

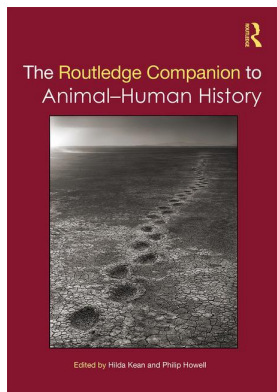
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2

THE OTHER CITIZENS

Nationalism and animals

Sandra Swart

*'Wounded Lions angry and disappointed after Springboks victory', 'Angolan Black Antelopes outrun the Lions of the Atlas', 'Congo's Leopards devour Mali's Eagles', 'Wallabies wallop Los Pumas', 'Vultures off to a flying start against Mauritius': one reads the headlines and one might be forgiven for thinking that there is a global war raging in the animal kingdom. It appears to be an apocalyptic post-human extension of the nation-state; as though governments had wearied of human casualties and decided to appoint animals as their proxies – like knights of olde jousting to represent their kings. Another image is that of the more jaded of the Roman emperors, wearying of his *bestiarii* slaughtering exotic creatures and simply pitting the beasts against each other for the thrill of the crowd. Or perhaps it is rather as if heraldry itself had come to life and suddenly the lion *rampant* confronts a griffin *sergeant* or a springbok *courant*. This muscular menagerie of competitive and athletic beasts struggle to defend their nations' honour. They seem to have taken Darwin's hypothesis to heart and wish to see if really only – literally – the fittest survive. To turn from the sports pages, however, to the political cartoons, we see international disputes between the British bulldog, the Spanish bull, the Russian bear, the New Zealand kiwi, and the South African springbok. Sometimes even real, living animals make the political pages: in 2014, for instance, an endangered Siberian tiger named Kuzya crossed the frozen Amur River into China, prompting an international incident – after consuming some Chinese chickens. Kuzya inspired an even less diplomatic Russian-born tiger named Ustin to cross the border into Chinese territory and go on a sustained goat-killing spree. Ustin and Kuzya were not just any tigers – they were rescued as orphaned cubs, taught to hunt by Russian officials, and released into the wild by President Vladimir Putin himself. Since these tigrine wanderings, there have been outraged calls in Chinese social media for Putin's tigers to be hunted and killed. Others have declared it a Kremlin spying mission through the GPS collars on the beasts. A Chinese official noted worriedly that the Russian tigers clearly had plans to cross the border again – but the sub-text is clearly a fear of the Russian Bear following the tigers' example.*

This chapter is intended to introduce the critical theme of animals, nationalism and national histories by offering both a brief overview of the existing historiography (to convey the main arguments and debates) as well as offering an illustrative case-study to understand these approaches at work. In this way it is intended to introduce newcomers to ‘animal–human history’ to a particularly important topic, as well as act as a reference guide and companion to the existing literature on this topic.

This chapter first discusses our historical understanding of nationalism, and then examines the literature on what we think of as the ‘Good Animals’ of nationalism. It explores the historical dimensions to the choice of ‘national animal’, defined as any creature that over time has come to be politically identified with a nation-state. The chapter draws on conventional understandings of nationalism (formal state-directed programmes), but also draws on Billig’s influential model of banal nationalism, the quotidian construction of a nation built on a shared (albeit constructed) sense of national belonging among humans, which often deploys non-human animals – both symbolically and materially.¹ The literal clash between animals and the rhetoric attached to it is examined by looking at the research at the intersection of nation and class, race, gender – to which this chapter adds ‘species’. As will be demonstrated, such rhetoric over ‘Good Animals’ is banal but far from benign.

The chapter then explores the ‘Bad Animals’ of nationalism. Certain animals have been understood as ‘bad’ by and for the nation-state. The chapter looks at how some key historians have discussed the construction of ‘vermin’ as a national problem. There has been an all too easy slippage, at some historical junctures, eliding human and animal ‘vermin’. The chapter subsequently turns to the clash between ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ animals: specifically, the politics of the alien versus the native animal. The chapter shows how humans can be forced into the category of the Bad animal too. The relationship between the ‘Good’ and the ‘Bad’ animal is explored through an analysis of the relationship between the ‘native’, the ‘natural’ and the ‘nation’. The chapter looks at roles the ‘animal-citizens’ play in the story a nation tells about itself. A metaphor about methodology taken from ecological sampling is apposite here in explaining the case-studies used: one throws a wired square called a quadrat at random onto the ground and then one scrutinises whatever species fall underneath it. Similarly, this chapter throws quadrats over a few global hotspots using various case-studies in order to understand how nationalists have deployed animals. Lifting the quadrats, we look at practices of breeding, slaughtering and eating animals and find wild and domestic animals, the tamed and the untamed, including the kinds of animals with which we opened this chapter but many others too – rugby-playing gazelles, penguins, skuas, trout, rhinos, whales, beavers, polar bears, kangaroos, and even Nazi cows.

