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Animal History as Body History: Four Suggestions from a Genealogical Perspective

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English abstract: Pursuing Animal History as Body History, this paper focuses neither on animals nor on humans, but rather on bodies and the different societal demands made on them. It rejects the simple attribution of a history and an actor- or even subject-status to humans and animals per se. Instead, the paper suggests a historical problematization of the processes that produce humans or animals as having a history and as being actors or even subjects. Against this background, I try to demonstrate the usefulness of distinguishing between a praxeological approach in a broad sense on the one hand and a genealogical perspective in a narrow sense on the other. I thus understand Animal History less as an expanded form of Cultural History, but much more as a special form of Social History, placing at the center of interest neither the nature/culture dichotomy nor the concept of life, but rather the concept of the social.

Although it would be preemptive to claim that the cultural and social sciences are headed towards an "animal turn", it is nevertheless certain that Human-Animal Studies and not least Animal History are receiving ever greater attention.[1]

It remains relatively difficult to pin down a set of concrete questions and empirical methods common to all research that falls under the heading of the interdisciplinary, even sometimes transdisciplinary field of Human-Animal Studies. In contrast, the study of Animal History seems to have settled on a dominant approach. The departure point for the study of Animal History was to reconstruct the historically variable ways in which human-animal relations were represented. Since then, the field has taken up a more praxeological approach: many researchers now investigate human-animal relations on the level of very different practices, attempting to conceive of animals as actors or even subjects, and not simply as the objects or mere vehicles of human perceptions and judgments. In this sense, it is not only humans, but also animals – or better, other animals – who make history.[2]

1 Cf. for instance Harriet Ritvo, On the Animal Turn, in: Daedalus 136 (2007), p. 118-122.

2 In the following I am not concerned with selecting and evaluating individual contributions to the field of Animal History. Rather, I claim that the four suggestions developed in this paper could have relevance for very different studies in the field. Thus, it seems to make sense to distinguish between a praxeological approach in a broad sense on the one hand and a genealogical perspective in a narrow sense on the other.

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This paper[3] seeks to demonstrate to what extend this praxeological approach has been inadequately pursued in many studies on Animal History, arguing in turn that this has often inhibited researchers from being able to adequately historicize human-animal relations. In this regard, I would like to make four suggestions on how not only human-animal *relations* but humans and animals *themselves* can be historically problematized. I aim to conceive of humans and animals as products within an endless process of production rather than taking their status as actors or even subjects for granted. In this sense, this paper opts for a narrower genealogical perspective as distinguished from a broader praxeological approach. I thus not only aim to analyze human-animal relations on the level of practices, but rather prefer to place the focus on the effects of such practices. With this in mind, I will attempt to underscore the significance of Body History for Animal History. And if Animal History as Body History is to overcome the traditional nature/culture dichotomy, then we should pursue it as a special form of Social History rather than as an extended form of Cultural History.[4]

1. A Genealogical Perspective on the Question of History

The interest that the study of Animal History has garnered is often undergirded by the claim that such study will wholly change the way we think about history and the way historians pursue their work. From this point of view, animals not only make history – they supposedly also have a history.

This claim not only should be made more precise: nobody disputes the fact that some animals have made more history than others. The claim should also be more differentiated: to *make* history is not the same as to *have* a history. For example, an earthquake can make history and influence humans, but it does not have a history in the same sense that humans – at least most – have a history. This is the case not because an earthquake is not human, but rather because humans have only little capacity to exert any sort of influence on earthquakes. Humans have complex encounters with earthquakes, but earthquakes don't have comparable encounters with humans.

3 I would like to thank Bettina Hitzer, Maren Möhring, Joseph Ben Prestel, Monja Schottstädt and the anonymous reviewers at *Body Politics* for their helpful critique and Adam Bresnahan for translating this paper from German into English.

4 In this context, I disregard the lack of interest that most established forms of Social History have shown towards Animal History and Body History.

