticated, and kept docile, or as predators or vermin to be eliminated.” (p. 25)

The emerging classification system of the biological world in the eighteenth century generated a new meaning to the concept of species. I am not familiar with any work that analyzes the implications of the new concept of species on speciesism itself. It may be a rich topic of study, since the biological concept of species implies strict borders of animal groups and a deterministic nature or characteristics of the group’s members; it may also imply a stronger

conviction than ever that an individual animal's essence may be known through general knowledge of her species.

Some implications of the introduction of the biological classificatory conception into humanity have been well acknowledged. From the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century, the biological divide between humans and apes was often blurred, and African humans were sometimes classified by Europeans as nonhumans, even as a distinct species (Patterson 2002, 28-31, Jacoby 1994, 96; Thomas 1983, 130-36). However, according to Winthrop D. Jordan (1968), in theory Africans were without doubt considered as humans, obviously possessing the human attributed of a soul and rationality. They were indeed treated "like animals" in terms of violent treatment, legal status and resulting mortality: "It was easy, then, for white men to slip into a mode of thinking about the Negro which operated with a vocabulary and imagery which had previously been confined to thought about the beast that perished." (p. 234). Nevertheless, Africans have been commonly associated with apes in terms of "dubious" origin, alleged sexual encounters and suspicion of hybridization. Any association with apes was perceived in a context of hierarchy (Ibid., 228-39). Once a biological classification of Africans as not fully humans was made, the well-established concept of species allowed a stricter African/European divide, in comparison with the divide between nations or other geographical-cultural groups.

Classifying non-European people as apes or other nonhuman species or hybrid was made within a clear framework, where any nonhuman is necessarily inferior. Being regarded as apish may have been merely a way of degrading people without any specific meaning that has to do with real apes. Apparently apes were captured, sometimes tamed, and displayed in zoos and shows

(Ritvo 1987, 30-39, 228-29). Some non-European people were also captured, tamed and displayed (Corbey 1995), but the genocide of Americans and the enslavement of Africans are irrelevant to primates (and may be connected to the models of wild animal extermination and domestication for work). Unfortunately, scholars who address the issue of humans as ape-like "subhumans" do not enquire how apes – the object of comparison – were viewed and treated (Thomas 1983, 129-32, provides a brief exception).

Regarding biologically based, scientific racism, most significant was the introduction of determinism and stagnation conceptions into the "species" of African humans, once the standard biological conception was introduced into humans' classification. Such conception of human nature as biologically pre-determined, survived the revolutions of evolution and genetics, and thrived on them. Although much has been stated about the role of biology in racism, the picture cannot be completed without understanding how biological classification is degrading in itself, prior to any specific classification of human groups in relations to apes. Ignoring differences among individuals and among groups in favor of an alleged species unity; ignoring groups' traditions in favor of simpler, more "biological" behaviors; perceiving any trait that can be labeled "natural" as inferior and antithetical to what is culturally desirable; and producing biological knowledge as a tool for power over its objects – all these are fundamentals of speciesism and possible precedents of racism. Much of the above aspects of speciesism in biology has been outlined by theoreticians of cognitive ethology – who rarely are interested in racism and in old science (e.g.: Griffin 1981); and by feminist scholars (e.g.: Birke and Hubbard 1995) – who rarely are interested in speciesism. Studying the specific forms of speciesism itself in historical moments of expansion into human groups is still largely neglected.

A related issue is historical cases of systematically equating some human groups with specific other species as means of degradation. The objects of equations were species that endure hostility and harsh treatment, usually domesticated species (implying subjugation and enslavement) and wild or feral species (implying extermination) (Patterson 2002, 25; Spiegel 1996, 34-36; Thomas 1983, 47-48). The historical challenge in such cases is revealing to what extent naming and portraying a human group as a victimized animal species enhanced the victimization of that human group: did it promote the use of some specific practices, similar to those that were used against the animals in question? Or was it a one derogatory move among many others, with no special implications? Answering these questions surely requires extensive knowledge not only of the human history, but of the animal history.