Herderian herds

Can animals be nationalists? The question is not as absurd as it might seem. From some evolutionary theorists has arisen the argument that national or ethnic attachment is a form of evolved altruism among group-living animals. Usually such large agglomerations occur among mammals ‘in the form of herds . . . in which the average individual gains directly from joining the group. Rarely does membership in such a

herd involve costs comparable to the self-sacrifice of those willing to die for their national pride'.² It has been argued, however, that if there is a biological basis for group strife it should be understood within the context of humanity's quest for identity. Nationalism exists as extensions of the normal human (or animal?) desire to protect the group – the strong 'affective need to delimit a social cosmos of conspecifics with whom he can share interpretations of his socially constructed world'.³ Nationalism and its hypertrophies (like xenophobia or racism) thus seems (to many theorists, such as Perry Anderson) a very human construct – but this position has been attacked by controversial populists such as Robert Ardrey and more serious researchers, such as Konrad Lorenz and Lionel Tiger; Ardrey and others were essentially using 'animal nationalism' to argue that humans were hardwired to seek territorial control.⁴

In navigating this debate one remembers uneasily the warring chimpanzee tribes described by pioneering primatologist Jane Goodall. She witnessed a four-year civil war for territory involving kidnapping, rape, and murder.⁵ The 'Gombe Chimpanzee War' that Goodall described raged from 1974 to 1978, a violent conflict between two groups in Tanzania's Gombe Stream National Park. The Kasakela (in the north) and the Kahama (in the south) had previously been a single, unified community, but the chimps dispersed into northern and southern factions. Hostilities erupted in January 1974, when a raiding sortie of six adult Kasakela males killed a young Kahama male. By 1976, the war had gained full-throttled momentum with groups of Kasakela unleashing almost daily cross-border incursions into Kahama territory. Over the next four years, all of the Kahama adult males were killed by the Kasakela males. Of the Kahama females: one was killed outright, two went missing mysteriously, and three were kidnapped, beaten and raped by the Kasakela males. The Kasakela then took over the Kahama's erstwhile territory. Alas, the war (like many human wars) was for nothing. With the Kahama gone, the Kasakela's range now bordered the more populous and powerful Kalande, who quickly forced the Kasakela to relinquish their newly conquered territory. Scientists and the public were initially astonished by Goodall's fieldnotes – as chimpanzees had been seen as inherently gentle creatures. But similar outbreaks have been recorded over time and the broad consensus is now that chimpanzees (like humans) aggressively defend territories against outside groups and struggle for dominance over neighbouring groups,⁶ basing their decisions to attack strangers on strategic assessments of the strength of their largely male coalitions.⁷ In fact, the uneasy feeling about parallels between the two species grows because of the familiarity of chimpanzee warfare: we recognise their silent patrols and tactical attempts to isolate and undermine their enemies – because they parallel our own. There were the usual casualties of war and war crimes: adults and babies were cannibalised during and after *mêlées*. Killing thus emerges for them – as it does for us – as a consequence of having 'turf', living in separate groups, and the vicissitudes of volatile power relations. It is questionable whether this can be defined as nationalism – although a lively literature has arisen defending the animal roots of human nationalism – this naturalisation of nationalism serves to legitimise in many quarters the aggressive defence of national borders. Nevertheless, whether or not they can be nationalist (in even a crude sense) themselves, this chapter will show that animals play a very lively role in a nation's foundation and edifice, both materially and, particularly, symbolically.

‘Nationalism is a dangerous animal’⁸

The very first human to use the word ‘nationalism’ was Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), who understood it as a vigorous attachment to one’s own nation, based on (at least etymologically) a birth group or a blood-related group, which could (he lamented) also turn into chauvinism against other nations.⁹ Most subsequent philosophers have embraced the cosmopolitan narrative of a shared history and identity. Perhaps only Herder has offered the most enduring philosophical intervention in the other direction, as he conceptualised the nation as a major unit of social analysis or, indeed, as the basic ‘unit’ of humanity.¹⁰ Isaiah Berlin later interpreted this as purely cultural nationalism, but there are elements of political nationalism useful in our analysis.¹¹ Herder associated nations with particular terrains, marked by climate and topography – national landscapes.¹² Even when people were dispersed or migrated, he still thought them linked to their original homeland, which imprinted onto their sensibilities as children, permeated their thought and language and thus got passed down ‘from generation to generation’ even if people left that landscape by emigrating.

Despite Herderian notions of enduring generational transfer, nation-states are an historically relatively recent phenomenon: they are not eternal, despite their claims to the contrary. Ernest Gellner argued that, although nationalists pretend that nations were always there, ‘in the very nature of things [as it were, in Herderian terms], only waiting to be “awakened” . . . from their regrettable slumber, by the nationalist “awakener”.’¹³ As Ernest Renan reminds one: ‘Nations are not something eternal. They have begun, they will end’.¹⁴ He could have added: not anytime soon, though. Nationalism is not a spent force: as Serbia/Bosnia, the newly liberated republics of the Soviet Union, South Sudan, Scotland, Brexit and innumerable other examples demonstrate. While globalisation and multi-culturalism are powerful forces, nothing suggests that nationalism will be displaced or overcome in the near future.