From a genealogical perspective, it is in this sense decisive that the concept of history not be wholly decoupled from humans. The reason for this, however, is not that humans principally differ from animals through the characteristic of having a history. But it should be kept in mind that history is synonymous neither with time nor the past nor with fate nor evolution. The meaning given to the concept of history in the last two hundred years – not least by historians – has more and more been related to humans or to a historically specific understanding of humans, their "origins" and "identity", their "progress" and "civility".[5] And this concept itself has not been without its own historical impact. In this regard, the field of Postcolonial Studies has rightly emphasized that also attributing a history to all humans is not a simple, harmless act because it frames our relations to other humans and these humans' worldviews.[6] But for precisely this reason this concept of history has a heuristic value – not in spite of its conceptual limits, but because of them, insofar it is deeply embedded in power relations and societal hierarchies. It reminds us that humans not animals are writing this history.

My first suggestion is thus that it might be useful to attribute a history only to those animals that have had direct encounters and confrontations with humans over a longer period of time and whose modes of existence have been traceably influenced by humans – that is, in cases where humans and animals have formed a society or at least some sort of collective.[7] In this sense, taking up a genealogical perspective implies that we should not a priori attribute supposedly universal human concepts to all other beings, as if there were no other legitimate, acceptable modes of existence. Rather, we have to clearly determine the time period and social conditions in which certain animals became actors or even subjects in their confrontations with humans. Such animals did not only make history, but also had a history – a shared history as companion animals in the broadest sense of the notion.[8]

5 Cf. for instance the classical studies of Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, New York 1970; ibid., The Archaeology of Knowledge, London and New York 2002.

6 See for example Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, New York 1988; Dipesh Chakrabarty, Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?, in: Representations 37 (1992), p. 1-26.

7 Animal History as Body History thus takes up a genealogical perspective in the Nietzschean sense while turning Nietzsche's notion against his own use of it, as he himself claimed that animals per se cannot have a history. On the centrality of Nietzsche for such a perspective on history see Michel Foucault, Nietzsche, Genealogy, History, in: Paul Rabinow (ed.), The Foucault Reader, London 1991, p. 76-100.

8 Cf. also Donna Haraway, When Species Meet, Minneapolis 2008. Donna Haraway speaks of a co-history between certain humans and certain animals – in doing so, she also binds the concept of history to humans.

Thus, in contrast to an earthquake, a cleared or newly forested mountain could have a history, and just as well, lactobacillales could have a history after their encounters with Louis Pasteur, dogs have one as pets and pigs as meat.[9] An animal that has had no such confrontations with humans has no history. After all, how is the empirical work of historians brought any further by insisting that humans have influenced all animals on this planet considered as a complex ecological network? In this sense, the claim that animals have a history is not a universal answer, but rather a heuristic question. Bruno Latour has shown in more ways than one that we should not attempt to find a single answer that would function for all humans, animals or other beings, but rather that the same questions should be posed in each particular case. In this regard, he speaks of a "symmetrical anthropology".[10]

Thus, from a genealogical perspective Animal History does not have much in common with Environmental History. Within Environmental History – nomen est omen – animals are mostly conceived of not as part of a society, but rather as part of the environment. I have the impression that such a differentiation does not overcome the nature/culture dichotomy, but rather supports it. Environmental History very often seems to hold on to the unfruitful opposition between environment and society or nature and culture, and does not escape this opposition by investigating the "interplay" or "interactions" between the opposing poles. In this sense, promoting "bridges" only means to reestablish "gaps". Environmental History is thus unable to adequately historicize animals and humans and their possible agency.

2. A Genealogical Perspective on Actors and Subjectivation

The concept of agency currently prevalent in Animal History is critical towards the way in which the cultural and social sciences have long viewed consciousness, intentions and language as central criteria for distinguishing humans from animals. Drawing especially on the works of Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway[11], the focus has shifted from consciousness, intentions and language to practices, actors and influences. In this sense, the claim is more and more that every animal has the ca-

9 On such encounters, lactobacillales and Louis Pasteur cf. Bruno Latour, Pandora's Hope, Cambridge, MA 1999.

10 Cf. for instance Bruno Latour, Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory, Oxford 2005; ibid., We Have Never Been Modern, Cambridge, MA 1993. See also Jakob Tanner, Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung, Hamburg 2004.

