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Intergroup metaphors

NICK HASLAM, ELISE HOLLAND & MICHELLE STRATEMEYER

The vast majority of psychological research on intergroup relations leans heavily on the concept of valence. Perceptions, impressions and judgments, are organized along the evaluative dimension of positive to negative. Stereotypes, although theorized as purely cognitive, tend to be flattering or derogatory, arrayed along highly valenced content dimensions of warmth and competence. Prejudices are conceptualized as degrees of dislike, or as associations between groups and negative stimuli. Communication is riven with judgments of the virtues and vices of absent parties. Group members are said to be motivated to preserve a sense of positive distinctiveness and biases are defined by the drawing of more negative inferences about outgroups than ingroups. Sometimes the social psychology of intergroup relations can look like a morality play.

Valence is, of course, an extremely important dimension of group communication. However an exclusive focus on evaluation flattens the content of intergroup relations and omits some subtle elements that are vital for an enriched understanding of group life. In this chapter we explore how particular metaphors operate in perceptions of and communications about outgroups and in the contrast between ingroup and outgroup. These metaphors, although they are sometimes bound up with strong evaluations and emotions, cannot be reduced to evaluative judgments without losing their content.

Our particular focus here is metaphors that relate to nonhuman animals. In some respects this is a narrow focus, as the metaphors that can be used to capture human groups can liken people to machines, objects, and forces of nature, among others. Readers seeking an excellent recent review with a wider angle of vision should explore Maass, Suitner, and Arcuri (2014). However, animal metaphors are complex and the human-animal distinction appears to be remarkably salient in social perception and communication. An emphasis on these metaphors also calls into play the recent blossoming of social psychology research on dehumanization, much of which has demonstrated the ways in which some people are seen as

more bestial than others (for a review, see Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). Thus our attention to animal metaphors in intergroup relations is rich as well as timely.

The present chapter begins by briefly reviewing recent research and theory on dehumanization, and how it shines a light on the ubiquity of animal metaphors in intergroup relations. It then moves on to discuss a particular class of animal metaphors involving comparisons of humans to apes or monkeys. These metaphors are then placed in the wider temporal context of judgments of primitiveness, and the belief that some groups are more developed, ontogenetically and phylogenetically, than others. The research reviewed to this point almost invariably concerns metaphors that are implicit and indirect rather than expressed in language. The following section therefore turns to the small quantity of research on explicit animal metaphors and the diversity of meanings they convey, with a special emphasis on factors that contribute to their offensiveness. The final section then moves beyond the focus of previous sections on metaphors associated with race, ethnicity and nationality to address animal metaphors in the context of gender.

Implicit Animal Metaphors

Psychological theory and research on dehumanization extend back to the 1960s and 1970s, and some of it presented examples of people receiving metaphorical slurs that portrayed them as animals or as supernatural beings such as devils and demons. These epithets were understood by early writers such as Bar-Tal (1989) and Opatow (1990) as forms of moral exclusion or disengagement: by removing others from the human category, people saw them as unworthy of moral consideration and undeserving of the usual restraints on violent conduct. Dehumanization in these early texts was usually discussed in the context of extreme behavior and high emotion: war, genocide, and intense inter-ethnic conflict.

More recently, starting around the new millennium, social psychologists began to document a new and subtle form of dehumanization. Calling the phenomenon ‘*infrahumanization*’ to avoid the harsher connotations of the original term, Leyens and colleagues (2003) explored the differential attribution of uniquely human attributes to ingroup versus outgroup. The *infrahumanization* effect was in many respects subtler than the prototypical examples of dehumanization analysed by earlier writers. First, the effect occurred in intergroup contexts that were not marked by intense animosity, and the effect itself was distinct from negative evaluation of the outgroup. Second, the metaphoric likening of the outgroup to animals was entirely implicit and nonconscious. Lesser humanness was ascribed to the outgroup not by way of explicit animal epithets but by the judgment that this group lacked the refined ‘secondary’ emotions that distinguish humans from nonhuman animals, such as envy and joy. An *infrahumanized* group is not seen as animal-like so much as being placed closer to animals on a human-animal psychological continuum. Despite the mildness of the *infrahumanization* effect, researchers demonstrated that it had behavioral consequences (e.g., Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2003).