Neither can one make an argument for increasing global orderliness: nationalism is a rough beast. Nations and territories do not neatly correspond: people spill over borders, loyalties stretch across boundaries or proliferate within them – all in complex ways. The simple territorially and homogenous nation-state is largely a myth and the existence of national minorities is almost inescapable. Even Herder conceded the ‘imperfect alignment of state and nation’, given the messy realities of the real world it is a multi-nation state that seeks to set up structures of self-government for different national groups, to respond to ‘heterogeneities in national belonging’.¹⁵ Herder sternly disapproved of the ‘wild mixing of various races and nationalities under one sceptre’, while strongly approving of cultural diversity in separate spheres, and cultural determinism.¹⁶ It is a starting point to understand – given the modern global order – both the unavoidability of national identity and its undeniable power, both covert and manifest. Nationalism spills over theoretical borders too. Of course, there is no direct cut-off point between patriotism–nationalism–jingoism–xenophobia; they exist on a continuum.¹⁷ Nationalism (on this shifting spectrum) is a resurgent force, despite Trotsky’s wishful thinking in consigning it to the ‘ash heap of history’. Politicians, as inveterate scavengers – together with raccoons, foxes and bears – have long overturned and rooted through the dustbins of history.

Another point to ponder is that nationalism only works on the presumption that humans alone are individuals and agentive – both ideas have been challenged from an animal studies perspective that reminds one that species are constructed categories. Species spill over bio-borders too. Donna Haraway has, for example, noted that we need to think about ‘terrain politics’, which recognises that bodies are composed of different species at different levels – apparently autonomous bodies are really overlapping ecosystems of parasites, pathogens and microscopic biota.¹⁸ Humans are walking multi-species compilations – internally cosmopolitan despite our narrow definition of self. This certainly extends Herder’s argument that humans are the only cosmopolitan species, whereas other species are specific, linked irrevocably to their own environments. He declared: ‘Human beings should live everywhere on earth, while every animal species merely has its land and its narrower sphere’.¹⁹ But animals ignore Herder’s localism all the time, as this chapter will explore when discussing exotic or alien species. As noted earlier in this chapter, most philosophers have embraced the cosmopolitan narrative of a shared global human history and identity, but it is challenging to push the idea of eco-cosmopolitanism as a counterweight to ‘animal’ nationalism. While it is a relatively new concept that still needs theorisation, eco-cosmopolitanism pushes one to think past narrow nationalism, to challenge ‘nationalist political conflicts over environment and take account of the planetary ecological systems that must be assessed by any cultural production attempting to introduce an environmental ethic’.²⁰ From this perspective, Ahuja looked at animals who defy all borders and travel vast distances: the cetaceans. He analysed the 2009 Oscar-winning documentary *The Cove*, which looks at dolphin-hunting practices in Japan, to offer a critique of nationalism’s legitimisation of violence towards (some) animals. Ahuja argues that cetaceans, who travel vast oceanic distances around the planet, are somehow not part of the imaginings that form the foundation of nations.²¹

Yet, actually, cetaceans are very much bound up in constructing countries.²² Whales are sites and symbols for the ‘material exercise of national sovereignty’, including the ‘sovereign right’ to ‘noncriminally put to death’, in Derrida’s term, meaning to engage in state-sanctioned violence.²³ For example in Japan, although few still desire to eat whale flesh, whaling is about far more than merely meat. After World War II, when a defeated Japan needed protein, the American occupying authorities advised that whale meat should become a staple in school lunches. Whale meat then became for the first time widespread nationally as a part of the Japanese diet. A generation later, under a 1986 ban on commercial whaling by the International Whaling Commission, Japan was still permitted to engage in ostensible ‘scientific whaling’ and to sell the meat afterwards. The country’s whale consumption crested in 1962 at 226,000 tons, then dropped to a mere 15,000 tons in 1985, the year *before* the ban. Some argue that the Japanese stopped consuming whale meat as the country recovered from the war and turned to more popular meat sources, such as beef. Nowadays, Japan remains pro-whaling because it

evokes a sense of nationalism. Japan does not want to stop whaling simply because it is told to do so by Western countries, including those that encouraged Japanese to eat whale meat after the war, when other food sources were scarce.²⁴

As Ayako Okubo, from the Ocean Policy Research Foundation, observed: 'It's not because Japanese want to eat whale meat. It's because they don't like being told not to eat it by foreigners'.²⁵

Cock and bull stories: gender, class and nationalism

Foreigners telling people what to do about animals has a long history. Janet Davis has shown how the American colonial authorities often used animals as a proxy form of government and to legitimise colonial rule as benign stewardship.²⁶ From the end of the nineteenth century, the American Society for the Protection of Animals, established in 1866, spread its dominion to Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines – the new dominions of the United States. Its views on anti-cruelty worked in tandem with new colonial laws designed to refashion the freshly acquired territories, to 'promote a better state of things wherever the authority of the Nation is established'.²⁷ Animal advocacy had a long relationship with power, especially the power inherent to scripting the nation.²⁸ Of course, the historical spread of humanitarianism transnationally also played an important role – with anti-slavery and then animal welfare.²⁹ The new American authorities banned cockfighting, with heavy fines of \$500 and jail time of up to six months. Cockfighting, as Clifford Geertz showed 40 years ago, had long been fundamental to the story that some nations – such as the Balinese – told themselves about how their society was structured, helping shape their national self-identity.³⁰ Similarly, cockfighting was integral to the gendered and classed self-understanding of participants in the new American colonies. The men involved projected much of their own masculinised identity onto the fighting roosters. The main fight could be between two parties or multiple entrants, but in each fight, two cocks (armed with natural spurs or metal razor spurs) were matched by weight and presented by handlers, allowed to give each other a few pecks and then released to fight until the conclusion: running away, refusal to fight, defeat or death. Davis has shown how this worked as a kind of 'animal nationalism' with supporters, opponents and participants projecting gendered and classed 'ideologies of nation' onto the roosters. The fights were more than avian-advanced avarice or ambition or aggression – at stake were also political claims about 'citizenship' and 'national belonging'.³¹ Defenders of the pursuit were cockfight nationalists intent on defending the sport as a legitimate struggle for sovereignty and simultaneously resisting their 'othering' by the state. On the opposite side, agents of the state created a pecking order of 'animal kindness', buttressing their claims of 'benevolent stewardship' over the other nations. Interestingly, local men did not object to the banning of bullfighting under the same suite of laws, as it had long been seen as the hated symbol of their previous oppressors, the Spanish. Bullfighting was seen as the realm of the hated nobility and Roman Catholic Church, whereas roosters were cheap to own – they were fecund and tough, which is why the irascible birds were able to follow commerce and conquest globally after originating in South East Asia.³² Thus colonial authorities wielded overt power over 'animal welfare' in order to refashion their subjects 'Good people'. But what about inventing 'Good animals'?