11 Cf. especially Haraway, When Species Meet.

pacity to influence humans and other animals and thus has a specific form of agency.[12]

From a genealogical perspective we can make a stronger distinction between practices and actors. Viewing a bodily movement as a form of praxis and not as a muscle twitch itself demands a certain degree of interpretation. However, an ever greater degree of interpretation is implied when one draws an immediate connection between a praxis and an actor to whom this praxis is ascribed.[13] The idea that certain beings are *per se* actors and thus have agency *per se* – everywhere and all the time – should be tossed out. My second suggestion is that we should rather direct more attention to demonstrating that "agency is something made".[14] The way in which a certain being has to be made into an actor ever anew could be an object of further investigation. In this way, humans, animals and other beings must not only be *viewed* as actors, but also *recognized* as actors to a certain degree.[15] They must be attributed with and possess certain capacities that allow them to carry out practices conditional for being considered as an actor in a given society. Along these lines, humans too must repeatedly reassert their status as actors, a status they can also lose to a large degree, as is for instance the case with many so-called disabled persons or coma patients. Considered as an actor, every being is a product – an effect of practices.

The differentiation between practices and actors seems to have a considerable heuristic value, especially as the concept of the actor is very often easily confused with the concept of the subject.[16] Human-Animal Studies and Animal History are more and more concerned with categorizing animals as subjects and not as objects. However, categorically affirming the status of animals as subjects completely ignores the significance of the notion of actors and their agency, which for its part has

12 The concept of agency is significant not only for Human-Animal Studies, but also for Postcolonial Studies and Gender Studies, to name just two; however, the concept is deployed in many different ways.

13 On this concept of praxis cf. for example Andreas Reckwitz, Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing, in: European Journal of Social Theory 5 (2002), p. 245- 265. This distinction between actors and practices was also emphazised by Friedrich Nietzsche.

14 Cf. for instance Timothy Mitchell's account on actor-network theory in response to the question: "Can the mosquito speak?" Timothy Mitchell, Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity, Berkeley 2002, p. 53.

15 The need of being viewed and recognized as an actor was strongly emphasized by Pierre Bourdieu. Cf. for example Pierre Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations, Cambridge 2000.

16 And the concept of the subject is very often easily confused with the concept of the individual. From a genealogical perspective, however, neither a subject nor an actor should be addressed as an individual.

been undergirded by Bruno Latour's rejection of the ahistorical, quasi metaphysical subject/object dichotomy.[17]

Just as well, the uncritical affirmation of animals as subjects also ignores – with grave consequences – the extensive research on the history of the subject and historically variable forms of subjectivation that has been carried out in the wake of the work of Michel Foucault. Being a subject in the sense of being a self is thereby uncritically understood as a sort of natural, permanent attribute of certain beings, celebrated as something possessed by humans and at least some animals per se. This ultimately occurs to the detriment of other animals that don't have the "luck" of being addressed as subjects and attributed with subjectivity. A genealogical perspective, however, is in no way concerned with simply denying subjectivity. The idea of Michel Foucault was to focus on historically specific forms of subjectivation, viewing subjectivity as a difficult societal task that ultimately can never be completed.[18] Instead of hypostasizing humans and animals a priori as subjects, we should rather historically problematize different processes of subjectivation, both for certain humans and maybe for certain animals, too. The ahistorical affirmation of supposedly natural forms of subjectivity poses a barrier to the adequate historicization of humans, animals and human-animal relations.

In this sense, historical research into the production of humans and animals as actors or even subjects must not be limited to a simple affirmation of human or animal agency. Such research should rather focus on how we can understand agency as a social resource that humans and animals compete for, rather than as a natural property.[19] Human-animal relations have always been power relations, which are not limited to the fact that humans have usually exerted more power over animals than animals on humans. Rather, a genealogical perspective focuses on reconstructing the hegemony held by humans in their relations with animals, thus criticizing the sometimes supposed omnipotence of humans

17 Cf. especially Latour, Pandora's Hope; ibid., Reassembling the Social. See also ibid., An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns, Cambridge, MA 2013.