Some attempts were made to analyze such equations. Charles Patterson (2002, chap. 2) reviews seven historical cases in which a powerful group marked another human group as animals, usually of some specific despised species, as a part of a campaign legitimizing sweeping violence. The review, however, provides almost no information about the treatment of such animal species. Therefore it lacks a historical account of the alleged transition from one kind of treatment to the other, and it provides a mere impression that referring to people as degraded animals may occur around violence towards them. Marjorie Spiegel (1996, 61-63) presents the labeling of runaway black slaves by names of hunted animals as a direct inspiration to methods of hunting the runaways and mutilating their bodies, in the nineteenth century United States. Spiegel's examples are few and local, but promising enough for further research. Another subject is Sara Jansen's (2000, 2003) study of the emergence of the concept of "pest" in

Germany since the 1860s. Jansen's thorough study suggests how considering a species as "pest" meant a war for total extermination by chemical means – an attitude that was later applicable to human groups. Jansen's study is actually not connected to speciesism in its common meaning, since her object of study is a tiny insect – the vine louse.[1] The study is nevertheless directly relevant to speciesism, since it demonstrates the construction of an exterminationalist approach, which in any case is indifferent to any feelings of the extermination subjects. Vine lice, rats and humans are treated with equal indifference, developed with vine lice as its object.

A deeper type of historical continuity is the import of distinct mentality, formed in circumstances of violence against nonhuman animals, into human-to-human relations. Roberta Kalechofsky (2003) claims for dramatic historical influences of the moral indifference that was established by the nineteenth century physiologists. Scientific unrestrained violence, hostile towards any moral and religious considerations, was consciously developed by that group as a means to deal with the torture of nonhuman animals in vivisection. The physiologists' self-training in the elimination of morality triumphed in science and expanded into human society. The implications may be followed along two roots: first, the moral indifference of scientists (e.g.: Nazi scientists) towards humans; and second, a general hostility towards moral considerations in science-oriented societies. Kalechofsky claims for the second, sweeping case of continuity, which is by far more difficult to be accounted for historically. Unfortunately, she does not provide a historical account of the expansion of the new mentality out of animal laboratories.

1 Ethicists appeal to sentience as a threshold for moral standing, relying on biological data; sentience is believed to occur only in vertebrates and maybe in some of the largest invertebrates. Beyond sentience, allegedly no social/moral concept is applicable, because there is no one there, so to speak (see DeGrazia 1996).

Yet her account of the self-training of the nineteenth century physiologists in moral indifference is striking and points out a direction for further research. Some aspects of that thesis are in fact familiar and accepted by mainstream historians, for example, in Michael Kater (1989, 226):

"Under the Nazi aegis, then, and especially with the onset and escalation of war, medicine felt free further to pursue its unlimited quest for knowledge and serve the state at the same time. Because animal experimentation was known to be a poor substitute for experiments on humans, for only analogous inferences could be drawn, the crossover to human experimentation during the war became a logical consequence of prior practices that had been fettered."

Historical continuity of mentality may be a mere aspect of more thorough continuity. In the case of vivisection, continuation may occur in the very same scientists, laboratories, research institutes, journals, sponsors, methods, objectives, applications and justifications. Much of the vast historical literature on human experimentation refers to experiments on nonhuman animals as a separate project. Vivisection in nonhumans is conceived as normalcy that has been surprisingly breached, and human vivisection appears as a dramatic deviation from normal, acceptable society (obviously, some of the literature refers to issues unique to human experimentation, such as the problem of informed consent and volunteering subjects). The discourse should be significantly complemented by a viewpoint critical of speciesism and well-informed in nonhuman animal vivisection. Such an approach may reveal: (a) the fundamentals of attitudes towards the suffering of the experiment subjects; (b) the labeling of vivisection subjects as a legitimate group for the practice; (c) the techniques of controlling such groups; (d) the teaching and internalization of the ethos of science and progress as the highest value; (e) the reduction of sentient individuals to a status of exemplars of bodily reactions; (f) the system of rewards and pressures in favor of vivisection; and (g) strategies of presentation the laboratory reality to the general public. Roughly applying such an approach concerning the Nazi

experiments in concentration camps, John Vyvyan (1971) concludes (p. 159): "The experiments made on prisoners were many and diverse, but they had one thing in common: all were in continuation of, or complementary to experiments on animals."