Subsequent research elaborated and extended research on *infrahumanization*. The effect was defined within Haslam’s (2006) integrative theory of dehumanization as one variant of an ‘animalistic’ form of dehumanization, in which people are likened or assimilated to animals with greater or lesser subtlety. (Haslam’s other major form of dehumanization, dubbed ‘mechanistic’ and involving a likening of people to machines or robots [Loughnan & Haslam, 2007], has received rather less attention from researchers and few studies of related metaphors.) Other researchers demonstrated *infrahumanization*-like effects by establishing implicit associations between groups and uniquely human emotions, differential attribution of uniquely human traits (e.g., polite) or human-related nouns (e.g.,

person) rather than emotions, and correlations between trait ascriptions and perceived animality.

In all of this work the idea of animality functions as a kind of hidden metaphor. Unbeknownst to people, their perceptions of members of other groups are organized by a deep-seated contrast between humans and animals as a class. Without being equated with animals, outgroup members are judged to be more psychologically similar than ingroup members to these animals. What exactly the implicit metaphor of ‘animal’ represents is uncertain, however, as the term incorporates a remarkable variety of creatures, some of which carry entirely opposite meanings (e.g., mouse and lion). Nevertheless, research on lay conceptions of the differences between humans and animals demonstrated substantial cross-cultural agreement (Haslam, Kashima, Loughnan, Shi, & Suitner, 2008) at this super-ordinate level, whereas the meanings of specific animal metaphors that people use in linguistic communication may vary substantially across languages (e.g., Talebinejad & Dastjerdi, 2005). Other studies established that people can readily infer the attributes implied by animal metaphors and vice versa (Loughnan, Haslam, & Kashima, 2009). By implication, the broad animal metaphor – and the contrast with humans that it evokes – plays a salient and powerful role in group perceptions and intergroup communication.

Implicit Ape Metaphors

Although the previous section emphasizes the extent to which a generic animal metaphor is implicated in how people make sense of ingroup-outgroup differences, specific animal metaphors have also been used throughout history to dehumanize racial outgroups. In particular, the likening of Black people to apes dates back to the colonial era as a way of legitimizing racial discrimination. The ‘Black-Ape’ metaphor reflected the view of the time that Black people were evolutionary intermediates, and not fully evolved as human beings. In

fact, the first article of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 even went so far as to declare that African American slaves should be counted as three fifths of a person. Although the likening of African peoples to apes is by no means a uniquely American phenomenon, and has been documented in Arab militia communications about sub-Saharan Africans in South Sudan (Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008), the metaphor has served as a justification for maltreatment. Because African Americans were not fully human they did not deserve the same rights and treatment as Whites, and because the residents of Darfur were seen as monkeys they deserved to be conquered and enslaved.

With increasing racial acceptance in U.S. society, the direct and overt likening of Black people to apes has diminished over time. However, research suggests that the association still exists in the minds of Americans. A 2008 paper by Phillip Goff and colleagues found strong support of a bidirectional association between Black faces and apes (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008). Across a series of six studies, the researchers found that exposing participants to Black faces facilitated the identification of ape images, and conversely, activating the concept of ‘ape’ shifted visual attention towards Black faces. This association was held among both White and non-White Americans, was unrelated to both implicit and explicit racial attitudes, and was present even among those who claimed no knowledge of the historical representation of Black people as apes. The association was found to be specific to African Americans and apes – it did not extend to other outgroups such as Asians, nor did it apply to other wild African animals, such as big cats.

Importantly, the authors also found that the ‘Black-Ape’ association has meaningful implications for the treatment of African Americans. In one study, Goff and colleagues primed participants with apes and then showed them a two minute video depicting a scenario in which police officers were surrounding a violently subduing a suspect. When participants were told that the suspect was Black, those who had been primed with ape-related words

believed the violence was justified more so than when they were led to believe the suspect was White. Strikingly, the researchers also showed that jungle imagery consistent with the ape metaphor often accompanied news media communications about murders committed by African Americans in Philadelphia, and that the use of this imagery predicted death penalty verdicts, which disproportionately targeted African Americans murderers. Taken together, Goff et al.'s (2008) findings reveal that not only does the 'Black-Ape' association still exist, but it also exerts a strong influence on perception, judgments, and the workings of the justice system.