The good animals?

One of the critical building blocks of nationalism is a state-sponsored and media-propagated celebration of a defined territory. Often this is described as territorial possession over a 'natural' environment, which is rhetorically described as having shaped the 'national character'. Such natural symbolism is vital in inventing and then curating a shared national identity. As a key theorist of nationalism, Anthony Smith argues that, together, these symbols 'constitute an important force for social solidarity, transformation, and renewal . . . necessary for the establishment of social cohesion, the legitimisation of institutions and of political authority, and the inculcation of beliefs and conventions of behaviour'.³³ National symbols are not only displayed in the most palpable ways: armies marching or in jingoistic displays of national flag-waving but also, in Billig's terms, the most banal and quotidian circumstances and ubiquitous but unremarked-upon icons – such as the 'national animals' incorporated into the Coat of Arms.³⁴ In Canada there has been recent controversy over the national symbol chosen in 1975 – the beaver – on the grounds that it resembles, as a conservative senator put it in 2011, a 'dentally defective rat' who simply vandalises the environment.³⁵ The senator proposed the polar bear, 'with its strength, courage, . . . and dignity', which critics warned would be an unfortunate symbol if they followed trends predicted by ecologists and became extinct. There were several dissenters: a member of Parliament maintained that dislodging the beaver would ignore the animal's impact on Canada's history, as it was 'the relentless pursuit of beaver that opened the great Northwest' (early colonists moved into the country's extremities to trap beavers for their pelts). A local natural history professor at Carleton University countered that the national emblem was not just a question of history. Instead he found the beaver ontologically apposite for the national *Geist*: 'They are like Canadians. Their demeanour is very pleasant', before adding, 'Polar bears inspire fear'.³⁶ Most national leaders like their national animals to be terrifying. Iconic beasts are frequently not indigenous, but are usually predators. Many European countries, for example, are represented by a lion or an eagle – they appear in at least 39 of the world's national symbols.

An oddly non-threatening national animal for a redoubtable state was South Africa's springbok (Afrikaans: *spring* meaning leap; *bok* meaning antelope), a graceful gazelle that became a symbol of (white) South Africa in the early twentieth century, appearing on the coat of arms and a number of South African sports teams, most prominently the national rugby team (a sport central to the identity of white, male South Africans). In fact, the springbok has been the emblem of the South African National Rugby team since it was introduced in 1906. After apartheid's demise, the new African National Congress government declared that teams were to be known as the Proteas, an indigenous flower. At the last moment, then-president Nelson Mandela allowed the rugby team to stay the 'Springboks', as a gesture of goodwill to the mainly white (and largely Afrikaner) rugby supporters, stating 'there is a real possibility that if we accept the Springbok we will unite our country as never before'. On the day of the final, President Mandela famously strode out onto the field wearing a Springbok jersey and cap to hand over the trophy to the victorious (white Afrikaans) Springbok captain. Under the spirit of a rainbow nation, the 'Boks' became reimagined as the

Africanised version of ‘springboks’ – the ‘*Amabokoboko*’.³⁷ Twenty years later, with the rainbow faded to a grey economic outlook and amid protests at the slow pace of transformation in rugby (as a proxy for the slow pace of transformation in broader society) the Protea replaced the Springbok as the national emblem. The Springbok did not go extinct: its home range moved from its traditional place on the left breast of the jersey, to the right breast (alongside the Protea) for international matches. The emblem issue occasionally resurfaces as a proxy for debates over nation-building.

Sometimes the ‘Good Animals’ are not emblematic but rather, real creatures, actively introduced to colonise a new space.³⁸ For example, in Australia – just as in other colonial spaces – the settlers sought to make themselves feel *at home*, by making it *like home*.³⁹ Whereas at first a certain pragmatism pervaded, with native animals such as the kangaroo at least providing a source of food before sufficient livestock could be imported, as the colony became more established there was an increasing desire to import Britain into the new landscape by importing British wildlife: among many others, songbirds, rabbits, foxes, brown trout and rainbow trout.⁴⁰ By the 1860s, acclimatisation societies institutionalised the importation of British beasts, but also, interestingly, exotica from other colonies, including springbok from South Africa.⁴¹ But, while such aliens were nurtured, natives were ruthlessly suppressed in the ‘fauna wars’; wombats and bilbies were killed for their digging, grazing marsupials for their conflict with sheep, and various carnivores for stock depredation.⁴² However, by the early twentieth century there was political opposition to native animal slaughter and increasing accord on the need for native animal protection. By the mid-twentieth century, ‘World War II reinforced Australian nationalism, and the post-war collapse of the British Empire forced Australians to reconstruct their national identity’.⁴³ Nationalism was one of the drivers behind redefining ecological policy and protection of native animals, re-categorising them as worthy of protection. Thus, because of shifts within nationalism, native animals could shape-shift between ‘Bad’ and ‘Good’ animals.