If Vyvyan is right, than vivisection is the most notable modern case of continuity between harming practices against nonhumans and against humans. In addition, the issue is not merely "historical" as a matter of past events. Vivisection on nonhuman animals is a practice which continuously recreates itself, its internal potential of transgression into humanity remains seemingly unchanged. It is an ongoing process, gradually industrializing and specializing but otherwise similar to vivisection in the first half of the twentieth century.

Artificial selection as a field combining ideology, science, habits, technology, economy and institutional structure, is another case of historical continuity, from nonhuman animal "improvement" to human eugenics. But continuity here is weaker than in vivisection because eugenical institutions tend to be distinct from agricultural ones. Therefore studies on the continuation should concentrate on the historical moment of emergence of eugenical ideas and practices in a reality of well-established institutions of artificial selection in agriculture. Literature about the agriculture/eugenics historical connection is uncommon. Most texts on eugenics almost ignore the agricultural precedent, mentioning it without much knowledge or interest, more as an illustration of how degrading eugenics was than as a practical foundation. For example, ignored is the fact that Francis Galton was the author of a text about domestication, shortly before he invented the concept of eugenics (Galton 1907 [1865]) – despite the high regard for that text among contemporary scholars of domestication (Clutton-

Brock 1981, 9-16; Serpell 1989). Patterson (2002, chap. 4) makes a rather exceptional attempted to address the agricultural selection/eugenics connection, and he points at the fact that in the United States, the eugenic institution emerged from the American Breeder's Association and leading figures in the early eugenic movement were trained in animal agriculture (Ibid., 82-83, 85). He also mentions some animal agricultural background in the Nazi regime (Ibid., 100-2). However, Patterson does not try to follow a development of one field into the other; he even fails to provide any historical account of breeding in animal agriculture, thus leaving more of a statement about historical continuity than a description of it.

I am not aware of any serious claim that the most common forms of violence against animals – that is, agricultural farming and killing – were imported against humans. The abuse of slaughterhouse workers, for example, is sometimes described in terms of the killing line, but usually it remains a metaphor or a claim about a common source of evil, against nonhumans and humans alike: capitalism (e.g.: Sinclair 1906, chap. 3). Again Patterson (2002, chap. 3) attempts to claim for a connection – between American industrialized slaughterhouses and the Nazi death camps – but his account does not exceed a vague claim for inspiration. He follows other claims for inspiration with no attempt to specify the details of continuity. For example, Siegfried Giedion (1948) following a detailed description of the Chicago slaughterhouses in his seminal work on mechanization in all aspects of life, comments:

"Has this neutrality toward death had any further affect upon us? This broader influence does not have to appear in the in the land that evolved mechanized killing, or even at the time the method came about. This neutrality towards death may be lodged deep in the roots of our time. It did not bare itself on a large scale until the War, when whole populations, as defenseless as the animals hooked head downwards on the traveling chain, were obliterated with trained neutrality." (p. 246)

A more focused, materially-oriented type of historical continuity from speciesism to racism is the anti-human application of technologies of power, which were developed against nonhuman animals. Such use may involve a change in the perception of the human group as an "animal-like", but it could be fully independent of such attitudes and connected to the technological opportunity alone. The point here is that nonhuman animals' bodies are widely, regularly and violently controlled by humans. Body-control technologies are regularly produced against various species of animals, making these technologies available to any further use.

Reviel Netz's (2002) study on the history of barbed wire may be the best demonstration of such historical development. According to Netz, barbed wire was invented in the 1870s as a means to control the movement of cattle – first to prevent them from entering fields and soon to form enclosures. Controlling cattle was not only the source of the invention, but more importantly it made barbed wire a familiar technology, widely used, widely manufactured, and remarkably cheap. Thus the cattle industry made a cheap and easily constructed obstacle comfortably available for the British army to use against the Boers in South Africa. That has been the origin of concentration camps, and later – applications of barbed wire in the battlefield, in Soviet work camps and in Nazi concentration and death camps. Netz is well aware that he writes a history of controlling the movement of bodies in space, and accordingly it is a history indifferent to the identity of its object species, nonhuman and human alike (that is also a reason for its indifference to racism). That is also a source of some weakness in Netz's work, relating to the users and victims of the technology as accompanying it and therefore many groups move in and out the spotlight quite detached from their overall circumstances.