18 Cf. for instance Michel Foucault, Technologies of the Self, in: Luther H. Martin/Huck Gutman/Patrick H. Hutton (eds.), Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault, Amherst 1988, p. 16-49; ibid., Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, New York 1977. Cf. also Nikolas Rose, Governing the Soul. The Shaping of the Private Self, London 1990; Andreas Reckwitz, Das hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne, Weilerswist 2006.

19 Such an inquiry would for example combine – despite their differences – the insights of Pierre Bourdieu with those of Judith Butler.

in favor of investigating the various ways humans have ever anew established dominance.[20]

But we shouldn't simply conceive of animals as victims and humans as victimizers. Instead we could inquire in more detail into what kind of societal tasks humans developed both for animals as well as for themselves in the context of human-animal relations. Humans have often been willing to discipline and normalize their bodies and habits in various ways in order to have as little as possible in common with animals, which has affected, among other things, human diet, sleep patterns, attire, etiquette, hygiene and sexuality. Being a subject in the sense of being a self not only means that one has the capacity to make a "free" choice, but first and foremost that one subjects oneself to the societal demands that make it possible to become a subject and to care for such a choice.

Thus, to decenter humans should not mean to center animals, whether it takes the shape of conceiving of animals a priori as actors or subjects. To critically historicize the actor- or subject-status of humans and animals is a necessary aspect of research into the ways in which they were produced, and not just the ways in which they were represented. Animal History will thus not only have to place a focus on practices, but also on the effects of such practices – last but not least, the effects they have on the performative constitution of humans as humans and *other* animals as other *animals*.

3. A Genealogical Perspective on Bodies and Materialization

The study of Animal History is not only hindered by the fact that many researchers seem to subscribe to an outdated dichotomy of actors and subjects on the one hand and effects and products on the other. Many researchers in this field also seem to be fixated on a traditional distinction between representation and production. A genealogical perspective is strictly speaking not concerned with considering the production of humans and animals *alongside* inquiries into various forms of their representation, thereby subsuming, for example, questions of breeding and diet under the heading of production. Rather, a genealogical perspective also conceives of forms of representation *as* an aspect of production, not only in a descriptive, but also performative sense.[21] In this context, Human-Animal Studies and Animal History are not the only dis-

20 On the concept of hegemony cf. especially Ernesto Laclau/Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*:* Toward a Radical Democratic Politics, London 1985.

21 For a precise summary cf. for example Hannelore Bublitz, Diskurs, Bielefeld 2003.

ciplines still often hemmed by their unfruitful subscription to the nature/culture dichotomy, which precipitates in dichotomies like those between body and language or materiality and discourse. Large branches of the cultural and social sciences in general are also still plagued by this issue.

In contrast, a genealogical perspective is defined by the claim that there is no materiality without discourse, no body without language, or at least not in any way that could be historically reconstructed – which is the key issue here. Thus, I am not concerned with analyzing the "interplay" and "interactions" between discourse and materiality or language and bodies, as if there were bodies in a given society that somehow wholly escaped being interpreted and classified from their very birth on, their development in turn being deeply influenced by such interpretations and classifications. Taking the works of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler as a point of departure I want to emphasize that a discourse is per definition only then in question if it has effects – material effects.[22] Setting this emphasis shifts the primary question of historical inquiry: the question is then how bodies have been differently shaped and changed in their very concrete modes of existence. My third suggestion is thus that, in taking up a genealogical perspective, it might be useful to focus neither on animals and humans nor on actors and subjects, but rather on bodies. Such a shift in focus would give Animal History a new aim, namely the historical reconstruction of societal demands made on various bodies within the sphere of human-animal relations. The fulfilment of such demands can be viewed as a condition for the consideration of actors or subjects by an other. Thus, I aim to inquire into the ways certain humans and certain animals were produced out of certain bodies within a given society and for a specific timeframe.