The bad animals – the Herd Reich?

The Good animals of one state may become the reviled Bad animals of the next regime. This is illustrated by the story of a restoration project that had much in common with nationalist Herderian quests for origin and authenticity.⁴⁴ As noted, Herder developed the idea of organic nationalism, in which the state partly derives its legitimacy from historic cultural and hereditary groups. It has been argued that Nazi ideas of a Germanic identity drew on Herder’s romantic quest for the eternal *geist*. One such project was run by the brothers Lutz and Heinz Heck, of the Berlin and Munich zoos. Both were well connected to the Nationalist Socialist elite and, in line with the Nazi ecomythography, they celebrated autochthonous animals. For the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Lutz Heck fashioned a Teutonic zoo, with ‘Wolf Rock’ at its hub, surrounded by what they considered quintessentially ‘German’ animals such as bears and lynxes. But the Heck brothers also sought to resurrect the long-dead and half-mythic beasts found in the nineteenth century romantic opera of Richard Wagner, who came to be idolised by the Nazi party. Both Nietzsche and Wagner espoused an ancient reverence for the animal spirit. Wagner’s operatic heroes and villains battled

each other in a darkly preternatural world, which prized fantasy over banal reality by reviving and, indeed, re-creating traditional Norse and Teutonic mythology.

Lutz Heck simply adapted a traditional method of selective breeding animals to accentuate certain traits: 'What my brother and I now had to do was to unite in a single breeding stock all those characteristics of the wild animal which are now found only separately in individual animals'.⁴⁵ Even an apparently vanished animal's genes might be found in the gene pool of closely related kin or direct descendants, so if he focused on slowly 'breeding back' animals most similar to their extinct forebears, over time he would re-establish their pure ancestral being.⁴⁶ The Heck brothers tried to revive the aurochs (the wild ancestor of domestic cattle), the wisent (a forest dwelling bison) and the tarpan (an ancient horse breed) by ostensibly breeding back to primordial purity, to purge the degeneration inherent in domestication. These beasts were intended to re-wild the forests of the Third Reich as living totems to its power. The Hecks worked under the patronage of Hermann Göring, who also revived for himself a title itself extinct for two centuries: '*Reichsjägermeister*' ('The Reich's Master of the Hunt'). Together they tried to repopulate the *urwald* forest landscape with animals from the romantic Wagnerian imagination.⁴⁷ Some of his back-bred animals were released into the newly conquered Białowieża forest in Poland. Heck recalled:

In my youth my imagination was caught by the famous description in [Wagner's] *Nibelungenlied* of Siegfried's hunt in the forest . . . I was interested above all in the two huge wild oxen, which . . . are regarded as the most powerful representatives of primeval German game – the European bison and the aurochs.⁴⁸

The ethologist Konrad Lorenz argued in a key article, illustrated with photographs from Lutz Heck's zoo, that 'civilized' animals and humans were analogous.⁴⁹ He maintained that the domesticated beast and the urbanised human both suffered the retention of immature features into adulthood, degeneration of the muscles and morals, and a marked increase in libido. He saw domestication as a degenerative disintegration; the Hecks were confronting this disintegration by breeding 'national' animals back towards the 'original'. Yet the Hecks bred an irony. In attempting to revive the pure and primitive aurochs, they actually created a hybrid mongrel of modern breeds. Some labelled the project a ruse that created new breeds as mere facsimiles of extinct ones. Most of the ancient creatures were only briefly brought back. The aurochs released into the captured Polish forest were shot by hungry soldiers for food. When the Allies bombed Berlin in January 1944, the zoo animals burned and bled to death in their cages. Some escaped, briefly, and scattered. Lutz Heck's son had to shoot the stampeding aurochs.

The Heck brothers' vision was essentially of nationalist expansion through animals, territorially and temporally, across the borders into Poland's Białowieża forest and back in time to revive extinct beasts. In a sense it was a bloody remaking of history, landscape and body echoing the Nazi project itself. Indeed, some Polish green groups, for example, still actively resist the backbred beings as foreign forgeries.⁵⁰ Some zoologists certainly prefer to speak of 'near-tarpans' or 'neo-aurochsen'. But

despite the ideological baggage, four decades after the war, Heck cattle started spreading out across Europe in a range of restorative projects. Current nomenclature no longer differentiates the aurochs as a species separate from domestic cattle. The ‘*Bos primigenius*’ lost its vaunted exclusive scientific status. Significantly, in an act that shows how animals can transcend their ideological heritage, in the *Oostvaardersplassen* in the Netherlands they were introduced as eco-proxies, useful substitutes for the Ice Age mega-fauna that once nibbled down the meadow grasses.⁵¹ However, nationalism prevailed; when a conservationist brought a few over to his farm in Devon in 2009, the British press (from the *Daily Mail* to the *Guardian*) reported on this bovine invasion of ‘Nazi cows’ with a mixture of knee-jerk nationalism and satire: ‘Giant Nazi cows on the loose in Britain’, ‘Nazi “Super Cows” Shipped to Devon Farm’, ‘Farmer brings “Nazi” cows back to Britain after 2,000 years’; the *Daily Mail*’s contribution, ‘In an English field, the cattle created by Hitler’, was accompanied by a picture of the Heck cattle captioned with the British tabloid’s traditional pun, ‘We were only following udders’.⁵²

From rebirth to death?

