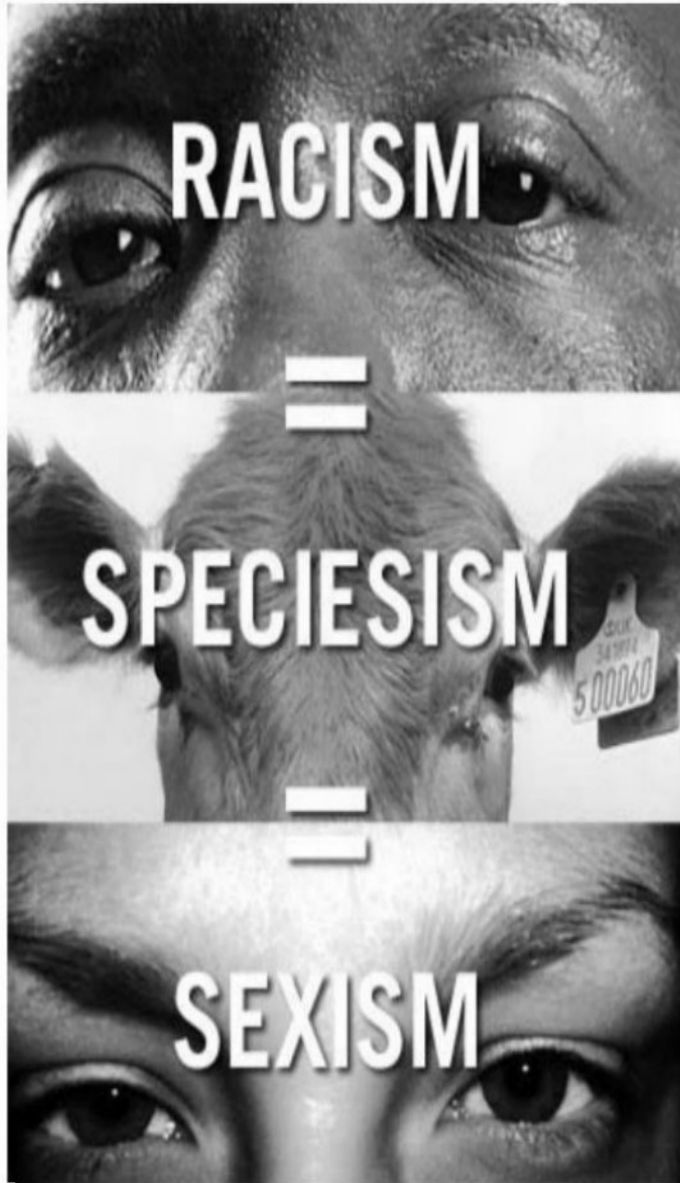


SMASH ALL OPPRESSION

FOR RESPECT, EQUALITY & LIBERATION



Revolutionary Struggle for Human & Non-Human Animal Liberation

A quick look at the interconnected relationship
between sexism, racism & speciesist oppression



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“The same ideology that supports speciesism is present in ideologies that encourage and justify sexism and racism...As a black woman who is vegan, I am particularly sensitive to the ways in which forms of exploitation are intertwined... So rather than being concerned with animal liberation or women’s liberation or black and other people of color’s liberation, I think we need to understand how they are all tied together and to know that we can’t free one group if we allow the same kinds of oppressive ideologies to enslave another group. Liberation has to come for all.” - Nekeisha Alexis-Baker

What is Veganism?

Veganism is the rejection of the commodification and use of non-human animals. Vegans do not consume non-human animal products (meat, dairy, honey etc), wear non-human animal products, or use them in entertainment or research.

What is Speciesism?

Speciesism is the practice of treating members of one species as morally more important than members of other species. Speciesism is analogous to racism, sexism and other forms of irrational discrimination and prejudice. Speciesism is an ideology that makes discrimination against the members of other species seem normal and natural. From educational and social experiences, the human animal has learned to see human characteristics and abilities as the ideal standard against which all others are measured. Embedded in the culture and thinking of the human animal is the idea that it is natural and inevitable to discriminate against other animals. Contrary to speciesist belief, the value of non-human animals does not depend on how similar they are to humans any more than the value of women is dependent on how similar they are to men or the value of people of color is dependent on how similar they are to white people. Social forces including social status and competition work to suppress the natural empathy people feel and make the oppression of others seem normal, natural and sometimes even beneficial for the oppressed.

~Sentience~

Speciesism is often cultivated by the belief that non-human animals are incapable of experiencing pain. However the fact is non-human animals are not only conscious and capable of experiencing pain but like human animals, experience a wide spectrum of emotions as well. The most basic way of experiencing the world is through feeling or sensation. Sentience is the ability to have perceptions and sensations. The basis of non-human animal liberation is the recognition that they are sentient beings capable of being aware, feeling pain, suffering and experiencing a state of well being. Like human animals, non-human animals are aware of their surroundings, communicate with one another through emotions and can maintain complex social relationships in their groups. Some non-human animals can enjoy learning a new skill or react to other non-human animals in ways resembling human empathy. Non-human animals can experience the unpleasant emotions of pain, frustration and fear. They can be reduced to a state resembling human depression by chronic stress. These emotions are noted when non-human animals are taken away from family members, hooked up to machines and confined in cages.