By focusing on the processes that produce humans and animals as actors or even subjects, we should take seriously the manifold distinctions drawn between humans and animals – and among humans and animals themselves – not only concerning the ways they are represented, but also concerning the ways they are produced. From this point of view, the ways that humans distinguish themselves from animals in most societies have grave consequences. The "anthropological machine" analyzed by Giorgio Agamben thus functions successfully for the most part: it really produces humans as being distinct from animals, with all the uncertainties and shifts implied therein.[23]

22 Cf. for example Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex, New York 1993.

23 Cf. especially Giorgio Agamben, The Open, Stanford 2003.

The attribution of consciousness, intentions and language not only describes particular beings in a more or less adequate way. Rather, it also modifies the very concrete existence of these beings, opening or closing their various possibilities of action and development. Even if it is theoretically unconvincing to make consciousness, intentions or language the basis for attributing agency per se to a particular being, history has shown that being attributed with consciousness, intentions or language has had great consequences not only for animals in their confrontations with humans, but also for the societies in which they exist.

Thus, a genealogical perspective does not have the aim, for instance, of somehow weakening the role language plays in the work of historians.[24] Rather, with regards to language, it might shift the focus of research to the ways in which some humans have repeatedly attempted to make animals speak, how they attempted to better understand the attributed or real speech of animals, and how they attempted to teach animals how to better understand humans. In this context, objects of observation might be the societal demands made of certain animals, the ways in which some animals actually learned to successfully fulfill such demands or complete certain tasks, and how this influenced these animals' mode of existence.

In this sense, placing the production of animals and humans at the center of debate means much more than analyzing forms of breeding or feeding. Animals and humans do not only *have* bodies, but they actually *are* bodies, and these bodies are constantly being subordinated to various societal tasks. Emphasizing the breeding and feeding of animals does not historically problematize bodies, but rather essentializes them. Speaking of an embodied agency that supposedly differs between humans and animals or stressing the bodily presence of animals more than that of humans reinscribes the nature/culture dichotomy that seems to always find its way back into Animal History.

Thus, one should stop drawing a stark demarcation between language and body or discourse and materiality only in order to "dialectically" transcend it. A better point of departure could be to simply abandon the demarcation altogether. We would then be able to consequently analyze discourses as practices, describing them in their effects. This would allow us to historically investigate materiality in its ongoing materialization. The common concept of materiality foregrounds the supposedly inherent stability of beings, which is, however, only a relative stability because every materialization is temporally limited.[25] In this sense, the

24 The role of language is often played down in current studies on Animal History.

25 On this conception of materialization cf. Butler, Bodies that Matter. See also Karen Barad, Posthumanist Performativity. Toward an Understanding of How Matter

common concept of materiality has a performative rather than descriptive function: it frames relations that humans have with themselves, with other humans, with animals or with other beings, insofar as it claims to only describe them in their supposedly natural stability. But in fact, it attributes humans, animals or other beings with an always already threatened stability conditioned by various social factors.[26] As such, the concept of materialization promoted here has the aim of conceiving of bodies in their performativity, and not so much of pinning down the performances of bodies.[27] I thus understand bodies as a kind of surface in its ongoing materialization and not as a kind of container in its seemingly ahistorical stability.[28]

In this way, Giorgio Agamben, for instance, does not, as it is often assumed, analyze representations of humans and animals in order to show how they include or exclude "the" Animal or "the" Human. Rather, he deduces the ways humans and animals are produced from ways in which the "Animal" and the "Human" are invented and distinguished from one another.[29] That there is in this sense no materiality without discourse has been pointed out in fruitful ways especially in the field of Gender Studies.[30]

The debate at hand is not concerned with arguing about whether or not there is, will be or ever has been a world independent from humans, a world that many humans attempt to grasp with the concept of nature. Rather, a genealogical perspective argues that historians – on the basis of historical sources – can in no way be certain where this world is to be encountered or to what extent the existence of all humans and of certain animals are no longer or less societally influenced, also as regards their bodies: from body weight to bone thickness, from blood pressure to strength of sight, from sleep rhythms to allergic shock, from smartphone

Comes to Matter, in: Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society 28 (2003), p. 801-831.