A significant facet in understanding nationalism’s relationship with animals is looking at how animals are not only bred, but how they die. Staying with Germany for this example; in 1995, a federal German court banned Muslims from *schächten* – slaughtering animals without prior stunning, ruling that the practice was not a religious necessity and therefore unprotected by freedom of religious expression in the constitution.⁵³ This was overturned seven years later, in 2002, as halal slaughter without stunning the beast was seen as integral to freedom of religion. David Smith traces the practice back a generation to the 1980s and shows that objections sometimes had xenophobic or racist rhetoric.⁵⁴ In fact, religious slaughter had been allowed in the Weimar Republic, and one of the Nazis’ first changes to the law (targeted, of course, at Jews) in 1933 was a directive specifying compulsory stunning of all slaughter animals. There followed a raft of animal protectionist laws by the Nazis, which were overturned by the Allies in 1946. The Federal Court of Justice (*Bundesgerichtshof*) confirmed that the Nazis’ law had been an instrument of intra-national nationalism, a violent measure aimed at Jews, and confirmed toleration of *schächten*. But, as the Muslim population increased in West Germany from 6,500 (in 1961) to 1.8 million (in 1989), the biggest welfare group, the German Animal Protection Association, turned its attention to this section of the population. West Germany’s nationality laws were based not on birth/residency but on ‘blood’, so resident Muslims could not access citizens’ public services or vote. The growing population and rising unemployment became linked in many people’s minds and triggered a national debate in the 1980s on what it meant to be ‘German’. Discussion centred on the unGermanness of the ‘barbaric’ practice of inflicting unneeded pain and fear upon the beast. This was mobilised as a trope of distinction between German and non-German. Adherents of animal-protectionism, Smith notes, supported an ideology of cultural homogeneity. Essentially – in their minds – foreigners could only become nationalised if they repudiated their ideas about animals and embraced German values of compassionate citizenry (in a parallel to the cockfighting laws discussed earlier).

For almost two decades, state authorities refused to issue permits for halal slaughter. Then in 2002, a Muslim butcher raised the issue to the level of a constitutional complaint. The court ruled that religious freedom of expression necessitated allowing halal slaughter and acknowledged that there was not yet scientific consensus over whether stunning spares animals' pain. As Smith argues, this decision 'finally slaughtered the animal protectionists' holy cow of western, "humane" and "conventional" slaughter with stunning'.⁵⁵ But then the court revealed its own political nationalist interest in the matter, concluding that the right of Muslims to practise halal slaughter aided their assimilation into German society.

Joeys and jingos: the national stomach and the politics of food

Just as Smith had examined slaughtering animals, Charlotte Craw went one step further and reflected on the nationalist politics of *eating* them.⁵⁶ Craw has explored the alignment of nationalist narratives and recipes using 'indigenous animals'; using kangaroo meat qualifies a dish as 'Australian' and somehow environmentally sound. She notes that the native, the natural and the nation have become intertwined. Animals framed as 'natural' and very 'other' to the human realm of politics, were actually deployed in questions of settler belonging. Craw uses a popular recipe book, 'the bible of contemporary Australian home cooking', to understand how consuming kangaroo meat became a soothing solution to an uncomfortable disquiet over national identity.⁵⁷ Such nostalgic deployment of kangaroo meat legitimised a particular conception of nationalised identity for (white) Australians anxious over their 'place' in the country.

This 'food nationalism' can also affect animals. In 2014, for example, the inmates of Russia's Moscow Zoo, one of Europe's oldest, were caught up in a quasi-Cold War fracas. The Kremlin announced a curb on Western imports, which suddenly made zoo fodder 'forbidden fruit', after an embargo on food imports from the United States, the European Union and other Western countries intended to be political retaliation towards nations critical of Russia's reaction to Ukraine's insurgency.⁵⁸ But the diplomatic blow also hit furry stomachs at the zoo. The animals were used to cosmopolitan dining: 'The sea lions crack open Norwegian shellfish. The cranes peck at Latvian herring. The orangutans snack on Dutch bell peppers. Now the venerable Moscow Zoo needs to find politically acceptable substitutes to satisfy finicky animal palates . . .'.⁵⁹ The animals 'don't like Russian food,' a zoo spokesperson admitted. The Russian Bear, symbolising Russian 'virility and independence' was, ironically, one of the animals worst affected.⁶⁰

