

ABLEISM AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

SOME DEFINITIONS

- **Ableism:** An ideology which makes assumptions of worth and value based on a being's mental and/or physical capabilities. This process of valuing some over others results in prejudice and discrimination.
- **Disability:** Whether a being can function in the same way as the average being. Largely defined by society.
 - Although, some individuals choose to define themselves as disabled either as a result of their own perceived inability/poor health or because they recognize that the way in which society is set up disables them from being a fully participating member
 - Can be *visible* or *invisible*

MORE DEFINITIONS

- ◉ **Chronic Illness:** An illness that is pervasive and long-lasting (can be degenerative or otherwise). Many chronic illnesses include the symptom of *chronic pain*. Many people with chronic illnesses identify as disabled.
- ◉ **Spoon Theory:** A metaphorical way of explaining the physical and/or mental exhaustion that comes with being chronically ill and/or disabled.
 - Ex: “I am really low on spoons today”

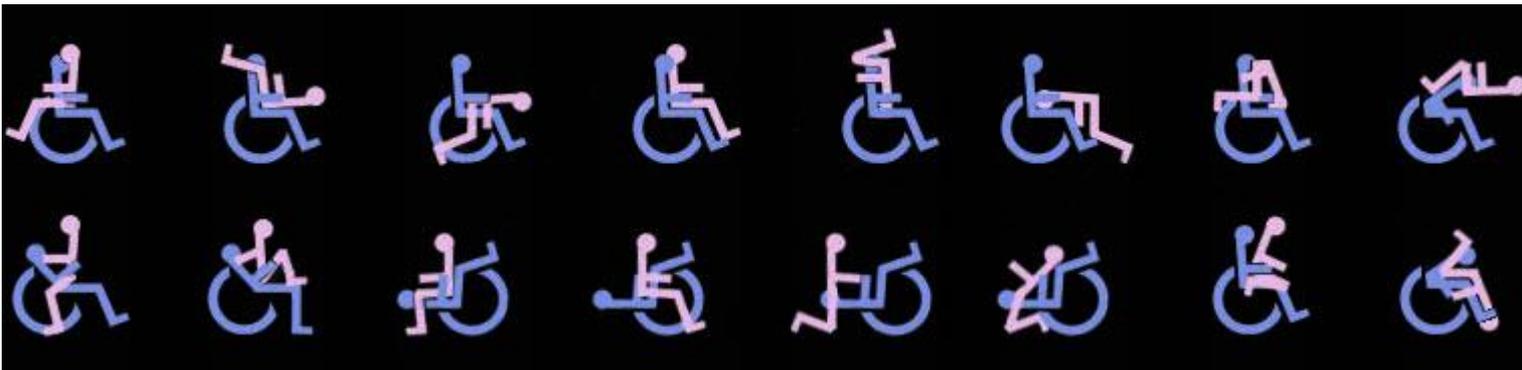
ABLEISM AND HUMANS

- The assumption that those who are disabled are somehow “worth less”
 - This assumption results in the exclusion of persons with disabilities from social spaces and life as well as a denial of their basic human rights



EXAMPLES OF ABLEISM

- The assumption that every human being can run, stand, walk, climb stairs, or support their own weight
- The assumption that those with disabilities are not sexual
 - Results in discrimination in the medical realm