26 In this paper I am less concerned with grappling with the various forms of New Materialism or Posthumanism currently discussed in the cultural and social sciences. While a genealogical perspective attempts to reconstruct the concrete effects of unstable materializations, it seems to me that discussions on New Materialism and Posthumanism are more concerned with understanding the principle failure of stable materializations.

27 While the concept of performance grasps the various practices of a body, which is thereby very often taken a priori as a given, the concept of performativity focuses on the effects of practices that constantly bring forth such a body in its materiality. Cf. Butler, Bodies that Matter.

28 On this kind of surface cf. Foucault, Nietzsche, p. 83.

29 Cf. Agamben, The Open.

30 Cf. especially Butler, Bodies that Matter. See also Anne Fausto-Sterling, Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality, New York 2000.

thumb to jogger's knee, from face peeling to hair length. The bodies historians deal with are in their very concrete existence – which is the key issue here – always a product of the society and the social conditions in which they exist.

That does not mean that there are no other conditions than social conditions and that the nature/culture dichotomy should be thrown out because it is principally false and because there is simply no nature that is completely separated from culture – a meanwhile all too well-established criticism made not only by researchers in the field of Animal History. Rather, we should reject this dichotomy because it is unfruitful for investigating the shared history of humans and animals: it suppresses more questions than it poses. Whether or not it is principally false cannot be adequately addressed by historians, but it is certain that historians do not need such dichotomies for their empirical work.[31]

4. A Genealogical Perspective on the Concept of Life

Such dichotomies of body and language or materiality and discourse don't get any more convincing or useful when one adorns them with "dialectical" gowns. So long as the study of Animal History continues to directly or indirectly subscribe to such dichotomies, it will be unable to adequately historicize humans and animals. Researchers in this field all too often hold onto a "remainder" or "core". This "remainder" or "core" is not historically problematized, but rather – in the guise of body or materiality – essentialized, whether it be in questions regarding the actor- and subject-status or whether it be when dealing with supposedly natural needs and wishes, which are often only depicted as being "manipulable" or "damageable". Such an essentialization is often made especially when discussing the possible "feelings" of humans and animals.

It is within this context that the concept of life is often foregrounded. But the concept of life is an "empty signifier", which only seems to naturally link together humans and animals, or humans as animals with other animals.[32] Pursuing Animal History as Body History is not the same as foregrounding the concept of life. We should certainly not treat all beings as bodies, but if bodies are understood as a kind of surface in its ongoing materialization, they don't necessarily have to be alive in a

31 Thus, from the perspective of Animal *History* I do not think that the concept of co-*history* needs a supplementary concept of co-*evolution*. For a differing position, see for instance Haraway, When Species Meet.

32 On the concept of the "empty signifier" cf. especially Ernesto Laclau, Emancipation (s), London 1996.

biological sense. They only have to be attributed with the "quality" of being or having been alive or quasi alive. Thus, from a genealogical perspective one can see that the appeal to the concept of life is not a simple, harmless act and is insufficient in at least two ways. Like the concept of the subject, the notion runs against attempts to conceive not only of humans or animals, but all kinds of other beings as possible actors, animate or not, an attempt rigorously pursued not only by Bruno Latour. It thus hinders the development of a more complex, more concrete understanding of societies and social conditions. The use of the concept of life within Animal History demands that one explain the criteria that allows one to exclude not only things, but also plants from a supposedly "symmetrical anthropology". It also demands that one explain in what way such an exclusion is fruitful. In my opinion, we should not attempt to establish Animal History at the expense of the history of things and the history of plants.

Taking recourse to the concept of life and deducing the actor- or subject-status of a particular being from it also forces one to explain the extent to which, for instance, braindead persons or people with artificial lungs are actors or subjects, or the extent to which they are living. That is, using the concept of life forces one to clarify where life supposedly begins and where it supposedly ends. From a genealogical perspective, the concept of life is thus not only heuristically questionable, insofar as it forces one to research things and plants with approaches entirely distinct from those used for studying humans or other animals. It is also politically questionable, insofar as it potentially delegitimizes the concrete existence of various humans – certainly without intention – in favor of other humans or animals.[33] Historians above all should not play down this risk.