What is especially important for dissecting animals as categories here (quite literally – in the case of the kangaroo-meat recipes) is that, as discussed earlier in the chapter, 'exotic' and 'native' are historically loaded terms – they carry a heavy history. This burden of the past carries into the present, particularly in battles over national identity. As Marcus Hall observed about projecting human political anxieties onto animals: 'Natives and exotics are us . . .'.⁶¹ Kenneth Olwig has also demonstrated that discourses over the dangers and perils of alien species bleed into (sometimes quite literally) violent rhetoric over native-alien discourse.⁶² Olwig notes that the scientists who fret about the penetration by invasive exotica are often blithely

unaware of overlaps with national chauvinists. But nationalists have certainly drawn on the work of scientists on ecological imperialism and the supposed threat of foreign races to the native populations.⁶³ In similar vein, Duncan Brown has asked ‘Are Trout South African?’ He uses this as a lens into exploring the politics of acclimatising trout, a ‘non-native’ species, just as in the earlier Australian example, which has operated as a metaphor for understanding a search for identity within a white settler society. Naturalists and settler ideologues both preferred to see ‘nature’ as an ‘empty space’ for better ‘breeds’ – be they fish or human. Brown argues further that the history of trout in South Africa can also be understood as that of a ‘rainbow of hope’ rising above narrow-minded claims of national identity and ‘belonging’. These are incredibly important questions to ask about nationhood, given South Africa’s ugly exhibitions of extreme xenophobia – from violent attacks on African ‘foreigners’ in 2008 and 2015, in particular, to more stealthy refusals to employ them in key sectors, seeing them as threats to national security.

Animal whites?

Staying with South Africa, historical anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff have focused on newspaper coverage of South African ecological ‘news’, and explored public panics over the threat of alien species to native ecosystems.⁶⁴ They have theorised the ‘ecology of nationhood’ to explain a ‘new post-racist form of racism’ in which anxieties of belonging are projected onto nature itself, to ostensibly de-politicise a highly charged racial issue. Certainly, there is an element of claims of autochthony through a ‘benevolent stewardship’ like the kind described earlier in the chapter of the US officials over their cruel cockfighting colonies; white citizens often claim ‘belonging’ through protecting and policing ‘nature’. A variation of this kind of moral panic is the threat of the alien (human) to the Good Animal-citizens.⁶⁵ This is entangled in the politics of human belonging too. For example, in South Africa at the moment there is a political and highly racialised debate being waged in the press with conservation discourses over, ironically, ‘black’ and ‘white’ rhinos (*Diceros bicornis* and *Ceratotherium simum*, respectively). One politician, Gayton McKenzie (of the newly minted Patriotic Alliance) is on record as declaring that he feels he must ‘actually pray every night for a white rhino to die’ . . .

[b]ecause when the last white rhino is dead, maybe people will start caring about the coloured⁶⁶ man in this country Between April 2014 and April 2015, there are six coloured guys that die every day due to gang violence. Half a rhino died per week during that year. But everywhere, you hear save the rhino’.⁶⁷

(In fact, the white rhino is the least endangered, at 20,000 plus, but ‘white rhino’ makes for better newspaper fodder and social media copy than ‘black rhino’, which is critically endangered at about 5,000).⁶⁸ Recently, the rhino-poaching crisis has been caught up in intra-national debates. Historically, South Africa has used military force rather than diplomacy with neighbouring states and, similarly, antipoaching has been enforced harshly. Contemporary antipoaching overlaps with political unease over



Figure 2.1 Bumper sticker, Kimberley, South Africa, January 2014.

Photo by author.

border safety, and this has precipitated the ‘rhinofication’ of South African security. Humphreys and Smith argue that militarised efforts to protect rhino confront the reality of a large and largely African class, which (for several generations) has been barred from wildlife management by white regimes.⁶⁹ Tellingly, the head of the Kruger National Park’s antipoaching activities is a retired apartheid general, whose rhetoric suggests he is approaching antipoaching as a new Border War: ‘ . . . South Africa, a sovereign country, is under attack from armed foreign nationals. This should be seen as a declaration of war against South Africa by armed foreign criminals’.⁷⁰ Of course, this is not to suggest that rhino poaching is an invented crisis. The numbers killed are staggering; in 2014 alone, 1,215 rhinos were killed in South Africa. The number of carcasses of poached rhinos in Kruger Park (a game reserve that is itself a borderland with Mozambique) rose from ten in 2007 to 827 in 2014.⁷¹ But equally staggering are the human casualties: as many as 500 poachers have been killed since 2010 in the Kruger alone. Bluen has argued that the ‘rhino war’ contains elements of a white ‘xenophobia’, particularly because most of the poachers are black men from Mozambique.⁷² The poachers are certainly ‘othered’, there is even talk of ‘exterminating’ them – they can be ‘noncriminally put to death’ in the eyes of many (mainly white) South Africans.⁷³ In claiming stewardship, in a form of intra-national nationalism, white South Africans are also insisting on their right to ‘belong’ (as in Figure 2.1 above). Further, the (largely) white public concern shared through, for example, dressing their vehicles as rhinos⁷⁴, putting a symbolic red plastic rhino horn on the front of their cars, thereby almost therianthropically ‘becoming’ rhinos or at least inhabiting them.