Metaphors of Primitiveness

Goff and colleagues argue that the ape metaphor has specific relevance to perceptions of and communications about African Americans, and that the priming and other effects documented in their studies are not based on a generic metaphor of animality. In this respect, their work is different from research in the inhumanization tradition, which rests on a broad distinction between humans and animals. On Goff et al.'s (2008) account, the African-ape link represents the continuation of a specific history of colonial 'racial science' that pictured Africans as simian, subhuman beings. However, the ape metaphor does not appear to be specific to views of Africans. Important studies conducted in the context of tensions between southern and northern Italy, for example, showed that subliminal ape primes facilitated recognition of outgroup (i.e., southern Italian) names (Boccatto, Capozza, Falvo, & Durante, 2008). Similarly, ambiguous morphed human-ape faces were more often categorized as humans when the human faces were said to be those of outgroup members (Capozza, Boccatto, Andrighetto, & Falvo, 2009), implying a greater acceptance that outgroup members were ape-like. By implications, the ape metaphor is not confined to particular inter-racial contexts.

In addition, the ape metaphor does not appear to be merely a static image. Instead, it can be understood as a representation of the idea of primitiveness, implying a process of phylogenetic development in which some people are less evolved than others. Likening someone to an ape might therefore symbolize an idea of developmental arrest or backwardness rather than representing a specific equation with a type of animal. This idea is explored in historical context by Gustav Jahoda in his superb book *Images of Savages* (1999). Jahoda argues that the idea of primitiveness and of some human groups being further along the hierarchical ‘chain of being’ (see also, Brandt & Reyna, 2011) can be traced back to colonial era ‘racial science’ and has persisted in some forms of modern racism. Importantly, Jahoda proposes that an assortment of groups are perceived as uncivilized primitives or ‘savages’ – romanticized as noble or scorned as ignoble – and these include indigenous peoples in general rather than Africans in particular. Such peoples were often pictured as amoral, hypersexual, unrestrained, childish, and instinctual.

In an implicit association study, Saminaden, Loughnan, and Haslam (2010) tested this suggestion that indigenous groups might be perceived as under-developed primitives. They examined whether images of a multi-ethnic assortment of people from traditional societies were more automatically associated with words associated with animals and children than images of an equally multi-ethnic collection of people from industrialized societies. Consistent with the view that indigenous people are viewed as less developed, they were more strongly associated with animals, children, and non-uniquely human traits. Thus the ‘images of savages’ revealed by this work is more parsimoniously explained by a general sense of anachronism than by a simple kinship with infrahuman animals. The research also establishes that it is not only Africans who are perceived through the lens of primitiveness, and that this judgment of phylogenetic and ontogenetic backwardness is not straightforwardly reducible to ‘race’.

Although his main historical focus was Western conceptions of indigenous people, Jahoda (1999) went further to suggest that a variety of other groups are commonly stereotyped as modern-day savages, following the same psychological template.

During the second half of the 19th century ... the ‘otherness’ of the savage came to be extended to a whole series of European ‘Others’, as viewed from the pedestal of the educated male middle class ... Savages, in this context, form part of a cluster that includes not only children but also the rural and urban poor, criminals, the mentally ill, and even women (p. 237)

This radical idea implies that we might find metaphors involving primitiveness as work in these other intergroup contexts. In a recent piece of research motivated by that possibility, Loughnan, Haslam, Sutton, and Spencer (2013) explored lower social class stereotypes in the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, and Australia. The researchers first demonstrated that the contents of the American “white trash”, British “chav”, and Australian “bogan” stereotypes were all systematically associated with the content of the ape stereotype. The same traits understood to differentiate apes from humans were those taken to distinguish lower class people from their socioeconomic betters. A second study replicated this correlation with an American sample using a less derogatory lower social class term, and a third, conducted in Australia, showed that the stereotypic link between bogans and apes extended to other demeaning animal metaphors (dogs and rats) and was not reducible to standard dimensions of stereotype content. By implication, stereotypes associated with social class are organized in part by conceptions of primitiveness in a way that can be captured by the ape metaphor, just as Jahoda (1999) suggested.