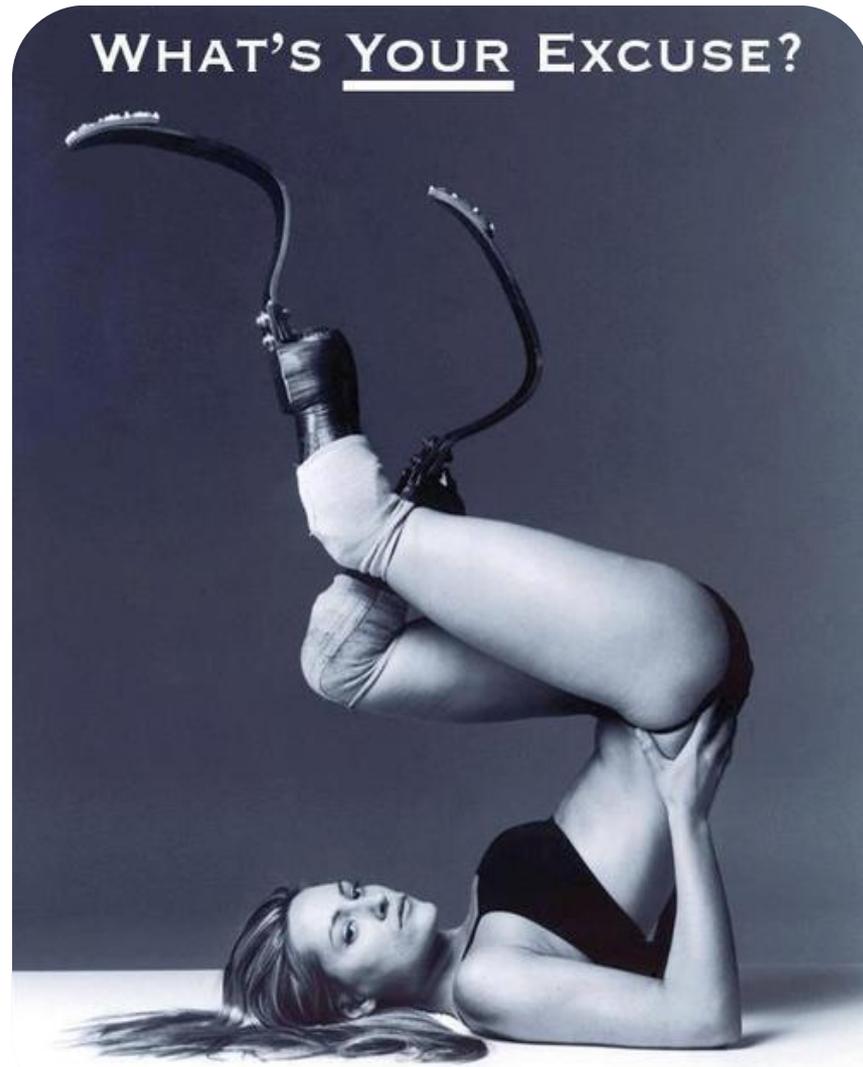


EXAMPLES OF ABLEISM

- The assumption that those with certain traits (in this case, those who are ill or disabled) should not reproduce and the subsequent control of their reproductive organs
 - Ex: “Pillow Angels”
- The assumption that all persons with disabilities are dependent or “child-like”
- The assumption that persons with disabilities are at fault for their illness(es)

EXAMPLES OF ABLEISM

- ◉ **Inspiration Porn:**
Usually an image of a person with a disability engaging in a completely mundane activity with an attached caption such as, “the only disability in life is a bad attitude”



MORE ON INSPIRATION PORN



"The only disability in life
is a bad attitude."
-Scott Hamilton

- ⊙ Demonizes those who do suffer or feel limited by their illness(es)/disability(ies), making them out to be the “bad disabled”
- ⊙ **Objectifies** persons with disabilities in order to inspire or motivate the able-bodied

INSPIRATION PORN AND ANIMALS

WE ARE THE WHEEL DEAL –
THE DIFFICULT WE DO
IMMEDIATELY..... THE
IMPOSSIBLE TAKES US JUST
A LIL BIT LONGER!



- Just as human beings are objectified by inspiration porn, so too are animals. The purpose of their stories/lives is to instill positive feelings in the able-bodied human

INSPIRATION PORN AND ANIMALS

- Only nonhumans who have been assigned a certain value (speciesism) will be the objects of inspiration porn (ex: companion animals)
- Farmed animals with “disabilities” (as defined by the industry) are considered utterly “worthless” and are “disposed of” as soon as possible
 - Ex: Birds who are “slow-growing”
 - Ex: “Freemartin” cows
 - “The cattleman can predict the reproductive value of this heifer calf at birth and save the feed and development costs if he is aware of the high probability of freemartinism.”

DISABILITY AND ANIMALS

- Whether or not a being (whether human or nonhuman) is disabled is largely decided by society.
 - Whether or not the life of the disabled individual is worth living is also decided by others
 - Ex for humans with disabilities: “I think I would just kill myself if I had that illness!”
- **Beings who are disabled are objectified and denied full autonomy and rights as a result of ableism and speciesism**

ABLEISM AND SPECIESISM: THE CONNECTIONS

- ◉ **Humanism** (as defined by Paola Cavalieri):
Equal moral respect is owed to all and only human beings
 - Wrongs are only wrong when they are done to humans
 - Problem - How do we define, “human”?
 - Is a person who cannot function in the social world without a technological aid really “human”? Should they then be denied rights?
 - Ableism

ABLEISM AND SPECIESISM: THE CONNECTIONS

- In an attempt to accurately describe what makes a human being unique, many will turn to the trait of rationality, or the ability to use logic.
 - This leaves out: Humans with cognitive deficits or mental disorders, humans who are considered to be “irrational” (such as women, People of Colour or the chronically ill) and nonhuman beings
 - Result: **Objectification**

ECOFEMINIST, CAROL ADAMS

- “Western philosophy defined humanness not only as *not animal* but also as *not woman* and not “coloured”. In Western philosophy, the concept of manhood applied not just to adult men but to the attributes of being human - rationality, autonomy, unemotionality. Women’s status is lowered by their being seen as animal-like, men’s status is raised by their being seen as the definition of what is human”

CAROL ADAMS AND THE “ABSENT REFERENT”

- The personhood of women and animals becomes absent in a process of **objectification**
 - Women are “dismembered” and “consumed” via over-sexualisation, and nonhuman creatures are literally cut apart and eaten
 - Their bodies exist only in the context of the use they can provide to others