Intersecting oppressions

Intersectionality is an examination of how all forms of oppression including but not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, species or disability do not act independently of one another but instead, are interrelated creating a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination. For example capitalism utilizes speciesism to commodify non-human animals, reducing them to units of production and capital. The legal property status of non-human animals can be compared to that of the enslaved Africans prior to the Civil War. Reproductive control over women reflects the reproductive exploitation of non-human animals. Consuming non-human animals perpetuates the capitalist and human supremacist notion that they are sources of food rather than sentient beings deserving of their natural born right to freedom as humans expect for themselves.

Communication, language and imagery contribute to the mutual reinforcement of all oppressions. Since non-human animals are viewed as inferior their imagery and identity is used as a derogatory way of describing oppressed or uncivilized humans. The marginalization of non-human animals is intimately intertwined with the oppression upon them. Each form of oppression plays an integral role in reinforcing another form of oppression. They are all connected and when examined, their common denominator is domination, violence and control.

Sexism

Within the speciesist discrimination towards non-human animals can be found the interconnected relationship between the sexual exploitation of non-human vagina-bodied individuals and rape culture in humans. Rape Culture is an environment in which rape is prevalent and where sexual violence is normalized and excused in the media and mainstream culture. It is the manipulation of emotions and abuse of power used to maintain dominance over others. All forms of dairy farming include the forcible impregnation of cows. Regardless of the size or scale of the dairy operation, the process of impregnation remains the same. This insemination process involves a person inserting their arm deep into the cow's rectum in order to position the uterus, and then forcibly inserting an instrument into the vagina. The restraining apparatus used is commonly called a “rape rack”. A cow never gives consent to the insemination process therefore the rape rack is used as a restraint. The impregnation of any animal, human or non-human, against their will is an act of violence and in direct violation of that animal's autonomy. Non-humans are also metaphorically used to degrade vagina-bodied humans (bitch, chick, cow etc). In addition to degrading humans individually these insults marginalize entire species of non-human animals as well.

Racism

When white supremacy is projected onto veganism people of color who choose a vegan lifestyle are portrayed as white-washed or illegitimate. This further marginalizes vegans of color by assuming that health, non-human animal liberation or environmentalism only concern white people. Veganism is viewed as a classist movement by those who assume highly processed specialty foods make up the majority of a vegan diet. This assumption disregards the cost of meat, and upholds the subsidized meat and dairy industries in North America as representative of the world. Speciesism reinforces racism when discrimination is promoted to institute a global market operated by subjugating and enslaving non-human animals. Racism reinforces speciesism when non-human animals are referenced to describe, and justify discrimination towards non-white people. Historically, enslaved humans shared the same branding, whipping and beatings that non-humans receive today. Enslaved Africans and other people of color were viewed as “animals” in need of being domesticated therefore rightfully subjugated for colonial labor and profit. Native Americans captured and forced into slavery were often compared to non-human animals in an effort to justify their mistreatment. In various contexts, pigs, cows and dogs are considered dirty, unclean, ugly, unlovable beings. These serve as stereotypes that excuse and encourage their exploitation.

Re-claiming health and freedom through individual and community empowerment!

Community gardens are usually constructed in abandoned or unused parking lots and other neglected spaces. These are built by a community of determined people who are passionate about providing free healthy food for the community. Many community gardens have been created to promote a healthy vegan diet in direct action against local fast food franchises and other markets that attempt to sell processed foods and non-human animal products. Community gardens are examples of mutual-aid, empowerment and sustainable health for a community of people. They create a combination of individual and collective power which helps build resistance against the capitalist food industry.

Polyculture is growing multiple crops in the same space, in imitation of the diversity of natural ecosystems, and avoiding large stands of single crops or monoculture. It includes multi-cropping, inter-cropping, companion planting, beneficial weeds and alley cropping. The larger variety of crops provides habitat for more species, increasing the local biodiversity. This is one example of reconciliation ecology, or accommodating biodiversity. In a vegan polyculture garden that resembles a natural system, plants keep the soil fertile. Non-human animals are not used for food or manure in vegan polyculture gardens. Instead they voluntarily enter as free pollinators, biological managers, and consumers.

Embracing a vegan lifestyle not only helps detoxify the body but revolutionizes the human animal interaction with non-human animals. It challenges the societal norm of species discrimination while promoting anti-oppression in eating and in perceiving one another. Civilization normalizes the enslavement of all sentient beings to one-sided exploitation within the economic prison of capitalism. In recognition that all oppression is conceptually interconnected, non-human, human animal and ecological liberation can only be achieved simultaneously through challenging the logic of this domination. Only when challenged together can sexism, racism, classism, nationalism, speciesism and all other forms of oppression be overcome.