My fourth suggestion is thus that the concept of life should not serve as the point of departure for the study of Animal History. Rather, the point of departure could be the concept of the social. Humans and animals have a shared history only insofar as they stand in relation to one another, only insofar as they are confronted with each other, only insofar as they form a society or at least some sort of collective. And they

33 This problem is addressed by the concept of bio-politics as developed in the works of Michel Foucault or Giorgio Agamben. Cf. for example Nikolas Rose, The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century, Princeton 2006; Thomas Lemke, Biopolitik zur Einführung, Hamburg 2007; Anna Kirkland/ Jonathan Metzl (eds.), Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality, New York 2010.

share this history with all other beings with whom they are confronted, be they plants, things or whatever else.[34]

Placing the concept of the social at the center of debate and thus pursuing Animal History not as an extended form of Cultural History, but rather as a special form of Social History, has significant consequences. First of all, drawing upon the works of Bruno Latour and Michel Foucault, it implies that researchers should not claim a priori that all humans and animals are actors or even subjects. Rather, they should reconstruct certain humans and animals and their relations internal to specific social conditions, conceiving of the social less as something structural and more as something situative. Second, drawing upon to the works of Judith Butler or Karen Barad, it implies that the status of humans and animals should not be seen as being all too stable. Rather, they should be viewed in the context of their ongoing materialization and with regard to their changing relations with other humans, other animals or other beings. The manifold differences between humans and animals – or among humans and animals themselves – should thus not only be understood as historically constructed, but as historically constituted or, better, co-constituted.

But falling back on the concept of the social in this way does not necessarily mean that Animal History must place exclusive focus on human-animal *relations*, as doing so quickly leads one to conceive of humans and animals *themselves* as ontologically given.[35] In this sense, researching practices internal to human-animal relations is not the same as reconstructing humans and animals as effects of such practices – not in an ontological but in an ontogenetic sense. Exclusive focus on human-animal relations also easily leaves aside the fact that many humans have existed primarily in relation to other humans or to things and neither to animals nor to plants. This, in turn, makes it difficult to precisely formulate the ways in which human-animal relations have also influenced other relations humans sustain with other beings. It makes it thus difficult to understand the effects of human-animal relations outside the bounds of Animal History.[36]

For these reasons, this paper has paid less attention to the various forms of interdependence and reciprocity in human-animal relations which Donna Haraway has placed at the center of debate. Rather, the

34 Here I follow Bruno Latour by placing the social at the beginning of every form of Social History. See also Patrick Joyce, What is the Social in Social History?, in: Past and Present 205 (2009), p. 175-210.

35 This would of course work against the meaning Donna Haraway gives to the notion of relations.

36 Animal History may lose its “freak-status” as soon as it makes this point clear.

genealogical perspective promoted here directs more effort to researching how many humans and certain animals have often been subordinated to astonishingly similar societal demands: for example, in the framework of industrialization or urbanization, in the context of the emotionalization or therapeutization of many humans and – ever more prevalent – certain animals, or against the background of various forms of bio-politics.[37]

From a genealogical perspective there is no going beyond anthropocentrism. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that humans don't only constitute themselves as humans by attempting to distinguish themselves *in principle* from animals. They also constitute themselves as humans by claiming to be distinguished from animals only *in degrees* – as an animal among other animals. The crucial question is thus not whether or not we can write anything other than an anthropology, but rather what sort of anthropology we want to write. Once again, taking recourse to the work of Bruno Latour, writing a "symmetrical anthropology" would have serious consequences for Animal History. It would not only mean historicizing human-animal relations as being variable, but rather would also mean historicizing humans and animals themselves as products. This implies not only a specific understanding of empirical work but also of political critique.[38]

Summary and Outlook

If Animal History is to change the way we think about history, it will not achieve this goal by simply viewing animals in the same way that historical research mostly views humans. Rather, the way we do historical research on animals as well as humans will have to significantly differ from previous approaches. The work of historians will not be brought forward by simply including humans and animals as *living* beings in historical accounts whilst more or less explicitly excluding *other* beings. The much criticized nature/culture dichotomy is not done away with by

37 This can be seen when one considers vaccinations and antibiotics or the supervision of dietary needs and the psychologization of health – all with relation to humans, but also increasingly with relation to certain animals.