Nevertheless, Netz's methodology may be very useful for locating the introduction of specific anti-animal technologies against human groups, mostly in a racist context. Some suggestions have been made concerning relevant technologies, such as the branding of black slaves in the United States (Spiegel 28-29, 31; Thomas 44) and the use of "cattle cars" to transport Jews by the Nazis. However, up to date the suggestions amount to claims of similarity with no compelling historical argumentation concerning continuity and causality in the import of the technology from one group to the other.

Mutual Influences

I would like to suggest what seems to me as the most advanced methodological approach to the speciesism-racism connection. Unfortunately, this approach has rarely been applied and I am aware of almost no relevant elaborated examples. Potential is the issue, not a body of knowledge. The suggested approach does not assume a one-way influence of the one field on the other. In fact, the one-way approach is liable to be used speciesistly, when the study of speciesism is considered as a mere prelude to the story of the major actors, humans. Studying the speciesism-racism connection may therefore serve as yet another strategy of expelling the nonhuman out of societal thought. Beyond the ethical problem in such an approach, it is historically unsound, since nonhuman animals do not disappear once some connection to racism has been acknowledged.

The difficulty is apparent, for example, in Netz's (2002) work on barbed wire. Indeed, Netz is empathic for cows and pays much attention to their pain and to their "education" by the painful barbed fence (pp. 16-39). He also clarifies that as a case of violence against humans echoing

violence against nonhumans, Auschwitz has been a short-term historical phase – before the course of influence has changed, and violent control of humans in the "center" of history has been refined while intensifying in the agricultural "margins" (pp. 236-38). Nevertheless, Netz neglects the cattle industry once the human actors enter the spotlight. Explicitly surveying the use of barbed wire on a well-defined group per chapter, in the case of the British war against the Boer, for example, the end of the war justly concludes a historical chapter. Contrarily, the cattle industry flourished throughout the period covered by the book. Now if the price of barbed wire was a significant factor concerning the scope of its use and if price was dependent to some extent on the amount manufactured, then two questions persists: how did the cattle industry influence the use of barbed wire against human decades after it was introduced to military use? And how did the military use affect the cattle industry? These questions are left not merely unanswered, but unattended to.

Seemingly the connections between violence against nonhuman animal groups and against human groups tend to be more complex than one-way influence. Jansen's (2002, 2003) work on "pest" is a superb demonstration of such complexity. Jansen does not presuppose that "pest" is a given biological or agricultural reality. She treats "pest" as a totally constructed being, unique to the late nineteenth century Germany. The new biological-agricultural conception emerged through German nationalism and xenophobia: the vine louse, supposedly American in origin and an immediate import from France, was conceived in terms of human invader, to be overcome by war and treated by thorough and orderly German methods – that is, not "lazy" French treatment. Thus the seeds of nationalism, militarism and maybe racism were sown in the concept of "pest" long before it was re-introduced into human society, dramatically enhanced by the totality, determinist assumptions and moral indifference of the biological, agricultural

and medical thought. The final concept of “pest” absorbed the worst from both worlds, so to speak.

The human-nonhuman-human correspondence in Jansen’s work may imply a rather common historical phenomenon. Many feared and despised “beasts” and “brutes” in Western history were constructed through projection of foreign content onto actual animals. There is a tradition of interpreting such animal symbolism in terms of projecting feared and socially condemned urges onto outside beings. Throughout centuries of European thought, the violent, sexual, stupid, anti-social, uncontrollable “beastliness” or “animality” of nonhuman animals as well as their virtues, is in fact a portrayal of repressed urges Europeans denounced in themselves (Mason 1997, 221; Midgley 1995, Chap. 2). That is also “beastliness”, which Europeans identified in any of their Others (Mason 1997, chap. 7; Thomas 1983, 41-47).

However, the mediation of ideas about “animality” through actual nonhuman animals is crucial. By projecting inner, forbidden, despicable content onto nonhuman animals, the original negative feelings were merged with actual, highly coercive practices against nonhumans, as well as with observations of real creatures that are quite unlike humans in many ways. Therefore the construction of the “brute” nonhuman animal is the locus of enhanced negativity and violence, drawing the worst of all worlds. And so once concepts of “beasts” and “brutes” were applied to human groups, the result was worse that an unmediated reaction.