Some very recent work extends the idea of primitiveness in a striking way. Kteily, Bruneau, Waytz, and Cotterill (in press) have pioneered a new instrument for assessing blatant dehumanization, in which participants make judgments about groups using a sliding

scale from 0 to 100 that is marked by a left-to-right procession of five images. The series begins at 0 with a knuckle-dragging ape, moves to one that lopes, and is followed by an erect missing link, a club-wielding Neanderthal, and finally, at 100, a modern human. This ‘Ascent measure’ captures the idea of evolutionary development in a dynamic manner, and scores on the measure related strongly to a variety of important outcomes in a variety of intergroup contexts. For example, dehumanizing judgments of Muslims by American participants predicted lack of support for Arab immigration, indifference to anti-Arab discrimination, acceptance of anti-Arab media portrayals, and support for aggressive counter-terrorism tactics, such as the use of torture and pre-emptive bombings. Across multiple studies, Kteily and colleagues further demonstrated that their measure of blatant dehumanization predicted important consequences independently of simple prejudice (i.e., intergroup animosity) and generally better than more subtle dehumanization measures.

Combined with the work of Saminaden et al. (2010) and Loughnan et al. (2013), Kteily and colleagues (in press) work reveals how dehumanizing views of groups can sometimes be understood within a temporal metaphoric frame. The belief that some groups are animal-like or bestial can in at least some cases be placed within a metaphor of evolution or development, in which some groups are represented as more primitive or undeveloped – and hence child-like as well as animal-like – than others. This elaborated metaphor of development, with ape and other animal metaphors potentially serving as signposts along a phylogenetic progression from bestial past to modern present, deserves more thorough study. In particular, it might be asked whether the progression continues into an imagined future where humans become more robot-like, or whether some form of descent into a denatured modernity complements the ascent into civilization (e.g., Kashima et al., 2009). Both processes might call into play different forms of dehumanization and different, mechanistic rather than animalistic metaphors.

Explicit Animal Metaphors

Most dehumanization research examines nonhuman metaphors in a very indirect fashion. People are implicitly associated with animals, ascribed animalistic traits, or denied some of the attributes that distinguish humans from other animals. The work of Kteily and colleagues reviewed above, with its blatant measurement of dehumanization that employs images of apes, missing links, and cavemen, among others, is a notable exception. Nevertheless, it remains true that psychologists have rarely paid attention to the use of explicit, lexicalized or visual metaphors, such as when animal labels are applied to individuals or groups (for an exception see Volpato et al., 2009). This is a regrettable omission, because some of the paradigm historical cases of dehumanization involve precisely these explicit metaphors. The well-known use of vermin metaphors to represent Jews in Nazi literature, the cockroach metaphors for Tutsis in the Rwandan genocide, and the use of ape slurs in racist images of African and African diaspora populations are striking examples.

Studying animal metaphors for human groups in a direct fashion has the potential to be highly illuminating for several reasons. First, although dehumanizing representations often liken humans to nonhuman animals, a moment's thought reveals that not all such likenings are dehumanizing or even offensive. Lovers call one another pet names, parents commonly use cute diminutives to refer to their children, people praise one another's virtues using a zoological shorthand (e.g., eagle eyes, owl-like wisdom, strength of an ox), and sports fans may adopt their team's totemic beast as a beloved social identity rather than as a mark of shame. Empirical research on animal metaphors in language might help to clarify why it is that some metaphors are derogatory and taboo whereas others are neutral or even laudatory (e.g., Sommer & Sommer, 2011).

A second and related research question is to understand the diversity of animal metaphors in a systematic way. A huge variety of animal metaphors can be used to refer to human attributes, individuals, and groups, and it is important to map the diversity of meanings that these metaphors convey. That mapping might surely contribute to an understanding of what makes some metaphors more offensive than others and could also reveal distinct ways in which their offensiveness is constituted.