Native species? Race, settlers and species⁷⁵

In the above example, ‘bad non-citizens’ have been killed – rhetorically and literally – to protect the rhino as a quintessentially ‘good’ citizen-animal. But sometimes, in

protecting the nation's fantasies about itself, the animals have to be killed too. In a case-study of the Prince Edward Islands of sub-Antarctica under South African rule, Van der Watt and Swart have shown how animals can be stunt-doubles in a time-honoured mythic melodrama nations need to perform in inventing themselves. Nationalism is not only a 'dangerous animal', it is dangerous to animals, as shown below.⁷⁶

South Africa took possession of the islands in the 1940s and almost at once references were made to the 'newest citizens of South Africa'. Pictures were taken of naval officers literally shaking hands with (flabbergasted but unresisting) penguins. This was, however, the very problem with these new colonial subjects: they were too submissive. They exhibited 'Island tameness'— the propensity of isolated populations of animals to lose their suspicion of potential predators, including humans. They were thus almost too perfect as colonial subjects – incapable of any resistance. But this did not fit the nationalist narrative, which was predicated on the notion of frontier conquest and romantic Herderian nationalism.⁷⁷ The nation needed an enemy.⁷⁸ Luckily, one presented itself in the form of the brown skua, a kleptoparasitic bird, known to savage penguin chicks. These insurgent skuas made possible a re-enactment of the conventional conquest narrative. By shooting them in vast numbers, the colonisers were able to repel and then repress these rebels. 'The 'good' animal-citizens (the penguins) and the 'bad' animal-citizens (the skuas) both facilitated a

psychosocial process of colonisation, enabling the men stationed on the island to act out a comforting and legitimising narrative of conquest. So entrenched was the frontier myth that it was a story the settlers needed to tell on a sub-Antarctic island, with one key difference: without human characters, the local fauna had to play the key roles of subject, in order to allow settler agency and the fiction of colonial victory.⁷⁹

The anthropomorphism was necessary to invent new subject-citizens to 'people' the islands, to then govern and control.

As illustrated above, anthropomorphism is useful, but, as indicated below, theriomorphism is vital. In the Antarctic avian example, it was a nationalist narrative that forced animals to play the role of people, but the reverse has happened; people have been compelled to become animals. Of course, in the example of rhinos, some sectors *chose* to become animals, but only high-prestige 'Good Animals'. Sometimes, however, humans have been re-categorised (against their will) along with the Bad Animals, as a threat to the nation. Integral to the process of inventing a nation is categorising and then vilifying its so-called enemies. Sometimes this dehumanisation is waged against external enemies, as in 'trophy photographs' of American military torturing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison, of a naked Iraqi man forced to crawl on the floor on all fours, with a dog-leash around his neck, as part of animalising 'the other', here as a tamed pet. Sometimes the dehumanisation is against internal enemies as a form of intra-national nationalism (as in reinventing Jews as *Untermenschen*, as vermin and as Lorenz's degenerate domestic animals, as discussed earlier in the chapter). Dehumanisation is useful; it overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder, it facilitates 'noncriminally putting to death'. In April 1994, when South Africa was

celebrating the end of apartheid with the election of Nelson Mandela, Rwanda, a central African state, saw the genocide of an ethnic minority, the Tutsis. In 100 days, from April to July 1994, the country's Hutu paramilitary, *Interahamwe* ('We who strike together'), butchered about 800,000 Tutsis (and Hutus). At the time, the genocide was presented as the consequence of ancient 'ethnic' or even 'tribal' animosity, between Tutsi and Hutu locked together in the same nation-state. However, evidence from the UN Tribunal established that this was false. In reality, the genocide was methodically enforced by a group of disaffected military officers. At least in part they were able to persuade Hutu to kill Tutsi friends, family and strangers, through the rhetoric of 'othering'.⁸⁰ To make the genocide thinkable, differential forms of national citizenship were imagined and propagated, with Tutsis re-categorised as animals, becoming a means of legitimising the slaughter. Tutsis were at first referred to as evil people but this soon escalated to 'cockroaches'.⁸¹ The instigators depicted them as vermin that must be exterminated for the sake of saving humans or, even, humanity. This permitted and, indeed, necessitated 'noncriminally putting them to death'.

Conclusion – beastly nationalism?

Animals do not respect national borders, as the examples of the insouciantly roving Ustin and Kuzya illustrate, but borders respect animals. In fact, animals help police, celebrate and move them, literally and figuratively. As discussed, a key and critical facet of the nation is its possession and patrolling of a specific geographic territory. The discourse of nationalism then insists on a defined 'natural territory', in part, at least, to discuss just how unnatural and even accidental the nature of its borders are. As Lord Salisbury sardonically observed in 1890:

We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's feet have ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were.⁸²

In the mountains and rivers and lakes were finned, furred and feathered future 'citizens' of these arbitrarily defined states. The natural part was (and is) not only used as a sleight of hand or alibi for camouflaging the arbitrary delineations, but also to actively promote citizenship. In other words, animals can be mobilised in the state-sponsored construction of the identity of belonging and, as the flipside of the coin, the identity of difference. An important argument, significant for animal-sensitive historians, is that a species is not so much simply an ecological fact, but also a political decision.⁸³ Their identity is at least as historical as it is biological. Species are imagined just as nations are. But to say something is 'imagined' is not to say it is not powerful, nor real to those who believe. Nostalgia helps reify the imagined identity, it papers over cracks of actual heterogeneity, in a nation-state or in a herd of animals. In essence, 'animals and their bodies appear to be one site of struggle over the protection of national identity and the production of cultural difference'.⁸⁴ These animal-citizens – the Good and the Bad, the real and the invented, the alien and the

native – play a part in the buttressing of the nation’s story it tells about itself. To end where we began, we return to the animal as proxy for the nation-state. To turn back to the sports pages from this week, one reads of yet another rugby victory: ‘Lions make nation proud’.

And, of course, in their way, they have.

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