Nowhere may it be more illuminating to study that entangled course of meanings than in vivisection. Although modern vivisection supposedly epitomizes modern scientific thought and considers its objects of research as they are, vivisected nonhuman animals are bluntly considered as “models” for humans, physically as well as psychologically. “Humanity” is openly imposed on nonhumans, in an odd association with mechanistic conceptions. In turn, the extremely abused – actually as well as symbolically – “animality” is brought back into human society (for discussions on the problem of models, see Greek and Greek 2000, 15-76; Ak and Sande 1999, xxi-12; Rollin 1989, 107-32; Kleinzeller 1989, 2-4).

Such transformations are merely one possible aspect of mutual speciesism-racism influences. A common history may generate other relations. Therefore the challenge is to study history as a shared reality of nonhumans and humans, without predetermined boundaries. But what is shared reality? For David Nibert (2002) history is governed by general oppressive forces (associated with economic incentives) which affect humans and nonhumans alike practically everywhere. This generalizing approach may distract attention from local events and influences to an alleged hidden structure. It tends to label as “oppression” radically dissimilar practices and attitudes. Describing the American beef industry, for example, the torture and slaughter of billions of animals, the abuse of their killers by their employers, the health damage to some consumers, and the ecological impact on some rural communities – all are brought together as signs of “capitalist oppression” (Nibert 2002, 60, 66-68, 101-27). Surely there is capitalist oppression, but it hits any of these groups distinctively, keeping clear boundaries between humans and nonhumans. The challenge, in my view, is to show that objectifying cattle as “meat on the hoof” directly affected the objectification of workers, farmers, etc. – and not through mere general social forces, that may similarly affect the car industry workers, for example. A

special treatment of slaughterhouse workers may in turn reinforce their objectifying attitudes towards their victims – in a manner that should be proved to be alien to traditional butcher shops.

The meat industry evidently brings together humans and nonhumans, but most social institutions keep humans and nonhumans quite apart. Nevertheless, some institutions not only bring the different groups closely together, but also treat them similarly. Vivisection, shows of live colonial bounty, or colonial extermination of local "wilderness" – to name a few institutions – cannot be studied seriously without considering the mutual influences.

Conclusions

Studying and understanding speciesist attitudes and practices are important in themselves. They are also important for a fuller understanding of some attitudes and practices against humans. The full significance of these connections is yet very far from being acknowledged, for three reasons. First, most scholars ignore nonhuman animals' issues, thus reflecting the social norm with regards to these animals. Such ignorance is an aspect of speciesism: not perceiving and not knowing, as if speciesism and its practical implications do not exist. Reflecting on one's own speciesism is exactly what speciesism prevents. Second, some connections between humans and nonhumans are taboo for fear that pointing at such connections is degrading for the human group. That is a speciesist reaction, but in a speciesist world the fear from "dehumanization" is authentic. And third, many of the works about the connections in question are not quite convincing. Some works are satisfied with haphazard and sketchy descriptions or pinpointing vague resemblance between the two fields. In any case, the few who study nonhuman animal

history tend not to transgress into an exclusively human history. The conclusion from these difficulties is by no means an attack on our topic; on the contrary, there is much to be done.

The outlines of the combined discipline which must emerge, according to the present essay, are difficult to draw. Human conduct against nonhuman animals is immensely versatile, and potential connections with anti-human conduct are versatile as well. Nevertheless, works up to date point at two promising generalizations. First, the richest implications of speciesist conduct occur when people were “treated like animals”. That may seem obvious, but often “treated like animals” is a non productive metaphor, indicating no more than “treated badly”. In contrast, genuine resemblance may provide important insights and it is a promising clue for historical continuity and possibly a common, reciprocal history. Second, the import of anti-human conducts into anti-human conducts tends to enhance a species-like division within humanity and therefore it is relevant mainly to racism. Concepts of speciesist-like biological superiority/inferiority have affected women, children and the mentally and physically weak. But they realize their worst potential against distinct social groups, those who could be fully separated from the group of oppressors.

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