Third, an examination of animal metaphors might reveal not only the meanings intrinsic to those metaphors – offensive or otherwise – but also the contextual factors that alter those meanings. How linguistic metaphors are used, such as who they target and how they are expressed, may also moderate their offensiveness and potentially transform a banal expression into a dehumanizing slur.

In a pair of studies, Haslam, Loughnan, and Sun (2011) attempted to answer some of these questions in relation to English language animal metaphors. Their first study explored the diversity of meanings conveyed by forty common metaphors, with a focus on the perceived offensiveness of each metaphor, the personality traits and evaluative judgments implied by it, and an assortment of metaphor characteristics that might predict its offensiveness. For example, among the ratings that study participants made of the metaphors, they were asked whether the traits conveyed by each metaphor accurately represented those of the animal itself, how negatively the animal itself was evaluated, how genetically dissimilar the animal was from humans, and how much the user of each metaphor would perceive its target as less than human.

Findings of this first study demonstrated the great diversity of meanings that animal metaphors can represent. Particular animals were seen as implying high and low positions on all of the Big Five personality factors with the exception of high Conscientiousness. For example, certain metaphors connote high and low Agreeableness (puppy versus snake),

Extraversion (fox versus mouse), Neuroticism (chicken versus owl), and Openness (monkey versus sheep). Animal metaphors also signified elevations on three of the four primary dimensions of negative evaluation (i.e., depravity, stupidity and worthlessness). Despite this diversity, however, there was also some commonality: on average, animal metaphors tended to betoken a view of their targets as depraved, disagreeable, and unintelligent.

In addition to showing how the typical meaning of animal metaphors is negative, the study also revealed which aspects of particular metaphors predicted its perceived offensiveness. The more offensive metaphors were those that implicate more disliked animals, those that suggest a more dehumanizing view of the target, those that are used in a literal manner, and those that do not accurately convey attributes of the animal in question. Regression analysis indicated that dislike of the animal and implied dehumanization of the target were the primary determinants of perceived offensiveness, but that these metaphor properties were not strongly related. By implication, the most offensive animal metaphors are of two kinds: those that liken people to taboo animals and those that contrast people with animals in ways that diminish their humanity. Examples of the former included rats, pigs, and leeches, whereas examples of the latter included apes and dogs. We might speculate that some offensive animal metaphors are grounded in disgust and involve a transfer of reviled properties from the animal to the person, whereas others are grounded in degradation and involve a contrast with non-taboo animals that nevertheless highlights the person's subhumanity.

It is noteworthy that Nazi images of Jews and Hutu images of Tutsis exemplify the disgust type, as do common metaphors of immigrants as disease-bearing vermin or bacteria (O'Brien, 2003), whereas colonial era images of Africans and other 'primitives' exemplify the degradation type. Animalistic dehumanization may not be a unitary phenomenon but may be separately grounded in 'horizontal' contaminating transmission concerns on the one hand

and ‘vertical’ assertions of social hierarchy and dominance on the other. The two forms may also co-occur, as Volpato, Dirante, Gabbiadini, Andrighetto, and Mari (2010) demonstrated in their analysis of dehumanizing imagery towards Jews and Africans in an Italian Fascist magazine between 1938 and 1943. Africans were metaphorically linked to apes, but Jews were linked both to apes and to an assortment of disgusting creatures: spiders, vipers, parasites, and microbes.

Haslam, Loughnan, and Sun’s (2011) second study shifted attention from the intrinsic properties of the animal metaphor itself to the contextual aspects of metaphor use that contribute to its perceived offensiveness. They presented participants with a scenario in which one person uses an animal metaphor to refer to another, experimentally manipulating the tone (hostile versus jocular), and the gender and ingroup versus outgroup status of the target. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the metaphor use was judged to be more offensive when the tone was described as hostile, the context inter-group and the target female. Across the 24 different versions of the scenario, differences in perceived offensiveness closely tracked the degree to which the speaker was judged to be implying a denial of human attributes to the target. Thus the offensiveness of animal metaphors, although sensitive to contextual variations, rests on the degree to which the speaker is inferred to convey a dehumanizing view of the target.