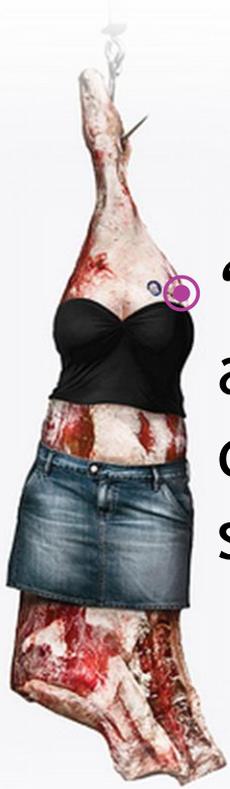
THE ABSENT REFERENT AND ABLEISM

- Persons with disabilities are “dismembered” (their identity is understood through their illness(es))
- Persons with disabilities are objectified
 - Inspiration Porn
 - Medical “puzzles”
 - Fetishization
- Persons with disabilities (like women, People of Colour, and nonhuman beings) become “less than human”
 - Results: Discrimination, prejudice, loss of rights (judicially and/or socially), and violence

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- ⦿ Persons with disabilities, animals, and women are considered to be irrational and thus not entirely fitting of the title, “superior human being”
- ⦿ This results in their objectification which encourages their position as “less than human”
- ⦿ This then results in sexism, ableism, and speciesism

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



“As long as the category of “animals” exists as a way of lowering and demeaning humans, disempowered humans will be victimized by speciesist attitudes” - Carol Adams

NOT ACCEPTABLE TO TREAT A WOMAN LIKE ONE

PETA

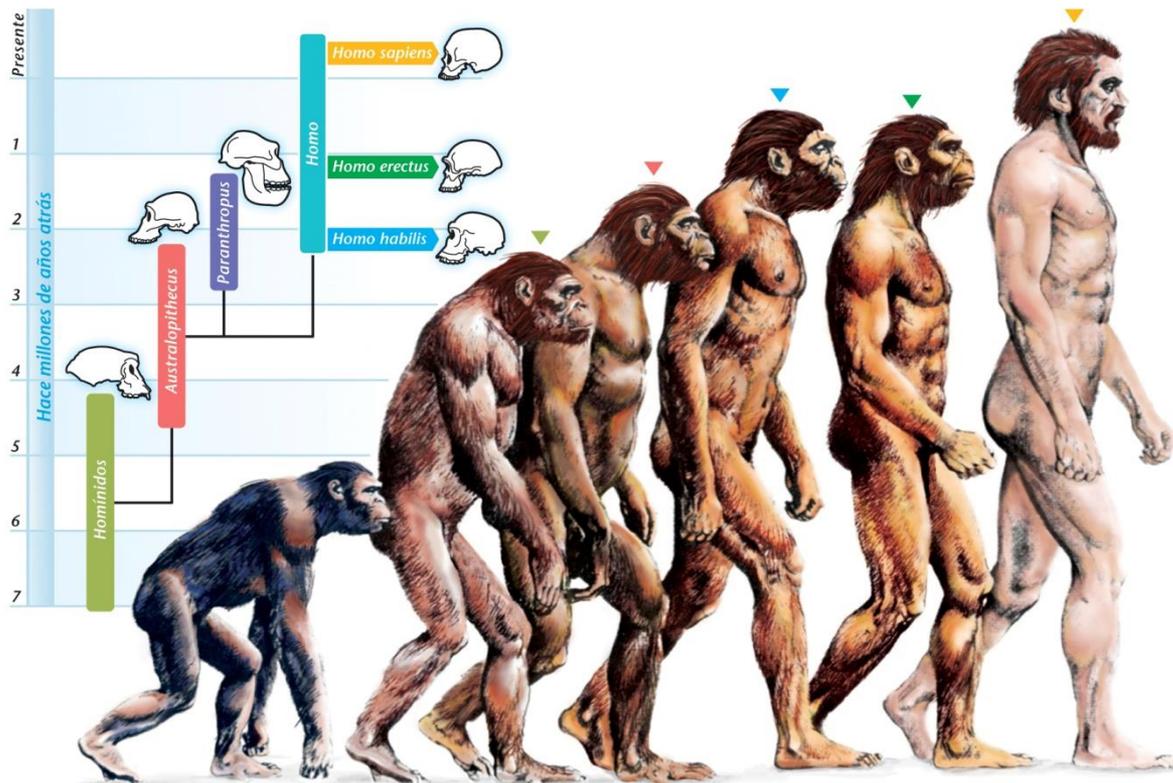
Has your child
got autism?

Learn about the link between
autism and dairy products at PETA.org.



CONCLUSIONS

- ◉ Sexism, speciesism and ableism are all a result of the problematic social definition of “human/person”



CONCLUSIONS



- ◉ In order to achieve equality for one, equality must be achieved for ALL by challenging what it means to be a true, “person”!!