38 I have the impression that within Gender Studies and Postcolonial Studies this important question of political critique is much better and much more controversially discussed than within Animal History. Cf. for example the classical studies of Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, New York 1990; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can the Subaltern Speak?, in: Cary Nelson/Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Chicago 1988, p. 271-313.

simply attributing actor- or subject-status and a certain way of "thinking" or "feeling" to animals as well.

Conceiving of Animal History as Body History means not taking agency or subjectivity for granted. It means to decenter not only humans but animals as well. Thus, a basic question could be: which discourses – which societal demands and tasks – does a body have to conform to in order to become ever anew an actor or even a subject? Placing the body and its ongoing materialization at the center of debate also means understanding Animal History as a special form of Social History. Thus, we could take the body and effects of practices as the basis for our conception of the social, rather than actors or even subjects. In this way, human-animal relations along with humans and animals themselves appear within an endless process of production. Only in this context does it become clear that differences between humans and animals are not only historically constructed, but also historically constituted, in different ways and again and again.[39]

Pursuing Animal History as Body History also means posing political questions about societal hegemonies. But this does not mean that one should automatically see animals as victims and humans as victimizers. Rather, we could not only research what humans do with and make out of animals, but also what they do with and make out of themselves in the context of human-animal relations. One should thus take the "anthropological machine" very seriously, not only on the more limited level of representation, but on the broader level of production. Even if humans have historically been hegemonic within human-animal relations, a genealogical perspective primarily attempts to reconstruct the various ways humans and animals have been produced differently. However, such a reconstruction does not have the aim of weakening our capacity to politically criticize the production of animals, but rather of strengthening our capacity to historically problematize the production of humans as well: the societal demands made on each single body to be a very particular body with specific capacities and supposed or neglected rights.[40]

Animal History opens up a new perspective on humans, not only a new perspective on animals. But this new perspective should not be greeted for the simple reason that it is new: in today's cultural and social sciences as well as in psychology and neurology, "thinking" often re-

39 On the distinction between construction and constitution cf. for instance Butler, Bodies that Matter.

40 Thus, from the perspective of Body History as well, the question of animal rights has a close connection with that of human rights. See for instance Joanna Bourke, What It Means to Be Human. Reflections from 1791 to the Present, Berkeley 2011.

ceives less attention than does "feeling", and it is in no way a coincidence that one speaks today of an "animal turn" and of an "affective turn".[41] In both cases, the meaning of the body is stressed, be it in the form of the notion of embodied agency or that of the affected body. But in both cases, the body tends to be essentialized – intentionally or unintentionally – rather than historicized. Body History should, however, be deployed in order to reject every manifestation of the nature/culture dichotomy in historical research.

Animal History as Body History should thereby be understood less as an expanded form of Cultural History and more as a special form of Social History. Such a form of Social History aims less at following an emphatic "history from below" and more at developing a distant "history from outside", to the extent that this is at all possible. In this sense, it does not take animals and humans nor actors and subjects as a point of departure, but rather makes bodies and their changing production into an object of historical investigation.

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41 Cf. for example Brian Massumi, What Animals Teach Us about Politics, Durham 2014. On the "affective turn" see also Patricia Ticineto Clough/Jean Halley (eds.), The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social, Durham 2007; Melissa Gregg/Gregory J. Seigworth (eds.), The Affect Theory Reader, Durham 2010. For a historical perspective on affects or, better, emotions, see for instance Ute Frevert, Emotions in History: Lost and Found, Budapest 2011; Jan Plamper, The History of Emotions: An Introduction, Oxford 2015.