It is perhaps surprising how little psychological research has addressed the explicit use of metaphors in the manner of Haslam et al.’s (2011) work, especially in view of the large volume of recent dehumanization scholarship in which implicit animal metaphors have featured prominently. There has been occasional work on how animal terms feature as terms of abuse, as documented in Van Oudenhoven et al.’s (2008) cross-cultural investigation, but this work has rarely asked why such terms are abusive and what meanings they convey.

Researchers might find a rich vein of phenomena to mine if they turn their attention to the linguistic manifestations of dehumanization, of which animal metaphors are prime examples.

Gender Metaphors

Up to this point, the focus of our attention has been on the use of animal metaphors in ethnic or racial contexts. However, metaphors in general and animal metaphors in particular are also commonly encountered in the intergroup domain of gender. Metaphors are also commonly present in describing men and women. The oft-mentioned “battle of the sexes”, a metaphor in which men are described as from Mars and women from Venus, is a perfect pop-psych example of this sort of gender distinction. Yet this is not where gender metaphors end. Indeed, just as ethnic and racial minorities are dehumanized by being likened to animals and objects, so too are women.

A number of recent studies have examined the extent to which individuals implicitly associate women with both animals and objects. For instance, Vaes, Paladino, and Puvia (2011) employed an Implicit Association Test (IAT) to assess associations between women and animals. In the task, participants were presented with photos of male and female targets that were either scantily clad or fully clothed. Participants then categorized these targets either with words representing animals (e.g., paw, snout, nature) or humans (e.g. culture, values, tradition). The results of this study demonstrated that participants are more likely to respond accurately when pairing scantily clad women with words relating to animals, in contrast with pairing male targets (either in a state of undress or fully dressed) or even fully-clothed female targets with animal words. This suggests that people may be more likely to view scantily clad women as more animal-like compared to men.

Similarly, Rudman and Mescher (2012) explored how such associations relate to the endorsement of violence against women. In a similar task to Vaes et al. (2011), participants

were asked to categorize animal and human words, in addition to object-related words (e.g., machine, device). Instead of images of targets, participants instead categorized words relating to women (e.g., she, woman) and men (e.g., male, boy). The researchers found that among men, the stronger the association between the concepts of women and objects, the more likely they were to state they would sexually assault a woman if they knew they would not get caught. For men, associating women with animals was also related to endorsing a greater willingness to sexually harass women, as well as greater perpetration of sexual assault. These results go one step further in suggesting that metaphorically linking women with animals or objects can have devastating effects on the safety of women, through men's endorsement of sexual violence.

Other theories have discussed the notion of women and animal associations in particular. Ortner (1974) argues that women are more closely aligned to nature than men, due to the physicality of their bodies, and this association has been supported empirically (Reynolds & Haslam, 2011). The female body is innately tied to the process of reproduction through menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth. In contrast, men lack this capacity for natural reproduction. It has been suggested that this association between women and nature is a cause of women's subordination in society (de Beauvoir, 1972; Ortner, 1974).

The close association between women and nature is reflected in many metaphors used to describe women, ranging from the patronising and benevolent (e.g., pet, kitten) to the outright derogatory (e.g., cow, bitch; Dunayer, 1995; Roach, 2003). For instance, we use the term 'kitten' to metaphorically describe young women who are cute and tame, a patronising term of endearment which promises "pleasurable domestication" (Marley, 2007, pp. 61-62). Using the term "kitten" for a young woman also suggests an absence of feral aggression seen in wild cat counterparts. In contrast, women who are perceived as aggressively sexual and dangerous are described as a different kind of cat – wildcats, tigers, cougars and vixens – who

are metaphorically hunting for their next prey (Tipler & Ruscher, 2014). The likening of women to wild or violent animals occurs not only within a sexual context, and can often also be applied to describe how women relate to, and compete with each other. Indeed, the phrase “cat fight” is commonly used to describe a fight or argument between two women, whereby women will “get their claws out” in combat with one another. Lastly, as a way of associating women with their animal function of producing and rearing offspring, women are often likened to farmyard animals (Rodriguez, 2009). Such metaphors (e.g., cow, pig) often tend to be employed as terms of contempt and derogation, implying fatness, dirtiness and ugliness (Turpin, 2014).

As another form of dehumanization, object metaphors are also applied to describe women. Phrases such as “piece of a**”, “eye candy” and “sex symbol” are often used to literally objectify women. The connotation of such phrases is that women are no more than the sum of their body parts – they are objects that exist merely for the use and consumption by others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Not only are women linguistically likened to animals and objects, they are commonly also visually depicted as animals or objects in mainstream media. Indeed, the advertising industry is rife with examples in which women’s bodies are animalised or objectified in order to sell products. Women, and Black women in particular (Plous & Neptune, 1997), are often represented as animals, caged or shackled to signify their need to be tamed and controlled. Even more common is the visual objectification of women in the media. Advertisements commonly portray women as passive sexual objects, often solely focusing on their isolated body parts. In such advertisements the function of women is purely decorative, and their agency is typically minimized or outright neglected (Berger, 1972; Coltrane & Adams, 1997). At the extreme end, some advertisements literally depict women as embodied objects, representing them as tables, beer bottles, or even video games. This once again communicates

that the role of women in society is to exist as mere objects for the pleasure and consumption of others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Animal and object metaphors are also applied to men, albeit to a lesser extent. Further, while such metaphors are typically subjugating or dehumanizing when used to describe women, when applied to men, the connotations are often quite different. For instance, animal metaphors used to describe men commonly have positive associations, emphasizing a man's size, strength and power (e.g., bull, lion; Rodriguez, 2009). Although there are notable exceptions such as 'pig', such metaphors connote positive traits and characteristics, and as such tend to be less dehumanizing.

Conclusions

Despite restricting its attention to a particular class of metaphors, this chapter demonstrates that these metaphors are rife in intergroup communication and perception. The broad concept of 'animal' defines a key contrast with the human category, and outgroups are commonly located toward the bestial side of that contrast. We are more human – and thus less animal – than they. Commonly this positioning is subtle and nonconscious, as in the selective denial of uniquely human characteristics to outgroup members relative to ingroup members in the inhumanization effect. Sometimes it takes more specific form in nonconscious, or perhaps merely disavowed, links between particular outgroups and particular animals, as in some usages of the ape metaphor. Occasionally the animal metaphor is accompanied by an implied evolutionary narrative in which some groups are stranded in a primitive past and are thereby incompletely human.

Although the topic of animal metaphors is unquestionably intriguing, there are some notable gaps in existing work that a future research agenda might aim to fill. First, most social psychological research on these metaphors has viewed them through the lens of

dehumanization. As a result, researchers have tended to emphasize the derogatory, damaging, and demeaning uses of animal metaphors, and how they position certain people as less than human. Relatedly, research has examined animal metaphors in the context of intergroup conflicts. However, animal metaphors are not invariably dehumanizing or even negative. These metaphors may feature in loving expressions, in statements of praise and adulation, and as symbols of valued social identities (e.g., nations, sporting clubs). Future research on animal metaphors might profitably investigate some of these more benign forms. A side-benefit of such investigations would be a clarified conceptual understanding of dehumanization. If not all metaphorical links to animals dehumanize people, then what is it about some metaphors – or the way in which they are deployed – that makes them dehumanizing and not others?

A second research agenda is to increase the volume of work on the linguistic expression of animal metaphors. In most existing work, animal metaphors are merely implicit, but animal terms are widely used to refer to people and the meanings they convey remain relatively unstudied. Paying more scholarly attention to animal metaphors in language will enhance our understanding of how these metaphors function in communication rather than merely in the private perceptions of individuals, the emphasis of most recent dehumanization research. A program of systematic work on the linguistic expression of animal metaphors would advance the field considerably, and would have to include a cross-cultural dimension, which is sure to be highly revealing. The psychology of animal metaphors is theoretically rich, linguistically elaborate and empirically under-explored. We urge a new generation of researchers to explore it.

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